

# the welsh agenda



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## Edging the estuary



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# The Welsh connectivity challenge

Tolstoy's famous opening to his novel *Anna Karenin* "All happy families are alike but an unhappy family is unhappy after its own fashion" could equally apply to the lives of nations. "All successful economies are alike but an unsuccessful economy is unsuccessful after its own fashion," we might say. The modern Welsh economy is certainly unsuccessful. Not only are we the worst performing economic region within the UK in terms of GVA per head, but we are close to the bottom of the EU prosperity league tables. What is distinctive about us that can provide an explanation?

A number of reasons come to mind. Nearly 200 years ago we were at the cutting edge of the world's first industrial revolution and in a profound sense have never got over it. The inheritance of that pioneering growth of coal mining and iron and steelmaking is still with us, but in largely negative ways. The wealth was removed and all we have left, apart from Port Talbot, are a few heritage sites, albeit that some are world-class. The zenith of Welsh prosperity occurred a century ago in the Edwardian years leading to World War 1. It is no coincidence that the period also saw the creation of Cathays Park and our first era of nation building, with the founding of the National Museum, National Library, and the University of Wales.

What was also distinctive about Wales in those times was how connected it was, both internally and with the wider world. In 1913 it was possible to travel from any substantial settlement within Wales to any other by the most importance mode of travel of the day, the railways. As far as the outside world was concerned Cardiff was linked to every other major coastal city by ships that carried Welsh steam coal across the globe.

Since then, however, the decline in our communications has been so steep that we can make claim to be the most disconnected part of the British Isles. It takes four hours to travel from north to south Wales by a train that passes through England for much of the journey. By road it takes nearer five hours. As for our links to the outside world they are precarious. Our main railway in the south passes through a tunnel that is prone to

flooding. Our main motorway passes through a pinch point at the Brynglas tunnels where in recent years we have more than once experienced an incident that has brought the entire southern economy to a shuddering halt. As for air travel, most of us have no option but to travel to farflung Heathrow and Gatwick for our long haul connections.

It is apposite, therefore, that this issue of *the welsh agenda* highlights two schemes being promoted by the IWA that have the potential to transform this picture of a languishing back water. At first sight both might seem so big and ambitious as to be unattainable. Our latest offering, explored on page 36, is for a new international airport to serve the whole of southwest Britain, but located along the Severn between Newport and Chepstow. It might seem churlish to be putting forward such a notion at the very time the Welsh Government is in the process of acquiring ownership of Cardiff airport. Yet, as the authors of the proposal point out, the two are perfectly compatible. Indeed, public ownership of Cardiff airport makes a new airport on Severnside more feasible.

Elsewhere we devote a good deal of attention to another scheme which has the potential to transform the prospects of the Welsh economy, a Metro for the Cardiff City region. We first published detailed proposals for this enterprise two years ago and it is remarkable how swiftly it has entered mainstream thinking. It is the subject of a task force that will shortly report to Economics Minister Edwina Hart who has recently, and appropriately, had transport responsibilities added to her portfolio. At Welsh Labour's Spring conference in Llandudno she pronounced that the scheme was receiving her positive attention.

In our featured articles on this topic (pages 10-16) Professor Calvin Jones, of Cardiff Business School, says that achieving a Cardiff Metro will not be a panacea for the Welsh economy. But as he also says, "If we build it, and build it well, we will tell the world we care about things. About the climate, yes, but also about the importance of distinctive place, about our less advantaged residents and about actively planning for a positive future."

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Cover: Penarth Head seen from the Cardiff Bay Barrage. Photo: Peter Finch



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## Newsflash

- **Wales: a sustainable food nation**

In association with Cardiff University, Cynnal Cymru, Soil Association, Cardiff County Council, Public Health Wales, Welsh Local Government Association

Tues 4 June 2013, 9am to 4pm, Glamorgan Building, Cardiff University

Bringing together representatives from all key sectors, the event will explore the obstacles and opportunities for action, showcase innovation and promote a new level collaboration on healthy and sustainable food, from national policy to local practice.

**Keynote Speakers:** Jonathan Porritt, Forum for the Future; Zoë Harcombe, author The Obesity Epidemic; Professor Kevin Morgan, Cardiff University; Eryl Powell, Cardiff Food Council; Peter Davies, Sustainable Development Commissioner for Wales; Tom Andrews, Soil Association.

£70 (£56 IWA Members)

- **IWA Coffee Shop Debate @Chapter**

Tuesday 4 June 2013, 6.30pm to 7.30pm, Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff

**Restoring Our Wildlife**

With Katie-jo Luxton, Director, RSPB Cymru (Entry free)

- **IWA Inspire Wales Awards 2013**

In association with the Western Mail

Tuesday 18 June 2013, 7.00pm - Midnight, City Hall, Cardiff  
An evening recognizing achievers in the fields of business, education, science and technology, arts, media, and creative industries, environment, citizenship, Welsh in the work place, global Wales, youth activities and sport.

£55 (£50 IWA members)

Table of 10 - £500 (£475 IWA members) Prices exclude VAT.

- **IWA Coffee Shop Debate @Chapter**

Wednesday 19 June 2013, 6.30pm to 7.30pm  
Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff

**Why Fathers should stand up for their daughters**

IWA Women celebrate 'Fathers' Day' (Entry free)

- **Education for a co-operative Wales**

In association with The Co-operative Cymru/Wales

Friday 28 June 2013, 9am to 4pm, SWALEC Stadium, Cardiff  
This conference explores the benefits that co-operative principles and practice can bring to the Welsh education system. Co-operative schools in England have more than doubled to 405 over the past year, and many more are considering adopting the co-operative model. So far, however, the movement has yet to spread to Wales.

**Keynote Speakers:** Dave Boston, Chief Executive, Co-operative Schools Society; Hugh Donnelly, Director, the Co-operative Education Trust, Scotland; Professor Andrew Davies, Chair Co-operative Commission; Professor Dave Egan, Heads of the Valleys Education Programme.

This conference is free but registration is essential via the IWA website.

- **IWA Coffee Shop Debate @Chapter**

Tuesday 2 July 2013, 6.30pm to 7.30pm  
Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff

**Why pictures matter**

With Peter Lord (Entry free)

## Just Published

**The Big Society in a small country**

By Dan Boucher

£9.99

**A Cardiff City Region Metro: transform | regeneration | connect**

By Mark Barry

£10.00

More information: [www.iwa.org.uk](http://www.iwa.org.uk)

# Where minorities meet in the heart of Europe

Andy Bevan describes an Alpine journey in search of hidden cultures

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Where minorities meet in the heart of Europe

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### Outlook:

A Metro for the Cardiff City region

Mark Barry

Jonathan Adams

James Brown

Calvin Jones

Henk Broekema

For many years I've been interested in cultures 'on the boundaries' of the big nation states and the major language divides. From that point of view, the map of Europe which shows a simple pattern of distinct and separate nations falls far short of an accurate depiction of cultural and linguistic realities. In the real world, where people live at village, town or community level, there is often a much more complex picture of cultural and linguistic shading, blending (or overlapping) as we physically approach the politically recognised borders. The result is an underlying pattern of long-established minority languages and bilingualism, which often co-exist with complex cultural and political identities.

This awareness was the background to a ten-day journey our family undertook to South Tyrol last summer, combining some holiday time and a short study visit. Our itinerary was Innsbruck-Bolzano-Zernez-Chur-Liechtenstein-Innsbruck. We travelled from the Austrian Tyrol over the Brenner pass into South Tyrol, recognised in the Italian constitution as an autonomous province. From there we travelled by train to Mals where we took the Swiss postbus for the one-and-a-half-hour journey over the Ofenpass to Zernez in the Romansh-speaking Engadine valley of Switzerland. Then we went by Rhaetian Railway to Chur, capital of the only officially trilingual Swiss canton, variously called *Graubunden* (in German), *Grigioni* (Italian), and *Grischunsto* (Romansh).

From Chur it was a mere 22 minutes fast train ride down the Rhine valley to Sargans, the border train

station for Liechtenstein. Our circular route was completed by a two hour train ride from Feldkirch, just over the Liechtenstein border in Austrian Vorarlberg, back to Innsbruck.

Good weather, glorious scenery and great hospitality accompanied us throughout. The people we met were invariably interested to spend time with this little travelling party from bilingual Lampeter in west Wales. Usually over a (culturally specific) meal and a glass, we talked about our common interests in autonomy, identity, language rights, bilingualism and community-level education policy.

Some of these people we had met through our work since 1997 on the European Voluntary Service programme. Others, particularly from the Ladin-speaking and Romansh communities of South Tyrol and Graubunden, were people I had contacted specifically to meet during our trip. As always, our short visit was much more interesting (and the learning curve much steeper) thanks to this kind of expert, well-rooted, local guidance.

It may not everyone's idea of a summer holiday, but the trip combined the excitement of travelling, the pleasure of great landscapes, new acquaintances and new resonances. And of course, all of us - including our ten year-old-son - enjoyed visiting Ötzi the ice mummy in Bolzano, the cable car ride up to Oberbozen (1,800 metres), the excellent hands-on activities at the *Parc Naziunal* centre in Zernez and a couple of days walking in the mountains high above the Rhine valley in Liechtenstein.

On our first day out of Innsbruck, stepping off the train south from

Brenner, the border crossing between Austrian Tyrol and South Tyrol, we noticed immediately the bilingual signs in Italian and German at Bolzano/Bozen station. As we strolled across the park to the Tourist Information office on Walther Platz, the place immediately felt much more Tyrolean than Italian (even though the urban area of Bolzano itself is a South Tyrolean exception in having a majority of Italian-speakers).

The architecture spoke strongly of Bozen's past. Until 1918 it was an integral part of the County of Tyrol within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Later we learned that, under Austrian rule, the overwhelmingly Italian-speaking Trentino area, the southernmost part of the old Austrian Crownland of Tyrol, was often referred to as *Welschtirol*. In one form or another, 'Welsch' has been used throughout the Germanic-speaking lands, to describe the Romance-speaking or Celtic 'other', just beyond.

The First World War is why Bozen finds itself inside the borders of modern Italy. Under the terms of the secret Treaty of London in 1915, Italy had entered the war on the Allies' side, on the understanding that Italy would gain Trentino and 'Cisalpine Tirol' in the event of Allied victory. Immediately after the ceasefire of November 1918, Italian troops occupied the area, as far north as Innsbruck. Their occupation of Tyrol south of the Brenner pass was confirmed at the Treaty of St Germain in September 1919. This was despite a petition signed in opposition by all the mayors of South Tyrol - so much for the Allies' declared war aims of 'self-determination'. After a short period of military rule, Italy formally annexed Trentino and South Tyrol in October 1920.

Significantly, during the Fascist period, Hitler and Mussolini agreed that South Tyrol remain an integral part of Italy. Mussolini pursued a policy of Italianisation, with significant immigration, especially to Bolzano. German speakers were to move to the Greater Reich or else accept Italianisation.

At the end of World War II, Italy and



Map showing the circular journey undertaken by the Bevan family through Austria, South Tyrol, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein last summer. Their journey began and ended in Innsbruck.

the occupying powers in Austria agreed to an accord safeguarding the rights of the German-speakers in the newly-designated unitary province of Trentino/South Tyrol. Widespread dissatisfaction among the German-speaking minority in the unitary province with the way the accord was implemented quickly led to unrest and a campaign of bombings. At first these were directed against electricity pylons but in the late fifties cost 21 lives, including four members of the *Befreiungsausschuss Südtirol* and 15 Italian soldiers and police.

The *Südtirolischer Volkspartei* (SVP), formed in 1945 by Südtirolers who had specifically rejected the option of leaving Italy to settle in the Reich, took command of the situation and pressed for autonomy through peaceful means. They were helped by the fact that the SVP has consistently won more than 85

per cent of German-speakers' votes and more than 60 per cent of the Ladins' in every South Tyrol election since 1945.

Between 1969 and 1972, international agreement was reached on a new Autonomy Statute which effectively divided the Region into *two* autonomous provinces: Trentino, with more than 95 per cent Italian-speakers, and South Tyrol, with two-thirds German-speakers. This set the seal on the present position where South Tyrol has a wide measure of autonomy and control over 90 per cent of the taxes it raises. Today it is Italy's wealthiest province, proud of its own institutions and quality of public services, including its own rail network. With serious budget cuts now emanating from the central government, and affecting all six of Italy's autonomous provinces, there is an appreciable increase in political

friction between Bolzano and Rome.

South Tyrol has also had the challenge and opportunity of dealing fairly with the Ladin-speaking minority within its own boundaries. In South Tyrol, Ladin has official status. Ladin-speakers are represented in the provincial government civil service in accordance with their numbers as recorded by census and there are special departments for Ladin culture, language and education.

Ladin-speakers are a small minority within South Tyrol – approximately 20,000 people which is just 4 per cent of the total. In addition, there are more than 16,000 in Trentino, where Ladin also has legal status, and 7,000 in Belluno, where it does not. In a referendum held in 2007 in Ladin-speaking Cortina d'Ampezzo, Belluno, there was an overwhelming majority to leave Veneto and rejoin South Tyrol. This issue remains unresolved.

Within the South Tyrol school system, German-speakers learn Italian, but often not well. Equally, Italian-speakers learn German, but in many cases unenthusiastically. We heard that school records show that Ladin-speakers, coming from a minority language community, are keen and motivated to learn *both* of the other official languages of the province and are usually fluently trilingual.

Ladin, descended in Alpine isolation from the everyday Latin spoken in the southern Alps at the end of the Roman Empire, is just one of the language communities which are the modern legacy of the Rhaeto-Romance language. The others are Romansh (spoken in the Swiss canton of Graubunden) and Friulian, which is one of the four official languages in Italy's easternmost and autonomous province of Friuli-Venezia Giulia.

One of the complications facing campaigners who are striving to protect and develop Ladin-speaking, is that there is a distinct variant of Ladin in each of the major valleys where the language survives. There is also a relative newcomer since the 1980s - a 'synthesised' idiom, known as



Ten-year-old Gethin Bevan seen boarding the postbus at Mal, for the journey from South Tyrol into Switzerland.

*Ladin Dolimiti*, which aims at bridging the local variants.

After three days in South Tyrol, we headed by train and postbus through Mals im Vinschgau across the border into Switzerland's Val Müstair and over the Ofenpass into the Engadine Valley. This is part of the canton of Graubunden where the Romansh language has official status, alongside German (the majority language) and Italian. In 2000, 36,000 people throughout Switzerland, including 27,000 in Graubunden, recorded Romansh as their language of 'best command', while 62,000 reported it as 'regularly spoken'. There are some areas where it remains very strong. For example, in the Lower Engadine valley, it is 'regularly spoken' by 70 per cent, while in the Val Müstair it is spoken by more than 85 per cent.

Again, Romansh exists as a language in five distinct 'idioms', with one overarching 'created' average version too, known as *Rumantsch Grischun*. We discovered many parallels between the issues around bilingual schooling in the Engadine and schools language policy in Wales. One of the major differences is that, even in schools which

are described as Romansh-medium, German becomes the medium for most lessons after the primary school stage.

