

Pol Hodge 29-04 - Translation

James: Well done.

Pol: Thanks, it's difficult, there's lots of mistakes in it really.

James: Yeah, yeah, no worries.

Pol: The guise is late Cornish also.

James: Yeah, the story's guise is yeah. Perhaps John (Richards) tried to change, well the saying into Common Cornish or something.

Pol: Well, the spelling is Common Cornish but the guise...yeah.

James: Well, very good, very good, it isn't easy.

Pol: Well, it's a good story. Don't leave the old road for the new road yeah.

James: Splendid, well we can move to the third part of the interview if you want.

Pol: Right, good enough.

James: Is it good enough?

Pol: Yeah, go on.

James: I will ask open questions and we can do a free conversation or something like that, you can say whatever you want.

Pol: Speech of rubbish.

James: Speech of rubbish yeah. You said before, when you were in London you met a Gaelic man.

Pol: Irish yeah.

James: Yeah Irish, and he said you can't be a Celt without the language.

Pol: Can you do the accent Jim?

James: No.

Pol: Ah 'you aren't Celtic if you can't speak a Celtic language'.

James: Was that the exact reason for studying the language?

Pol: Um always I was interested in the language but more about place names and um when I did, well I did, I was born in um a poor village um four miles East of Camborne, I forget the name, Redruth perhaps and ah, but I was raised yn Trewoon um near to Camborne in West Cornwall um and very Cornish and um at that time, forty years ago, it wasn't of interest to English people to come and live in places of that sort, they live in Saint Ives or Falmouth or get all the best jobs in Truro. So, to think about that now, nearly all my family were Cornish also, very, very Cornish and in one way it wasn't necessary to learn the language or join Mebyon Kernow um we are all Cornish um some English people here but it doesn't matter, a small area, they are welcome to all come together. But then I left Cornwall and lived in London um I did Chemical Engineering in

Southbank Poly and this was like, like a different country totally. Um what was interesting was that there were black students or Asian there who were British. Right, very good, this is good, but they were more English than me and um heck, that's somewhat strange. There were overseas students also, I can remember one man from Iran, and there was a horrible war between Iran and Iraq, so he joined our course, all through the four years um and there was courses planned for him, and all his family got money to keep him in Great Britain um out of the war. He did, as I believe he lost something like three uncles and one brother in the war, horrible. So, this was somewhat strange to me in my opinion being very Cornish but there were people um with a different ethnicity but at the same time they were more English than me um that was somewhat strange to me. Really and um I got very homesick and um without knowing anything about London Cornish or London Mebyon kernow or the City Lit class and it wasn't until the last year in London for me that I met Thomas o'Shelvek and I went to the Cornish class in London and this was good. There were people there who knew a lot about being Cornish outside of Cornwall um i joined Mebyon Kernow there and met with Paul Smales, he was chairman of the Mebyon Kernow London branch and that was something different also, he is a very good man from Falmouth and my father used to work in in Falmouth with his father mmm 'Beefy' Smales was his father's name but Paul was yeah, paul was a lawyer, very clever, who works really hard um very rich, well heck this is, it isn't too bad being Cornish, you can be, have a successful life, earn money things like that and be Cornish at the same time um yeah so um really all of that started in London um if I want to be honest.

James: So, why did you continue with the language?

Pol: Um well I finished the course um then i tried to get a job um chemical engineering wasn't interesting to me in fact my time in London was somewhat hard, I nearly became a alcoholic um staying in my house on my own and drinking a bottle of vodka almost every night.

James: Really?

Pol: Yeah. I hated living in the place, alright for a holiday but it was horrible and um with that um I got a somewhat low degree so ' what shall I do now?'. Well I escape from London hooray and then I did a P.G.C.E. in Bath University, so I trained em I trained to be a teacher um there wasn't a Cornish class there so I learnt with 'Kernerwek dre Lyther' (Cornish by letter), and I can remember the lesson, in those days it was only Ray Edwards, so I spent one year in total learning the language by 'Kernewek dre Lyther' and Ray's lessons, very sad when he died last month in truth um he did lots for the language and...

James: A source (of knowledge)

Pol: Yeah, yeah this is a good word. He democratised the language um so, so open, he made the language open for everyone, in Cornwall, outside of Cornwall no matter um that was the days before the internet um that was a lifeline really, so yeah very good and then I returned to Cornwall um and went to the class in Camborne with Ray Chubb in the community centre and also I went to the class in Cornwall College Camborne or 'Camborne tech' and the teacher there was Loveday Jenkin, so I learnt there and at that moment, at that time I was third grade and with that I got a job teaching ? in Looe school and um that's your area...

