

## Interview with Doris Hughes – 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008

*I wonder if you could tell me where you were born and when and so on and so forth, all of that initial stuff which we did with your brother.*

I was born in the village of Cymau, Bryn Goleu, Cymau in 1920. I went to school at Abermorddu until I was about 14 I suppose. I went into a confectionery in Caergwrle, I was very keen on becoming something like that and enjoyed it and then they went bankrupt, so out I came from there.

*So when you went into the confectionery, what age were you then?*

I would be about 14 or 15 I suppose.

*So you left school at 15 then?*

Yes.

*So you just went to the village school?*

Yes that's all.

*So you went into the confectionery and that fell over, so what happened then?*

What did I do after that?

*That would have been about 1935?*

Yes.

OK.

Oh after that I went to Bathafarn Hall in Ruthin to look after the children, she'd only got one when I went and then she had another one while I was there. It was marvellous, 18 months I think that was with the Yord Shipping Line people, that was very interesting indeed. Then I came home to my mother because she wasn't very well. So that would be when I was about 17 then.

*1937, so did you have brothers and sisters and so on?*

Oh yes I was the second, one brother older and me, and then there was another brother and another brother and a sister. There were 5 of us in all weren't there.

*What were their names?*

My eldest brother was Maldwyn, and then George, and then Idwal, and then Cadfan and Evelyn.

*So you got plenty of practise with babysitting before you went.*

I did, well how I came to go there was my mother's brother was a chauffeur in Llanfair PG with the Terry's chocolate people. I went to stay with them for a couple of weeks as one did, and the lady of this big house said "oh my daughter in Ruthin could do with you" so I said "oh that sounds interesting". So she said "well would you like to go and have a lok at her?" and I said "tell her to come and look at me". She came and I went. I was just there for 18 months I think.

*So that takes you up into 1938.*

Yes.

*Drums of war.*

Yes, and then after that I came home, my mother wasn't very well. Then I went into a shop in Mold which was a ladies gown shop, Hodgkinsons. While I was there of course the war came and I must have had some letters or something to say that I had to do something for wartime, whatever they called it at that time, and I came to Valley works.

*Just let me check back with something on that. I understand that there was an Act passed in '38/'39, 1939 probably and every woman over the age of 18 had got to register either for military service or whatever, so does that ring a bell with you?*

That's what it must have been. I chose the Valley works so that I could be with mum.

*And you are living at Mold now?*

Oh yes I was living in Mold.

*So you had younger siblings, which were younger than you, who wouldn't be working?*

No. Well we moved from Cymau when I was 16, we came to Mold in '36. There is very little between us you see. Maldwyn, he would probably have gone to the Forces by then, I'm not sure.

*Idwal was born in 1934 because he went to work there, no '33 because he was, no in 1923 because he was 16 when he went to work there. He said he worked for the first 2 years when they were lying the pipes and so on. So you now decided yhou wanted to go and make mustard gas did you?*

Yes because I was in this ladies gown shop in Mold and I must have had, as you say, you had to sign or something, I can't really remember any of that, and said I'd go to the Valley.

*So they told you you'd got to do that?*

I'd got to do something you see, more important work than what I was doing.

*And they assigned that to you, they said hey you've got to go to..?*

Yes I could go into one of the Forces but as I say mum was not very well at all, and I didn't want to go away, so I chose Valley works. And it was the, it was marvellous, I'd never worked with so many people and enjoyed it immensely, you know, it was a real different life altogether.

*So you started there right at the very beginning of the war?*

Yes.

*That was '39, as far as you can remember?*

Yes.

*What, you just turned up at the works or, how did you get introduced there?*

We went into an office with a Mrs Hodgkinson, I think her name was. She took all our particulars and said you know, what you want to do and she also made a savings thing for us, you know that we'd put into a savings, of course we had never been used to such big money and we were all inclined to say oh we'll give £2.

*So how much was that at the beginning, how much were you being started?*

About £5 or something like that.

*What a week?*

Yes, and you'd only been used to £2 you see at least, so it was oh I can give. I think how sensible she was because she said things are changing, we know you are getting a lot more money but then everything is changing in your life as well. I thought she was, what would she be a PR? Or something like that would she?

*She would be a recruitment officer.*

She was very nice and actually she came to stay and live with my mother and myself in Mold. She said about this so OK it came down to £1, so I was giving her £1 a week I suppose out of our salary.

