

**Evan Jones, Ivy House, Nant Alun Road, Rhydymwyn**

**Rhydymwyn**

***So, if you would like to start?***

Hello. My name is Evan Jones, from Ivy House, Rhydymwyn. I started work in the factory in May 1941 as Office Boy, delivering mail on a bicycle around the works.

***All the way round the works or just the admin area?***

All the way round.

***Everywhere? So, you had free access almost?***

Oh, yes. We were based in the office...

***The one at the front?***

Yes. You went in through the main door. The commissionaire was on the left, in a little hatch and that's where we were based. There was a row of buttons on the wall and when one of the rooms said ten, then you went along to see what they wanted. They were mostly Scotchmen. I couldn't understand them.

***Scientists were they?***

Yes. The Office Manager, he was Robert Burns...James Burns. He was in the first office. Across the road was the wages office. Then there were two Mr McCloashin (?) and Mr Cameron next door. Doctor Burn, in charge of VS section of the works, was across the way, then the Work's Manager, Dr Hurst, he was in the corner. Next door was Mr S D Roberts, the Work's Engineer and the secretary for those two, Mrs Kirkham, next door. Then there was a room, next door there, with printing machinery and that and you'd be sent there to run so many copies off of this or that, what was wanted. The Accountant was next door, D G Evans and the drawing office was in the corner and coming back this way the committee room was next door to the commissionaire's office, then Dr Ingram was next door, a huge man who always wore Harris Tweed plus fours.

***So, it was a busy place then?***

Yes. Straight from the door, down the corridor, the telephone exchange was there. The number of the works in them days was Mold 350. We were taught how to handle the telephone exchange, in case somebody was off. There were three shifts on it and during the day, if somebody was off, we went in to help there.

***How long was the building open for, time wise, in the mornings, six o'clock, five o'clock?***

We started work at seven thirty to five thirty.

***Were you working different hours to them?***

There were three shifts in the works.

***Oh, so it was open all the time? You never closed the site?***

No, six till two, two till ten and ten till six, three shifts and the Time office was where the Gatehouse was, by the bicycle shops and the Time office was right there.

***So, did the admin people work on shifts as well?***

Oh, no. They were days, but there were shift controllers in the office. They worked three shifts and there was a Captain Jimmy Wallace, he was in charge of K Division. He was an old Army man. His second in command was a Lieutenant Williams. They were in charge of the Home Guard as well.

***Which was also based there, was it?***

It was. The ambulance station and fire station was this side of the road, behind the fence there and the Home Guard was just opposite.

***Were they just Home Guarders or were they factory workers who...?***

Factory workers as well, but they were in charge of it, Captain Wallace and ...

***So, when you biked round the site, did anyone challenge you or were you cleared?***

Well, P6, as we called it then, the big building, I don't know what it's called now,

***The one that's still standing?***

Yes, that one there, that is where the atom bomb was started. I used to take mail there. There was a policeman outside the huge metal door, all the time and you went to him and he'd say, "What do you want?"

"I've got some mail," and open the small door and you went in and there was one the other side of the door. That was as far as you got. You handed whatever you'd got to him and out you came again.

***Did that apply to other buildings you went to, that there was guards?***

No, only on that one.

***Only on that building?***

Yes. Halfway down the works there was a patrol office there again. If you went there you had to report in there, what your business is and go through again there. When you got into what they called 'The Smokes', if you went in the offices, you had to put rubber over-shoes on, before you went any further there.

***So, in some buildings they let you wander around?***

Oh, yes, well you'd got to be delivering stuff here, there and everywhere, you know.

***But, the buildings where they put mustard into the shells, you couldn't go in there?***

No.

***Were they guarded, or were you just told never to go there?***

They weren't guarded by patrol.

***You just knew?***

You just didn't go. There was the clean side and the dirty side. We kept to the clean side.

***What about the far end, where the train came in and there was the little station where they loaded up the armaments, were you allowed to go down there?***

Oh, yes, you used to go down there. In that area at the bottom, you had to put rubber over-shoes on.

