

## LLEISIAU O LAWR Y FFATRI / VOICES FROM THE FACTORY FLOOR

Y fftari staes (1955, am 18 mis) a Kaylor Compacts, Caernarfon (1956-62)  
Hefyd Waterworths Cockle Factory (1961)

Cyfwelai: VN008 Mary Evans  
Dyddiad: 13: 01: 2014  
Cyfwelydd: Kate Sullivan ar ran Archif Menywod Cymru

*There is an English summary of the interview following the Welsh text*

Wnaeth Mary gadarnhau ei chyfeiriad a'i dyddiad geni: 26 Mawrth 1940. Mae hi wedi byw yng Nghaernarfon erioed

Mae Mary yn dod o deulu mawr, wyth o blant, ac hi oedd yr ifancaf. Roedd y teulu yn dlawd. Cyn ei genedigaeth, roedd ei thad yn gweithio mewn siop ei hun a'i mam yn gwneud sglodion ger y castell. Aeth ei thad wedyn i ddysgu plant mewn 'borstal'. Roedd ei thad wedi'i eni yn Chicago, USA, a daeth o i Brydain yn 14 oed. Aeth o i'r fyddin wedyn, ac roedd allan yn yr dwyrain am dipyn, a fuodd o farw yn 50 oed o Asian Flu. Roedd Mary yn 9 oed ar y pryd, er bod hi ddim yn gweld lot ohono o achos roedd tramor yn y fyddin ac yn dod adre ar wyliau yn unig. Roedd brodyr a chworydd Mary yn hŷn na hi a rhai ohonynt yn gweithio eisoes, pan gafodd hi ei geni. Mae Mary yn cofio ei thad yn prynu côt newydd iddi un tro. Roedd o adre ar ei wyliau ac roedd hi mor falch ond aethon nhw i ryw gaffi ar y ffordd adre a wnaeth hi adael y gôt yno!

7.00 Aeth hi i'r National School yng Nghaernarfon yn 4 oed. Pasiodd hi'r *scholarship* wedyn i fynd i'r Ysgol Ramadeg, er bod hi ddim yn hoffi'r ysgol o achos oedd '*snobbery* yna' - roedd pawb yn yr ysgol rad yr un peth, a dyna beth roedd hi'n hoffi. Roedd hi eisiau mynd efo'r genod eraill nid i'r ysgol ramadeg. Gadawodd hi'r ysgol yn 15 oed, er bod y prifathro ddim yn fodlon. Daeth o i'r tŷ i drio'i darbwylo hi i aros yn yr ysgol. Felly aeth hi lawer i'r ffatri Corsets, a oedd yn derbyn gweithwyr, a dywedon nhw "*start Monday morning*". Yn 1955 digwyddodd hyn. Ond pan aeth hi i mewn i'r ffatri doedd hi ddim yn ei hoffi fo, achos doedd hi ddim yn gallu gwneud y gwaith. Chafodd hi ddim hyfforddiant 'os oeddynt yn licio'ch wyneb, cawsoch chi'r job'.

8.20 Cafodd hi row un diwrnod gan Nansi Fawr, y *supervisor*. Roedd hi'n gweiddi arni "Mary, ti'n *hopeless!*" Felly amser cinio aeth hi i James Kaylor, ffatri *Compacts*, a churo'r drws a gofyn am swydd. Wnaethon nhw'i galw hi i mewn yn syth am gyfweiliad ond dywedodd hi ei bod hi'n gweithio ac yn gorfod mynd yn ôl ar ôl cinio i'r ffatri corsets, ond doedd hi ddim yn licio fo. "*Don't you like it there?*" "*No, I want to come here.*" Roedd hi wedi clywed am y *Compacts*, bod nhw'n

gwneud pethau fel *jewellery* a *compacts* a *lipsticks*, ac roedd hi eisïau gweithio yno. "*Start Monday*". Buodd hi yno tua thair blynedd tan i ffrind ddeud wrthi fod arian gwell yn Waterworths Cackle Factory. Felly aeth hi yno, ond wnaeth hi ddychwelyd nes ymlaen i Kaylors ac aros yno tan iddi gael plant.

