

synopsis & transcript

**MAERDY 10**

INFORMANTS:

<p><b>A:</b>    <b>Male</b>, 70 years old  <b>Welsh:</b> fluent/<u>some</u>/slight/none  <b>Mother's birth:</b> Cwmdare, Glam  <b>Father's birth:</b> Maerdy</p>	<p><b>B:</b>    <b>Male</b>, 61 years old  <b>Welsh:</b> fluent/some/slight/<u>none</u>  <b>Mother's birth:</b> Maerdy  <b>Father's birth:</b> Maerdy</p>
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*Preliminary talk, including some banter with ladies of the club who are, noisily, preparing the room for an evening event.* [ 00.00 min - 02.10 min]

*They see a picture of Penrhys, where there is a Catholic shrine, and talk about what is there now and the origin of the name 'Penrhys'. The ladies of the club are still being noisy and a further appeal is made to them for quiet.* [ 02.10 min – 04.00 min]

*They look at a picture of a street of terraced houses in Trealaw, and talk about the sturdiness of construction of such houses and the communities of people living in them.* [ 04.00 min – 06.40 min]

*Seeing pictures of various Rhondda Fach collieries, they describe how they progressively closed down, and how the workforce moved from one to another.* [ 06.40 min – 07.20 min]

*They describe how friendships spread among the miners. A talks about solidarity down the pits, and about tussles with the management. A & B talk about safety in the pits and recall an accident in which there were fatalities:* [07.20 min - 14.10 min]  
**(transcript)**

(looking at a picture of a colliery)

A: . . Tylorstown

B: . . the colliery

I: what do you mean number nine now

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A: . . . and when they closed that see they all came up to Maerdy

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I: yes

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A: then like you know . . and surprising how the friendship spread

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A: right through the Valleys . . . . aye . . . . give

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B: ( looking at another picture )  
. . . . which one's this John

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A: us a look now . . . . number nine . . . . aye

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B: . . . Ferndale . . . . nine again

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A: . . . when . . when Tylorstown shut down like you know the pit

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A: . . they came to Maerdy . . but or~originally Maerdy shut down in

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A: nineteen thirty-nine . . and we went down the Valleys . . Ferndale

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A: and Wattstown I went to Wattstown . . you know . . surprising the

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A: friends you made then and you've got them today . . . . and then

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A: as the pits shu~ closed they came back up to Maerdy now . . so

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B: . . . . . yes

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A: there was more friendship younger people . . well we were fifteen

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A: hundred

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B: . . . companionship in the mine is far superior to any other type

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A: . . . yes . . . . . ah aye

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B: of work . . . far superior

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I: . . . can~ can you give

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B: . . . . . if a . . . if an official picked on

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I: me some examples of that

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B: you . . . . . and sent you out . . . . . not . . . no~ no doubts about

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A: . . . . . yes

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B: this . . . we'd all be with you . . . and (inaudible) the same . . . you

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A: . . . . . I'll always remember~ remember

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B: know . . . shut it . . . fact

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A: in the four feet . . . in the . . . we had a face

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B: . . . . . six . . . . . (laughs)

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A: . . . and the management . . . it was pure sabotage . . . we had one sl~

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A: . . . go slow down the Bute . . . six months . . . . . and we couldn't do

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B: . . . . . [ mm ] . . . . . yeah

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A: a thing down there . . . well anyway . . . the team I had

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B: . . no

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A: . . they called them the Senior Mafia . ( l a u g h s ) . . they

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A: picked all the bad 'uns of the pit . . put them together . . . brought

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A: me down from another horizon . . . and . . . and five others on

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B: that's it

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A: the (inaudible) side who I could . . handle . but I couldn't handle

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A: these . . they were all from number ten . . . . all youngsters . .

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A: well I was average . see I was forty-five like you know . . I

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A: couldn't do a thing with them see . . well . we were getting sent out

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A: . . and sent out . our wages were only seven pound a week . . I

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A: was only having a pound pocket money . (laughs) (inaudible) if you

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A: were lucky . . and after that finished now . . they decided to

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A: sabotage another part of the pit now . . . another horizon . . . so I

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A: had the junior Mafia now . (laughs) . all the boys in the bar by there

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A: . and they were all youngsters weren't they . . . so . . . .

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B: [youngsters]

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I: . . (laughs)

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A: we did manage with a few bob more on the fir~ . . on the first . .

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A: go slow like . six months' go slow . . but up here now . . . N C B

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A: was ready for us . . so you couldn't say 'damn' . . if you said

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B: ( laughs )

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A: 'damn' . . . to an official . . . they'd send you out . . . . well

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A: . we were having next to nothing money now isn't it . and

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B: . nothing

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A: it went . . . rampant now see . . so the first incident was . . . we

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A: had a fall . . . . so the undermanager and overman was there . .

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A: and I was there . . . and . . they told me . . pick . . three men

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A: with you and we'll pick another three for the afternoon shift three for

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A: the night shift . . so I said yes and what are we going to get paid .