***In case you sparked?***

Yes. All the tools were copper, copper hammers and chisels. Another job we had, after you'd been there a few months, on a Wednesday, go to the bank for the wages. D J Evans, the Work's Accountant, he'd got a revolver, a six shooter, Sergeant Major Harrison of the Home Guard, he'd got a Sten (?) gun and Sergeant Marshall that was in charge of the patrol, a silver mounted walking stick. We went to the top bank in Mold at nine o'clock. It didn't open till ten. We were there an hour before. They let us in. Harrison would be out in the street with his Sten (?) gun.

***Really? What on display, not just there? And it was loaded up with real bullets?***

Yes. Marshall was the other side of the door with his stick and we were counting the money. The amazing thing was, we used to go in an ambulance, and they couldn't have picked a poorer driver. She was the vicar at Llanberis's wife, very nervous person.

***I suspect with three people with guns, you would be a bit nervous?***

I suppose.

***I take it no one ever tried to rob it?***

No.

***I take it, it was general knowledge, after a while, that at nine o'clock...***

You were carrying a lot of money in them days.

***Exactly. I suppose if anyone tried then they'd be shot?***

Yes, Harrison was there with it. On the Wednesday afternoon, you came back and the wages were made up and you had to get a hand to do that, say you and I across the table, you'd count it, pass it to me to check it, or the other way round. Then across the hall that was in the office there, there was a metal door and that was the strong room and we put the wages in there over night and a patrolman stood all night.

***Again, loaded gun?***

Yes.

***They weren't taking chances were they?***

No. Then they paid out on the Thursday lunchtime.

***Was there a big queue and they all came to the office or were they given individually.***

No, they were in the Time office and they paid out.

***There was a queue of people?***

Oh, yes.

***Were there ever any arguments over wages or absenteeism?***

There was a rule there, I remember, Mr Howard was in charge of the wages and he said if they paid someone ten shillings too much in his pay packet, they couldn't take it back off him, if someone had slipped up and paid one but it had gone out, they had to fetch the man in and ask him if he'd hand it back and if he said no, he was entitled to keep it. "But," he said, "If he says that over a period of time, I'll have five pence off him."

***So, they'd get it back another way.***

A shilling here and there and get it back off him. Now, we'd go round the site yard and the places where you'd have a cup of tea, I often think they were lagging the pipes with asbestos, 'monkey muck' as they called it. There was one building there and he was in school with me this lad, John, he was with

another older man who used to go in there for his tea. When you think of it now, the place was covered in dust.

***It's different standards now.***

Yes, it is. Another place we used to go was the effluent pit, down there. You wouldn't know that as they'd filled that in before you'd come along, had they?

***I've heard about it. There was a pipeline out to the river wasn't there?***

Huge, circular building on the ground, one half full of machinery and the other half was full of the effluent. You'd be down there chatting with Glyn Morris, who was one. I knew him well, he'd lived in Nant Alyn and we used to go and have a cup of tea with Glyn. It pumped it out to Oakenholt. The first pumping station was by the River Alyn, first inspection chamber, by the bus shelter now. It went all the way through Woodside and Northop there and then off into the estuary. There was one man who used to go on a bike and inspect all the way along.

***Most of it was underground though, wasn't it?***

Yes, you'd have to go down into each chamber to have a look to see if everything was all right.

***Every day?***

Yes. Glyn Wilby was one. Jack Williams was during the War.

***So, I take it as a whole, when the factory was in operation, it was some sight, smoke, steam, light, noise?***

It was a busy place. This area here was the park for the buses. Some buses brought a gang in the morning and they stayed and others went and came back.

***So, it was just like a mini bus station? This road must have been busy?***

It was. The station was going then. A lot travelled to work on the train then.

***Was there a station here as well?***

There was, yes. The worst thing they ever did was to do away with the station.

***I suppose that was near the Antelope Pub?***

Station house is still there now.

***When you were there, can you recall any incidents that happened, any problems with the site?***

Not really.

***So, they kept it quiet in other words.***

My father worked as a roadman on the highways and a mate of his was working by Gwysanwy (?) and the Tuesday and on Thursday, a convoy used to come from Runcorn here with police escort, delivering the goods from Runcorn to here. Ben saw them coming, leaning on his shovel. That was a Tuesday and they went past and came again Thursday. Ben hadn't moved that much further. A policeman shouted, "Still leaning on that bloody shovel mate?" He told father about that.