We also learnt that two of the main Romansh idioms, *Vallader* and *Puter*, in the lower and upper Engadine respectively, are known collectively by the local Romansh-speakers as *Ladin*. This includes the *Jauer* variant of *Vallader* which is spoken in the Val Müstair.

The other idioms, spoken further to the west, are *Surmiran*, *Surselvan* and *Sutselvan*. Daniel Telli, who is the professional linguist at the offices of *Lia Rumantscha* in Chur related to us the complex and changing decisions in recent years at cantonal level concerning the budget available for the provision of school texts in Romansh. Initial agreement to pay for texts in each of the community idioms has, unpopularly with many Romansh-speakers, been replaced by a commitment only to provide texts in *Rumantsch Grischun*, on grounds of cost-effectiveness.

With Daniel, we reflected on the fact that the Bible was translated into a form of Welsh in 1588 which has been accepted as the unified root for a literary/academic standard, while dialects flourish at community level. Debate in Wales continues over *Cymraeg Byw* and local dialects, as opposed to a more bookish form of standard Welsh (as in most languages), whereas Romansh does not have a widely accepted 'standard' form. We offered the view that the long-standing existence of Welsh-medium broadcasting, publishing and education (from primary to tertiary level) has helped enormously to address these problems in Wales.

From Chur, we took the train to Sargans, on the border with Liechtenstein, which provided another angle on versions of independence and the viability of extremely small nations. Liechtenstein shares a very close relationship with Switzerland, accepts Swiss representation abroad and manages without an army or its own currency. Of course, it combines this with a strange and, from my point of view, anachronistic continuation of feudal practice in the way it designates its Head of State - in common, it has to be said,

with other European states including the UK, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Spain.

At Schaan, in Liechtenstein, we had a reunion with three ex-volunteers whose European Voluntary Service placements had been in Wales. We then drove to Feldkirch, just inside Austrian Vorarlberg, to spend an evening with colleagues there. They explained that, just at the time when South Tyrol was assigned to Italy, a referendum in 1918 in Vorarlberg voted overwhelmingly to apply to join the Swiss Confederation. This was rejected by a combination of French and Italian-speaking cantons. Swiss high finance feared the costly accession of a poor relation, while the Allies felt that allowing Vorarlberg to leave Austria would be too much on top of the loss of half of Tyrol. So, Vorarlberg, with its Alemannic dialect (akin to *Schwyzerdütsch*) remains in Austria.

Crossing borders and taking part in these interesting conversations left me thinking of 'national' identity in a much more fluid way. We need a broader European tolerance which values minorities, as well as respecting the reality of the big language blocks. This contrasts starkly with the current fixations in London (and Brussels) with Border Agencies, Border Forces and *Bundesgrenzschutzen*.

We travelled through very different political and cultural landscapes within a small geographical area. In the abstract, Germany and, by extension, German-speakers would most often be thought of as a big, strong power-block in European politics. Yet, in South Tyrol German-speakers are a small linguistic minority within the Italian state – a minority that has successfully established, by agreement, a wide measure of political, financial and cultural autonomy. Probably there is more of this to come.

Within Italy, Ladin-speakers are an even tinier minority which inhabits areas with a German-speaking majority (South Tyrol) and with overwhelmingly Italian-speaking majorities (Trentino and Belluno). In two of these areas, Ladin-speakers have established certain legal



One of the many meetings the Bevan family had along the way – on this occasion with European Voluntary Service colleagues at Schaan in Liechtenstein. From left to right: Ann Bevan, Andy Bevan, Virginie Meusberger, of the Liechtenstein National Agency for the European Voluntary Service, Sabrina Wachter, a former volunteer in Cardiff in 2004, and Matthias Bruestle, of the Netz Werk European Voluntary Service organisation. Photo: Gethin Bevan.

and cultural rights, but these do not apply in Belluno, where action to implement the 2007 referendum decision in the Cortina d'Ampezzo area to re-join South Tyrol is still pending. If this is resolved in the near future, as Ladins hope, I would then expect a new push for further autonomy from a pretty united South Tyrol. It is interesting to see how closely Ladin communities and their political leaders seek to co-operate - and often to participate - in the dominant SVP, as do many Italian-speaking Tyroleans as well.

In Switzerland, we encountered some similarities and some important differences. Here, the efforts of Romansh campaigners focus more clearly on linguistic and cultural issues, within the context of a fairly close identification with Switzerland in general and the canton of Graubunden in particular. A strong tradition of multilingualism and the long-established and very developed federalism of Switzerland means that Romansh campaigning presents itself differently.

This trip has also led me to reflect on the relationships between standard languages and local dialects, not least within the big language groups like German. After all, it is significant that *Hochdeutsch* is pretty universally accepted throughout the German-speaking lands, including Germany, Austria, Alsace, Switzerland, South Tyrol, the 'Eastern Cantons' of Belgium (around Eupen) and the southern slopes of the Julian

Alps, as the written, formally spoken and academic standard. Meanwhile, local dialects flourish, from the *Plattdeutsch* areas of the north to the Alemannic areas of the south. For example, on our journey, we became aware that there are quite specific *Walser* variants of Alemannic spoken in the highest Alpine valleys quite widely across South Tyrol, Graubunden, Liechtenstein and Vorarlberg.

There is, of course, a similar contrast between standard and regional or local idioms in French, Italian, English, Welsh and other languages. In many ways, that is the norm, especially with the bigger language communities.

It all looks more nuanced, shaded, multi-textured and overlapping than some agglomeration of separate entities on a simply drawn political map of Europe. And that map will keep developing, as current events and pressures for further autonomy in places as far apart as Scotland and Catalonia make clear.

**Andy Bevan** has worked on issues of inter-cultural adaptation for over 20 years. He worked with VSO in London for nine years, supporting technical development projects in Africa and providing pre-departure training for skilled, community-based volunteers. In 2000 he co-founded ICP Partneriaeth to promote European Voluntary Service activity in and from Wales.



John Osmond

# A powerful engine for Welsh civil society

Geraint Talfan Davies assesses the contribution of the IWA's first full-time Director

The IWA was nearly eight years old before it got itself into a position to be able to advertise for its first full time director. That was in 1996. The timing was fortuitous, as one of the applicants was John Osmond. The job and John seemed made for each other. Seventeen years later he is stepping down from a position in which he has made a remarkable contribution to Welsh public life.

The IWA today is a very different animal from the one he joined, and it is a tribute to his work and what he has built that when the post was advertised this year the IWA received no less than 37 applications. I have to say that his achievement is not a surprise to anyone who knows of his total commitment to the task and to Wales and, of course, his legendary, prodigious work rate.

His forceful salesmanship, not least on the Eisteddfod field, has brought many people into the IWA's fold, to the extent that our membership has grown from around 60 to nearer 1200 during his time. Our branches have extended across Wales. The number and range of our conferences has expanded, so that now not a month goes by without one or more IWA events. He has been a fountain of ideas.

John has always believed in the power of the written word. He has a long list of books to his credit, always consistent in their sense of direction for Wales. Arguably, he has been the most influential editor in Wales over the past 40 years, even if the circulation of his publications can never match those of daily newspapers. After the debacle of the 1979 devolution referendum,

John's continuing resolution in the cause was transformative. In the early 1980s he edited a fortnightly magazine, ARCADE. Three years after the magazine's demise in 1982, he edited a book of essays, *Wales: The national question again* - a seminal work that rekindled the devolution debate through its scope and coherence.

It was natural, therefore, that he should have wanted to turn *Agenda* - that the IWA until then had published only fitfully - into the regular, professionally produced journal that *the Welsh agenda* is today. It reaches its fiftieth edition this Summer. Natural, too, that he should have made our news analysis website *clickonwales.org* into a source of thoughtful and authoritative commentary on Welsh life.

When John took on the post in 1996, he stood down from the Chairmanship of the Parliament for Wales campaign. But he exercised his influence in other ways. In 1996 he edited an IWA report on how to conduct the forthcoming devolution referendum that recommended it should be held in Wales a week later than in Scotland. It was a recommendation that was adopted by Government and, given the closeness of the result, it may well have been a crucial factor in getting Wales across the line.

Thankfully, John's talents will not be lost to the IWA. I am glad to say that he will continue to edit *the Welsh agenda* and *clickonwales.org* and will doubtless continue his trenchant commentary on our public affairs. The IWA's debt to him is huge. He has also been a powerful engine for the development of Welsh civil society and, I am sure we are all happy that such a contribution is not at an end. Diolch, John.

Geraint Talfan Davies is Chair of the IWA.

# New generation takes charge at IWA

The IWA has appointed 37-year-old Lee Waters, currently the Director of Sustrans Cymru, as Director. He succeeds John Osmond who is stepping down after 17 years in the post.

In Lee Waters the IWA has found someone at the forefront of a new generation of politically engaged people whose lives and careers have been shaped by devolution. As such his appointment marks a generational shift for the IWA and will be part of a wider process of refreshing the organisation's mission in the years ahead.

Lee has already demonstrated a powerful capacity to bring practical innovation as well as challenge into the policy debate in Wales. His profound commitment to moving Wales forward, his understanding of Welsh politics, coupled with his range of experience, equip him well not only to continue the work of the Institute but also to build out from the strong foundations that have been laid over the last quarter century. As he himself says:

*"I am excited to get the opportunity to lead the IWA. For Wales to achieve our potential we need an open and self-critical culture. The IWA has a vital role to play in creating a space where ideas can collide, and solutions can be forged. Having played a crucial role in shaping the creation of a law-making Assembly for Wales, the challenge now for the IWA is to play the role of critical friend in scrutinising the way the powers are used".*

Lee is a former Chief Political

Correspondent for ITV Wales and BBC Wales producer, and since 2007 has been Director of the influential green transport organisation, Sustrans Cymru. Significantly, Sustrans is one of the first civil society organisations in Wales to be on the verge of getting a Bill through the National Assembly – the Active



Lee Waters

Travel (Wales) Bill, now going through its committee stage.

At Sustrans he has transformed the profile of the organisation in Wales, doubling its size in the process, and now with overall responsibility for a portfolio of practical projects to change travel behaviour worth in

excess of £24 million.

In 2011 he was asked by the First Minister, Carwyn Jones, to be his representative on the cross-party Yes campaign ahead of the referendum. He became Vice Chair of the campaign organisation, led on media and communications, and was responsible for working with all four parties to forge messaging for the campaign.

Lee was brought up in the Amman Valley and educated at Ammanford Comprehensive School and the University of Wales, Aberystwyth where he received a first class degree in politics, and authored a prize-winning thesis on devolution. He was also selected to be an English Speaking Union Capitol Hill Scholar and worked in the US House of Representatives in Washington D.C., before working for politicians in Wales and Westminster.

After graduating he served as a speechwriter and political secretary to Ron Davies, the Secretary of State for Wales before joining BBC Wales as a producer of the flagship breakfast radio programme, *Good Morning Wales*, where he helped establish the programme's reputation for breaking political stories. In 2001 he joined the ITV Wales political unit. Over the course of five years he presented the weekly politics programme, *Waterfront*, and reported on the National Assembly and House of Commons as a lobby correspondent.

For the past decade he has also been Chair of Governors of the highly regarded Barry Island Primary school. He lives on the island with his wife and two children.

# A Metro for the Cardiff City region

## The need for connectivity

Mark Barry



A lot has happened in the two years since the IWA and the Cardiff Business Partnership published *A Metro for Wales' Capital City Region*. First, a strong business case made by the Welsh Government combined with a powerful lobby from the business community persuaded the Whitehall Department of Transport to support the electrification of the London to Swansea Main line

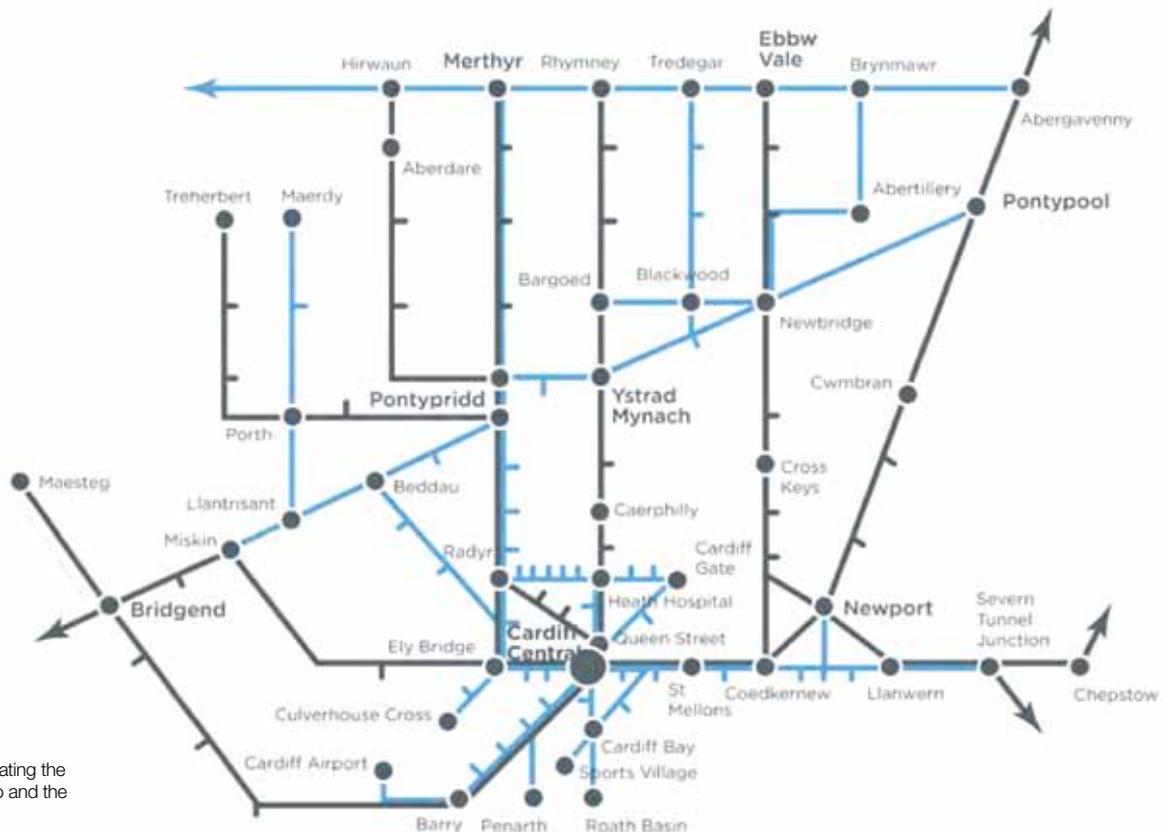
and the entire Valleys rail network. Secondly, the concept of a Valleys Metro has become a mainstream topic of discussion in transport and regeneration circles in Wales.

At last, 15 years into devolution, there is an appetite to consider taking on some ambitious infrastructure projects. The one thing that has not changed over this time is the economic challenge and the need to stimulate the economy. This is not just a matter of addressing the poor GVA per capita and economic inactivity in some Valley communities. There is also a need to help Cardiff compete more effectively with cities across Europe. Meanwhile, the city region debate has progressed sufficiently to enable some radical policy decisions to be made. Today there is widespread recognition that a modern public transport system - a Metro - will

be an essential catalyst for a modern city region economy in south Wales.