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A: Mr Lewis . . oh we'll see when the end of the week come and

A: you've done a good job you'd get . you wouldn't get paid see

B: [ aye ] [ aye ] [ aye ] .

A: so we knew . . . we wasn't going to get paid isn't it

B: nothing again [ no ]

A: . . . so he said . . you are refusing . no I'm

B: . . nothing again

A: not refusing I said . I just want a guarantee of a wage . . give me a

A: wage and we'll . . talk about it . . oh . no no no no no no . . .

A: and if you're not going to do it . you can put your coat on and get

A: out . . that was their attitude see

B: . . aye . th~ that was their attitude

A: . get up the pit . so I put my coat on . . Duw it went like . wild

B: aye

A: fire . . . they've sent Dave out . . they've sent him out . . Duw

A: . Duw . they were out in a block . . and that . . after that . . oh

B: ( laughs )

A: . . . . there was no law after that . . ( l a u g h s ) . . no law

B: [ laughs ]

A: (coughs) but no law like

B: . no violence . nothing like that

I: . . . no

A: . . no sense at all . aye

B: . . oh aye

I: . . you~ you stuck together then

A: . . oh yes . . through thick and thin

B: [ as I said be~ ] . . as I said about the

A: [yeah] . . yeah . . . and we had a stay in

B: companionship . . far superior

A: strike . didn't we . . we had to have a stay in strike now to

B: . ( laughs )

A: do something . . to get it erm [yeah] . . highlight it . . get it on

B: to highlight it

A: the TV . and erm . and I always remember it . . . you know we had

A: . a . . president of the South Wales Miners . Emlyn Williams . . .

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I: mm

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A: . . . he'd just been promoted hadn't he . . he was coming up the

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B: mm

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A: face now . . erm . up the roadway like . . . and he said to me .

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A: . with urns of tea and sandwiches . . . come on now Johnny . let's

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A: go up the pit to talk about it . now Emlyn~ Emlyn I said . . I

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A: remember when you worked in Maerdy and I worked by you . . and

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A: how many . . walk-outs and strikes did we have . then I said . .

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A: enough said {Johnsey} he said . don't say no more . I'll see when

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A: you decide to come up the pit . ( l a u g h s )

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B: . and do you know

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B: what they put it down to like . when they used to send them urns of

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A: . . yeah . . wasn't it

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B: tea down . they never put sugar in them . .

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A: . . ( inaudible ) like (laughs)

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B: never no sugar . . no . . . you could

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A: (coughs & laughs) . . . . . aye . I always

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B: wash your socks in it ( l a u g h s )

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A: remember~ remember that . . yeah . . . and then we got worse off

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A: wasn't it . . you can't win mun

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B: . . . you can't win can you . . .

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A: . . . (laughs) . . . aye . aye . . . . . but that was

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B: but I like

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A: comical . one face was the Senior Mafia and the other face was the

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A: Junior Mafia . and (inaudible) the boys (inaudible) (laughs)

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B: . . aye . aye [laughs]

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A: . . yeah

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B: . . aye . . that's .

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I: . . did you work down the same pit

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A: . same places . well . we worked roughly . by each-other

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B: yeah aye

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A: for years and years . you know . . loads . . only we were

A: youngsters then like . . I was a man when these were starting as boys

I: yes

A: like you know . . (laughs) . . so they sort of . . grew up together

A: like . . and they look on you then as a father figure see . . it was .

A: . it was . . ( l a u g h s )

B: ( l a u g h s )

I: . . was it safe to work~ to work down there

A: . . no . . . . safe no . . that's

B: . . it's only as safe as you make it

A: right . . . . . yes

I: . . . . . erm . . were there any erm . .

A: . yeah . and fatalities

B: . oh aye

I: accidents while you were down there

A: . . . fatalities . . . . yeah . . . . the worst one of all was young

A: Bobby wasn't it . . . about . . . roughly . . .

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B: . oh terrible that was

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A: about nine o'clock in the morning wasn't it . . . .

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B: . . . ( inaudible )

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A: he was working five men together with a . . a huge machine see a

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A: huge ripping machine you know . . . and the driver . . which

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A: happened to be then like was always on the step . and as soon as the

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A: conveyors would start . . . pressed two buttons and you . . every

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A: minute counted like you know . . and we were all chatting away

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A: wasn't it . . . . and these three were extracting . . supports . . for

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A: us to stand . . again from another road you know . . and all

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I: . . yeah

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A: at once the conveyor started . . we started machining . . . . and

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A: with less than a minute wasn't it . . . we heard a cla~ . . clap you

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A: know . . . and a huge . . cloud of dust . . and there was no way

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A: out see there was only one way out . . only one way out . .

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A: ( inaudible ) . . we were all trapped . . . . and

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B: [ inaudible ] trapped weren't we

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A: we waited for the dust to clear . and when we . . we went back and

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A: had a look and where they were working was . . deathly silence . .

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A: it has fallen in

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*TAPE ENDS*