***What was in the stuff from Runcorn?***

What they made the mustard gas out of.

***Syrup? So, that came before production started fully, did it?***

AI used to bring it, twice a week, in the tankers. Of course, the King and Queen came here as Cath said earlier on.

***That was to boost morale was it?***

Yes. Everybody had to stand to attention.

***Did they go round the whole site or just bits of it?***

No, more or less only the top bit here. The Duke of Kent, he came here. They used to have worker's playtime every Tuesday.

***In the canteen?***

In the canteen. The top one this Tuesday and the next week it'd be the bottom camp. There were two canteens, one by the bottom gate. Glen Miller and his Orchestra, he was here.

***They all came down?***

Yes, he did a concert.

***Considering this was this secret place where no one should know what was going on, it was fairly public knowledge, wasn't it?***

Oh, yes. Rob Wilton, I remember him coming. Somebody different every week, you know.

***So, did they know what was going on here or did they regard it just as a factory?***

Well, I suppose it was just a factory to them.

***I suppose, as you biked around you couldn't work out what was going round, it was just a big works?***

Some of the buildings they had to be in, they had to wear 'greys', protective clothing, you see. You couldn't get into those without a grey suit on.

***You wouldn't know what was going on here?***

Not really, no.

***You wouldn't think, that's a big factory, I wonder what that does?***

You knew they made small bombs in the bottom and your toxic ones in the cave buildings and acid plants where they are where you see 5 and 6 and 4.

***Of course, the railway line ran alongside?***

Yes.

***Again, people on the railway on the trains could see what was going on?***

Oh, yes. There were two or three big engines based in the works.

***There was quite a lot of railway track on the site.***

Yes, all over really.

***So, there was a lot of little things going on as well as making the mustard.***

The last twelve months, in 1944, the foreman's clerk was called up, so I was moved from the office to workshop number 2, opposite the boiler house. What was the foreman's name? Niblett? I only travelled round where the fitters were. He was in charge though. He'd got a little workshop where he was based and then there was one in between the two cave buildings, down the works. He was in charge of the effluent pit, so I used to go there again and follow him round a bit.

***Considering the secret nature of the place, it's amazing that more people didn't know what went on here? It's strange isn't it? Was there a sort of thing that nobody spoke about this place locally?***

Well, everybody had to sign the Secrets Act, so I suppose they took it literally.

***They took it seriously, as there was a War on.***

You didn't say anything about it.

***When there were accidents, and there must have been accidents here, did that news leak out or was it kept very quiet?***

It was kept quiet really. If they were burned it would reoccur annually.

***Would it? Unless you were there it wasn't common knowledge and nobody would know about it.***

No.

***So, the management did a very good job at keeping it quiet?***

Yes.

***When people knew that the place was going to close or be run down, did they change their view of life or did they just keep on going until they were told we don't need you anymore?***

Well, I'd left before it finished. I was called up in April '45. It didn't actually close until a couple of months later.

***You say you were called up in 1945, was there a reason you weren't called up before then?***

I was eighteen.

***You were too young?***

Yes. I started when I was fourteen here.

***I see. The powers that be didn't say that because you were in a reserved job...***

No. Some did and some didn't, it depends on what they were doing, I suppose.

***So, keeping on the military service bit, all the people who worked there, who were bussed in, there must have been lots of them, were they exempt from military service or were they the wrong age or what?***

They were exempt really.

***For whatever reason.***

Yes.

***So, again the powers that be said that because you were exempt from the War effort, you'd have to go and work at the Valley site?***



My sister, she worked here. She's dead now. Molly worked here. She was called up to go here. They didn't get the choice really.

***They were just told?***

You report to the factory for war work.

***So, it could be that a lot of the people that worked here were called up to work here, rather than military service. It was all military service, but they didn't see conflict as such, they worked here.***

I went down Gresford.

***As military service?***

That's what they were doing in '45.