*That was for the savings, war savings?*

Yes.

*Which you never got back did you?*

Oh yes, and then we paid into something, let me think what that was called now, it was like a war thing, it wasn't very much, but I saw it in the paper one day about 10 or 12 years ago that you could reclaim it, so I thought right I know it won't be much but I did. I remembered my Works Number and I wrote up and put my Works Number in and I got it.

*So that was 50 year later at least?*

Absolutely yes.

*So you got a lot of interest on it didn't you?*

Well, it wasn't a big amount, I can't remember. It was a very small amount. Very small but it was something that they were taking off us, we had to pay into this, whatever it was. I can't remember what it was called now. That was taken out of your salary and then it said after the war was over you would get it back.

*But they told you that right at the beginning before you went to work there?*

Yes.

*So they said you are coming to work here and you signed on and so on, so then you just started to turn up, and what happened when you initially went there? Did you get training or were you assigned to it?*

I can't remember anything, I was sent up to the assembly. We were issued with these lovely white overalls, which looked really smart, we thought.

*So you were in the assembly and the assembly is where they took the finished bombs and shells, all the munitions, they took them down there to paint them and put the fuses and the explosive devices in.*

Well they didn't put the fuses in, they were in the magazine weren't they, ready to go out but they were never put on to my knowledge. I worked up at the magazine as well.

*Did you?*

Yes, more or less like cleaning it really, you know, just keeping it tidy and what have you.

*Do you remember a lift going up there?*

Yes.

*Do you remember that lift?*

Yes, that's how we went up, wasn't it.

*OK, and there was a gantry went over the road, a path raised up over the road?*

There must have been, thought I can't remember that clearly, you know, because we did things in those days, you were never on your own, there were always 2 or 3 of you and you were talking, it didn't really register enough.

*You were interested in boys and your cigarette breaks. Young girls are aren't they?*

Well that's right and we used to have lots of, to me it was a big change in my life because I'd been a bit laid back with, you know, quiet and ladylike and then going there, well I just opened out and it was oh, I'd never heard all these tales and jokes and.

*So when you went up the lift and to the gantry and so on and went up the the magazines, can you remember the paths you went up? Were they covered? Did they have a sort of roof on them, the pathways between the two magazines and so on.*

No, I can't remember that.

*OK, and down in the actual danger area, the paths that went between the different buildings, were they covered over?*

Do you know, I really cannot visualise it at all.

*I'll tell you the reason I'm asking you. We've got a good idea of, we can see the shells going in there and the bombs and so on, and we can see them being painted on one side, we can see the people in the canteen going in and out of the DA through the entry area where they swap their clothes over, we can see all of the, down the left hand side along the railway line, right. We can see all of the showers, the offices, the railway platform, all of that's benign down there, nothing's going to blow up, right. In the bit in between we think that there were big, big mounds of earth there in case there was an explosion, can you remember those?*

No.

*In the central bit there was the place where the explosives were put in when the stuff was brought down from the magazines. Now, we can see paths going between them and the paths are still there. But what we cannot understand, that people would drag bombs around there on that asphalt when it was raining and things like that because they'd just skid all over the place. And we think that probably there was roofs on there. And other ladies have said they went up the tunnel but they don't mean the tunnel.....*

No, the big tunnels no. They had trolleys didn't they, they used to put them all on a trolley.

*I don't know.*

Yes.

*So when they came into the DA, they came on trolleys did they?*

Yes.

*OK, what tow trolleys?*

They were pulling them and pushing, yes that's what they were. And then that's why the floors were asphalt because they couldn't do with any vibration or anything like that you see. All these things used to be rather scary to hear and you used to, oh you know, let's forget it, you know, and get on. Then we were painting these shells.

*They've still got the paint on the walls down there.*

Have they? We used to love doing them, you'd put the thing on, like on the stand and it spun round and you just held your brush there, it was very easy and then another week you'd be doing the stencilling, the numbers on, we'd have that job to do.

*So no spray cans, you had a paintbrush did you?*

Yes it was a paintbrush and if you did just get a, some of them would leak and you had to straight to the buckets of water that were there. So then I was upgraded after so long, I came to the, came to work with Mr Niblett, I remember his name is on one of those sheets and I was in his office.