James: True.

Pol: So, that was impossible to live in Looe without being extremely rich so I lived in Liskeard and with that I went to Julyan Holmes' class and he taught me very good things, he is a very learned man, it was splendid and also I learnt how to drink and things like that with Pawl Dunbar and Graham Sandercock, there was a splendid 'Yeth an Werin' (informal gathering of Cornish speakers) in 'Tavern an Karow' (a pub now called the 'Old Stag').

James: 'Tavern an Karow' yeah.

Pol: Yeah, Martin Miller was there, Graham, Pawl, this is enough, Julyan also, so if you think about those names it's the, what is it, a distinguished language group and all in one place, this was splendid and...

James: Yeah, sorry...and still they are there, well except Graham, he lives in Saltash but all in that area.

Pol: True.

James: That is marvellous and we ought to do a 'Yeth an Werin' again I believe, there isn't one in Liskeard now.

Pol: Oh sad.

James: Yeah.

Pol: Sad.

James: Um how do you make use of Cornish everyday?

Pol: Well, there's my wife, for the tape, my wife is standing next to me. So, well Jane is, well very fluent in the language so we talk together sometimes.

James: Sometimes.

Pol: Um well if there's a need to say something that the children ought not to know um this is good. They are clever enough, they can work out what is what, if you speak um to the side um oblique? So, but, if we can say 'agan mab' (our son) instead of saying 'Josh', instead of saying 'Chloe' we say 'agan myrgh' (our daughter), the children can't know what we are saying really, but there are lots of other ways. I write a column for the 'Western Morning News' um that is bilingual um so I do that every week, this does...well this is one way ? the language. Also I have a class, now in um school Archbishop Benson in Truro and if you want to keep your language, teach it and um this is, this can be very hard, some people who come to the language are very clever, perhaps they speak two, three other languages, they are very clever. There are some other people who come to the language only because they are Cornish, they are Cornish. So it's difficult to do teaching resources which will be of interest to, to the two sorts really um what else do I do?

Jane: Poetry?

Pol: Poetry yeah um as I said before um I go around with Bert Biscoe, our Bert, um yeah this is good, we have done almost three hundred readings now, amongst them is Glastonbury mmm yeah, the hundredth Gorsedh, this was interesting um what else, Brussels, well last month in Brussels um this was good. So the poetry is something of distinction really um and I said previously I have a need to read it aloud, there are some people who are, are, well perhaps they do one poem in Cornish as a 'party piece' really um and, but I do one or two in English, this is my 'party piece'. So if there's a desire to write the poetry and also to perform it to people and the people aren't stupid, they can work out immediately if you are a speaker or not um...

Jane: You do translations for films.

Pol: Oh, translations for the films yeah, this is splendid.

Jane: Teach the ? how to say things.

Pol: Yeah this is very interesting um if you do a good translation, all the mutations and grammar is good enough. Usually I am going around in a very low register and I am a member of the translation group also, and the chairman there is Jori Ansell and we argue sometimes, my grammar is low register and his grammar is high register and there is a joke I have with the students also about the imperfect subjunctive, that is our saying for going to the pub, 'there isn't time to do the imperfect subjunctive in the class so we better...' isn't that true?

Jane: It's true, but the joke becomes a bit weak after two or three years...

Pol: Um what else? Oh, if you want to find good things to do um why not um make jam, in English 'jam' and get the labels in Cornish um everytime when I do a birthday card or Christmas cards, things like that, I write something in Cornish there.

James: What about the internet?

Pol: Internet?

James: Sending, sending e-mail or something.

Pol: Yeah I e-mail about, that's something really good. I am also a member of the 'Cornish Language Advisory Panel' for Kerrier and this is, this is good to get people such as Rod Lyon um and Loveday Jenkin, she is chairwoman, and you can communicate together in Cornish um the e-mail is really good. You have to be more fluent for the telephone, isn't that true? Isn't that the hardest of all for you?

James: Perhaps, I'm not sure. Perhaps yeah perhaps, it is.

Pol: Um sometimes I telephone people and chat.

Jane: Sometimes?

James: Every night perhaps.

Jane: Almost every night.

Pol: Yeah perhaps.

Jane: More chat than teeth.