***You think to yourself, military service means armed forces, but the country still has to be run, we've got to survive.***

Exactly.

***You don't think of that. So, was there a resentment or a resigned nature to the fact that people were working here and not in the armed forces?***

I don't think so really. They just took it in their stride, I suppose.

***It's military service and there's a war on and we've got to do something?***

Yes.

***We have had comments that this is the forgotten war effort factory and everywhere where they went with military service or active service have been remembered, yet this place hasn't. I'm not sure what's right or wrong, because it's still military service?***

Oh, yes, it is. It was the War effort.

***So, when you left in '45 was this place still working flat out or was it starting to run down?***

I think it was starting to run down then in '45.

***They'd realised by then, I presume, that they didn't need the stuff of they'd made enough and they could store it?***

(Mrs Jones) ***What year did you come back?***

I came back here in '48. They were dismantling it then.

***Was there much talk or rumour then about what went on or was it still very quiet?***

Nobody said much about it.

***I take it the busses had stopped coming by then?***

Yes. When we came back, you could go all over the place. They'd cleaned the cave buildings. When I was here during the War, you could go in one half of it, the clean side and the cubicles where they charged the bombs and you couldn't go in that side. They pulled everything apart and you could go anywhere then.

***I take it when you went in these buildings, the cubicles, you couldn't see how they used to fill the shells, all that had gone had it?***

They'd taken everything out of it and the bare walls were there.

***Roughly as we saw it a few years ago. In that time that you'd gone away from here, they'd done quite a bit of work?***

Yes.

***In some ways, as you left it must have run down and then stopped production?***

In three years you didn't know the place as you thought it was. Another thing, during the War, was plane spotters employed here. Jack Hughes was one, wasn't he? Where the furthest chimney was on the top, the vent, across where you see the fences, there is a little personnel gate. It's still there I think. There was a little tower in the works there and his job was stood out there during his shift and if there was any planes over, make a note of what it was and plane spotting.

***Did you get many planes coming across?***

You had a lot of planes about during the War.

***Were they ours or enemy?***

Well, at night they were enemy ones.

***Simple as that?***

Oh, yes.

***I get the impression that no one knew about the existence of this factory. It never appeared to have been bombed?***

It was well camouflaged you know. The buildings were all painted and if you got on a hill further back, you had a job to say what was what. There was trees and windows and whatever.

***There was always trees on the site?***

No, there weren't trees on the site but the buildings were painted with trees.

***So, even though people may have told the enemy that this place was here...***

You'd have a job to see it.

***You'd have a job to find it? There was no real fire protection was there?***

There was a searchlight down the Sun Inn, in the field. No guns, just the searchlight.

***The hope was that either noone knew it was here or if someone got lucky the camouflage would save the day. Really, on a hillside looking down, it merged very nicely?***

It did. For years after you could look and not see.

***I presume the same applied walking round the local streets and lanes, that whilst you knew it was there, you didn't quite know what it was? Coming back to the trees on site, was the site just a sterile chemical works or were there bushes and trees?***

They'd planted the trees when I came back the second time. They started planting them about 1947, no 1949.

***So, when you were here working, biking around, there wasn't anything, it was just a railway and stuff.***

No, there was nothing. The odd one where the river used to run down here, they're still there now I think.

***Do you remember the place being built?***

Yes. We were only young really.

***I was thinking more of diverting the culvert. Was that a major job...I mean diverting the river into the culvert?***

Oh, yes. The river used to come down almost in front of here. The first bad winter they had after they diverted it, it came out in the factory.

***It flooded?***

There was only one tunnel underground. There is two underground now but on the original plans there was only one. It flooded everywhere in the works and by the next winter they had built the second tunnel. That's how we came to have two tunnels.

***I'm told that's this building and that's before anything started...(showing a picture)***

That was the river there.

***A little stream really.***

That's the path you can see there. The river is on the edge.

***Oh, I see.***

It was quite a big river.

***They built the factory very quickly. There must have been a lot of activity around here at the time?***

Then the water supply for the factory came out of the shaft at the top here.

***They constructed the shaft or was it already here?***

The shaft was there.