There is now widespread agreement that the Metro must be used to stimulate economic regeneration as well as improving connectivity. Schemes necessary to create an integrated network include:

- A Valleys Circle Line to transform the Cardiff city region's transport geography. This will be achieved by linking the Rhymney and Merthyr lines to allow Pontypridd to play a more pivotal role in the region's economy.
- A Cardiff Crossrail, using tram-train technology, to fully connect the city to the region and unlock a range of development opportunities.
- A Rapid Bus Transit system to address poor connectivity between places like



A schematic diagram illustrating the potential reach of the Metro and the connectivity it would bring.

## Outlook

Merthyr and Ebbw Vale.

- A major upgrade of the Newport to Ebbw Vale line to help the regeneration of both towns.

More generally, the Metro provides an opportunity to rethink the role of some of our towns and communities across the Valleys. By providing the connectivity, Metro stations can themselves become catalysts for regeneration and development. It is also vital that the unique role contributed by Cardiff and its city centre is incorporated into Metro thinking. This is the part of the region that must attract and nurture the high value knowledge businesses that are common in successful city regions across the world, but are under-represented in Cardiff.

Delivery of these ambitious proposals over 10 to 15 years will require an investment of around £1.5 billion. Such a programme, aligned with other measures, will have a major impact on the economic fortunes and capacity of the region.

Aside from the Metro, better links to Heathrow and London are also required, not least to counter the impact of the High Speed 2 rail link that will bring places like Manchester and Leeds within 80 minutes of London. Electrification must be the first step of a programme that turns the Great Western Main Line into a quasi-high speed track so that journey times of less than 80 minutes are also possible from Cardiff to London and Heathrow. We need a coherent regional development plan to underpin these investments and help drive the GVA per capita of the Cardiff city region on an upward trajectory.

Visions are important, but they are the easy part. The biggest challenge remains mobilising the political will to drive this programme forward. Specifically, our elected representatives need to take on board the absolute requirement to establish an arms-length executive body with the remit and powers able to convert an ambitious Metro policy into a tangible project that will benefit the entire region.

We need a Metro delivery authority with sufficient funding from multiple sources, including government and local

authorities. Its remit should combine traditional passenger transport executive responsibilities with a land and property development capability. It would be accountable to elected representatives from the National Assembly and local authorities. Its task will be to develop and deliver the Metro. It will need to engage the private sector to facilitate development and regeneration at locations across the network.

Creation of such an organisation will be critical to the success of the Metro project. But success will bring great rewards:

- Reduction in travel times for commuters, especially in the Heads of the Valleys. It will give employers a larger pool of labour, reduce churn in recruitment and improve staff retention.
- Regeneration through increased footfall at stations across the network. Early identification of this impact will alert prospective developers and landowners to the opportunities and drive private sector investment.
- Much greater use of public transport, reducing the number of car journeys and pressure on the roads. If it is accompanied by road congestion charges the Metro has the potential of reducing the number of car journeys by up to 50 per cent.
- Shaking off the legacy of a century of industrial decline, creating a more cohesive city region that can compete more effectively on the international stage.
- A new lease of life for communities across the Valleys with stronger commuter settlements able to support a wider range of secondary services.
- Reduction of carbon emissions, less congestion, and an improved quality of life.

**Mark Barry** runs an economic and transport policy development consultancy in Cardiff and is founder of the Metro Consortium. His latest report *A Cardiff City Region Metro: transform, regenerate, connect* was launched by the IWA and the Metro Consortium in March.

## A catalyst for reshaping the Valley towns

**Jonathan Adams**



Above all else The Valleys Metro is concerned with the future prosperity of communities living in the south Wales coalfield region. Our 15 post-devolution years have seen a steady divergence of GVA per head between Wales and the rest of the UK. The continuing decline of the economy and of average living standards in the coalfield region vastly occludes any growth south of the motorway. Every conceivable quick fix has been attempted, and none has changed the trajectory of unmanaged change.

Ex-coliery communities have declined across Britain, but the predicament of the south Wales coalfield is not replicated elsewhere. In the English Midlands, south Yorkshire, Northumberland, Cumbria, Ayrshire or Fife the disappearance of the industry has left small voids. Only in south Wales has it left a social and economic chasm. What makes us different is the fact that none of the other major coal areas were ever as dependent as south Wales on just one industry.

In England, the coalfields generally spread across densely populated and prosperous regions which had a multitude of economic drivers. The contrast with Wales was stark. If there had been no coal, without question the Valleys would be a National Park today. In simple terms, the region is poorly suited to human settlement. Until the 18th Century it was as wild and as sparsely populated as any other part of upland Wales. Taking contemporary Powys as a benchmark, without industrialisation the population of the coalfield region would be no more than a tenth of what it is now. It is impossible for the region to achieve social or economic viability in its current form, when the one and only reason for

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- Developing bilingual practices
- Cefnogi'r proffesiwn
- Professional development

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people living there in large numbers has entirely disappeared.

Inevitably, and despite a huge political effort to maintain opportunities, the coalfield is depopulating. In all of Wales it is only the populations of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil, Blaenau Gwent and Neath Port Talbot that have reduced in density in the last 30 years. Where similar conditions prevail elsewhere in the world only ghost towns remain. Consider the coal town of Lynch in the Appalachian mountains, where a post-war population of 10,000 has fallen to fewer than 900, or Vindex in Maryland, one of many Potomac Valley coal towns which have vanished completely. It is too easy to see the wider economy as the cause of change in the south Wales valleys. It was capital that created their predicament. But it is the character of the landscape that now governs what is possible. Where the Valleys are concerned, 'It's the topography, stupid'.

The reshaping of coalfield settlements requires a planned reversal of the original process of industrialisation. Industrial development preceded population growth, and occupied the more usable ground on the Valley floors. The collieries were the centres of gravity of the communities, and they occupied the central spaces. At the height of the coal industry civic and social amenities were plentiful but they punctuated closely packed terraced streets at irregular intervals. It was unavoidable that the majority of the settlements would take the form of strands of housing along steep valley sides, and that few conventionally defined towns could take shape.

So how could the form of valleys settlements change, to become more viable? And what part could a greatly improved public transport network play in the transformation?

Part of the answer can be found close to hand. Rural settlements of the kind that typify agricultural Wales take a simple characteristic shape, just as they do the world over. Buildings and homes aggregate around a few small, tightly defined common spaces, in a 'bullseye' pattern. The density of building is

greatest near to the centre, and gradually decreases towards the edges. Shops, social facilities, welfare and civic buildings occupy key locations close to the heart of the settlement. Life flourishes in the places and spaces between the core buildings. Even in economically strained rural areas, settlements of this type continue to be viable, because each provides a focus not just for the immediate inhabitants, but also for a large area of rural hinterland. Density of habitation will typically be relatively high at the centre of a rural town - with terraced houses the norm - but measured together with the hinterland overall population density will be low.

If current trends continue, it is inevitable that the Valleys population as a whole, and of the upper and mid-Valleys in particular, will further reduce. Without constructive intervention, settlements in the Valleys will gradually evolve into unfocused clusters, coalescing from the contiguous strands of contemporary Valley settlement. These changes will not need to be planned or managed, they will happen regardless over the course of the next few generations. But with intelligent planning and management the changes can be made to happen more quickly. There can be greater active community participation with a good chance of a positive outcome, and with far less collateral social damage than will otherwise result. However it happens, it is essential for the overall population of the coalfield region, and also for the area of built development, to be greatly reduced.

At the moment there are 12 miles of unbroken development along the Rhondda Fawr between Pontypridd and Blaenrhondda. This could be thought of as one town, but it contains around a dozen settlements whose separate identities are still linked to the industrial centres they once served. However, the dozen-or-so settlements are distinct in name only. In their place it is possible to envisage perhaps half that number of small, well-defined, healthy towns, each surrounded by fields and forests.

The existing railway tracks were built to handle coal. They can only be at the base of the Valleys, and it is along those

lines, where the industrial structures have been removed, that an abundance of useful development space is to be found.

With carefully judged planning, the Valley towns of the future can be re-shaped around cores of civic and social amenities and well defined public spaces, following the pattern of rural towns, and the new rail stations can be the catalyst that enables the redefinition to begin. New stations might be built in existing station locations, but the priority must be the availability of space around them for the development of new workplaces, shops, public amenities and even new urban housing, rather than the sub-urban forms favoured until now by the volume house-builders. As important as any of these will be the tightly defined, attractive civic spaces, around which the new developments will be concentrated, and which will become the centres of gravity of the future Valley towns.

The counterpoint to the creation of these new, close-grained urban centres will be the separation of the settlement edges from each other by the removal of under-utilised housing and the restoration of 'natural' landscape in place of existing terraced streets. This will be a process of selective demolition and clearance, and it can only happen with the committed participation of local communities, every affected household of which must demonstrably benefit as a result.

There are of course a few coherent, well-defined Valleys towns that already exist, such as Pontypridd, Merthyr Tydfil, Llantrisant, and Aberdare. These should continue to grow as they are at present, largely by drawing in new residents from the fringes.

The planned expansion of Cardiff will provide a further essential counterpoint to the restoration of social and economic balance in the Valleys. For the children and grandchildren of current Valleys residents, the option of commuting to the southern cities must be made an attractive one.

For many future residents of viable Valley communities it will be normal to travel to work outside the Valleys, and to the cities in particular. The Valleys Metro

will provide the means of commuting quickly and regularly throughout the Valleys and down to the south. It will be equally effective in making the re-shaped Valley towns attractive for investment in new workplaces. This means that, for non-commuting residents, there will be sufficient local work to ensure an average level of employment can be sustained. In this way the viability and health of the community as a whole can be established and protected for generations to come.

**Jonathan Adams** is Special Projects Director at Capita Architecture.

## It will tell us all we need to know about ourselves

Calvin Jones



Before we start, let's get one thing straight. A Metro for south-east Wales is no economic panacea. It will not result in a rapid revitalisation of industry, in an influx of high paid or high value adding jobs and dozens of company headquarters, or of tens of thousands more tourists. In fact, the debate around a Metro for south Wales should be contextualised within the understanding that it is likely no policy intervention can make any of the above happen, at least not within anything other than a generational timescale.

Any debate about appropriate investment in transport (and indeed wider social) infrastructure must recognise that we are a place at the wrong end of history. Wales' last really significant economic contribution occurred over a century ago, and our greatest innovations over a hundred years before that. It is important to realise this need not be a bad thing and it is not our fault.

We are part of a state (and of a continent) which has had and lost the global economic focus. The geographic shifting of this focus is discernable over thousands of years: from the fertile valley of the near east through the Mediterranean and then Northern European empires, and on to the New Worlds. It is driven by climate and the changing importance of land, mineral and human resources. It is irreversible. Wales is a small, peripheral country, and small, peripheral countries cannot compete in innovative (or increasingly productive) terms with larger, better-connected places. This is especially the case when corporate control of global capital depreciates the effectiveness of policy interventions and the geographic 'embeddedness' of economic activity.

And if we aim to compete our way back to the top, we should remember our demographic future. By 2050 the UK will have only two workers for each dependent economically inactive person (mostly aged), which will be down from the current four to one ratio. This fact alone will massively change the fundamentals of our economy away from activities that are 'internationally competitive'.

In July 2009 Robert Reich, US Secretary of Labour, suggested the Great Recession was not V or even U shaped, but X shaped – with X marking the spot where a new economy was (painfully) born. This new economy is still of unknown shape, but we know what it will *not* be. It will not be Euro-centric, debt and consumption fuelled, easy-oil reliant, globally devouring and climate ignoring. Ecological and energy limits don't care whether economists believe in them or not. The existence of these limits is obvious, especially here in the most energy dependent (yet poorest) of Britain's economic regions. And these limits give us some pointers as to what is and will become more important in how we conceptualise and then enable economic prosperity.

The first pointer is: **resilience**. We live in an age characterised by economic, meteorological and social

shocks that are increasing in frequency and severity. As a first principle, investment in infrastructure should prioritise the protection of our basic welfare. As private car ownership becomes simply unaffordable for an ever-greater share of the population, access to key services (not just employment centres) is far from given. Multiplicity of transport modes, as provided by the Metro, can only help soften future shocks.

The second pointer is: **decentralise**. It is clear that as transport costs increase, there is a huge opportunity to re-launch properly local and community businesses, in sectors as diverse as food, professional services and entertainment. Revitalising the economic behaviours of only forty years ago would capture a far higher proportion of wealth in our poorer communities. At the same time it would reduce our reliance on globally spread, increasingly vulnerable supply chains for what have become basic necessities. A properly multi-nodal (not hub-and-radius) Metro system could enable a far higher level of intra-south Wales economic and social interaction.

A third pointer is: **dissensus**. This means doing things differently across the region, with different places developing different competencies in entertainment say, or in social care, or in (let's dream) micro-factory manufacturing. We would then have the potential for a spread of prosperity amongst a large number of economically distinct and complementary towns across the Valleys, rural uplands and the coastal plain. And all of this would be enabled by a publically owned, low cost, diffused and efficient integrated transport system.

How to pay for this vision? The obvious answer is to toll the roads, to accept the potential for short-term competitive disadvantage in pursuit of a long-term goal. There are other ways. For example, there is roughly £8 billion of Welsh public sector pension fund money doing not-brilliantly in Tesco, BP and other corporate investments. That sum could pay for the Metro more than twice over – and, together with a long-

term, guaranteed income stream from fares, could fund it for decades ahead. Additionally, the Welsh Government's first forays in borrowing are likely to come soon. Pump priming the next century's transport infrastructure would be a better first use than priming the detonators on a half-billion pound populist shoring up of the last century at Brynglas Tunnels.

I implied at the start that a Metro for south Wales wasn't centrally important, in the sense of not 'guaranteeing' success (whatever that means) for the region. But the Metro project is centrally important as emblematic of what we think about Wales, and our future. If we build it, and build it well, we will tell the world we care about things. About the climate, yes, but also about the importance of distinctive place, about our less advantaged residents and about actively planning for a positive future.

If we don't build it – if its too difficult or expensive, will take too long, or because we just simply like our cars too much – that will tell us all we need to know about ourselves. That we're content to throw public money at the same old failing elephants; that we are content to live with managing decline; and content to cross our fingers and hope something or someone comes along to sort us out. I hope and believe that's not us.

**Calvin Jones** is Professor of Economics at Cardiff Business School.

## Survival in an age dominated by cities

**James Brown**



Within 20 miles of the centre of Cardiff live 1.48 million people. Although the idea of a *Cardiff City Region* or even *Greater Cardiff* does not yet sit

comfortably with everyone, it is an undeniable fact that this scale and density of habitation represents, in numbers alone, a City. We may not live in a singular and identifiable city with a single governance structure like Glasgow or Bristol. Yet the scale at which we operate means that south-east Wales *should* operate more like a city region to secure the benefits of our size.