Pol: Oh, more tongue than teeth my wife wants to say.

Jane: More chat.

James: Was the language difficult to study?

Pol: No very easy.

James: Yeah?

Pol: Um I must say that under the Kernewek Kemmyn system it's marvellously easy um there is an English saying 'what you see is what you get'. So you can learn very fast with that um also it's easy to teach, that's more important for me really um yeah it's easy enough um again about the registers um it isn't necessary to say the imperfect subjunctive, you can make use of the word 'martessen' (perhaps), 'perhaps there is something something' in place of 'y fia' (there would be) or another one, I don't know. Yeah, it's easy to, to learn/teach Cornish um also if you look at the dictionary the English one is a shelf, full of books, if you see the winners of 'Countdown' or

something they get 'Oh here is an English dictionary for you as a prize' and this is...for the tape I am doing, well this is a length of six feet isn't it? But our two way dictionary is some inches isn't it? Um yeah so, easy to learn.

James: Very good. What about the translations, was that difficult or...?

Pol: Very difficult really um well I think it's difficult um there is the Bible project which is marvellously good and um I didn't, I support that work, very good but I didn't offer to be a translator, my translation isn't the correct register and perhaps my grammar isn't as good as that um yeah. Translations are very difficult, one idioms um and the worst of all is the rubbish from the local government um I did some of that for Kerrier and it was necessary to translate the rubbish from local government to plain English in the first place, then translate to Cornish um that is the most difficult.

James: Very good, very good. What's your idea about the language in the future, what would be your dreams.

Pol: Mmm ah, well we have to get total media in Cornish um there is 'Radyo an Gernewegva' (Radio of the place for Cornish speakers (lit)) the splendid work of Matthew Clarke but this is, what is it, half an hour every week?

James: About, yeah.

Pol: So, if you put that against a big and empirialistic language such as French or Spanish, really we have to get something in Cornish um every minute every day um perhaps it would be possible in the future who knows?

James: Who knows, who knows?

Pol: Um we are gathering the language movement, the language movement is gathering more and more films and more and more music um so, I know it won't be like the B.B.C., there will be repeats all the time but it is the media. The other thing is to teach the language in schools um this is the thing really. Um yeah oh I was a member of the 'Ad-Hoc' group, that was hellish work, is this archive private? This was horrible.

James: No, it isn't private.

Pol: It isn't private, well that work was horrible, there is...there were three people in that group; Jori Ansell, Loveday Jenkin, Pauline Preece and with them more than a hundred years of teaching the Cornish language mes in the 'Ad-Hoc' group nothing, this is, no matter, so oh...so, but there was a reason for that wicked work, to get the S.W.F., and the S.W.F. will be used in schools so there is a need to suffer there to get the language taught in schools um and it would be very good if hundreds of young people um in Cornwall learnt the language, they fiddle around with that um I will be happy if children say 'your Cornish is crap' and 'we can do better', I'm looking forward to that time.

James: Yeah, oh yeah. It will be marvellously good.

Pol: Will be or would be?

James: It will be. OK, Do you want to say something else? That's the end of the questions.

Pol: Um well I believe I've done enough rubbish.

James: It isn't rubbish. It's very good.

Pol: Yeah, but you have to put all this onto the computer, don't you.

James: True yeah, transcribe and translate.

Pol: Ah well perhaps...is there something else that I want to say um? Well in public no, except the language is going forward and this is very good, there is recognition from Europe um there is money, there is recognition from the government of the United Kingdom um but now we are all in a position instead of shouting 'there isn't any Cornish, there isn't any Cornish', now we are in a position where we ought to deliver and the changing of that culture oh 'changing of culture', 'changing culture', I'm speaking like a councillor or something, the changing of that culture is very hard for some and that is the fault of the people who pretend to be Cornish speakers, but in the end these people can't, false Cornish speakers, these people can't translate, translate anything to Cornish, these people can't write books in the language, these people can't sing in the language, these people can't do anything in Cornish except 'dydh da' (good day), 'myttin da' (good morning), 'fatla genes' (how are you), talking for one hour in English and say 'nos dha' (good night) um that isn't enough anymore so we need to encourage the young stars in the language movement, I'm thinking about Elizabeth Stewart and Matthew Clarke people like that. There is need, the government or authority needs to give money and support to them to do their work um this is the next wrong doing in my opinion. Right, this is enough!

James: Very good, thank you, that is the end of the interview.