10.50 Felly aeth hi yn 15 oed i'r ffatri corsets, aros tan 16 1/2 oed a mynd i Kaylors. Oedd hi wrth ei bodd yn y ffatri compact. Roedd pawb mwy at ei gilydd - "**On i'n wrth fy modd yna. Odd pawb mwy at ei gilydd, odd 'na genod 'rough and ready' ond on i'n licio nhw, on i'n rîli licio nhw. On i'n cael gwranddo ar eu hanesion nhw, pethau on i ddim yn cael clywed adre, Arglwydd!**" Yn ôl Mary, roedd merched y ffatri Compact a merched y fffatri Corsets yn hollol wahanol. **Doedd y merched oedd yn gweithio drws nesa iddi yn y ffatri corsets dim yn cymryd sylw ohoni, ond yn Kaylors roedd hi'n clywed hanesion pawb, pethau oedd hi ddim yn clywed adref, cariadon a phethau felly. Roedd y radio ymlaen drwy'r ffatri i gyd, *speakers* ym mhob man.**

**Ei gwaith hi oedd rhoi polish ar y compacts ar ôl iddynt gael eu dipio mewn asid, a rhoi'r *gems* ynddyn. Hefyd roedd hi'n gwneud y tiwb sy'n pwshio'r *lipstick* i fyny. Roedden nhw'n cael y *rejects* am ddim.** Ond roedd y pres yn wael - "dwy bunt a rhywbeth oedd o" ac roedd Waterworths bunt yn fwy. Felly roedd hi'n gallu rhoi mwy o arian i'w mam pan oedd hi'n gweithio yn Waterworths.

Gwnaeth hi gwrdd â'i gwr pan oedd hi yn Waterworths a chyn priodi, penderfynodd ddychwelyd i Kaylors Compacts. Pan oedd hi'n gadael Kaylors i fynd i Waterworths, dywedon nhw "**any time you want to come back, there's work here for you.**"

Roedd *presses* yn y ffatri, yn torri allan y *compacts*, ac roedd hi'n gweithio ar rheina ar ôl iddi ddychwelyd. Roedd hi'n mwynhau. **Roedd un o'r *supervisors*, John Challenor, yn mynd rownd y merched yn trio gwneud iddyn nhw weithio'n gyflymach, ac roedd yn cyffwrdd ei choes.** "A wnes i ddeud wrtho unwaith i mi briodi - 'Don't", medda i, dechrau objectio i'r peth."

14.18 "**Roeddwn i'n denau adeg hynny a aeth y gair i'r *manager* mod i'n disgwyl. So roedd o'n deud "Mary, look, I've got to ask you a personal question."** meddai fo. '*Are you pregnant?*' 'Yes', medda i. Ac mae'n deud '*How far gone are you?*' '*About six months in a fortnight,*' medda i. '*You're not supposed to be on the presses, love, you should have told us.*' Oedd y *press* yn ysgwyd fy nghorff i drwy'r dydd, am wyth awr, ond ces i ddim *labour pains* na dim byd pan ges i'r plentyn. Roedd o wedi gwneud i waith i fi!"

Aeth hi yn ôl i'r *production line*, ond roedd yn rhaid iddi adael i gael y plentyn. A'r *manager*, Mr Welsh, yn deud bod gwaith iddi unrhyw bryd roedd hi eisïau dychwelyd. Roedd Mary yn byw efo'i mam ar y pryd. Roedd ei gŵr yn gweithio i'r Corporation a phan oedd ei phlentyn yn 3 mis, aeth Mary yn ôl i Kaylors' am y trydydd tro a gwnaeth hi aros tan roedd ei mab, Vernon, yn flwydd a hanner, pan aeth ei mam yn sâl. Gadawodd y ffatri ac aeth i lanhau yn Woolworths, mewn swyddfeydd, a *holiday chalets*. Symudodd hi i waith swyddfa wedyn a gwnaeth hi hynny am 30 o flynyddoedd tan iddi ymddeol yn chwedeg dau. Wedyn bu hi'n gweithio mewn swyddfa bost, a oedd yn cael ei rhedeg gan ei mab a'i wraig tan roedd hi'n chwedeg saith.

**Roedd hi'n hoffi gwaith ffatri yn fwy na dim gwaith arall. Roedd y gwaith yn ei siwtio hi yn y ffatri achos roedd yn ddiddorol a chyffrous - 'roedd pob peth yn glittero.'** Ac roedd mwy o amrywiaeth nag oedd yn y ffatri corsets - '**Mary, we're going to learn you how to do that now.**' Rhywbeth yn digwydd bob amser, meddai. **Roedd y cyfleusterau yn dda – doedd merched o dan**

**18 ddim yn gallu mynd i mewn i'r acid section o gwbl, meddai.** Roedd y compacts yn mynd i mewn i'r asid fel mewn basged chips. Doedden nhw ddim yn gwisgo iwniform na *gloves*, a gyda *gloves* fydden nhw ddim yn gallu gweithio efo'r *compact* achos roedd gwaith mor ddelicêt, meddai Mary.

Cwmnïau o Manchester oedd y ffatrioedd Corsets a Compacts.

Priododd Mary yn 20 oed, ond gwnaeth hi gario'n ymlaen i weithio. Doedd ei gŵr ddim yn gweithio'n gyson, felly roedd yn rhaid iddi hi weithio. (Aeth hi'n ei blaen i ddweud sut y cwrddodd hi â'i gŵr). Roedd yn galed iddi wneud hyn, roedd hi'n cynnal y teulu fwy na lai, ac roedd hi'n gallu gwneud hyn yn well pan oedd hi'n gweithio mewn swyddfa. **Yn y ffatri, doedd dim modd codi i fod yn supervisor, doedd hi ddim yn gallu meddwl am un ferch sydd wedi codi o lawr y ffatri i safle managerial.** Roedd y *managers* yn bobl o i ffwrdd, achos roedd gan y cwmni '*mother factory*' a câi'r *supervisors* eu gyrru i lawr o fan'no. Ond, meddai hi, doedd dim hyder ganddi bryd hynny i wneud swydd *managerial*. Roedd hi'n rhy ifanc, a doedd hi ddim yn meddwl am ddim byd mwy na mwynhau, dawnsio, yn enwedig pan oedd hi'n sengl, i'r *YMCA*, i'r *Drill Hall*, *Six Penny Hops*, ac *RAF Valley* - "ar y slei." Aeth hi ar y bws efo'r genod hŷn. Roedd hi wrth ei bodd efo'r bywyd hwn, ddim yn yfed, ond yn smocio. Doedd dim pres iddi hi yfed, na'r gŵr 'chwaith. Doedd hi ddim yn cael gwyliau oherwydd diffyg pres, er iddi hi fynd i Blackpool unwaith.

Mae'n disgrifio ei hun fel merch 'reit *selfish*' pan oedd hi'n ifanc, yn gweld ei mam a'i theulu fel niwsans, dim ond eisiau mwynhau ei hun.

**30:50 Roedd hi'n gweithio o wyth tan bump yn y ffatri, gyda chwarter awr o frêc yn y bore ac yn y pawns, a hanner awr i ginio.** Roedd rhaid iddi glocio mewn ac os câi unrhyw ei dal yn clocio rhywun arall i mewn - fel oedd llawer yn gwneud - roedd yn "*instant dismissal. Welais i lot yn cael instants.*" Roedd hi'n gwneud yr un peth ond 'Ces i *get away with it, do.*" Dywedodd hi fod *lucky charm* ganddi, achos roedd hi'n gwneud llawer o bethau *wrong* ar y *bench* ond chafodd hi mo'i dal byth. Roedd y *supervisors* yn strict, ond os oedd y gweithwyr yn cyrraedd y targed, doedden nhw ddim y poeni. Roedd Mary yn eu gweld nhw'n deg iawn. Roedden nhw'n grêt efo hi.

O ran oedran, roedd rhai yn mynd i fyny i 50, y rhan fwyaf yn ei 30s. **Roedd pawb yn siarad drwy'r dydd, yn wahanol i'r ffatri Corset, lle oedd Nansi Fawr yn dod ac yn dweud wrth y gweithwyr i gau'u cegau.** Roedd yr awyrgylch yn "*completely gwahanol*" yn y ffatri Compact yn ôl Mary. Roedd miwsig yn mynd trwy'r dydd, *rock and roll*, ac roedd hi'n hoffi'r gwaith. "*Y companionship o'r genod yma, from all walks of life oedden nhw, a'r hanesion, ie. Iesu, oedden nhw'n garactyrs. A genod neis.*" Pan gafodd hi fabi, ddaethon nhw i gyd i fyny o'r ffatri i'w weld o, gan gynnwys y dynion.

**Roedd lot o sbort rhwng y merched a'r dynion yn y ffatri, ac roedd llawer ohonynt yn canlyn.** Roedd rhai yn diflannu i mewn i ryw gwpwrdd am gusan yn ystod y sifft, gan gynnwys y *supervisors*. Roedd rhai o'r *supervisors* yn "*straight laced.*" Doedd dim lot o wahaniaeth mewn statws rhwng y dynion a'r merched, er bod 'na ddim *supervisors* benywaidd yn y ffatri Compact, roedden nhw i gyd yn ddynion, o'r *manager* i lawr, gyda oferôls brown. Mae'n cofio un hogan ar y *bench* a oedd yn gwybod y swydd yn dda, a byddai Mary yn mynd ati cyn mynd at y *supervisor*, achos mai dynion oedden nhw, ac roedden nhw'n "*cracio jokes, sbeitio chi.*"

**Mae'n cofio un ferch a gafodd ddamwain, collodd hi bys ar ei llaw de, a chafodd *compensation***

**hyd at gyrraedd yr oedran 60. Wnaeth hi ddim gweithio ar ôl y ddamwain.** Priododd hi un o'r *supervisors* a doedd o ddim eisiau iddi hi weithio. Mae Mary yn meddwl bod y cwmni yn *negligent* ynglŷn â'r ddamwain hon. Roedd *tool makers* yno a'u swydd nhw oedd mynd o gwmpas a gwneud yn siŵr fod y *presses* yn ddiogel. Roedd y ferch yma, Jennifer, yn newydd ac roedd rhywbeth yn rhydd ar y *press*, doedd y sgrîwiau ddim wedi cael eu tsecio, ac aeth *blade* trwy ei bys hi. Wnaeth Mary ddim gweld y damwain ond clywodd fod y lle yn lluwchi mewn gwaed. Wnaeth y ferch ddim contestio dim, felly roedd y cwmni yn lwcus iawn, meddai.

**40:30 Roedd undeb yn y ffatri, ond doedd y merched ddim yn perthyn iddo, er bod y dynion i gyd yn perthyn. Oedd na lot o *discrimination*, yn ôl Mary, yn y 50au a'r 60au. Ar ôl gadael y ffatri a mynd fel *manager* i mewn i swyddfa, doedd lot o bobl ddim yn hoffi hynny. Yn y ffatri, dydy hi ddim yn cofio dim un o'r merched yn dweud eu bod nhw eisio ymuno â'r undeb. Ond oedd y dynion yn gul, ac yn dod rownd pob wythnos i hel pres aelodau.**

Bob 'Dolig roedd 'na barti yn Sir Fôn neu ym Mangor. Roedd y gwŷr yn gallu dod hefyd, bws yn mynd a phob, popeth am ddim. Roedd y *bosses* yn mynd hefyd.

Dechreuodd hi yn 1955, gorffennodd hi yn 1960 i gael plentyn; mynd yn ôl o 1961 tan 1962, ac wedyn gorffen gwaith ffatri yn gyfan gwbl achos bod ei mam yn sal, a bod gwaith arall yn caniatáu iddi edrych ar ôl ei man a'i phlant, ac roedd y pres yn well hefyd mewn swyddfa.

Un stori wnaeth hi ddweud am ei chyfnod yn y ffatri oedd bod 'na lifogydd yn y dref ac roedd yn rhaid i bawb gael eu hachub mewn cwch!

Roedd compacts Kaylors yn mynd dros y byd i gyd, roedd y ffatri yn "thrivio" (llewyrchus) yn y cyfnod hwn. **Roedd llawer o ffatrïoedd yng Nghaernarfon ar y pryd. Mae pob un wedi cau nawr. Ond yn y cyfnod roedd hi'n gweithio, roedd pawb yn falch o gael swydd, yn falch i weithio. Roedd cael swydd yn golygu parch, doedd dim ots pa fath o swydd.**

Hyd : 55 munud.

### *English summary*

## **The Corset Factory (1955, for 18 months) & Kaylor Compacts, Caernarfon (1956-62)**

**Also Waterworths Cockle Factory (1961)**

**Interviewee:** VN008 Mary Evans

**Date:** 13: 01: 2014

**Interviewee:** Kate Sullivan for Women's Archive Wales

Mary has always lived in Caernarfon. She was the youngest of eight children and the family were poor. Her father worked in a shop and her mother made chips near the castle. Her father then went to teach children in a 'Borstal'-type school. Her father was born in Chicago, in the USA and came to Britain when he was fourteen years old. He joined the army and was out in the East for a while, but died of Asian Flu when Mary was nine years old. Mary's brothers and sisters were older than her and some of them were already working when she was born. Mary remembers her father buying her a new coat one time when he was home on holiday from the army. She was so happy with the coat but they went to cafe on the way home and she left the coat there!

7.00 She started in the National School in Caernarfon when she was four years old. She passed her 'scholarship' exam and went to the Grammar School. She wasn't fond of school because there was a lot of snobbery there. She wanted to go with the girls who went to the secondary modern school because everybody there was considered equal. She left school at fifteen years old, despite the opposition of the headmaster. He came to the house to try and persuade her to stay in school.

She went down to the corset factory and was told she could start on Monday morning. The year was 1955. Unfortunately, when she started at the factory she found that she didn't like it there because she couldn't do the work. She wasn't given any training and says that if your face fitted there you got a job.

8.20 She was given a row once day by the supervisor Nansi Fawr (Big Nancy) who shouted at her that she was hopeless, so that lunchtime she went to James Kaylor at the compact factory and asked for a job. She knocked the door and they called her in but she explained that she had to get back to work at the corset factory, and that she didn't like working there. She said, "*I want to come here.*" She'd heard about the compact factory where they made things like jewellery, compacts and lipsticks, and she told them she wanted to work there. She was told she could start on Monday.

She worked in the compact factory for three years until a friend of hers told her that she could earn better money at the Waterworths Cockle Factory. She went to work at the cockle factory but returned to Kaylors where she remained until she had children.

10.50

She went to work at the corset factory when she was fifteen years old, and when she was sixteen and a half she went to Kaylors. She loved working there. There was a greater sense of unity there. **"I loved it there. Everybody pulled together. There were girls there who were rough and ready, but I liked them. I was allowed to listen to their stories, things I wasn't allowed to hear at home!"** The girls in the two factories were completely different. **The girls working next to her in the compact factory took no notice of her, but in Kaylors she would hear everybody's business, things that she would never hear at home about boyfriends, and things. The radio played all day, and there were speakers everywhere.**

**Her job was putting polish on the compacts after they had been in the acid, and putting the gems on them. She also made the tube that pushed the lipsticks up. They were allowed to have the rejects free of charge.** The wage was approximately two pounds, whereas at Waterworths it was a pound more, so when she worked at Waterworths she gave her mother more money.

She met her future husband when she was at Waterworths, and before marrying she decided to go back to Kaylors. When she had left Kaylors to go to the cockle factory they had told her **"any time you want to come back, there's work here for you."**

The presses in the factory cut out the compacts and she worked on these when she returned to the factory. She enjoyed this work. **John Challenor, one of the supervisors would go round the girls trying to make them work faster, and would touch her leg. As soon as she got married she told him not to do this again.**

14.18 "I was slim then and word got to the manager that I was pregnant. So he said, "Mary, look, I've got to ask you a personal question. Are you pregnant? 'Yes', I said. And he said 'How far gone are you?' 'About six months in a fortnight,' I said. 'You're not supposed to be on the presses, love, you should have told us.' The press would shake my body all day, for eight hours. I didn't have any labour pains when I had the baby. It had done the work for me!"

She went back on the production line, but had to leave to have the baby. Mr Welsh, the manager, told her there would be work for her any time she wanted to return. Mary was living with her mother at the time. Her husband worked for the Corporation and when the baby was three months old Mary went back to work at Kaylors again and stayed until her son, Vernon, was a year and a half, which is when her mother became ill. After leaving the factory she got various cleaning jobs at Woolworths, in offices, and in holiday chalets. She moved in to do office work, which she did for the next thirty years until she retired aged sixty two years old. She then worked in a post office which was run by her son and his wife, until she was sixty seven years old.

**She liked factory work more than any other work. The work in the (compact) factory suited her because it was interesting and exciting – everything there glittered – and the work was more varied than in the corset factory. 'Mary, we're going to learn you how to do that now.'** There was something new there all the time. **The facilities were good.**

**Girls under eighteen years old were not allowed into the acid section.** The compacts went into the acid like chips in a basket. They didn't wear a uniform or gloves – they wouldn't have been able to do the intricate work involved with the compacts if they were wearing gloves.

Both factories were Manchester based companies.

Mary married at twenty and continued working as her husband's work was sporadic. Supporting the family like this was difficult, but became easier when she started doing office work. **In the factory it wasn't possible to be promoted to the position of supervisor. She can't remember any of the girls rising to a managerial position. The managers weren't local people - they would be sent down from the mother factory. She didn't have the confidence in those days to go for a managerial position. She was young and the only thing on her mind was dancing, especially when she was single.** She describes herself as being selfish when she was young. She just wanted to enjoy herself and saw her mother and family as a nuisance.

**30:50 She worked from eight o'clock until five o'clock, and would have a quarter of an hour's break in the morning and afternoon, and half an hour for lunch. She had to clock in. If any one was caught clocking in on behalf of anybody else – as did happen – the punishment was instant dismissal. 'I saw lots of people having instants.'** She did it but got away with it. She had a lucky charm and although she did lots of things wrong she was never caught. **The supervisors were strict but fair and were happy if the workers reached their targets.**

Some workers were as old as fifty, but the majority were in their thirties. **Everybody chatted all**

**day, unlike at the corset factory where the atmosphere was completely different. There Nansi Fawr (Big Nancy) would tell the workers to shut up. In the compact factory rock and roll music would be playing all day, and she liked the work.**

**“The companionship with the girls from all walks of life and hearing their stories was great, they were characters and nice girls.”** When she had a baby they all came up from the factory to see her, including the men.

**The men and the women in the factory had a lot of fun, and some of them were courting. Some of them would disappear into a cupboard or somewhere for a kiss, including the supervisors. Some of the supervisors were straight laced.** There wasn't much difference in status between the men and the women, even though there were no female supervisors in the compact factory. She remembers one woman who worked on the same bench as her who knew the jobs so well that she would go to her before going to the supervisor. The supervisors would crack jokes but could be spiteful.

**Mary remembers one woman called Jennifer who lost a finger on her right hand because there was something loose on the presses and the blade went through her finger. She received compensation until she reached the age of sixty. She didn't work after the accident.** She married one of the supervisors who didn't want her to work. Mary thinks that the company was negligent.

40:30 **There was a union in the factory but unlike the men, the women weren't members. There was a lot of discrimination in the 1950s and 1960s. The men were narrow minded, and would come around every week collecting members' contributions.**

Every Christmas there was a party on Angelsey or in Bangor. The husbands were allowed to come, there would be a bus, and the bosses would be there.

She began work in 1955 and left in 1960 to have a baby. She returned in 1961 until 1962, until her mother became ill.

Mary remembers the time there were floods in the town, and everybody had to be rescued by boat.

The Kaylor compacts were sent all over the world. **There were many factories in Caernafon at the time and people took pride in the fact that they were working.**

***Duration : 55 minutes.***