Cardiff, and the 1.48 million people that live within its gravitational pull, need to be capable of functioning as a cohesive city because the economies and societies of the 21st Century will be dominated by cities. For the first time in human history, more than half of the global population live in cities and by 2030 this figure is predicted to be nearly 60 per cent of the world's eight billion inhabitants. By 2050, it'll be nearer 70 per cent of over nine billion people.

Moreover, 600 urban centres currently account for 60 per cent of global GDP and this proportion is predicted to be largely the same by 2025. However, by then the membership of this group will be very different. This is because by 2025 one third of these will be from the southern and eastern hemispheres - China in particular. What this tells us is that those cities that are able to project themselves positively in national, continental and global terms will give themselves a better chance of capturing economic opportunities.

The Metro is important to Cardiff and south-east Wales because it is an opportunity for our region to cultivate an image of itself to present to the rest of the world that is positive and forward thinking. It is essential that we embark upon a process of simultaneous and assertive regeneration, development and environmental conservation that will result in Cardiff and its catchment becoming one of the most livable cities in the world.

There are three main indices which chart the living conditions of urban areas and it isn't surprising that *public transportation* is measured by two of these indexes. Irrespective of how livability is measured, cities like Zurich, Melbourne, Copenhagen, Auckland and

Vancouver are continually represented in this group, and they all have metro systems. Why shouldn't south-east Wales aspire to join their ranks?

If we choose to invest in projects like major road building programmes, which *don't* establish Cardiff as one of the Europe's most livable cities, then we are wasting time, energy, money and opportunities. Our inaction, or inability, to grasp the opportunities available to us now will, quite rightly, be judged harshly by the future generations who will inherit a much more diminished city from us.

So what will this livable city of south-east Wales look like? At the local level there is real potential for the hubs on the Metro network to become dynamic places around stations. A key determinant of success will not just be about developing utilitarian and functional connections, but making them humane, vibrant and interesting through sensitive place making as well as good architecture. It is important that the moment you step off the Metro you are presented with the culture, heritage, character and distinctiveness of the place rather than an excessively engineered clone town. The Metro then is much more than a functional network of getting from Albany Road to Blaenau Gwent, but a reason to remake new *places* throughout the network.

The Cardiff Metro proposition makes us confront some of the most important questions about the City Region. It forces us to consider the future of the Welsh capital itself, the role and identity of other towns in the region and the complex relationships between them all. It is important that we don't get distracted with what we might lose, but think about the Metro concept from a global perspective of competitiveness and livability as well as from an extremely local perspective of humane place making.

**James Brown** is a Director with Powell Dobson Urbanists, a multi-disciplinary built environment consultancy.

## We need a new travelling experience

Henk Broekema



Three criteria should be used when we come to judge whether the Cardiff Metro is a success:

1. The transport system should contribute to the goal of attracting investments and stimulating economic growth.
2. The business case for developing the various elements of the infrastructure system – like specific bus services or railway upgrades - should prove sensible.
3. Stakeholders across the field should be enthusiastic - 'success' is after all in the eye of the beholder.

Here I will address two of the stakeholders, the public transport users of the future, and those involved in the development of Cardiff Metro.

Developing a transport system like the Cardiff Metro is not just about upgrading a railway or offering a new bus service. Instead, it is about offering an experience. Travelling is an experience. Whether a transport system offers a good or a bad experience will make the difference between people using it or not. As such, the user experience will impact on the business case and should be continuously kept in mind.

To make travelling a positive experience, it is particularly important to recognise that people travel from door-to-door. Establishing fast and frequent railway services is therefore of limited value if people struggle to reach their final destinations. To offer a travelling experience that can compete

with a journey by car, the integration of various modes of public transport is a pre-requisite.

As an example of integration, let me share some experiences of travelling in the Netherlands (my country of origin). From the moment I put my feet on the ground at Schiphol Airport I start using public transport and other integrated services. First I may travel by train to Amsterdam Central Station. For my onward journey, I may rent a bicycle or a scooter, or I might travel by taxi. The next morning I might take a metro, tram or bus to one of Amsterdam's railway stations, in order to catch a train to a client elsewhere in the country. When I arrive at my final railway station, I may cover the final miles to my client's office using a 'car club' car - conveniently located at numerous railway stations.

However, perhaps the best example of integration is what happens by the

to co-ordinate their activities. Given the huge number of people and organisations involved, managing the co-ordination between them should be considered as a project in itself. The successful delivery of a Cardiff Metro should therefore start with orchestrating the involvement of stakeholders.

It is important to recognise that this should not focus on the business case for a Metro, nor on the way in which car parking, rail, bus and active travel should be integrated. Instead, it should be about assuring proper co-ordination and collaboration between the people and organisations that are involved in the development of the Cardiff Metro.

For example, it should be about the facilitation of creative dialogues between stakeholders, ensuring that all are involved, with their minds focused on opportunities and success. People across a wide range of organisations and sectors

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## To make travelling a positive experience, it is particularly important to recognise that people travel from door-to-door. Establishing fast and frequent railway services is therefore of limited value if people struggle to reach their final destinations.

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time I fly home to Cardiff. All the legs of my journey - whether I made them by train, bus, tram, metro, bicycle, taxi or 'car club' car - are combined on one invoice that will be sent to my employer. To summarise, an integrated transport system should offer its users a reliable, frequent, fast, cost-effective and comfortable door-to-door travelling experience.

To develop a transport system that offers such a good door-to-door experience, numerous people and organisations across sectors will have

should feel inspired to contribute to the Cardiff Metro. Therefore, the first tangible objective of the project should be to establish a Metro Delivery Authority that enjoys widespread support.

**Henk Broekema** is a business psychologist with the AMI Management Consultancy. He was raised in the Netherlands and has lived in Cardiff since 2011.



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# 1

## Changing Union

### Articles

Welsh devolution's unfinished business

Theodore Huckle's case for a Welsh jurisdiction

## Welsh devolution's unfinished business

Richard Wyn Jones gives an overview of the Changing Union project's evidence to the Silk Commission

The story of Welsh devolution since the establishment of the National Assembly in 1999 is, demonstrably, one of increasing public support for the principle of devolved government. It is also a story of increasingly effective practice by both the legislative and executive branches of devolved governance. Paradoxically, this has been achieved despite rather than because of the constitutional arrangements that have underpinned our democratic institutions.

Thus far, all talk of a Welsh devolution 'settlement' has been more aspirational rather than accurate. The reality has been anything but stable. The executive model of devolution established by the 1998 Government of Wales Act didn't even last a decade, and had been utterly transformed de facto long before it was formally put out of its misery. It was re-shaped by the Government of Wales Act 2006, which half-opened the door to primary legislative powers through the convoluted Measure making procedure – Legislative Competence Orders (LCOs). The door was more fully opened following the decisive affirmative vote in the 2011 referendum that brought into play Part 4 of the 2006 Act.

This latest move took place far sooner than had been originally envisaged, in part due to the manifest failings of the arrangements that existed under Part 3 of the Act. Despite all the speeches made and ink spilled trying to argue the virtues of the executive model of devolution or the LCO system, it is difficult to imagine that any of their then proponents would wish to return to them, or even be reminded of their previous enthusiastic endorsement.

Although only in effect for less than two years, there are already strong indications that the latest Part 4 arrangement – a 'conferred powers' model of legislative devolution – is proving problematic, prolonging many of the faults and flaws that characterised the architecture of devolved government in the period from 1999 to 2011.

This is most obviously demonstrated by the UK Government's decision to refer the first piece of legislation passed by the National Assembly to the Supreme Court. It is widely reported that it was only the intervention of the Attorney General that halted the referral of the second piece of legislation. Even if the decision of the Court to uphold the Local Government Byelaws (Wales) Act 2012 may help to clarify the powers of the National Assembly, it has, nonetheless, been demonstrated that the new dispensation can cause significant problems.

In addition to being based on a constitutional architecture that expert opinion – almost universally – regards as flawed, the new dispensation does not address what might be termed the unfinished business of legislative devolution. Some of this is covered by what are sometimes termed the 'Richard consequentials'. Having made the case for legislative devolution, in 2004 the Richard Commission argued that a 60-seat National Assembly was not large enough to scrutinise legislation and hold Ministers to account effectively. It recommended a move to 80 members elected by STV. The Richard case for increasing the size of the legislature remains compelling, and in the light of further extensions of competences even conservative. In addition, as pointed out by First Minister Carwyn Jones, the Welsh situation of



The Changing Union project is being undertaken by the IWA in collaboration with the Wales Governance Centre at Cardiff University and Cymru Yfory/Tomorrow's Wales. Funded by the Nuffield Foundation and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, the project is tracking and influencing the devolution debate across the UK over three years in the run-up to the Scottish independence referendum on 2014. The project's complete evidence can be downloaded from its website [www.changingunion.org.uk](http://www.changingunion.org.uk)



Members of the Silk Commission undertaking Part II of its inquiry. From left to right: Rob Humphreys, Director of the Open University in Wales, nominated by the Welsh Liberal Democrats; Eurfl ap Gwilym, Deputy Chairman of Pure Wafer plc, nominated by Plaid Cymru; Jane Davidson, former Minister for Environment and Sustainability, nominated by the Welsh Labour Party; Professor Nick Bourne, former Leader of the Conservatives in the National Assembly, nominated by the Welsh Conservative Party; Paul Silk, former Clerk to the National Assembly and Chair of the Commission; Trefor Glyn Jones, former Chairman and Chief Executive of Pilkington Optronics and Lord Lieutenant of Clwyd; Helen Molyneux, founder and Chief executive of NewLaw Solicitors; and Professor Noel Lloyd, former Vice Chancellor of Aberystwyth University.

enjoying legislative devolution without a separate legal jurisdiction is certainly anomalous and, arguably, problematic.

It would be a mistake to judge too harshly the work of the constitutional architects whose efforts have thus far failed to provide Wales with a stable, sustainable devolution settlement. While all politics may well be the art of the possible, this seems particularly true of the politics of Welsh devolution. Devolution has moved forward only at a pace and in a direction sanctioned by the country's dominant political force. Proponents of democratic reform (in all parties) have shown great skill and sensitivity in ensuring that considerable progress has been made.

It is also the case that doubts about the level of public support for devolution have acted as a constraint on progress. Although the weight of survey evidence amassed after 1997 suggest a very substantial growth in support for what an earlier generation termed 'home rule', the narrowness of the 1997 referendum result served to call into question the extent to which devolution was the 'settled will' in Wales.

Given this context it would be facile

to be overcritical of the actors involved in the process of Welsh constitution making. Indeed, it is more appropriate that we applaud the political commitment, imagination and courage that have underpinned the development of a democratic tier of Welsh government. But neither should we gloss over or minimise the pathologies of a development process characterised by constant change and upheaval, and the triumph of pragmatism over robust constitutional principles. Countless hours have been wasted and considerable reservoirs of ingenuity squandered in efforts to make fundamentally flawed constitutional designs functional. A concern with process has (of necessity) diverted time, energy and resources away from outcomes.

There are at least three reasons for believing that the Silk Commission is in an ideal position to map out a stable and genuinely sustainable constitutional settlement worthy of the name:

1. Despite the best efforts of the current Secretary of State to close the stable door long after the horse has bolted, the Commission's very wide-ranging terms of reference allow

for consideration of the full range of elements required to establish an effective system of democratic devolved government.

2. Those terms of reference have been endorsed by all the main political parties in Wales, as well as by the Welsh and UK governments. This is sure to imbue the Commission's recommendations with particular authority.
3. Following the referendum result in March 2011, the Commission is deliberating in a context in which the question of public consent for devolution has been definitively answered. The Rubicon of legislative devolution has been crossed, irrevocably.

In its submission to the Silk Commission, the UK's Changing Union project has argued that there are three sets of issues that need to be resolved if Wales is to have the stable and sustainable system of devolved government it both needs and deserves.

### A reserved powers model

Expert opinion is high on unanimous in holding that a reserved powers model of devolution provides for greater certainty and clarity about the boundary between devolved and non-devolved issues than the conferred powers model now in operation in Wales. Indeed that was precisely why the UK government decided to base the powers of the Scottish Parliament on the reserved powers model when it was established in 1999. The short Welsh experience of trying to operate a conferred powers model confirms why that was exactly the right decision. Wales should move to a reserved powers model establishing the powers of the National Assembly on the same basis as those of the Scottish Parliament and, indeed, the Northern Ireland Assembly. This would give the Welsh public and their civil society organisations clearer lines of accountability and place the relationship between Cardiff Bay and Whitehall-Westminster on a more equal, adult footing.

Moving to a reserved powers model naturally raises the question of what should be reserved to the UK level. Our evidence to Silk suggests that we should use the now tried and tested Scottish status quo as a starting point for that discussion. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. In terms of specific policy areas, we believe that there is a compelling case for the devolution of policing. It was, after all, former Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, who once asked the Northern Ireland Assembly:

“How can you, as an Assembly, address common criminality, low-level crime and youth disorder when you are responsible for only some of the levers for change, and when you have responsibility for education, health and social development but have to rely on Westminster for policing and justice?”

If the argument for devolution is so strong in the context of a society in which policing has a deeply troubled past,

then the case is surely even stronger in the more benign circumstances of Wales. In the case of broadcasting, which is currently a reserved matter in Scotland, we believe that our particular linguistic and cultural make up – as well as our heavy dependence on public broadcasting – means that there is a compelling case for going further in Wales. Full responsibility for S4C should be devolved and there should be shared responsibility between the Welsh and UK level in the field of public broadcasting.

### A Welsh legal jurisdiction

It seems to be common ground, even among those initially sceptical about devolution that a distinct Welsh legal jurisdiction will eventually emerge. That being so, we consider it necessary to plan ahead for that development rather than let it emerge in a gradual, ad-hoc and unmanaged manner. This is not a can to be kicked down the road to be picked up by some future Commission. It is rather an issue on which the Silk Commission could and should take a lead. The goal of establishing a stable and sustainable settlement demands nothing less.

### Capacity

In developing our evidence for Silk – a process that has encompassed the commissioning of numerous research papers and extensive discussions – we have been asking some hard questions about the quality of Welsh democracy. Getting the constitutional architecture right is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for developing in Wales a culture of debate and scrutiny that is robust, inclusive and creative. One consistent theme that we've encountered in examining the work of the National Assembly and Welsh Government as well as the role of civil society is that of capacity.

In the case of the Welsh legislature, it is clear that the National Assembly is simply too small. In both absolute terms and relative to the size of the population it represents, it is one of the smallest legislatures in the world. Indeed it is

below the size necessary that would allow elected Members to undertake effectively all the necessary functions of a legislature. Even if it is politically inconvenient to say so, the case for an increase in the number of Assembly Members is unanswerable.

Capacity is also at the heart of widespread concerns about the civil service in Wales. Our evidence recommends reforms to the organisation and culture of the Welsh Government. These reforms range from realigning the political accountability of the civil service from Whitehall to the First Minister and the rest of the Welsh Government executive, to changes in education and training for civil servants.

