

synopsis & transcript

MAERDY 1

INFORMANTS

A: Male, 55 years old Welsh: fluent/ <u>some</u> /slight/none Mother's Birth: Maerdy, Rhondda Father's Birth: Maerdy, Rhondda	B: Male, 82 years old Welsh: <u>fluent</u> /some/slight/none Mother's Birth: Caernarvon Father's Birth: Capel Curig North Wales
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(Informants are father and son.)

They look at a picture of a group of miners and talk about them. [00.00 min - 01.40 min]

They talk about their work at Maerdy Colliery, the strike of 1983, the closure of the pit and the hard times since then : [01.40 min - 06.20 min]
transcript

B: . . well .

I: tell me about this closure now . from . . what happened [from the
=====

B: well~ . . it~it started in nineteen eighty . . eighty four . . when the~

I: beginning]
=====

A: the [strike started]

B: . . when we went on the . . we went on strike to . . to erm try and
=====

B: save the pits you see . to keep employment in the village . and in the
=====

A: . . and we (inaudible)

B: valleys . . . but unfortunately we lost the strike we were
=====

B: out for a twelve month but erm . . . as soon as we came back to work
=====

B: they had . . . said that erm they'd cut down the work force then . . . I had
=====

A: yeah

B: to . . . finish in nineteen eighty six erm . . . because . . . the job
=====

B: that I was doing was . . . no longer . . . being . . . you know . . . because
=====

A: yeah

B: th~they were finishing the job that I was doing so . . . they made us
.
=====

B: redundant then . . . and then they cut the workforce down from then to
=====

B: two hundred and fifty men and in nineteen ninety-one I think
=====

A: [erm] yes . yeah . .

B: it was wasn't it Dad . . . they closed it altogether like
=====

A: nineteen ninety . December/ nineteen [ninety]

B: . nineteen ninety December
=====

A: yes . . .

B: ninety wasn't it aye and my father worked in a a
=====

A: well I erm~ I erm~ I'm going back now erm . . . in erm . . . nineteen
=====

A: sixty-three . . . there was two thousand men employed in Maerdy
=====

A: and erm . . I was erm . . on the . union I was a disputes agent

B: mm

A: then . . . and then it dwindled down to three hundred odd by the

I: yes

A: erm eighties and the . nineties. . . . and erm . of course erm

I: mm . was

A: no . . well the point here

B: . . no . no

I: that because of new technology or [because of]

A: . was that . . Maerdy . . I can remember Maerdy Pit . . the Maerdy

A: Pits . . there was four here . . . I~. I can remember them . closing

B: mm

A: down three times . . and this was the final one now in nine~ in

A: nineteen ninety but erm . in the . ear~ear~early thirties . . . it

B: mm

I: mm

A: closed down and even in~in~during the war . . it closed down in

A: October nineteen forty and then when nationalization come in

I: yes

A: in nineteen forty-seven then this pit was re-opened . . . and when

I: yes

A: it was re-opened . . . they give us the assurance . . that there was a

A: hundred years . . work there and it didn't~didn't last forty years

B: mm

B: oh aye . . and my father had to erm . finish in erm . . in erm

I: (inaudible)

B: the nineteen seventies . . because of a illness my mother had this

B: serious illness . and he had to . . finish to . . to look after her you see

I: uh uh

B: . . . well he was a dispute agent and I took over the job of dispute

I: right

B: agent from him . . . and erm . . . but erm it~it~it~it was a~ a place

I: mm

B: where~ Maerdy . well . . we all think of our own pit as a special

A: . that's right

B: place if you understand me . . and erm . th~th~the work~

B: . . the work-force there were erm~ were exceptionally good weren't

A: . oh of course they was . . . yes

B: they Dad . . . a good . work-force you

A: know . . well erm . . . when I was working there when I started work

A: at fourteen years of age . . there was pits every couple of . villages

A: . . Maerdy . . Fern-dale . . Tylorstown . . Watts-

B: . that's right yeah

A: -town . . Porth . . . and . . the~the big valley that was covered with~

B: yes

A: . . only pits . . that's all was here . . so when I left school . . during

B: [inaudible]

A: the nineteen twenty-six strike . . . then when they~. when they~. when

I: yes

A: they went back to work . . then I started at~ at fourteen and a half

A: years of age . . . and erm . that's~ that's all was here . . there was pits

I: [did you]

A: everywhere you had nowhere else to go to . . there was no factories

A: or anything like that here . . . it were~ it depended on coal and erm .

A: I'm afraid . . . that it's gone now but erm . . I won't see it I don't

A: suppose but I'm afraid that they'll have to come back to . . . to coal

A: again

I: . . . has~ has it gone now . . I mean the reserves which are

B: no . no . you~ you'd never be able

I: still underground . . are they protected

A: [no]

B: to open that pit again . in erm~ in erm . in Maerdy . . because . the~

A: . . building up[in there]

B: the amount of . water . . that is building up in there .

B: is . is . tremendous . . and it's more than likely that . . it would cost

B: them too much . anyway to reopen erm . that mine

I: . . well there's

A: . well~well this is it . isn't it

B: oh there's

I: a waste of a natural resource

A: . . . of course [there is]

B: millions of tons left there when I started to work

B: I started at fifteen and a half . . . and I was working in the . colliery

B: down in Ferndale . . and my father was working in the colliery in

B: Maerdy and he was having a bath because they'd modernised that

B: pit . . and I was coming home and still bathing in front of the fire

A: yes

B: . . . and . my father was coming home clean . cause he'd been

B: showering in the pit you see

I: . . now . why~why~why was that . it was

A: . yes but~

B: yes . they only had showers down in the~

I: all the N C B then

B: . the number five pit for the . erm . . the deputies and management

B: . they didn't have no . showers for work people . the workforce

*They continue to talk about work in the pits,
life as colliers and the bleak circumstances
that have descended on Maerdy since the
Maerdy pit closed.*

[06.20 min - 14.20 min]

TAPE ENDS