

synopsis & transcript

MAERDY 9

INFORMANTS:

A: Male, 68 years old Welsh: fluent/some/slight/ <u>none</u> Mother's birth: Maerdy Father's birth: Mountain Ash, Glam	B: Male, 69 years old Welsh: fluent/ <u>some</u> /slight/none Mother's birth: Blaenllechau Father's birth: Tylorstown
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They find a picture of Ty Mawr Colliery and talk about some problems at the site since its closure. Then, seeing a picture of a chapel, they talk about chapel-going - in the past and present. [00.00 min - 02.50 min]

They look at a picture of a Rhondda Fach colliery. A thinks he can identify it. A talks about his work driving tunnels in the pits. They see a picture of Cliff Morgan and talk about rugby, recalling a famous Welsh win in the last minute of the game. Seeing a picture of Tommy Farr, they then talk about his legendary fight with Joe Louis. A describes how it was that he came to listen to that fight. They look at a picture of Tylorstown Pit, and discuss the safety of old tips and their removal: (transcript) [02.50 min - 09.30 min]

A: where do you reckon that is Bill . . . Tylorstown the
=====

A: Queen's [ah]

B: well it looks like it doesn't it . although I don't know much
=====

A: . . . is it . . erm Hendrefadog . aye it's

B: about Tylorstown really
=====

A: Tylorstown . . Hendrefadog up there see

B: . . that'll be Number Nine

A: . yeah isn't it . . . aye aye

B: then [yeah]

I: . . is~ is that closed down now

A: . . yes . aye

B: . they're all closed down . there's nothing in this valley

B: now . that'll be pulled down right down now . yeah

I: . . did you two

A: [yeah]

B: . . yes . aye . . I didn't do ver~ . . I done

I: work down the~ the mines

A: . . I did . erm . twenty one

B: about . thirteen years I did . . aye

I: . . and

A: oh I~ I erm . . most of my

I: where did you work . where did you (inaudible)

A: working life was in . Wattstown Colliery . but I~ I . . . if you

A: understand I had a job with a private firm . there . then . erm what

A: you call 'hard headings' . . . and I~ I roamed . I went

B: . . . (coughs)

A: about . . . different collieries with the . . with the firm you know

A: . . I worked about . . seven or eight different collieries at the time

A: . . but still with the same firm if you understand

I: . . what was your

A: . . erm hard headings . . . hard ground

I: your work then . . what~ what was [that]

A: man . . well erm . . driving tunnels

I: . . what . . tell me what it was

A: more or less . . if . . if you had . . if~ if a big wall in front of you

A: like that like . and you bore holes . . . you put erm . . powder in it

A: and you'd fire it knock it . all the ground out . and you clear it to put

A: a ring up . . . archway . . . and then you~ you'd advance like that

I: yes

A: all the time like you know . . . I never done much on~ on erm . .
=====

A: on the coal actually as I was always . erm . driving tunnels . . what
=====

(looking at another picture)

A: you call tunnels Cliff Morgan . he was on television last night
=====

A: . . . erm . in This is Your Life . . and I was wondering what he

B: yeah
=====

A: was doing there with erm [aye

B: . . oh he's a big noise with erm . . with
=====

A: what's his name] . . oh

B: the B B C

I: . . are you . are you erm . keen rugby supporters
=====

A: aye . yeah

B: . . used to follow it at one time . but now . it's just
=====

A: . . aye . . we don't go to the matches

B: television fan at the moment
=====

A: now [(inaudible) used to go] when we

B: . very rarely anyway . . . I sometimes go to Cardiff
=====

A: were younger . we'd go to Twickenham wouldn't we

B: . . oh aye

A: but erm . . it's erm . very rare we go to the matches as it's . a little

A: bit erm the wrong side of thirty for that

I: . . (inaudible) . and where did

B: . . I used to go . I used to go to Cardiff

I: you go for the matches now

A: Cardiff . Bridgend mostly I used to go . .

B: [a lot] . . I've been to Bridgend

A: I went to a match there erm . a fortnight ago in Treorchy the first one

A: I've been to for years . . . a friend of mine asked me to go over

A: there . . . I~ I enjoyed it mind . . . but erm it's . . if you

A: understand it's more comfortable . . having a cup of tea and the

A: television isn't it

B: . . yeah . as long as they . you know

I: . . (laughs)

B: televise these big games it's not so bad

I: . . can you remember any .