A vibrant civil society is not some kind of optional extra if Welsh democracy is to flourish post-devolution. It is rather a fundamental requirement. Civil society organisations have an all-important role to play in policy formulation and delivery, as well as more generally in helping to hold both executive and legislature to account. Yet many of those active in Welsh civil society are deeply worried about the capacity constraints that act as a barrier to their fuller participation in the political process. Again our evidence contains concrete proposals about how these capacity constraints might be addressed: ideas that we hope will spark continuing debate among civil society organisations themselves as well as influence the thinking of the Silk Commissioners.

It is to stimulating wider debate about the constitutional future of Wales that we now turn our attention. One of the broader lessons offered by the experience of constitutional change elsewhere in the UK is that this is most successful where it is accompanied by a broader public debate, one that extends beyond politicians and even the members of official Commissions to include as many voices as possible.

.....  
**Richard Wyn Jones** is Director of the Wales Governance Centre and chair of the UK Changing Union project steering group.



# Theodore Huckle's case for a Welsh jurisdiction

Theodore Huckle, pictured in Alexandra Gardens in Cathays Park. Photo: Doug Nicholls.

**John Osmond** meets a gradualist occupying the forward trenches in the battle for devolution

Being the Welsh Government's leading lawyer, known as the Counsel General, has a mafia-like ring about it and, in part at least, Theodore Huckle fits the description. Essentially, he's a behind-the-scenes man, above the fray, and though a longstanding Labour member determinedly non-political.

Nearly two years ago, in June 2011, he was handed a new brief – devolution and Wales – and he has adopted the cause if not the country. Perhaps unwittingly, he has been thrust into forward trenches of nation building, though decidedly he does not see it that way. Late last year he batted for Wales

in the Supreme Court when the Wales Office, with a clunky hand, attempted to strike down the National Assembly's first legislative act, an innocuous local government byelaws Bill, as unconstitutional.

Huckle triumphed, though as much due to the weakness of Whitehall's position in misreading the realities of devolution as anything else. It was a landmark moment that opened the way for the Welsh Government to present its radical presentation to the Silk Commission on the National Assembly's next steps. These include everything being devolved to the Assembly except

UK matters 'reserved' to Westminster, the devolution of police and criminal justice powers, and the eventual creation of a separate jurisdiction for Wales.

Theodore Huckle sees all this as "inevitable" in due time - perhaps in the 2020s. As he puts it, "If you are going to have separate laws then, eventually you're going to have a separate jurisdiction. But it doesn't mean that everything has to be completely separate. We have a blank canvass on which to construct our own Welsh solutions. We might want to administer our domestic Magistrates Courts, County Courts and Crown Court, but continue to share the High Court, the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court with England."

He doesn't see creating a Welsh jurisdiction as a big deal. After all, Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, and even Guernsey and Jersey all have their own separate jurisdictions. Theodore Huckle is a gradualist. He is fond of saying that in Wales we tend to drop the 'd' from devolution and talk about evolution.

But he acknowledges that there are those who argue repatriating our law-making powers and building Welsh legal structures is part of a nation-building project, a precursor to greater Home Rule, even creating an independent country. "It does border on the separatist agenda," he said, "and that can cloud the issue for some people." But he was quick to add that there is no necessary correlation between separatism and a separate legal jurisdiction. As he puts it, "We're all better together in a United Kingdom where we can have our own separate identities".

But what kind of United Kingdom is it going to turn out to be? It's not just a question of devolved legal institutions and a jurisdiction providing the Welsh with a more rounded and distinctive sense of citizenship. There's also the impact of the change on the rest of the UK, especially England. For creating a separate Welsh jurisdiction will necessarily entail creating a separate English one as well.

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Writing on the IWA's ClickonWales website in February, Theodore Huckle alluded to this when discussing the reasons for the Supreme Court's decision in favour of the Welsh Government. He quoted Justice Lady Hale, a member of the Supreme Court, who last October told the Legal Wales conference in Llandudno:

"The important point is that, as long as they keep within the express limits of their powers, the devolved Parliaments are to be respected as democratically elected legislatures and are not to be treated like ordinary public authorities. The United Kingdom has indeed become a federal state with a Constitution regulating the relationships between the federal centre and the component parts."

Creating a separate Welsh jurisdiction will underscore the distinctiveness of England as one of these component parts, which may be an unwelcome novelty for legislators in Westminster. Meanwhile, whatever the outcome of the Scottish referendum in September next year, the balance of relationships across the UK are bound to change. Anticipating this, First Minister Carwyn Jones has made repeated calls for a UK-wide Constitutional Convention. As his Government's evidence to Silk put it:

"From the Welsh Government's perspective, devolution is not about how each of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland is separately governed. Rather it is about how the UK is governed, not by one but by four administrations, in a relationship which is not hierarchical."

Carwyn wants equality within some kind of federal relationship – a big ask in a situation where England overwhelmingly outweighs the three devolved territories and, anyway, is not over-eager to get involved in this kind of four-way dialogue.

As our interview warmed to these themes I sensed Theodore Huckle becoming uneasy. It was not that he was unaware of the complex issues and uncertain prospects – to the contrary – but rather that the discussion was becoming overtly political. Despite his membership of the Welsh Cabinet, Theodore Huckle emphasises that he is not a politician. First

**"I come from an English-speaking part of Wales. I would have had a lot of sympathy for people in that part of the world, mainly an older generation, who felt oppressed by bilingualism. They couldn't understand it."**

and foremost he is a lawyer, on hand to advise, and to stand back when political judgements are made.

So when I asked him about his enthusiasm for devolution he was happy to articulate the logic of the present direction of travel, but reluctant to say which way he had voted at the start of the journey, in the 1997 referendum. I sensed a similar ambivalence about that underlying project – building the political nation.

But there's no denying Theodore Huckle's allegiance. He would say he's indelibly Welsh, though inevitably of a specific kind. He was brought up in Blaenafon. His mother, a teacher, reared four children on her own. Theo was the third, went to West Mon in Pontypool in the 1970s when it was still a boys grammar. He did well, becoming the only boy in his year to gain entry to Cambridge where he studied law at Jesus College - in those days on a full grant from Gwent County Council.

Theodore Huckle has built his legal career entirely in Wales, which is unusual. In 1983 he was admitted to Lincoln's Inn as a Hardwick Entrance Scholar and the next year awarded the Megarry Major Scholarship, worth £3,500. This was enough for him to join chambers in Cardiff, for the first six months as an unpaid pupil. He chose Cardiff for the pragmatic reason that he could save money by living at home. He was called to the Bar in 1985 and his legal career took off, specializing in

personal injury cases.

So it was not the cause of Wales as such that drew him back home. But when he came he liked the lifestyle and stayed. He met his wife Alison, settled in Cardiff and now they have four girls aged eight to 18. In 2008 Huckle's Chambers in Park Place split and with colleagues he founded Civitas as the first

specialist civil law chambers in Wales. During these years Theodore Huckle's outlook on Wales underwent a subtle shift, most evident he says in a change of attitude towards the Welsh language:

"I come from an English-speaking part of Wales. I would have had a lot of sympathy for people in that part of the world, mainly an older generation, who felt oppressed by bilingualism. They couldn't understand it. And there are still people who resent the efforts to maintain the Welsh language. But now I take a completely different view. It seems to me that politicisation of the language is completely receding. It should be a matter of celebration that we have this diversity of people and languages across the country. We should look at ways we can promote this as a distinctive brand for Wales in the world."

It is a statement that gives you a sense of a journey being made and a border crossed. It is hard not to speculate that Theodore Huckle is embarked on a similar journey in relation to devolution, Welsh citizenship and creating a jurisdiction.

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**John Osmond** is Editor of the *welsh agenda*.

# Making Wales open for business

Geraint Talfan Davies reports on an IWA seminar that questioned the Welsh predilection for public sector solutions

## Articles

Making Wales open for business

## Nationalist Politics in the 1960s

Elystan Morgan's tryst with Wales

The real story behind Tryweryn and the Investiture

Economic opportunity rather than rights critical for language survival

Despite the clamour for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to adopt a Plan B, or at least a Plan A+, there is almost no prospect that Britain will desert the ruling consensus amongst Western governments that favours a firm brake on public expenditure for as far ahead as the eye can see. If things seem tough in the public sector, most believe that worse is to come. Welsh local authorities and health boards are grappling with sizeable deficits, and it is often asserted that 'we will have to find new ways of doing things'.

Easier said than done. Successive Welsh administrations have explicitly rejected a competitive, market driven reform of public services in favour of a 'citizen-centred', collaborative approach. Following the creation of the National Assembly in 1999 the Welsh Government resisted the use of PFI schemes, and can claim that its liabilities under such schemes are now far less than is the case in England.

How open are we to new ways of doing things, especially if that might involve making use of private sector businesses? Is there a tension between the Welsh Government's aspirations for a business friendly Wales and its position on private sector involvement in public services? If so, what are the effects of that tension? Where is the debate in Wales on the merits of traditional public service delivery versus social enterprise and

competitive approaches?

The IWA has been keen to have such matters debated, but we have often run up against the tendency in Wales to voice concerns in private and not to rock boats publicly. Recently we tested the water with a seminar on these themes, conducted under the Chatham House rule. This brought together people drawn from the private, public and voluntary sectors, as well as government officials and academics. It was also supported by the Office of Fair Trading, part of whose job is to explore the effectiveness of markets. The OFT's Chairman, Philip Collins attended.

It produced a lively, occasionally impassioned debate, and a surprising level of agreement. It focused on three features of the situation in Wales: (i) economic realities; (ii) the impact of cultural attitudes towards business and competition; and (iii) public sector policies and practice in Wales.

First, there is a problem of scale. Wales is a small part of the UK market and doesn't have a very strong internal market. Our corporate sector is small and small scale companies predominate. There are far too few middle-sized companies, and too many of them become the prey rather than the predator. Even in the services sector Wales is in competition with bigger centres across the border. Consolidation of a number of industries has seen

control shifting to London and the South East. The net result is that the public sector is more dominant in Wales than in any other UK region except Northern Ireland, and that people feel that the private sector is not the driver of progress. This places a considerable onus on the public sector to drive innovation.

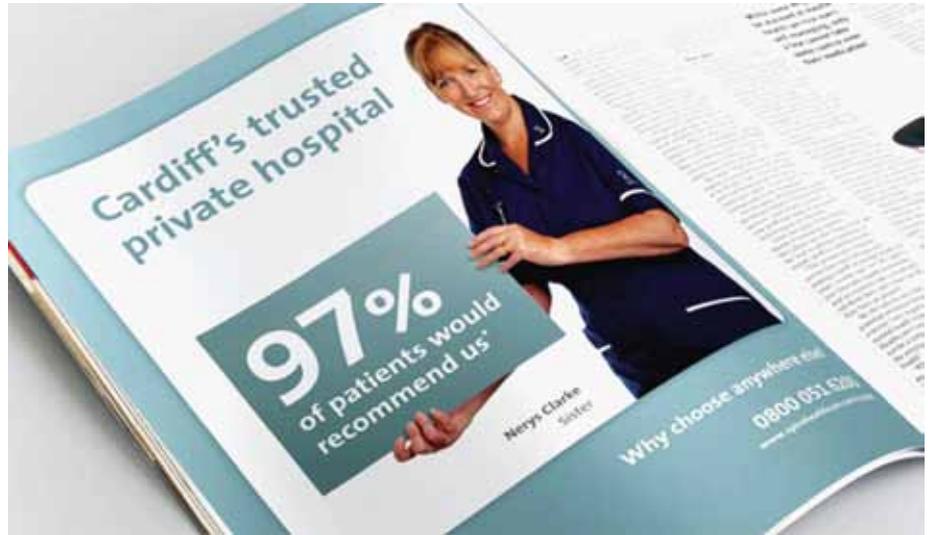
There is scepticism about the virtues of the competitive market because it is felt that the market hasn't delivered for Wales. This feeling arises from the decline in Wales's economic fortunes in recent decades and from a political culture that sees Wales as more communitarian than England and politics as more overtly social democrat. There are very few private sector representatives amongst elected representatives in the National Assembly. This is even true of the Conservative group.

The financial crisis has sharpened interest in social enterprise, mutuals and other not-for-profit models. Although this was understandable, some participants felt it was also a 'reality avoidance mechanism'. The notion of competition as a driver of innovation, growth and consumer satisfaction was largely excluded from policy discourse in Wales. Some felt that the differences in the political culture between Wales and England might be greater than actual differences in public opinion in the two countries – especially in terms of people's experience as

**Even in the services sector Wales is in competition with bigger centres across the border. Consolidation of a number of industries has seen control shifting to London and the South East. The net result is that the public sector is more dominant in Wales than in any other UK region except Northern Ireland, and that people feel that the private sector is not the driver of progress.**

consumers of public services.

For some a laudable preference for equality translated into "a sad weakness for homogeneity in the public sector, resulting in a dull uniformity of provision



The use of private health as a way of inducing greater contestability and choice in service provision is making little headway in Wales. NHS Financial Information reports that private patient income earned by NHS trusts in England rose by 5.3 per cent during 2012, and by 15 per cent in London's specialist hospitals. On the other hand Welsh NHS private practice fell by 8 per cent and Scottish by 18 per cent.

favouring safeness and mediocrity". Innovation and diversity was often attacked as producing 'a post code lottery', whereas some thought they were fundamental to successful public service provision.

In Wales the supply side rather than consumers or users determines what is offered. This, it was argued, would be an increasing problem, as any idea that consumers would be passive in relation to public services was wishful thinking. The notion that uniformity is valued more highly than great service or innovation

for citizens needs to be tested.

In terms of public sector policies and practice two issues dominated the discussion, the appropriate boundaries for public sector activity,

and procurement. Several participants referred to the Welsh public sector "doing things it should not be doing". There was a need for a wider public debate about the appropriate role of government. Some worried that such debate as exists is taking place "in a political vacuum – an economics-free zone". Similarly, there is also little debate on public sector productivity, which some thought also applied to a third sector that was largely government funded.

Others felt that the expansion of the third sector - under the rubric of not-for-profit – raised competition issues. Examples were given of government funded third sector agencies competing with private sector companies in inappropriate ways. The problem, it was said, is that for these kinds of bodies income was often more important than cost or profitability. If we are to develop private sector provision, there is a case for more stringent guidelines for government funded organisations and clear conditions that provide a level playing field for organisations from all sectors.

Another issue in this area was the application of EU structural funds. If the main purpose of the structural funds was to raise per capita GDP, it had simply

not happened. Priorities and distribution methods had failed. The emphasis had been on soft outcomes in which “the private sector didn’t get a look in”. Excessively bureaucratic processes had favoured the involvement of public and voluntary sector representatives.

Public procurement – amounting to £4.3 billion a year in Wales - has been much discussed and the Welsh Government has taken several steps to create procurement policies that are intended to aid economic development. Some academic contributors believed that Wales now has excellent procurement policies, in many areas better than in England. However, a problem is that much of the public sector is not implementing Welsh Government policy. Lack of compliance is a major issue.

There was a separate tension between the demands of open competition and the wish to help Welsh business. Several thought greater attention should be paid to the long

term effects of the design of public services, with collaboration balanced by the encouragement of competitive suppliers who would innovate and drive up quality. Procurement should not be ‘the only tool in the box’. For long-term sustainability and citizen satisfaction, the public sector needed a wide range of suppliers, including some with ambitions to succeed in wider UK, European and international markets.