***And they just tapped into it?***

There was two men from Pantymwyn, Joshua Jones and Ned Cartwright, there was a ladder going down the shaft and there was a huge pipe it comes up and across the river. You can see it in the river now.

***Yes, you can.***

That was the water supply for the factory.

***So, when the factory was really going, did it affect water and electric round here at all.***

No.

***They made sure they were well covered to start with?***

Yes. The water for the business end of the factory came out of that shaft.

***So, people have gotten used to the factory and its bustling ways and suddenly it stopped production, did the locals miss it or were they quite relieved that it had stopped work?***

I don't know really. I suppose they missed the opportunity to work there.

***That's true. You get used to things, don't you, and the people were just demobbed I take it, as the factory stopped. Your military service is at and end, go and find a civvy job.***

Dad was a boiler fireman there.

***Just looking after the place?***

The boiler was going when I worked there second time. He was in steam.

***You mentioned that you worked there a second time...***

1948-55.

***What did you do then?***

Looking after the stored machinery and that here.

***They used it as a store place?***

During the Korean War there was a factory in Crewe, Radleigh Green, and the contract was stopped and they went back to munitions and all the cooker parts came here.

***They used the buildings for storage didn't they?***

Oh, yes.

***So, as they cleaned the buildings up after '48/'49 time...***

They were supposed to have done.

***They found other uses for the buildings. Did they then stop guarding the place or was it always gated?***

There was always patrolmen here then on the gates and down. There was three shifts on patrol then.

***So, even though they were using it to store stuff, it was still guarded?***

Oh, yes.

***I suppose a number of years ago they stopped doing it 24 hours and just had someone here during the working day?***

In the end.

***And now we've gone full circle and we've got green grass and, eventually, more trees.***

It's looking nice now.

***It's not bad. Do you think this will be the end of it or do you think the locals will always have the legacy at the back of their minds?***

They may do, you know. I worked there for years and no harm came to me.

***This applies to whatever you do.***

Yes, it does.

***I mentioned the war effort, at a time of war you shoot people in the armed forces and you can get shot yourself and it's dangerous.***

Yes.

***I've tried to say to people, when they've said about this factory and the results and say it's no less or more dangerous working there than it would have been in the Army, the Navy or the Air force. It's not nice, it's not good, but that's what war is about. It would be nice to bring the thing to a close and have people just accept the fact that this was there and it's as good as it's going to get. It's been cleaned up, as you say, over a very long period and over every ten years or so, there's more information about pollution generally, so standards go up and I suppose until we get to a point when we can totally eradicate what's there, there will always be a legacy. It would be nice to draw a line though, wouldn't it?***

Oh, it would.

***Do you remember during the operation of the factory, if there were complaints about fumes coming off the acid plant or the manufacturing buildings?***

No. You didn't hear of anything really.

***Nothing off the destructor incinerator?***

No.

***You weren't aware, as you were travelling around the site, if the incinerator was working or not. It wasn't a thing that would be apparent to you?***

No.

***As you went round the site, would you have known about such things? Would you pick up things?***

Yes.

***So, to a point, as you biked round, you chatted to people and got to know them?***

Well, you knew a lot of the anyway.

***There was never things that happened where they said, "Don't tell anyone about this?" It was quite calm, as far as you were concerned?***

Oh, yes. Going back to the atomic bomb place, the tradesmen all came from Billingham, County Tees to there you know, coppersmiths.

***They were making gaseous diffusion experiments, weren't they? They were trying to use gauze to separate out uranium. Would it have been a copper gauze they were using maybe?***

I don't know but that was their trade. We knew, we used to print at that time the tank cards and Cane one mans name was, coppersmith, and you got to know who was who and what was what.

***Was it Mr Porton(?) Vickers, that employed some of them?***

Yes.

***Was it noticeable, the tailing off of work, when the scientists went off to America?***

As I say, during the War you never got into it and when I came back it had been gutted and there was odd bits of paper about but you were struggling to tell what was what, but that was all. Nothing else was in there, you know. They'd knocked all the cubicles down.

***It was quite a lot of building partitions, walls in there?***

Oh, yes there was. I remember this side of it there was cubicles right along.

***Like the filling cubicles in the other building?***

Yes. They were in the other buildings, the other two that were left up as well. It was the same sort of building. It shouldn't have been built here. It should have been P4 and P5. It should have been built somewhere else. It was built here so they used it for something. That was the talk.

***So, what else did they say regarding what should and shouldn't have been built?***

Well, I remember them saying that it shouldn't have been built here.

***Because they never used it? It was quite lucky they had that building to do the experiments in.***

Yes. I don't know what else I can tell you.

***I was going to say, any other recollections, accidents, rumours?***

There was a couple killed on the railway, by one of the engines here. There was quite a number burned by the toxic part but you didn't get to know. When I came back second time, those that had been burnt were still working there. They'd put them on light duties. They used to go to Woodside picking stones, cleaning the field up.

***That was the old storage depot on the way to....***

Northop. That was one of the jobs that they gave them to do, recuperation, I suppose.

***Could you see they'd been burnt?***

Oh, aye, they had blisters and that. It affected their eyes and that.

***Did those blisters clear up and were alright?***

Oh, yes, but they would reoccur.

***So, it would never go away?***

Not really.

***Did you know of anyone who suffered from contamination effects from after the War, any construction workers coming across?***

Wait a minute, there was a fellow, he was helping the electrician change bulbs in the K buildings, sitting on the crane being wound along and disturbed the dust and he got burned from it.

***From the dust? So the dust had a lot of mustard in it?***

Yes, where the crane was running, he got burned with that.

***What year was this?***

'52 or 3, something like that. He went abroad to work, middle east or somewhere with the Ministry and he came back and was in charge of the factory after. He's dead now. Getting burned might have done him good like.

***It makes you wonder doesn't it?***



It does really.

***There was some potential of incident with someone cleaning out gutters as well, they may have got a rash and they didn't know if it was a burn?***

Probably so. I remember it affected him.

***Were the sites of burials well marked? Were you aware after the War where chemicals had been disposed of?***

Well, there's one at the back of the garage there. That's the only one I knew of like.

***There were markers but I take it, when you were there the second time, there wasn't a great deal of talk about it.***

No. When I came back the second time, they'd more or less really finished burying, you know.

***You mentioned when you were here, there were still people working on the reclamation of Woodside, did you get the impression of how well the final stages of reclamation were being managed? Was it still rigorously managed or had things relaxed to a certain extent?***

I think they'd relaxed a bit, you know. All that was left of Woodside, when I went there, was the fence around. I don't know whether it's still there.

***That's the only way I recognised it, a few lengths of Ministry fencing.***

Otherwise you couldn't have said there's been anything there.

***You said earlier the pipeline went close to Woodside, but do you know if Woodside was ever connected to the pipeline?***

I think it was. I think it must have been.

***What did they do at Woodside?***

Being honest, I'm not sure.

***The Antelope, so you remember much about that?***

The Antelope field, yes.

***That was all tanks, wasn't it?***

We used to carry stuff from here to there. There was a gate.

***To go across the railway line?***

Yes.

***Any leaks or problems there?***

I didn't have much to do with them. I might have been there a couple of times.

***Was there much resentment from the locals that people got burned, or were they resigned to it?***

I don't think they realised they had been burnt, you know.

***Even though they were given light duties and had blisters, was there a feeling growing that the place was nasty and shouldn't have been there?***

Not really.

***It goes back to the War effort and we all do our bit, sort of thing?***

Yes.

***Did the site have much of an identity in itself? Did it have a particular uniform, a particular logo, groups of people that formed sports teams?***

The ones that got toxic side wore grey suits, woollen suits and greenish plastic protective coverings as well. Other than that they were just ordinary.

***So, people didn't have a factory uniform that said Her Majesty's Government Factory?***

No.

***I assume if you didn't know what was there, there were no signs on the gate saying what it was, apart from Keep Out?***

No.

***And the buses just came. There were never any saying works bus?***

No.

***The bus had a destination?***

They all had their name on the back of the fences.

***So, they came from a long way away?***

Oh, yes.

***So, given they did their eight hours, it was a long day? But again, we're back to the War effort and it's no different than being in the armed forces.***

When they were going off, this road here was solid, people all going for the train.