A: oh aye . I think the best one

I: games that you went to especially

A: was the one in Twickenham when Wales were playing England

A: . . . and what was his name . Taylor . . . in the last minute of the

A: game he had to kick

B: [no] . . that was in Scotland . . . when he kicked

A: . . Scotland and he kicked

B: it from that . . far side . . Scotland aye

A: it [and he was a left footed] . a~ a left footed kicker wasn't he

B: it was the best game I recall . [the most . aye] . that's

A: . and he kicked it from the right-hand side of the field so the ball

B: it [that's it]

A: {to} [bring it in] well a~ a

B: yeah especially . . because of that . . left-hand [side of the

A: right-foot . . . kicker would kick from the left-hand side of the field

B: [that's it]

A: and a left-foot kicker . would kick from the . right side of the field

B: [so he could bring the ball in rightwards]

A: . so the~ the ball . . if he was kicking with his left . the ball would

A: go that way wouldn't it like you know . ah it was great that was

B: [that

A: because erm . it was a great game and

B: was a really] smashing game as it happens

A: he was . he won the match on that kick if you understand . . and it

A: was~ it was a good kick from the touch-line wasn't it

B: . indeed it was

A: . . no

B: [no]

I: and did you go together on the train . . or what did you do

A: I~ I~ I

B: I went on one of the bus trips . I think . from the Maerdy Con I

A: . . yeah . . we had a cricket team around here at the time

B: believe

A: . . . and . . erm . the cricket team used to organize the matches

A: isn't it . to Twickenham . . to Scotland . . and that {time} erm .

B: [aye]

A: most of the cricket team used to go with~ with a few of the supporters

A: . . and fill a bus up like you know . . stop a weekend . . . and erm

B: aye

A: take a month to get over it when you come back

(looking at another picture)

B: . . there's

I: . . (laughs)

A: y~es [aye]

B: one of our old heroes there isn't it . . Tommy Farr

B: have you hear~ have you heard him singing on the . wireless . he's

B: got some records out now and again . aye . he's quite good

I: . really

A: . . I'll tell you something about that now . . . erm . . in nineteen

A: thirty six Jack Peterson had had hammerings off {Noise1}

A: all the time hadn't he . remember {Noise1} beat him three times the

B: [that's it] [aye]

A: German so Tommy Farr come . . . to

B: . . that German bloke [aye]

A: stardom . . . and he was fighting {Noise1} in nineteen thirty six

A: . . now . we were living in Royal Cottages . . . and you

B: . . aye

A: know the Shot . the British Legion now aye .

B: . . when it was a . . (inaudible)

A: . it was only from that wall . . up to those there's

(someone talking in the background)

A: a tin shanty I'm talking about . . ex-servicemen

B: . aye

A: now . . . and . . they had no wireless see . . in this club . so my

B: yes

A: father was the chairman of the Club at the time . . . we had

B: . . . oh yes

A: a wireless in the house . . . as I say . I was about ten . . .

I: . . . yes

A: I would be ten . nineteen thirty six . . . eleven . . . and . . .

A: . . . they wanted a wireless over the . Shot . for the old people to

A: hear the fight . . so I w~was insisting now that if they had the

I: yes

A: wireless over there I wanted to hear the fight . . and there was no

A: children . . really Tom Evans was . . was a strict secretary of the

B: (l a u g h s) yes [yes]

A: Club . . and the only way they could have that wireless was

B: yes [yes]

A: allowing me in . . in the club to hear the fight and erm~ and erm .

I: (laughs)

A: only the fight mind once the fight was over I had to come out . .

B: (laughs)

A: because there was a strict law in those days no children in . . . in

B: [you were . . .

A: clubs or erm . (i n a u d i b l e) it was religious like . you know . .

B: . . you were very honoured . very honoured] aye

A: shouldn't have a child in the club because they were afraid you'd

B: (laughs)

A: have a summons . . . and erm . that's where I heard that fight was in~

B: [yes . aye]

A: in that club

B: yeah . that was a . . he almost made it didn't he

A: . . . yeah

B: according to the critics . . he almost won the title

I: . when was that

A: erm . nineteen thirty seven . I can remem-

B: . . nineteen thirty si~ [thirty thirty seven]

I: now then

A: -ber always I'm~ I'm good at that . . in nineteen thirty

B: thirty seven yes

A: seven he fought Joe Louis June of nineteen thirty seven

B: [i n a u d i b l e] [he]

I: . . he lost on

A: . aye . Joe Louis took the title off Braddock . . and .

B: aye aye

I: points

A: Tommy Farr was his first defence of the title the first time

B: . . oh he was [the first

A: Louis put his title up . . to defend it was against Tommy Farr

B: one] aye was against [Farr]

(looking at another picture) (and at another picture again)
A: . . I can remember that well . . . where the hell is that then

B: oh aye

A: . . oh . it's erm Ty~ erm . . . Tylorstown tip

B: . . St Mary's Well

A: this photo . must have been taken this last few years by the look of it

A: 'cause the tip is down see the tip . . the top have gone off it

B: . . yeah

A: . yeah . . . Tylorstown . .

B: . that's been pulled away since hasn't it

A: . . . Ynyshir

I: . . . have they . . . has there been any trouble from the

A: . . . no . . . no not in this area

I: tips . like there was at . Aberfan

B: when they were levelling that one off . . . one of the drivers happened

B: to get killed . he was one of these 'dozer drivers or whatever he might

A: . . . mm

B: have been . . . came down the bank somewhere or other

I: . . . oh

B: . . . tumbled over . . . yeah it was . . .

I: . . . oh that's a tragedy isn't it

A: [no we've (i n a u d i b l e)]

B: that's qui~ . quite a few years back now mind . . . I forget how long

A: . . . but that Aberfan was a terrible thing that was . . .

B: back it was

A: nineteen sixty three I think that was

B: . . . they seem to have . since

B: they've done it up here anyway . they seem to have good drainage
=====

A: yeah . but do you know since they flattened this . . tip up
=====

B: going [erm]
=====

A: here . . I keep racing pigeons you know . . . and erm I'm . .
=====

A: very keen on the weather . . . for the pigeon's sake isn't it . .
=====

I: yeah
=====

A: and since they flattened this tip up here the Valley's a lot colder
=====

B: . . oh
=====

A: [inaudible]
=====

B: aye . you . . you haven't got that break there see . that break there
=====

A: . . the tips were higher . . so when the wind was coming down the
=====

A: valley . . the tip was breaking the wind . . but now
=====

B: yes
=====

I: . . that's right
=====

A: they've lowered the tip down . . so the whole area's having the wind
=====

B: yes
=====

A: as it's coming through . . and it~it have made a awful difference it

A: have

*They look at further pictures and discuss them.
A talks about his family's move to Dagenham ;
where he remembers his father bringing home a five
pound note.*

[09.30 min - 12.00 min]

*Continuing to recall his time spent in Dagenham,
A talks about his taking of the eleven plus and
about his schooling there.*

A: I went to school . . . without boasting now I went to school in

A: Dagenham . . . erm at eleven . . I passed my . eleven plus . .

B: oh aye

A: down here . . at ten . . when I was ten . . . so I could have tried it

A: again when I was eleven if I had failed . . erm if you understand .

A: I~ when I went to school . . I was the youngest . in the class

B: . . I

A: . . I was~ I was in the~ in the age group . . a year

B: got you aye mm

A: below what I should have been see . . all the boys that were eleven

B: [what you should have] aye

A: at the time . . were in another erm . . . in a class . I was ten and I

A: was in an eleven year class but I started as an infant you [see]

B: they all move

A: . but when I went to London to school

B: forward at the same month

A: now in Dagenham if you understand I was so . far without

A: boast~ I'm not boasting when I say this now . I was so advanced in my

A: schooling . . that I~ when I went to~ to class eleven . in London

A: they set me in the top class fourteen year old . . and

B: oh

I: yes

A: I was . I was in the class of fourteen when I was eleven . . . and the

B: mm

A: funny thing about it was . . I passed the . . eleven plus down here

A: isn't it . . . and . . . up there . . I saw . they gave me a paper now

A: to . . for the eleven plus . in London and do you know it was harder

A: up there than down here . it was a~ a har~harder exam paper

B: . . . oh

A: in London . . than down here . and yet I was more advanced than

A: the eleven year olds . . in London . . 'cause I've~

I: . . . well well

A: I've always had that stuck in my mind . . that . . I don't think I'd

A: have passed up there then . where I passed down here

B: . . they say

A: ah . but it

B: the education down here at one time was really exception[al]

A: was Welsh see . . . if~ if~ if you were advanced in Welsh down

B: [aye] aye

A: here in the eleven plus . . . you were practically guaranteed to go

B: aye . aye

A: through see . . . why I don't know but you had to be good

B: . . . oh aye

A: . . . at erm . erm arithmetic and English . . . that was the three . . . but

B: [yeah . yeah . yeah]

A: Welsh you know . but up in up~ up~ up in England

B: aye I never [did try it myself]

A: it was a different thing altogether see . different schooling altogether

B: [yeah]

A: it was but as I say I was good at a~ arithmetic I used to

A: have a row off the teacher every day . 'cause I . . . didn't used to

A: put down . how I worked a sum out I'd work it out in my head

B: . . .

B: you take the amount of teachers they turned out around the valleys

B: here alone like

TAPE ENDS