

Was Dylan Thomas a grafter or a drunk?

Video transcript: 'He was really quite a perfectionist'

Hannah Ellis:

Places such as Laugharne, perhaps New Quay in Ceredigion, South Leigh in Oxford, the Uplands in Swansea, all these little, small communities were where my grandfather was happiest.

There's all these stories about him knocking back whiskies, partying, being quite wild. But from stories people have told me I understand that sitting in the local pub with a beer watching the day go by and hearing all the different conversations, *that* was when he was happy, *that* was when he was content.

And going to New York and London and big cities, though they were good for his work, they were actually also very scary and put him in quite a vulnerable situation.

I am led to believe that he was really quite a perfectionist. I'm told that he could write the same line of a poem a hundred times over just to get it the way he wanted it.

It just shows how he continually made changes and tried things out. He played with words, he experimented. So he thought about rhyme, he thought about the different language.

He was always experimental and even as a performance poet; he was one of the first people to perform on radio so he was experimenting with new media at the time.

I'd like Dylan Thomas to be Dylan Thomas the poet or Dylan Thomas the writer, who happened to like to drink, who happened to have affairs. That was just part of it, not to single him out as just his behaviour really. More I think, his work should stand out, not his behaviour.