Some also saw evidence of a generalised distrust of business, producing a nervousness amongst public sector officials in dealing with the private sector; which some described as “a culture of fear”. Others thought that public procurement procedures were “costing the private sector a fortune”, and that this was a major disincentive for many small firms.

One view was that compliance with Welsh Government procurement policy should be made a mandatory duty on all public bodies, and that the head of every public sector body should made to

account publicly for its implementation. It remained the case that for most public sector buyers the key performance indicator was still price. As one contributor put it, “If you change the KPI, you will change the way they buy”.

Performance in this area was being affected by a lack of procurement skills – exacerbated by having too many local authorities - and the EU Remedies Directive which increased risk aversion. Others pointed to a tendency within government in Wales to ‘tender for innovation’ – that is, going to market with a call for ideas.

At the end of the session many felt that the seminar had seen a more honest exchange than is usual in Wales on the place of the private sector in Welsh policy thinking. They urged the IWA to find ways to develop this debate and to engage the Welsh Government. We will.

.....  
**Geraint Talfan Davies** is Chair of the IWA.



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Lord Elystan Morgan pictured at an event to mark the launch of his memoirs in Aberystwyth in November 2012.

## Elystan Morgan's tryst with Wales

Emrys Roberts engages with the memoirs of a key figure in 20th Century Welsh politics

Lord Elystan Morgan likens his 'Memories of a Lifetime' to the reminiscences of someone looking through a bundle of photographs. The format serves him well, proving a more interesting read than a strict chronological autobiography would have done.

He gives us a lively portrait of rural life in Cardiganshire in the mid-20th Century. The twinkle was in his eye from the start. He was fond of playing tricks on his playmates – mostly fairly innocent and not too much of an embarrassment to a future judge, unless his memory has been diplomatically selective.

The biggest wrench in his life came on moving from the village school to Ysgol Ardwyn Grammar School in Aberystwyth where he encountered a strong English, and even military, element for the first time - in both school and town. He began reading widely, including Saunders Lewis's weekly column in *Y Faner*. This led him to Saunders's *Canlyn*

*Arthur* (In the Steps of Arthur) and the big impression made on him by the story of how the Czech leader Tomas Masaryk had come to realise that his first loyalty was to his own people, not to Austria.

This led Elystan to join Plaid Cymru while still at school. He later became secretary of the Aberystwyth college branch and met Plaid leader Gwynfor Evans. Gwynfor made a huge impression on him as someone totally dedicated to the cause of Wales. His admiration for Gwynfor transcended any subsequent disagreements, even after he decided to join Labour in 1965, having been a prominent member of Plaid for well over a decade.

At this point, what have thus far been a series of 'snapshot' reminiscences of his early life give way to an apparent imperative to justify this change of party allegiance. He cites an acrimonious atmosphere in Plaid executive meetings claiming that I, though General Secretary

of the party, was also the self-appointed leader of New Nation, a group he describes as a party-within-a-party.

Alas, his memory fails him on this point. New Nation was John Legonna's brainchild after I had been sacked as party Secretary. It was a loose group, completely outside the party, which published a few discussion papers and arranged the first Cilmeri Commemorative Meeting in December 1964.

Without defining socialism, Elystan claims that he had always held socialist as well as nationalist beliefs. Plaid's poor showing in the 1964 General Election had led him to conclude that there was greater scope for furthering the interests of Wales within the Labour Party rather than within Plaid.

Whilst this is a perfectly respectable argument, he seems to forget that he stood for election as Vice-President of Plaid in 1964. He expected to win as it was well known that he had

Gwynfor's full support. In the event, he was beaten by Chris Rees, who had been active in the protests against the drowning of Tryweryn and, like me, had gone to prison rather than join the British Army at a time when the majority of Welsh MPs had voted against peace-time conscription. Most members of Plaid assumed – rightly or wrongly - that Elystan's defection reflected his disappointment at losing the election to Chris.

I permitted myself a wry smile when I heard of Elystan's change of allegiance. After all, he had complained not long before that I was more of a socialist than a nationalist. Yet, in spite of being sacked from my job - on the basis of false accusations secretly circulated about me which I had no chance to rebut - I still remained a member.

I was disappointed that a man of Elystan's sharp, analytical mind had swallowed those accusations hook, line and sinker. Even now he seems to believe that my efforts to turn Plaid into an effective democratic political party

He also retained the ability to laugh at himself sometimes. For instance, on being made a judge he remarked that, as a barrister, he had had “some brilliant acquittals at Newport - especially when prosecuting!”

had some sinister ulterior objective. I can attribute this only to his almost blind admiration for Gwynfor who wrongly perceived that his own position was under threat.

None of this, however, invalidates Elystan's argument that people prepared to promote the national interests of Wales are needed in the Labour Party. Realising that, I have never held Elystan's decision against him and was perhaps the only Plaid member who gave him a friendly greeting when he ventured onto the Eisteddfod Field the week his defection was announced in

example, was his defence of a farmer and his son who had handled a bailiff rather roughly. Their command of English was not great and Elystan argued that they had misunderstood the bailiff's intentions because they were virtually monoglot. The Chairman of the Bench had snorted that that was nonsense as there were no monoglots left in Wales. Elystan suggested that the Chairman was possibly one himself – though if he could address the court in any language other than English he would be happy to withdraw the remark. That quickly got the jury on his side!

He also retained the ability to laugh at himself sometimes. For instance, on being made a judge he remarked that, as a barrister, he had had “some brilliant acquittals at Newport - especially when prosecuting!” He was, of course, a very accomplished orator, which was a key asset when he set out on a political career in the mid 20th Century, though that is not so much valued nowadays.



A Labour poster for the 1966 general election in Ceredigion which Elystan Morgan won by 532 votes. The Liberals had previously held the seat for nearly 100 years.

Welsh language adverts on S4C these days. How things have changed!).

And so to what is the most significant part of the book: Elystan's reflections on the way devolution has developed and his thoughts about what should be the next phases in the process. Among his sometimes radical suggestions are:

- That the Assembly be recognised officially as a Parliament and its powers extended to include everything not specifically excluded from its remit.
- That the number of members be increased to 100 and a second chamber established to ensure effective scrutiny of government.
- Consideration be given to the role of local authorities.
- A form of dominion status for the nations of Britain with a central government having power in a small number of functions of common interest.

The suggestion that local authorities might become little more than the local administrative arm of central government, rather than local democratic decision-making bodies in their own right, seems to fly directly against the arguments he himself advanced against local authority re-organisation in the mid 1990s. I would argue that we should be considering how to de-centralise power rather than contemplating a further bout of centralisation.

The other major difficulty is with Elystan Morgan's idea of some kind of federal government for the UK. Whatever level of sovereignty was retained by the individual nations, the central government would presumably still be responsible for matters such as foreign policy and the armed forces. In any such federation England would remain the dominant force and thus in effect would make decisions in federal matters. The English penchant for an aggressive foreign policy

(usually subservient to the US) and for maintaining large forces to back it up remain anathema to the Celtic nations. We would not only be drawn into foreign adventures of which we disapprove, we would also have to contribute to the cost and that would inhibit our ability to tackle many of our entrenched social and economic problems.

In fairness, Elystan would argue that he had not intended to produce a blue-print but merely wished to highlight subjects that merit in-depth – and, indeed, fairly urgent – consideration. The history of his involvement in politics at many levels, the contributions he has made and his insightful comments will hopefully ensure that this volume helps give rise to the serious debate that these issues merit.

.....  
**Emrys Roberts** was general secretary of Plaid Cymru from 1960 to 1964. *Atgofion Oes: Elystan* is published by Y Lolfa at £12.95.



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NATIONALIST  
POLITICS IN  
THE 1960s

# The real story behind Tryweryn and the Investiture

The iconic graffiti maintained by Cymdeithas yr Iaith on a broken down farmhouse wall alongside the A487 near Llanrhystud, a few miles south of Aberystwyth. In 2009 Llanrhystud Community Council launched an £80,000 appeal to buy the land to preserve the landmark as a memorial. The appeal was kick started with a £30,000 grant from the Welsh Government, announced at the Bala Eisteddfod that year.

## J. Graham Jones praises an account of physical-force Welsh nationalism

Published to mark the 50th anniversary of the first bombing campaign in Wales, *Hands Off Wales* offers a definitive overview of the rise of Welsh nationalist militancy in the 1960s and establishes the importance of the protests to the nation's history and to its cultural and political advance. The theme of this meticulously researched and well-crafted, pioneering study is the unprecedented militant campaigns in Wales at the time of the flooding of Tryweryn in Meirionnydd to provide a water supply for the people of Liverpool in 1963, and the protests against the Investiture of Charles as Prince of Wales at Caernarfon Castle on 1 July 1969.

The two militant groups which emerged in Wales during these years were the Free Wales Army and *Mudiad Amddiffyn Cymru*, the Movement for the

Defence of Wales. However, as the author is at pains to point out, the links between them were not anywhere near as close as some analysts would have us believe.

It is the author's firmly held conviction that neither group would have been formed had Plaid Cymru reacted more vigorously when the proposal to flood Cwm Tryweryn was first announced in 1955. He accuses the nationalist party of lapsing into "little more than sentimental loquaciousness" at this crucial juncture in its post-war development. And he is critical of long-serving party president Gwynfor Evans for not taking a more proactive role at this crisis point in his party's evolution.

Concerned that both the nation's cultural life and environment faced a grievous threat, other activists were consequently prepared to fight to defend them, whatever the cost. Wyn Thomas deals with themes and groups well-nigh ignored by most 20th Century, perhaps more respectable historians. There was a marked reluctance in academia to give

the subject of Welsh militant nationalism in the 1960s its due attention and respect.

Both Tryweryn and the Investiture led to bomb explosions. As the author is anxious to point out, the explosions which occurred at the Tryweryn Reservoir site in February 1963 were "the first sustained use of explosives as a means of political protest which the nation had ever witnessed". Too young himself to remember the events which he chronicles, Wyn Thomas has earned his living in the care industry for more than two decades. This authoritative volume is an adaptation of his doctoral thesis presented in Swansea University in 2011.

The authority and originality of the study derives mainly from the long, and exhaustive series of interviews Thomas conducted between 2000 and 2012 with almost all those involved, face-to-face and via correspondence and e-mail. Indeed, many were interviewed on more than one occasions - John Jenkins of Wrexham six times, Emyr Llewelyn Jones of Ffostrasol seven, and

Owain Williams of Llanllyfni six. The author's determination to leave no stone unturned and to check the accuracy and veracity of his material is impressive.

The voices of officialdom are heard as well. They include Lord Snowdon, Sir Tasker Watkins, Sir John Mortimer, and representatives of the Home Office and the Ministry of Defence. The information is further buttressed by archival research at Aberystwyth and Kew, intense newspaper research, and a thorough review of the (now steadily growing) secondary literature in the field.

Throughout the absorbing text the material is placed firmly in its historical and geographical context. Among the background episodes to the emergence of militancy in the 1960s the following are highlighted:

- The piecemeal concessions to Welsh nationhood grudgingly granted by the centralist Attlee government after the war.
- The ultimately abortive, although still influential Parliament for Wales agitation of the period 1950-56 which culminated in the presentation of a petition to parliament bearing the names of 240,000 signatories.
- The lengthy, tenacious campaign of

the Beasley family of Llanelli to receive a bilingual rate demand.

The author also provides a wider political backdrop. When setting the scene for the downfall of the Free Wales Army during 1968, we are told of the events of that incredible year in Vietnam, Northern Ireland, Spain, and the United States. As *Mudiad Amdiffyn Cymru* stepped up its campaign of direct action, Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King were cruelly assassinated in the USA, Northern Ireland seemed set to erupt into unprecedented outbreaks of violence, and Enoch Powell delivered his inflammatory 'Rivers of Blood' speech in Birmingham.

Wyn Thomas strives to be fair and to tell both sides of the story. Although highly critical of Gwynfor Evans, he readily points out that he certainly had his avid apologists and defenders, among them Elystan Morgan, whom Evans considered his heir-apparent to the Plaid Cymru presidency upon his eventual retirement.

The author is scrupulously fair to Julian Cayo Evans, the self-styled leader of the Free Wales Army. While quoting police reports that Evans possessed "an underdeveloped personality" and "a mental age of about 12 years", he readily acknowledges the opinion of a retired



John Jenkins, Secretary General of Mudiad Amdiffyn Cymru, the Movement for the Defence for Wales, arriving home in Cardiff in 1976, after serving the greater part of a ten-year sentence for his role in the bombing attempt to disrupt the Investiture of the Prince of Wales in Caernarfon Castle on 1 July 1969.

police inspector that throughout their tortuous dealings Cayo Evans remained "approachable and not without charm and warmth". Journalist Lyn Ebenezer appreciated Evans's close friendship, commenting that there was "no one nicer and no one kinder".

The book is both rigorous and respectful in its treatment of *Mudiad Amdiffyn Cymru*. We are told that its Secretary General, John Jenkins, organised a clandestine movement of which any anti-imperialist movement in the world would be proud. Certainly, the reader cannot be left in any doubt about his integrity.

**Dr J. Graham Jones** is Senior Archivist and Head of the Welsh Political Archive at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. *Hands Off Wales: Nationhood and Militancy* by Wyn Thomas is published by Gomer Press at £25.00.



Gwynfor Evans seen congratulating David Walters and David Pritchard, two non Welsh-speaking Plaid members from the Monmouthshire Valleys, following their 'non violent direct action' sabotage at the Tryweryn reservoir site in September 1962. Looking on is their lawyer Elystan Morgan.

# Economics rather than rights critical for language survival

**Harold Carter and John Aitchison find there are now more Welsh speakers in Cardiff than in the whole of Ceredigion, Gwynedd and Ynys Môn**

The release of the first returns on the Welsh language at the 2011 census has caused both anguish and dismay. The 2001 census was thought to have marked a distinctive turning point where over a century of decline had been transformed into modest gains, a reward it seemed for the investment of effort and finance into linguistic regeneration. But the decade since has failed to build on that historic turn around and decline and fall have again set in.

Between 1991 and 2001 the number of speakers increased by just over 13 per cent, from roughly 508,000 to around 580,000. Ten years on the picture is surprisingly different. The surge in numbers has been halted, with a decrease to 560,000 people indicating that they can, though not necessarily do, speak the language. This represents a decennial fall of 2.2 per cent. Undoubtedly, the most worrying aspect of the recent data is the four areas of the country which recorded losses:

- The rural heartland of the north and west, what was once called 'Y Fro Gymraeg'.
- Swansea and its hinterland.
- The old central coalfield area of Merthyr Tydfil and the Rhondda.
- The industrial parts of the north-east, around Wrexham and Flint.

By far the most critical of these areas, and the one to which most attention has been directed is the rural heartland. Of course, it can be argued that the results were not unexpected. In *A Broken Heartland and a New Beginning*, an analysis of the 1991 census (in *Planet 97*), we drew attention to a serious collapse and fragmentation in Welsh as a community language within these parts, especially marked by the decline in the number of those communities where over 70 per cent spoke Welsh and where it could therefore be regarded as a thriving mode of every day communication.

Those earlier studies were based on detailed analyses at the community level. However, the cruder 2011 data would suggest that the processes then operative have continued. Between 2001 and 2011 Ceredigion and Carmarthen in particular showed significant falls in absolute numbers of over six per cent. It is distressing to record a fact which is the most telling of all, that for the first time the Welsh-speaking populations within these authorities are no longer in the majority. There are now more Welsh speakers in Cardiff than in the whole of Ceredigion, Gwynedd and Ynys Môn.

At this point it is appropriate to turn from narration of facts to an interpretation where an explanation of

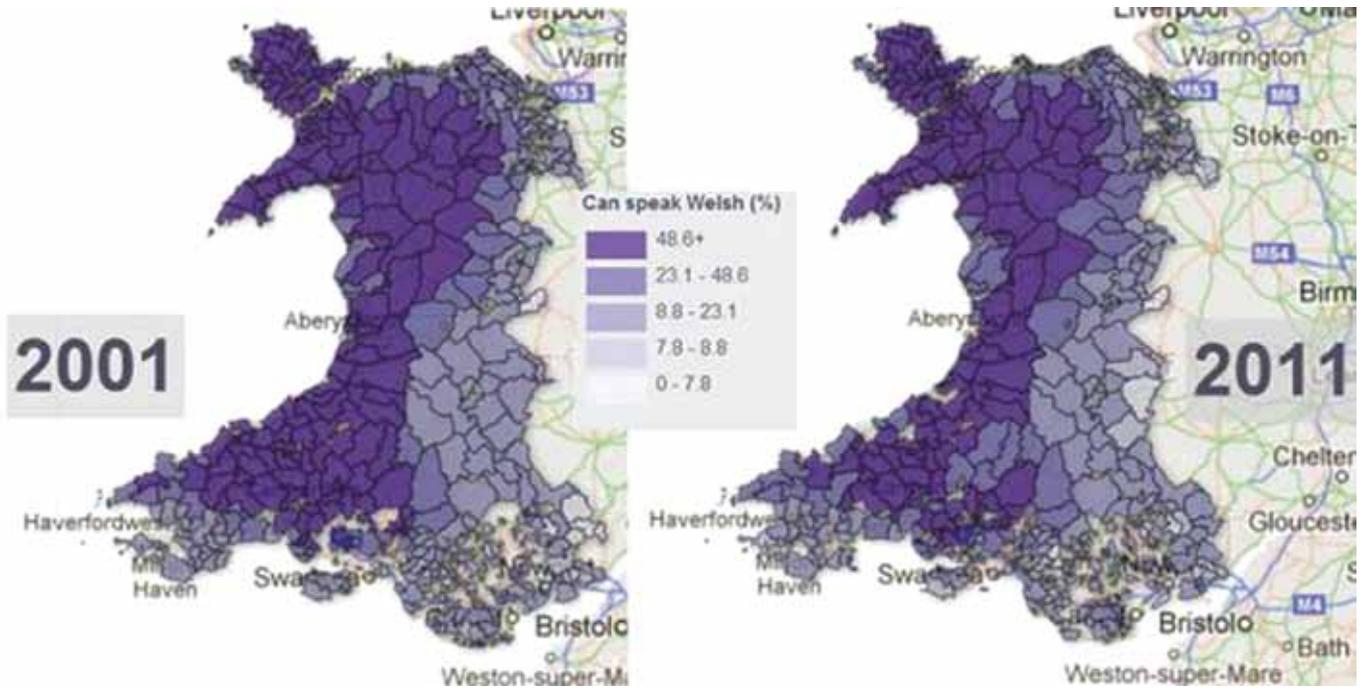
language loss can be found. In simplest terms the point at which any good or service is offered is determined by two controls. The first of these is the threshold population. This is the minimum population required to make the offering economically viable. Put crudely, there is a Marks and Spencer in Cardiff not in Aberystwyth because the capital city can provide the threshold population that Aberystwyth cannot. It is possible to make these measures much more sophisticated, for example by introducing a multiplier on average earnings to give an estimate of spending power available in the town and region. But for present purposes we can use the simple basis of population.

The second control is range, or the distance over which people are prepared to travel to gain access to the good or service. At some point the distance becomes either too expensive or too inconvenient. People will refuse to travel and the offering is outranged. Again sophistication can be introduced by adding a consideration of time taken rather than simple physical distance.

Leaving aside all the elaborations possible, it remains the case that threshold population and range remain the two essential controls of location. One modification needs to be added. Population numbers are as applicable to service as to commercial activities, but in service terms the interpretation of range must be adjusted to the distance people can be expected to travel.

The above discussion might seem remote from language issues but it is fundamental to them. In times of economic difficulty the planning response is unequivocally placed on threshold numbers. Moreover, the providers of services can ignore range, for the costs and inconveniences of travel are not borne by the providers but by the consumers.

The result is that economies of scale and accompanying centralisation determine the way services are provided. This has meant widespread closures of shops, pubs, schools,



Distribution of Welsh speakers by community council boundaries at the 2001 and 2011 Census.

magistrate courts, leisure centres and swimming pools and especially medical services. The removal of such critical services inevitably weakens the viability of rural communities, encourages the emigration of the young and active, and hence leads to language loss. It is in this context that the struggle for the future of the language has to be located rather than in campaigns over rights and notions of equality.

Concern has been expressed over the use of Welsh in the National Health Service. That is all well and good. But to the population of these rural areas the issue is not the language used but the effective provision of crucial hospital services. The *reducto ad absurdum* in National Health Service terms is that the assemblage of the finest group of specialists is of no value whatsoever if I am dead on arrival. In language terms it translates to the point that the status of Welsh will matter little if there is no one left to speak it.

It must be added that measures to offset these problems face great difficulties. Large scale capital projects (Wylfa excepted) are very unlikely

given the present state of the economy. In any case, they tend to increase the immigration of non-Welsh speakers. Small and medium size businesses face a formidable range of difficulties, foremost among them remoteness and a totally inadequate transport infrastructure. In thinly peopled areas which are losing services it is difficult to assemble and maintain an effective reservoir of skills.

Some agriculturally based enterprises, in dairy and meat products, have been very successful. But here, too, there have been problems and the movement of production to larger more accessible sites is an all too familiar story. In short, the economic means for sustaining rural communities are weak and seemingly declining.

The loss of Welsh speakers in Swansea and its hinterland is equally disturbing. In Swansea itself there was only a slight decline between 1991 and 2001 in the percentage of Welsh speakers, from 13.3 to 13.2 per cent. But it accelerated in the succeeding decade, falling to 11.4 per cent. This is not easy to explain for Swansea is a city with apparently all the advantages

of Cardiff or Newport. Moreover, it has been one of the bastions of the language and there have been significant efforts to sustain the language both in the city and its hinterland. Accordingly there would be a presumption for growth parallel to that at Cardiff. Yet whereas Swansea returned 27.9 per cent speaking Welsh in 1911 and Cardiff only 6.7, the comparative figures one hundred years later are 11.4 as against 11.1 (it should be noted that the areas of the County Boroughs in 1911 were quite different from those of the present Unitary Authorities).

The reasons for the loss in Swansea are not easy to elucidate. Maybe the city has not benefited from the influx of Welsh speakers associated with government and the media which has characterised Cardiff. It is significant that in the age group 3-14 there are 32.8 per cent speakers in Cardiff, but only 28.5 per cent in Swansea - an indication perhaps of a lack in Swansea of the young Welsh-speaking in-migrant families which are associated with the capital's administrative functions. It is possible to maintain that this area,



possibly extending westward to include Llanelli and its environs, represents a throwback to the conditions which over much of the last century resulted in language loss. Whatever the explanation, it is little short of disastrous that this metropolitan area has to be added to the rural heartland when the decline of the last decade is assessed.

The third area we noted is Merthyr and Rhondda Cynon Taf. Those authorities recorded virtual stability. There was no change in the Rhondda and Merthyr showed a small decline from ten per cent to just under nine per cent. Here the explanation must lie in the economic problems which have

There was no change in the Rhondda and Merthyr showed a small decline from ten per cent to just under nine per cent. Here the explanation must lie in the economic problems which have beset the area.

beset the area. There was probably very little in-migration of non-Welsh speakers to these old industrial regions to translate the situation into one with tangible decline in proportion. Nor does there seem to have been any real movement in the opposite direction of locally-based increase. The result is a depressing stalemate with little movement in either direction.

The final area is the north-east. In

Wrexham the percentage of speakers fell from 14.4 to 12.9 per cent and at Flint from 14.1 to 13.2 per cent. In an odd way, given what has been written earlier about economic decline, it is probably economic growth which contributed to these changes. The continuing growth of Broughton has been one of the real centres of development in Wales. Moreover there is a great contrast with the equivalent region in southern Wales, around Cardiff. There is no parallel draw for Welsh speakers to jobs created by a Welsh administration. In contrast the area is within the urban hinterland of Chester and, more importantly, of Liverpool, and indeed Manchester. In a sense its loyalties are directed across the border. All this generates a condition where a strong basis for language increase is unlikely.

This analysis is circumscribed by the coarse level at which the data is available. Modification or qualification

may be necessary when the small area statistics are published. It also should be noted that, as always with census data, questions of reliability have been raised, especially where results do not fit preconceived ideas and confound expectations. As with all questionnaire surveys, there are legitimate criticisms, but this review is based on comparisons over a census decade, and it is unlikely that any shortcomings would have

changed over that period. The problems of data reliability in 2011 are surely the same as those in 2001.

It has also been suggested that the data are so unreliable as to be unworthy of analysis. To that there is really no answer other than that the census is the only survey that does not rely on sampling and rejection leaves no room at all for objective enquiry. In artistic terms there may be room for impressionism as against the reality of the photograph, but in social enquiry the objective reality of the photograph is much to be preferred.

Our core conclusion is that whereas in the immediate past the growth in the south and east outbalanced the decline in the old heartlands that balance has now been reversed. Growth in those southern and eastern parts now seems to have reached a plateau. The number of Welsh speakers in Cardiff advanced by only 0.2 percentage points. Meanwhile, decline in the heartland, which was identified at the last census, has now surfaced and been clearly revealed. To this has to be added the failure of the area about Swansea Bay to show gains.

For policy makers the message is not an easy one to accept, that all the efforts over status and equality may be of little ultimate effect if the core areas of the language continue to show no economic dynamism and where bureaucracy sees the future as totally conditioned by the exigencies of threshold populations.

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#### **John Aitchison and Harold Carter**

are both former Gregynog Professors of Human Geography at Aberystwyth University. They have written extensively on the spatial patterns of the Welsh language including *A Geography of the Welsh Language 1961-1991* (University of Wales Press, 1994), *Language, Economy and Society. The changing fortunes of the Welsh Language in the Twentieth Century* (University of Wales Press, 2000) and *Spreading the Word. The Welsh Language 2001* (Y Lolfa, 2004).

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*"Maer Radd Meistr mewn Llywodraeth a Gwleidyddiaeth Cymru yn gwrs rhagorol - mae'n gyfoes, perthnasol, heriol a diddorol. Mae wedi bod yn wych gallu astudio'r cwrs hwn yn rhan-amser gan weithio ym maes Gwleidyddiaeth Cymru ar yr un pryd. Mae'r addysgu wedi bod yn ardderchog a'r cwrs wedi bod yn hynod fuddiol i mi yn bersonol ac yn broffesiynol."* Graddedig 2011



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The siting of a new airport alongside the Severn estuary near Newport would minimise noise pollution, with planes able to take off and land over water in a 24-hour operation.

# Wales and West should join forces on airport

**John Borkowski and Angus Walker** suggest a radical solution to the Welsh air connectivity deficit

The Welsh Government's £52 million acquisition of Cardiff Airport at the end of March was the right decision in order to facilitate future planning for Wales's air transport. In the longer-term, however, neither the present Cardiff nor Bristol airports are well placed to satisfy Welsh needs.

Over the last few years the number of passengers using Cardiff airport has halved to a little over a million a year. Meanwhile, though Bristol airport has been much more successful, with passenger numbers climbing close to six million a year, its future development is constrained by its location, runway limitations and other factors.

Southern Wales has too small a population to base its long-term aviation needs on its own. Indeed, around three-quarters of Wales' air passengers already travel to English airports, mainly Heathrow, Manchester, Bristol

and Gatwick. The challenge for the Welsh Government is to work closely with South West England to develop a joint approach towards aviation that will result in a major new airport for the whole of south west Britain.

The UK Government has established an Airports Commission, under the chairmanship of Sir Howard Davies, "to examine how the UK's status as a leading global aviation hub can be maintained". As part of its remit the Commission has been asked "to maintain a UK perspective, taking appropriate account of the national, regional and local implications of any proposals."

The last review of airports policy in 2003 adopted an approach that considered regions separately. By doing so it failed to take account of the *combined* needs of south Wales and the West of England. Separating consideration of these two markets led to a sub-optimal strategy for the development of air travel for both south Wales and the South West England. Both regions need to ensure that this approach is not followed by the new Airports Commission.

There is a danger that decisions on airport provision in London could mean a serious worsening of the air connectivity of southern

Wales and the south west of England. It would be particularly severe if it is decided to opt for airport development on the east side of London. Unless a new level of air service provision can be created for south Wales and the West, it will entail a significant loss of economic competitiveness for both regions.

In a study we have prepared for the IWA, *Air Connectivity for Wales and the West*, we argue that the two regions should cooperate to promote a state of the art, 24-hour Severnside passenger and cargo airport that would serve the whole of south west Britain. The IWA will be submitting our report to the Howard Davies Commission.

A decade ago we made a study of the concept of a Severnside airport for Newport Council. We believe there is still an opportunity to build it on the edge of the estuary between Newport and Chepstow, with convenient access to the motorway system and to the new electrified rail service. It would take

nearly ten years to plan and build, but the eventual and coordinated closure of Cardiff and Bristol Airports would mean that it would have 10-11 million passengers a year from the start. This is a much higher figure that the British Airports Authority was able to deploy at the opening of Stansted Airport's first major expansion in 1991.

The siting of a new airport between Newport and Chepstow would minimise noise pollution, with planes able to take off and land over water. This would also allow it to become the UK's first purpose-built, 24-hour cargo airport, reversing the relative decline of air cargo in the UK. It could become an integrated cargo hub linking all four modes of transport – air, road, rail and marine.

This large purpose built airport would provide Wales and the west of England with a much better set of air services than anything that could be developed separately at Cardiff or Bristol. Cardiff Airport's major problem is that

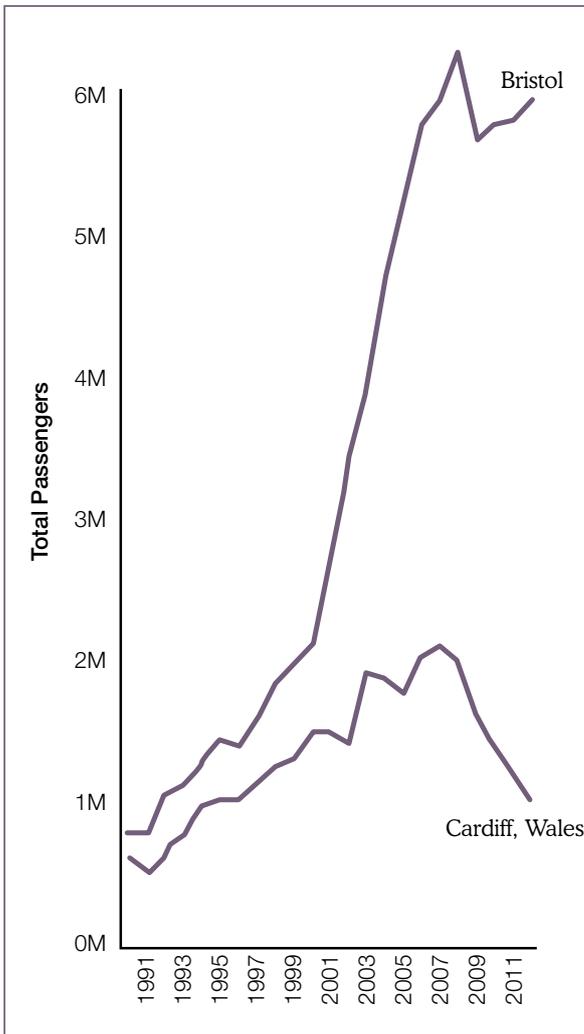
is has to compete with Bristol Airport which has been much more successful at developing scheduled flights. Bristol has scheduled flights to 70 destinations compared with just 12 at Cardiff.

However, Bristol Airport has its own problems. It is located on a hill to the south west of the city and is badly located in terms of convenient road and rail access. The airport site is restricted with little space to expand and only a 2,011 metre length runway. The airport could probably be expanded to reach around 10 million passengers a year, but at this size operations would be very congested in terms of runway movements, taxi way use, and lack of parking stands.

Access to the airport with passenger traffic doubling to 10 million per annum would create substantial nuisance for local residents and would be a significant local congestion problem. While on paper the airport could be expanded, it would require a large number of additional remote stands requiring



Map showing a potential site for Severnside Airport on the Welsh side of the estuary near Newport. One runway would be on shore with a terminal to the south. A second runway would be offshore parallel to the first. The airport would be served by road and rail from the M4 and the electrified Great Western Main Line.



Graph showing the growth of passenger traffic at Cardiff and Bristol airports between 1991 and 2011.

Pilning immediately to the east of the second Severn Bridge crossing, close to north Bristol and less than 10 miles from the likely Severn estuary airport site.

The study showed that, with no new runway constructed at the English

side of the Severn estuary slightly offshore past the Caldicot Levels. This would be far less damaging in terms of noise pollution and would allow for 24-hour cargo operation. In addition the land availability at Pilning is relatively restricted. This would make it difficult to have two parallel wide-spaced runways to enable independent operations on

## What is needed in the long term is a much larger replacement airport for both Cardiff and Bristol on a better located site.

South East Airports, passenger volume at the new airport would reach 33 million passengers per annum by 2030 assuming only the closure of the existing Bristol Airport. In this scenario it was assumed that Cardiff Airport would continue to operate. If Cardiff Airport were to close (which would be a logical consequence of a decision to build the

each runway, a limitation that would not apply on the Welsh side of the Severn.

We believe our recommendations deserve to be taken seriously by Governments in London and Cardiff and by the business communities of Wales and the West of England. The Welsh Government have done absolutely the right thing in seeking to gain greater control over the future of our air connectivity. This step to preserve the traffic now needs to be coupled with our major new airport concept to take the thinking a stage further. If the Welsh economy is to prosper this is the kind of big scale, long-term project it needs.

substantial additional bussing to and from the terminal which would have to be significantly expanded on a very confined site. Operations would not be easy at this level of throughput. Fog is also a significant issue at the airport at certain times of the year. This leads to significant flight diversions and cancellations.

What is needed in the long term is a much larger replacement airport for both Cardiff and Bristol on a better located site. Evidence to support the Severn estuary airport was provided by the South West England Green Paper Consultation Document published in 2002. In this paper the UK Government published the results of a study of establishing a new 'greenfield airport' at

new airport) this would have added a further 1 to 3 million passengers per annum bringing the total at the new airport to around 35 million passengers per annum by 2030.

While this study is now ten years out of date, its principles are still correct, although the passenger volume would need to be reduced as a result of slower economic growth and the burden of extra taxation on the industry. We believe that it would be reasonable to assume a traffic generation potential in the region of 25 to 30 million passengers a year by 2050 for the Pilning site, were it to be developed.

However, rather than Pilning we prefer a site further down on the Welsh

**John Borkowski** is former Head of Strategy for British Airways and is now Managing Director of MSP Solutions, an aviation and management consultancy. **Angus Walker** is Chairman of MSP Solutions. Their report *Air Connectivity for Wales and the West* was launched at the IWA's National Economy Conference *Making Wales Competitive* in Cardiff during March.

# Sacred landscape and Sustainable Development

## Cynog Dafis argues that a circle can be squared on green growth

The Welsh economy is seriously underachieving. As economist, Gerry Holtham, has demonstrated, Wales' public sector deficit, the difference between public expenditure and what is raised through taxes, is £12 billion, a quarter of Wales' Gross Added Value (GVA). Wales' average GVA is about 75 per cent of the UK average, and the 'prosperity gap' is at present widening rather than closing.

Compare this with Scotland where the deficit is no worse than that of the whole United Kingdom. As Gerry Holtham points out, the reasons for the difference are that Wales has neither its own oil field nor a sizeable financial services sector, and that taken overall its economy is not in a healthy competitive state.

As a result of these economic realities the positions of Wales and Scotland in constitutional debate over the future of Britain are totally different. Scotland can consider political independence, whether you think this desirable or not. The next option, fiscal autonomy or 'Devo-max', is also credible and a real possibility.

However, for Wales both these options are out of the question. Not only that, but a third option of giving the Assembly the kind of substantial taxation responsibilities known as 'Devo-plus', remains a considerable challenge. Wales would still be heavily dependent on financial transfers from the Westminster Treasury. In short, and depressingly, the weakness of our economy limits our national aspirations.

There are other serious effects of

economic underachievement, including unemployment and economic inactivity, educational underachievement, and a range of health and social problems. In addition, and as serious as all of this, is the continuing haemorrhage of our best and brightest talents through emigration. In turn this is a drain on our social and cultural confidence and specifically on the vitality of the Welsh language.

The promotion of Sustainable Development is as we have all heard ad nauseam, a statutory obligation placed on the National Assembly through the 1998 and 2006 Government of Wales Acts. I played some part in the process of including this obligation in the 1998 Act, and am glad to be able to say so. However, from the standpoint of constitutional principle, it is wholly unacceptable that Westminster legislation places such an obligation (and there are others) on the National Assembly and I look forward to doing away with such obligations in a new Government of Wales Act as soon as possible.

The Welsh Government is committed to passing a Sustainable Development Act and a Bill to take this forward will be presented to the Assembly this October. It is opportune therefore, and at the risk of oversimplification to remind ourselves of the two rival visions of a future Wales set out in the iconic *englyn* of Taliesin o Eifion (Thomas Jones 1820-76):

'Pure Wales, tranquil Wales –  
fair Wales  
Wales beloved always  
Fairest Wales, seize the day,  
Land of song, advance and progress.'

Here we have two versions of Wales. In

the first couplet there is a complacent, sentimental, picture of a *pure, tranquil, beloved* Wales. In the second, there is the alternative, a Wales which *seizes the day* and embraces *progress*, one of the key concepts of the Victorian age and the industrial revolution.

The concept of Wales as a beautiful, unspoilt landscape, a marvellous country for visitors to explore and discover its romantic, rocky primitive beauty is analysed in Peter Lord's masterly volume *Imaging the Nation*. It was this version of Wales, and of so-called 'North Wales' in particular, which caused the UK government to designate 20 per cent of the land of Wales as *national* parks (note the adjective, and bear in mind that the nation in question is not Wales), and a further 10 per cent as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In both designations there are substantial limitations on development, including renewable energy, in the name of conserving the priceless landscape of pure Wales.

The rival version is to be found in the reality of the lives of the majority of the people in 19th Century Wales, which turned them into an industrialised population in one of the most innovative and enterprising countries in the world. It was this spectacular transformation that gave rise to political and religious radicalism, social and cultural creativity and ferment. As a result, and unlike Ireland, we retained a high percentage of our migratory population within the boundaries of Wales which in turn injected new energy into the Welsh language. One by-product of this transformation was, of course, the 'land of song' invoked in Taliesin o Eifion's *englyn*.

True, all this came at enormous human (although not nearly as bad as that suffered by rural Ireland) and environmental cost. It was a perfect example, you might say, of unsustainable development. And, in addition to injecting new life into the language, did it not also sow the seeds of its decline? But seriously, where would Wales be today were it not for what was forged in this amazing revolutionary cauldron?

When I walk in the countryside today, what never fails to entrance me, and what gives meaning to the landscape, is the human, social and cultural inheritance passed on by past generations. And so much of that priceless heritage is due to the development of industry. Is it not striking, and proper, that the industrial town of Blaenafon has gained UNESCO World Heritage Site status?

The other day, I stood on Banc y Darren in northern Ceredigion, above Trefeurig, Cwmerfin, Cwmsymlog and Penrhynoch. The view was amazing, while the ground under my feet was a maze of mine workings, lead, silver, and copper. The surrounding villages were as much industrial settlements as Blaenafon and Merthyr Tydfil, Glyn-neath, Tredegar, Llanberis or Rhosllannerchrugog. These were among the powerhouses of the cultural, social and national awakening which is responsible for the fact that Wales is today a political nation.

From Banc y Darren I could also see wind farms enlivening the view. Erecting and maintaining them has created jobs and is pumping tens of thousands of pounds a year into the surrounding areas. But these developments happened in the teeth of the fierce opposition from a minority of dedicated people. As often as not their opposition was articulated in terms of the romantic image of Wales as a priceless and unsullied landscape which must be preserved from development and radical change.

Yet when I stand at the summit of Pumlumon I see not destruction but the miracle of turning wind into electricity, the spinning of the blades enlivening the view, and the fascination that these

depopulated, post-industrial areas are once again contributing to the economy and creating a new and valued product.

Concern for the preservation of a priceless landscape was what informed the Welsh Government planning decisions which led to the failure of the Cambrian Engineering Company which constructed wind turbine towers and employed 80 workers in Gwynedd. It was the same concern which meant that producing a planning framework for renewable energy was such a long-drawn-out, tortuous process, from which emerged the infamous TAN 8 planning document. One consequence of that is the ill-informed and negative protests in Powys today, before which the Welsh Government retreated with such alacrity.

When the sawmills at Newbridge on Wye, Powys developed a scheme to generate heat and energy from waste wood and conifers, increasingly difficult to exploit because of the increased recycling of paper, one of the objections listed by the Environment Agency was that a rising column of steam from the works – steam, not fire or smoke – would sully the view. In the face of planning objections the scheme, which could have helped kick start a Welsh biomass industry, was withdrawn.

At a recent conference on renewable energy a constant refrain by the companies present was the difficulty of carrying on their business, and thus competing and producing profit, in Wales. The contrast with Scotland was mentioned repeatedly. There the installed capacity for renewable energy has risen from 1,800MW in 2004 to 4,360 in 2010 – an increase of 242 per cent. The corresponding figures for Wales were 429 and 764, an increase of 56 per cent. Wales had a target of reaching 4TWh for renewable energy by 2010, but only achieved 1.6TWh.

The Scottish Government has certain powers which the Welsh Government lacks, and which have enabled Scotland to innovate in tidal and wave technology as well as wind. However, this has as much to do with political will as with powers. And part of the problem is Version 1 Wales -

pure Wales, tranquil Wales, the sacred landscape which must be kept inviolate. The irony is that strict environmental regulation often prevents precisely the type of development which is essential for a sustainable natural environment.

However, we also need to consider our attitude towards economic development that is not sustainable in the full sense. The evidence suggests that Wales's reserves of shale gas along with methane from the extensive coal seams remaining under land and sea, for example in Swansea Bay, are substantial. Carbon emissions from gas are less than from coal and oil, but they hardly fit a true definition of sustainable development. If these sources were intelligently developed and set within the framework of other policies such as workforce development and creating Welsh supply chains, might it be that Wales' natural gas reserves could have a transformational effect on our economic fortunes not unlike that of North Sea oil in Scotland? Would it make any kind of sense for Wales to reject this opportunity in the name of sustainability or in keeping with the pure, tranquil Wales mind set?

Wales then should interpret its national commitment to promoting sustainable development rather by what we do than by what we don't do. We should regard sustainable development as an opportunity to surge ahead rather than as a series of hurdles to be surmounted before we can act. Rather than adopting the role of well-behaved ecologists we should be pushing the boundaries of invention and innovation, eager to grasp the opportunities when they arise. If that is environmental heresy, it is also simple common sense for a small nation whose collective environmental global footprint is tiny, and whose need of economic transformation is profound.

So we come at last to the proposed Sustainable Development Act. Part of the background is the Sustainable Development Charter which according to the Welsh Government "sets our vision for a sustainable Wales". Sustainable development, described as "the central organising principle" of the government's

### 3/Economy

policies, has the following elements:

- Living within our environmental means, using only our fair share of the earth's resources.
- Supporting healthy, productive and biological ecosystems.
- Building a sustainable and strong economy, and fostering local economies and suppliers.
- Enjoying safe, sustainable and attractive communities.
- Creating a fair, just and bilingual country.

Wales's environmental footprint heads the list. However if we were to succeed in closing the prosperity gap between Wales and the rest of the UK, an increase in our environmental footprint would be a well-nigh inevitable consequence. Improving our primitive road network, for example within Wales and between north and south, would in all probability increase our carbon emissions, unless we produce new sustainable fuels - and Wales is not likely to manage that on its own.

WWF and other environmental organisations complain that the Welsh Government's legislative proposals place insufficient emphasis on reducing our global ecological footprint. Here is an excellent example of transferring a UK policy automatically to the Welsh context, with no attempt to think creatively about the specific problems and priorities of Wales. In this mind set the economy comes third and not first.

What, therefore, should be the foundations of the new Sustainable Development Act? In other words, what kind of Wales do we wish to see? Here are two options. The first is to commit to our present route:

- Emphasise environmental conservation and living within global limits.
- Develop a range of locally-based enterprises which conform strictly to the sustainable development template and gain brownie points from environmentalists and within the UN Network of Regions for Sustainable Development.
- Reject economic growth as a key



Generations of activity at Myrnydd Mechell on Anglesey has resulted in a spread of clutter – with wind turbines in the distance – that now defines its character. Photo: John Briggs.

consideration.

- Accept Wales' dependence on fiscal transfers from Westminster, with all that implies for our constitutional aspirations.

Or we can be much more ambitious:

- Use sustainable development as an engine for improving economic performance and creating a new industrial revolution in Wales.
- Accept the need for compromise in conserving the environment, particularly the visual landscape.
- Over time to wean ourselves off our dependence on the UK Treasury.
- