Interview of Mair Brennan (Maiden name Thomas) on 10/02/2020

Mair, born in 1943, spent most of her life in Bryn. In the following interview, Mair outlines her experiences growing up Bryn.

**Paul Bulmer 00:00**

Introduces himself and John Preece

**Mair 00:14**

I was born on a farm at Margam called Bleanmalwg. Moved to the Varteg farm at the age of three. We then moved to Bryn Troed-y-Garn Farm (known as Bryn Farm) at the age of six. Life was very busy for my mother with three children. We went to the Bryn School (on Farteg Row) at the age of five. My mother was very hard working; she also had a small coalmine to contend with.

We always walked to school and had to cross the main road and along a path down to the river where there was an arch coming from the old colliery. We used to jump over the arch and along a path leading to the Bryn School. It was a dangerous path and as children we were often naughty and we would jump across the arch from one end to the other over the flowing water and sometimes fall in and float down the river. We would then have a row when we got home because our clothes would be soaking wet.

As children, we were all friends with no animosity and we grew up in a close-knit lovely time.

We went to Chapel and to Church. We went to “Band of Hope” (Sunday school) at Jerusalem Chapel. I also went to Bryn Church where I was confirmed at the age of twelve. Life in chapel was exceptionally good. We had Whitsun tea parties where all the girls would wear their very best dress for the day. Our mothers would go to Swansea on the bus. The Britain Ferry Bridge was not there in those days, so we had to go all the way round via Cymmer to get to Swansea and we would be worn out by the time we got there. As children we would not take anything we did not want to wear and so would come all the way back to Port Talbot to buy a dress.

In school, if you were good you could take the headmasters dinner down to his office. I am told I was a very good child but my sister was very naughty. If you were naughty, you had the cane and my sister often had the cane.

We played hopscotch, ball, and hoola hoop and had a fantastic time.

Moving from Bryn School, you went to the Easton School at Port Talbot or the Grammar School. I went to the Easton Secondary Modern School.

Bryn life was very social with tea parties and carnivals. The carnivals were wonderful; one gentleman dressed up as cannibal, covered his face all black and had a big bone from the butchers. He stopped a car going through the village and everyone was petrified. They were wonderful times, my aunty dressed up as a lady on a white horse.

For shopping in Bryn, you had Aunty Nelly’s shop for Groceries and China or Georgie’s shop for groceries and Uncle Len’s shop for groceries, and everything in those days was put on the book. You didn’t pay when you went in for your groceries; you paid when you could so you could have quite a big bill. My mother one day had a big bill with Georgie the shop and he even took the six pence at the end of the big bill. My mother was mortified so she went instead to do her shopping with Uncle Len.
When it came to going for a picnic with our hot cross buns, we all went up to what is called Jack, Bill and Tom. Below here was a little reservoir where we used to drink water from and have a fantastic picnic while playing up the mountain.

6:38 Interview closed