*He's a chemist.*

Yes, I forget what was I saying, and a nice bloke, he was lovely.

*I've found him, I don't mean I've physically found him, but I know what he did and so on. He was a chemist.*

Chemist he was, yes, he was lovely. And I worked in his office and I suppose I was taking the time of his men who worked under him I suppose, I don't know.

*So where were you located with Mr Niblett? Where?*

By the Police, coming through the Antelope entrance. The Police Officers were right opposite our windows, we could see them. And the laundry staff were behind.

*So that's up in the labs?*

I don't know, so that was my job to go down to these sites and get their time, what they'd put on a certain job. It was all numbers and how many hours there were and then get all that done and take it to the main time office.

*OK, which was right at the top facing the main entrance.*

That's right facing the main entrance.

*So you must have walked a fair distance around there.*

Oh I did, I used to walk down to all these different jobs, to see what they were doing and how long they were there and all that sort of thing.

*Did you go into P6 building 45 which was the tube alloys building? The building on the right hand side which they were playing with the... All the scientists were in there.*

I wouldn't have thought so. I used to go into an office lower down and I've been trying hard to remember what his name was, he was a lovely bloke and my friend worked there. She was clever, she was a clever girl she used to draw these maps out for them, she was good. I can't remember his name and that was on the left hand side going down towards the assembly, it was on the left hand side, in the main....

*That was where they put the mustard gas into the bombs and shells there, K4 and K5.*

That's right, yes yes I remember those.

*Do you remember, there was a railway under a shed thing ran down the right hand side, so the tunnels would be on the right hand side, the K4 K5 on the left hand side and there's a railway ran down there and it had a sort of lean-to thing over it.*

Did it?

*If you can't remember. Now when you went from the main area down to the DA, was there some guard on there or something? Because there were two distinct areas, you know, they were fenced totally separately?*

No, doesn't come, can't remember anything.

*You told me previously you'd been down the bottom of the site to buildings 1, 2, 3 and 4. Right down the very bottom. Do you recall those buildings down there? They were very different in the sense that that's where they had all the completed cases to load on trains and lorries, do you remember that down there?*

Oh I don't remember going into them or anything like that, don't remember anything like that at all.

*Do you remember your..... So tell me about your social life – a girl living at home, now very wealthy – comparatively, with the risqué times of the war around you, so what was your social life?*

Well I think, we used to..... The community was very good, I mean I don't know if you, you have got a picture of Mr Pennal in the office, I know someone showed me that one day. Now he lived near me and we used to go, well there was 3 ICI houses near, or 4, near where I lived you see, and we were all like a community – will you come to my place tonight and this is what we used to do. Because it was black-out, girls didn't really go around that much you know really at night because it was so black out everywhere, you couldn't see where you were going.

*So you went to the social affairs?*

Yes, Mr Dukes was one, who lived in one of them, we used to go there.

*George Dukes wasn't it?*

Yes, and Mr Niblett of course, they were marvellous to me they were ever so friendly. I did a lot of babysitting for Mr Niblett and his wife, they used to go to the social things in the Valley works.

*Well, also Tom Woodward lived in Number 1.*

Yes.

*We know that because his boy lives on Anglesey and we've got some pictures of him. He lived in 1, I was surprised to see that everybody was cleared out of them in 1946 and they were sold off.*

1946 were they?

*Yes, well they might have had the opportunity to buy them themselves.*

Yes there was a Walsh, he bought one. I don't know what he was doing in Valley works but he was, was it Jack Walsh, I think he bought one of them. Then Mr Niblett I remember them moving very very well, it was very heartbreaking. The had one son, Robin.

*He has just had a heart attack, we were in touch with his wife.*

No not, Niblett's, unless he married again. Because his wife Margaret she died very, not very long after they moved.

*No, the boy's wife.*

Oh Robin?

*Yes, we believe that he wrote a memoir about living there and so on and his father's experiences. There is a lady in the WI who is chasing that through for us.*

I'm sure he must be dead now, Albert Niblett.

*Oh the dad will be yes, but the son, we have traced out some of the people there getting married in the church at Gwernaffield, so we are getting a hold on it.*

I did have a lovely picture of Robin, on a little toy truck, probably sorting out and probably thinking well I'll never need this again and it's probably gone. I don't know, I'll have a look for that.

*Did you go to dances and things like that?*

Not much no. Used to go to the Town Hall in Mold occasionally.

*Was that full, a lot of people.*

Oh yes.

Yes we did go to a lot of those dances in the Town Hall. Then I met what became my husband.

*What, there in the dance there?*

No, the way I met my husband was – my mother was a keen gardener and she got him, he was a farmer, so she got him to bring a load of manure for us and that's how I met him first. I can see myself walking in now



*Goodness I hope he had a bath before he took you out.*

Well I can see walking in there now and I didn't know him at all and he sitting there. Mother had made a cup of tea, like was the fashion in those days for everybody and then he came delivering milk. It was pay day and I went to the door to pay him and he said "What are you doing tonight?" So I said "I'm not doing anything". "Would you like to go to the pictures?" It was a shock because I'd never done anything like that. So I said alright, I met him and we went, and that was it. So I never had another boyfriend.

*Lucky you.*

He was the only one I ever had, yes.

*There was a beautiful song wasn't there "Some Day My Prince Will Come"*

Yes and we were very happy for 53 and a half years. Very happy, farming of course, yes.

*Can I ask you about, were you there when Margaret Bromfield visited?*

Can't remember.

*She was the lady who was responsible for the welfare of all the female workers in Flintshire. She was the first lady Cabinet Minister.*

Well I suppose I was a healthy person I never wanted anything so..

*No, no, she, I don't been welfare, I mean welfare generally. Do you remember the King and Queen coming?*

Oh yes I remember that very well. The train came in to by the Antelope there, the Royal train, I think they came by car but the train was there and I can see them coming in now and he walking down, it was a corridor I suppose, and he just took his hat off and flung it down. He wasn't a very well person was he. I could see that I thought he's in a temper, he probably got very tired walking around a factory, you could understand really.

*Did he visit 4 factories in one day?*

Ah there you are you see, he must have been shattered.

*John Summers, Courtaulds, RAF Hawarden and Valley. If you look, if you go down the Flintshire Record Office, there's a beautiful portfolio of picture sof him on that day but they are all taken at John Summers, it is not mentioned in the press, it just says that he visited a site somewhere in North Wales.*

It was so secret you see wasn't it.

*You do remember seeing him?*

Definitely, we went to the gateway as they were coming in.

*So the Queen was with him as well?*

Yes she was, lovely. Then this Mrs Hodgkinson who I was talking about, she was the one that went to greet them and go with them around. I remember that very well, and then I'd gone back to my office and when they were going back you see and this is how we came into the train there.

*Can you imagine it's the fourth place and he turns round and says "So what's this place?" A poison gas factory.*

That's how it was, that's just what he did I can see he was in the Air Force uniform and off came his hat.

*Do you remember the Duke of Kent going?*

No.

*He was there the same period.*

No.

*And Rob Wilton was there on Worker's Playtime.*

On Worker's Play I remember that.

*Now I've got a couple of questions about that for you. It says, I read the reports on it, and it said 1000 people watched him. Now where he was playing, could they get 1000 people in there?*

Oh I would have thought so.

*Could they?*

Yes.

*It's a lot 1000.*

Yes it was a big room.

*So he just did one show? He didn't do..*

No it was only the one – Worker's Playtime like isn't it.

*The day war broke out.*

*Bill Gates was the producer of that sorry, William Gates.*

I remember those. I didn't go to all the Worker's Playtimes. You got a friend and we used to get together and we'd sit and talk and things like that more really.

*So did that go out real time? That went out at half past 12 lunchtime.*

Lunchtime yes.

*When you were working on site I understand that they played Worker's Playtime on the tannoy.*

Yes we used to hear that without going out.

*Music While You Work I understand. Did you get the news broadcast?*

I'm not too sure about that.

*Did that play continuously?*

No at times, it wasn't on all the time.

*I wonder if you remember John Hammond going there?*

Not particularly no, probably did hear him.

*I just know that it was somewhere between '42 and '44. That's all I know.*

No, I would have gone by then.

*When you went there in 1939 as a 19 year old, did you have to...so you were a single person. Could you tell me about I spoke to another lady who went there in '39 same as you and she was married. She said she was asked not to have children.*

Oh, never heard that.

*So you went in 1939 as a single person and in 1943 you left to get married?*

In '42.

*So why did you leave?*

I left in the following January I think, perhaps Christmas I'm not sure. It was winter time I know that. I came away because we had this smallholding up in Gwernaffield, we were in rooms before that, so of course I'd got to leave then.

*So he married you from the work ethic?*

Yes exactly, get out and milk those cows woman.

That was it but I kept in with a lot of the people from Valley works but you know they've all gone, I don't know where everybody is really.

*You left for an easier job? Less work as it were?*

Well it was a very lonely life, because I was up, I don't know if you know the Hafod Road in Gwernaffield?

*I know its tough running a smallholding.*

Well I mean if you turned off, coming down from Pantymwyn, you'd turn right in Gwernaffield and come along there and then right again. It's a lovely spot to live, you've got lovely views but it was a very lonely life, very lonely.

*You'd always been closer to the family than the public anyway.*

Yes I'd got my family, and my husband's mother didn't live very far from us really, she was just down the field. Then I had my first daughter.

*When was that?*

1945.

*Could you tell me some general things, did you smoke?*

Well I might as well say no really, I tried it once or twice but I didn't really.

*What sort of cigarettes were around?*

I used to remember, a red sort of packet I can remember that very well but I can't remember the name of them.

*Craven A?*

Craven A – yes, it was Craven A quite right.

*I've just been reading about somebody who was in Germany as a British spy and this old lady of there thought that the height of decadence was smoking Craven A through a cigarette holder.*

*Before you went to work there did you have an inside bath?*

Oh yes.

*And an inside toilet?*

Oh Yes.

*Did you have toilet paper?*

Yes we did, but we didn't when we lived at Cymau. We didn't have a bath, I was 16 you see when I moved to Mold. And then of course, we'd got a bathroom and all.

*Did your soap come in tablets or in long bars and you cut it up?*

Soap?

Yes.

Yes we did have them at one time like that. Mum used them for washing I think, blue and white mottled soap it was.

*But they had Lux and things like that?*

Yes you had Lux a lot.

*And Palmolive.*

Yes Palmolive and there was another one, it was red, no like a tanny colour, shiny soap.

*Pears?*

Pears yes, you remember better than me.

*It's just I'm sad. And you had a bath, sorry about this but it is interesting. So most people I know bathed once a week?*

You what?

*Bathed once a week?*

Well that's how we did at Cymau but when we came to Mold to live I could have a bath whenever I wanted, which you felt like when you came out of Valley.

*Oh sure, but they had showers there and so on didn't they?*

Yes but I never did use them there, no. You didn't need them up at the assembly you see, it was different than being down in the other works. I know the other girls used to but we didn't have to, we just changed out of the overalls and that was all.

*Did you have shampoo?*

At home you mean?

Yes.

I don't know what it was called either.

*There's a lot of people used to use ordinary soap and they used to catch rainwater in a tub outside to soften the soap up.*

Then always rinsed with vinegar, vinegar and water.

*And I've got to ask you the deadly question, how many times a week did you wash your hair?*

No more than twice.

*I remember from my youth, which was a bit later, that girls would never go out on Monday because they'd got to wash their hair.*

Oh that was always an excuse wasn't it.

*Don't tell me that. Do you mean they didn't want to go out with me?*

Not tonight I've got to wash my hair.

*So I just wondered if it was once a week and you got round to Friday/Saturday wow no wonder they smoked you know.*

No I think I used to wash it at least twice a week but no more than that.

*So what about clothes, you had clothes rations, clothes coupons did you?*

Yes, but I was very fortunate I always had very good clothes and as much as I needed really, I was very lucky in that respect, 'cos mum probably didn't want her coupons as much as I did.

*You kept her locked in did you?*

Perhaps the boys as well I don't know I was never short.

*But you do remember the coupons?*

Oh yes.

*And rationing, was that painful, the amount of food you got on the ration books, did you notice that meals got worse.*

Well, I can't remember much about it at home, my mother was a wonderful cook, she could make a good meal out of very little. But when I was married, well I was on a smallholding, I didn't know what rations were, because we'd got our own hens, we'd got some milk, we used to make butter and all that. We used to kill a pig, we got plenty of meat I didn't know what rationing was. I know it was on but I mean I didn't have to live by the rationing. Which was fortunate.

*What were the bus services like? The bus services were regular were they?*

Well I'd have to walk to Gwernaffield, there wouldn't be a bus anywhere near for me.

*But that wasn't a really long way was it?*

No.

*You could go out the bottom of the site couldn't you and up to Belan?*

No we got it up at Gwernaffield right in the cross in Gwernaffield that's where the bus was.

*Oh no I meant if you'd got to walk it.*

To walk to work, well I'd given up the works when I came up, I wasn't working there then.

*Trains were regular?*

I used to go to work with the train when I lived in Mold at half past six in the morning.

*Because it was convenient or did you work shift work?*

No.

*So it was a single shift?*

Yes. A lot of the time I biked, but you used to go for the train at half past six in the morning, I suppose the dark mornings or something we'd go for the train. And then I started to bike and you were talking about shift work, well I had a job to drive the ambulance and I was really thinking this was it. When my mother heard it was, I think it was Mr Dukes was in charge of that I think, when she heard it was shift works she said oh you're not going to go up there at that time of night and coming home and all this. So I had to give it up. I was very disappointed, I wanted to do that.

*Was George Dukes a guy with a mass of white hair?*

No, no, he had dark hair.

*I'll send you a picture and see if you can pick him out for me because I'm putting names to faces now and so on. To back track on something else which I made a note of, your father in the 30's had his own car, so tell me about the cars and so on because he must have been reasonably well off to run a car.*

Well he was a builder you see, I don't know I was only a bit of a child I wouldn't know how their finances were would I really. I know the people in the cottage along the road would say oh you're alright your father papers the sitting room with pound notes.

*Did he?*

No he didn't but I didn't know what they meant really. But obviously they knew he was getting more than they were.

*He got his first car what about the mid 30's?*

Yes it would have been the 30's wouldn't it.

*And can you remember the first car?*

It was only a little thing, he bought it very cheaply somewhere I think, but we were very proud of it you know.

*Of course you were. So what kind was it?*

It was a little Austin 7.

*And then he traded it in for a?*

A Morris 1000. And the first Morris 1000 had a split windscreen, first one and then of course we had the one straight through.

*Wow, so was that during the war or after the war?*

Oh it'd be after the war that wouldn't it. I can remember the ,BFM 781, I can remember the number.

*Wow.*

That's good isn't it. But some things I don't remember.

*So you can remember the flood can you?*

No, do you know I don't remember that, we probably didn't go to work or something because of it, I don't remember, Idwal remembers that very well but I don't.

*9 weeks.*

When was that then?

*1941, can you remember and it's difficult I know with the passage of time, can you remember when you actually went to the DA and that was 1939, when you went to work there, was the DA complete with the buildings up down there?*

I didn't see any buildings being done after I went there really.

*So you probably went there about 1940 because they were still building the big buildings on the top in 1940.*

It was all finished I think.

*Well we're very interested in the DA because it seems totally separate in a lot of thing that happened down there. When you were in the DA, can you remember the trains coming in to the platform, in to the unloading platform?*

Yes I can remember that.

*We think that they just delivered things there, so would that make sense to you? Could you see trains going out full of things? We think that they just delivered things into there.*



Well they'd got to go back the way the came hadn't they.

*Well there was a, no they could drop the wagons off there right, and they could tow them back out, that's with another train, but the train could go, the engine could go down to the end, there was a cross over point there and come back up the other side of the site. It's just that we're trying to, you don't recall the big mounds in the middle of the DA? Which were.*

That was a safety thing, no I don't remember those at all.

*I think there's a possibility that you spent, the paths and sort of roofed corridors there, and I think its possible you didn't see out much, you just were going up there yes.*

But we had, I can remember having a terrific snow fall and I was at the assembly then and they'd got to try and clear the thing and I think it was Mr Hirst and he came and he said "come with me" and I went with him and we went into like a big workshiop, that was at the top end near the time office I would imagine, a big workshop a lot of men working in there and he said "they're going to make some shovels for you, wooden ones so that these men can clear the snow off the asphalt". I can remember standing there waiting for these me to do these blimmin shovels.

*So the asphalt was open down the bottom there?*

Oh yes, it was all like that yes. Very very smooth.

*We can find at the sites of some of them, bolts where the roof went on but we can't in other places and we do know what happened in different sites anyway. So you left in 1943, January 43 and you went for a life of luxury on a smallholding, I know how hard it is working on them and so you sat up there in great splendour, did you have a radio?*

Yes and I got the first television up there, nobody else had ever got one and I had it for the Coronation, and we put the room out and there was everybody coming because there was no one else had got a tele.

*Charged them as they came in*

No, that's what I should've done. I can remember that, it was a little black and white one, well of course it would be wouldn't it. I had television and I think I was very lucky in that respect.

*But in 43 until 45, until the end of the war, the whole of 43 , the whole of 44 and half of 45, you worked up there or lived and worked up there for the war years, for two and half years. I'm trying to find out how you got your information you see. So would that be the radio, did you get newspapers?*

Oh yes we had a newspaper.

*What, a daily paper?*

Yes. The Daily Post. Occasionally we had what was called the Liverpool Echo and then that stopped, I don't know what happened about that.

*Well the Liverpool Echo is for Liverpool and the Daily Post is the North Wales version.*

They used to sell a lot of the Liverpool Echo around Mold and that way.

*When you had the radio, I wonder if you had a lot of programmed or was it limited programmes? Two or three programmes?*

On the radio? I think there were only two I used to listen to anyway, one would be Radio Wales and whatever the other one was.

*The Light programme. There was Radio 3 on that as well.*

That was music was it?

*Classical music which my granddad used to listen to.*

Yes well I used to have that on in the daytime when I was working you know, when I was doing the housework, that'd be nice as a background, that's right 43.

*Between 43 and 45 you were told about what was going on in the war by the radio. Did you have a church and social groups you went to WI or WVS or?*

No I didn't.

*Local pub, did you go to the local pub?*

No, I didn't have anything in those days up there no.

*I was just interested in finding out how the rumour mill started.*

You see it was really a bit of an isolated spot wasn't it, isolated really and my husband would come home, say about 6, and that was your life really.

*Where's my dinner?*

Where's my dinner yes. Saying that I remember we having supper with friends, we did a lot of that socialising in the house you know. And we got the table all set and we were sitting there and all of a sudden my husband said "where's the salt" so I got up to go and get the salt and this friend said to me "doesn't he ever do anything for himself?". I said well no he doesn't that's my work.

*She must have been a liberal. So we got to 1945 and you heard all about the day on the,, so did you go to a big celebration on VE Day?*

Yes we did, they had things on in Gwernymynydd and the kids had a mug you know.

*Bunting and...*

Yes everything yes. We did go to those yes.

*Booze up there was there? I guess it was rationed.*

There'd be tea and mince pies and cakes I suppose I can remember that. Yes that was very good, they used to do quite a lot of jolly things like that.

*And VJ Day just after that, so VE Day was a rehearsal for that?*

I don't know I can't remember anything about that either. I was a bit of a laid back person when you think about it.

*So the war was out of way, you had a socialist government coming in, what did you think of that?*

Not very happy about that I'm sure.

*Churchill was out and the war hero and Attlee was the Prime Minister.*

Then I moved to Hope in 19... what would that be, I was at the Gap? at Bryn Awelon for 12 years, went there in '43 so it'd be '54 wouldn't it that I moved to Hope. We had a bigger smallholding, I was there for 6 years and then we moved Bangor on Dee which was farm, not a smallholding, it was a nice farm and we were there for 25 years.

*In 1945 bells are pealing, everything is marvellous and then you had the winter didn't you.*

That bad winter.

*Was that '46, it was the most horrible winter.*

I was still up in Gwernaffield then wasn't I and everything was frozen. We were without water for 3 months, and we'd got the cows wanting water so I used to walk them along to the house across the road, they would put a hosepipe on, bring the hosepipe into the road and I'd got a bath there and she'd run the water and the cows would fill up with water there. But I had to clear a path to walk there and by the time I was coming back it had closed up again, the snow was that, oh it was a terrible time, it was dreadful. That's how I used to go, which was very kind of them. Well anyhow, the weather got better, everybody else got no frozen pipes but poor Doris had got frozen pipes still, no water and I had to come to do something about it. They came and they dug down and the pipes were still frozen, that was why I wasn't getting any water, they were still frozen down there. Then the Holywell Water Company, which had a pump, really in our field I suppose, only it had been all fenced off, said "oh if you'd have let us know we would have come and put a stand pipe outside". Do you know I could have cried because how hard I'd worked taking these cows along the road every day, twice a day and clearing the path for them and then clearing it to come back again, you just wonder how you did it but we did it, and then he said they could have put a stand pipe outside here for you and you'd have had plenty of water. Do you know I really think I could have hit him. But he didn't know I hadn't got water of course, but that's what it was, and this was May, in the merry month of May, they came and they dug down, got to the water pipes, cut one in half and it was frozen. Amazing isn't it? And they said it was

because the pipes were so deep down in the ground that they didn't thaw out as everywhere warmed up, that's why I was so long, that was what was said.

*Do you remember when the..... so the war was over and it must have been a great relief to everyone and you had this awful weather.....can you remember how people felt, euphoria for the war being over but things were pretty tough just after the war weren't they?*

Well they were for a while, but I think there was, you see especially when the boys all started to come, because my 4 brothers were in the war you see, they were in the army, the marines or whatever. It was lovely to think of them coming home, that's all you thought about really and I think for mum and dad it must have been very bad for them, their 4 sons had gone you know. I remember him going to see Idwal to the station, in Mold and he'd said bye-bye to him in the house, but Idwal was shocked when he got to the station, dad was there, he doesn't know how he got there, so quick you know, and shook hands with him and Idwal says he'll never forget it he shook hands with his left hand and he thought that was so unlucky, out of the train you know. I can see my dad coming home now with his head down and he sat in the corner in the chair and he said to my mother "I'll never see that lad again". So mother said "oh don't talk like that". "No", he said "I'll never see him again", but it was him that died not Idwal, he had this awful stroke or whatever it was, so he didn't see him again but it wasn't how he'd meant it you know.

*Did the brothers who came back, did they all go straight into work or did they have to.....*

Oh yes.

*So they all picked up jobs fairly quickly?*

Idwal of course had got married, he came to live with me when they got married, and then his wife, coming from down Essex, she didn't really settle in in Wales, she made out she'd got a bad chest she couldn't do with the mountain air so she went down there which was a big blow to Idwal, he hadn't expected that, to have to go down there to live. So that's where he was for 60 odd years so he went down there, I think he went into a bakery.

*Ok, yes I know the bakery connection.*

The eldest brother, when he came out, he went with my dad building. The other one was a butcher and his job was there for him when he came back, in Pugh's the butchers in Mold.

*Fantastic.*

Then he got his own business and that eventually. The other one, the younger brother, he went to college in Liverpool, I forget what it was called, a naval, navy anyway, I think it was something to do with the Navy, signals or something like that and he went to work in, oh I'm sorry I can't remember the names of places, not very far away. He was there for a long time and that was his job, he was with the telephone, signals and that sort of thing.

*In the post war years it was fairly gloomy I think and although people were pleased everybody came back but it wasn't easy for them.*

Nothing going on or anything like that it was very subdued.

*Do you remember the marvellous summers of '47 and '48? Fantastic summers. Remember Edritch & Compton always on the radio with the Brylcreem and all that? Do you remember all that?*

Yes.

*Because I was told that was a bit of a watershed and people got out of the war bit and started looking forward through that period for about '48.*

But you see farming as you say in the lovely summers, we would be so busy with the harvest and things, it's a very different life altogether. Any other profession really you know, we didn't get even a weekend off did we, we were working right through, it was all work really.

*So, you got your TV in 1953, there's posh for you!*

Yes wasn't it. Oh gosh yes it was.

*White wedding and not even pregnant you know.*

It was lovely and it was such a wonderful signal up there the people who brought it up for us said we had a wonderful picture.

*So do you remember the potter's wheel in the intervals?*

Oh yes, there was some lovely intervals wasn't there.

*Mary Malcolm was it?*

Yes that's right.

*And Bruce somebody, Bruce Hoblely was it?*

Oh I don't know, but they were really lovely intervals they were nice to look at, the harvest all the corn stooks up and down, they were lovely.

*I suppose that was the watershed really wasn't it, was the Coronation, the old King had gone and all other things to do with the war, and there was a young pretty girl giving hope and so on to everybody.*

Yes that's right. And of course the royal family were royal, they were very sort of quiet, we didn't see them an awful lot did we, it was all so much nicer than it became, too public really. They didn't become to be royal any more really they were.

*I think that's a smashing place to finish. We've gone through all the dark days and we've come back and the sun has started coming through the clouds hasn't it now, it's much better. That was absolutely smashing Doris.*

I'm sorry my memory of the Valley works was you know.....