***It must have been a sight. We've got no pictures at all of what it was and all we've got is the old map. I'd have loved to have had some pictures.***

***You never went into the underground tunnels?***

Just inside the door a couple of times.

***Again, to deliver post?***

Yes.

***So, even though using the tunnel as a storage area for mustard or munitions, people had post delivered there?***

Yes. You'd take a message for somebody.

***Did the people have an office in the tunnels?***

Yes, whoever was in charge.

***You wouldn't have thought that being a tunnel there would be offices in there. You'd think they'd be outside somewhere. I take it, the stuff on the top of the hill, next to the tunnel entrance, the ventilation plant, was quite big, wasn't it?***

Oh, yes. That was going full blast. It had a bit of whuft (making sound of gushing air) about it.

***Outside, you could hear it going?***

Yes.

***It ran all the time, I take it?***

It didn't run all the time, but when it was going it was very noisy.

***So, the factory itself, in its ordinary working, would be quite a noisy place, enclosed in the valley. The plant, when it was working, would have quite a lot of steam and other noises coming off it?***

***So, a Dante's Inferno almost? I take it, of a night time, well lit....Oh, I suppose it wouldn't be, would it?***

No, blackout.

***You just had the machinery noise?***

Yes.

***I don't know if you remember, but on the northern most tunnel, the entrance nearest us here, there was a small building on the right as you go into the cutting for the tunnel. The original plans say it was the powder house for when they created the tunnels and then later plans say it was a police lodge, presumably to control access in and out. Do you remember that?***

I remember the little building there, yes.

***Was it a police lodge in the time that you were there?***

I can't remember really.

***Then, after the War, they were still using the tunnels, weren't they? How did that work, with the split of security between storage for government purposes on the main site and maintaining the mustard in the tunnels?***

I don't know.

***Was there an internal security fence or any sort of security force preventing it?***

The doors were always closed on them, you know. There was always someone to open them up.

***Was it common knowledge that the UK's mustard gas stock pile was based here?***

I don't know.

***There was a laboratory too, looking after it?***

Yes, there was two labs, one ICI and one.....they were next to next on that side there, not far from the Antelope. One was ICI....

***Was it War Department Lab?***

Can't remember. I used to go and take stuff there. That was running 24 hours.

***Again, that was totally self contained? It washed all its own stuff?***

Yes. It went down a few years ago, the old stores and workshops. That was a workshop and stores, the very long building. The joiner's shop is not long gone, opposite that and the electrician's shop was attached to it.

***On the munitions side, did you get many shells blowing up?***

No.

***Because they would have done?***

Yes.

***Were you aware of the magazine on the hill, on the southern end, while you were working here, where they used to keep the burster charges and powder? At the moment you have to climb up a bank side to get there. Was there some sort of arrangement for getting the explosives up there during the War?***

No, I don't think so.

***They found the underground stream as one of the tunnels has a waterfall, hasn't it?***

Yes.

***When you came back for the second time, you came for what years?***

1945.

***So, it was before they finished with the tunnels and the clearing out?***

Yes. I went to work in Mold then.

***Did you see them clearing the tunnels out?***

Never.

***In 1947 time, some of the German nerve agent bombs were brought back and stored in the big sheds at the bottom end of the site. Was that never spoken about?***

I wasn't here in '47.

***I think they finally went off in '48 or so. I can't remember the exact dates, but it would have been close to the time you came. There hadn't been any rumours of things stored in the sheds at the bottom? I believe that that material was taken off and kept at a site near Caernarfon.***

There was a panic, wasn't there Cath, not long ago. Somebody had found something.

***That was Dave Williams who came across something round in the woods at the bottom end, but it was never really established what it was.***

***A hive of activity.***

(Mrs Jones) There was something up here too, because the Army were all here, by this village.

***Where was that?***

(Mrs Jones) Round that same time, because the Army disposal came up.

I can remember the tankers.

***Nothing else?***

***I can't think of...***

I don't know anything else, really.

***That's great. Thanks for your time.***

No problem.

***I appreciate the help.***

