

# THE PHONOLOGY OF RHONDDA VALLEYS ENGLISH

## PREFACE

### The Rhondda Accent

The pages and recordings that follow are a study of working-class male pronunciation in a South Wales “Valleys” accent of English. They form a condensed version of my 1999 PhD thesis "a Study of the Segmental and Supra-segmental Phonology of Rhondda Valleys English" (RVE), to which sound-clips are now added illustrative of consonants, vowels and prosody (stress, rhythm and intonation), together with a full archive of recordings and transcriptions.

Symbols and technical terms used are explained for the non-specialist reader in the **Glossary**.

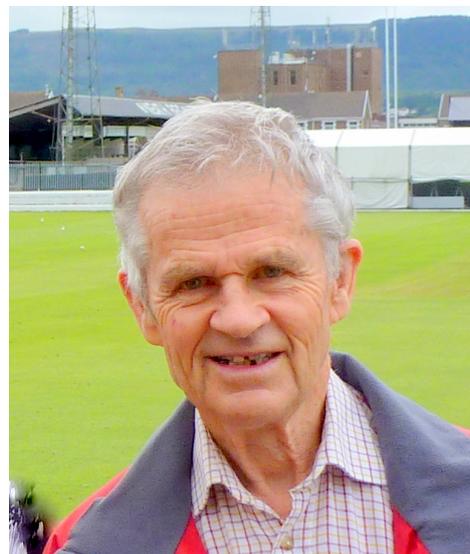
### Sound-clips

Presence of a sound-clip is indicated in the text by an icon . To hear the sound-clips, you need to either:

1. Download or save the PDF to your device and open it manually with Adobe Reader. If you are opening the PDF in your browser from a link, then Adobe Reader may have an extension or plug-in to launch it in Adobe Reader if your browser supports it.
2. If this does not work, all the sound-clips are assembled in the Sound-clip Directory, referenced to the chapter and section in which they appear. For example, the clip for "Rhondda Fach", the second sound-clip in Chapter 2.1, can be found in the Sound-clip Directory at 2\_1.2; and for "do you know I walked from Cardiff", the first sound-clip in Chapter 4.2.2, at 4\_2\_2.1.

### Rod Walters

Rod Walters was born in Neath, South Wales, in 1939. He has spent most of his working life overseas, including twelve years in British Government funded EFL programmes in the Middle East. Returning to Wales in 1990, he worked until retirement as a senior lecturer at the University of Glamorgan, where his research interests have been in the phonology of South Wales "Valleys English." He has found that the features which contribute most strongly to "Valleys" accents have been influenced by the Welsh language. With his background in music (LRAM), he has been particularly interested in describing the prosodic features that form the distinctive "melody" of Valleys accents, features which, though different in phonetic detail, are (to his ear) found in many other Welsh accents of English.



## **Publications**

- Walters, J.R. A study of the segmental and supra-segmental phonology of Rhondda Valleys English, PhD Thesis (1999), University of Glamorgan;
- Walters, J.R. English in Wales and a 'Valleys accent', in *World Englishes* (2001) Vol. 20.3, Blackwell;
- Walters, J.R. "Celtic English": influences on a South Wales Valleys accent, in *English World-Wide* (2003) Vol. 24.1, John Benjamins;
- Walters, J.R. On the intonation of a South Wales 'Valleys accent' of English, in *Journal of the IPA* (2003) Vol. 33. 2, CUP;
- Walters, J.R. A study of the Prosody of a South East Wales 'Valleys Accent', in *The Celtic Englishes III* (2003) ed. Hildegard L. C. Tristram, Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter;
- Walters, J.R. Applications of Discourse Intonation: Rhondda Discourse Intonation, in *Speechinaction.com* ed. Richard Cauldwell, 2003.

## **Contact**

Email: [rodny.walters@gmail.com](mailto:rodny.walters@gmail.com); [glyn.walters@gmail.com](mailto:glyn.walters@gmail.com)

## **Acknowledgements**

My thanks are due to the University of Glamorgan Research Committee for funding this research, and to my two supervisors, Alan James and Paul Tench, for their unfailing wise counsel over the years. I also thank

- Martin Ball, Philip Brake, Cennard Davies, Robert Owen Jones and Alan Thomas for their advice on matters of Welsh Language phonology;
- Nik Coupland, John Edwards, David Parry and Robert Penhallurick for their insights into Welsh English;
- David Brazil, Gill Brown, Bob Ladd, Peter Roach and John Wells for their advice on matters of linguistics and dialect phonology;
- The Welsh Folk Museum at St Ffagan's for access to archive recordings of Rhondda speech;
- Sally Bates and Ineke Mennen for their instrumental analyses;
- Dave King and Roger Carruthers of the University of Glamorgan, and my son Glyn Walters, IT consultant, for their considerable technical contribution to the project.

Finally, I express my deep gratitude to the officials and members, many of them unemployed miners, of the Tynwydd Workmen's Club and the Conservative Workmen's Club (the "Con") at Treherbert, the Maerdy Workmen's Club, and the Cymmer Pioneer Workmen's Club and Cymmer Workmen's Hall at Porth. Their warmth and welcome made the job of interviewing easy and an experience I will never forget.

Rod Walters

12 September 2021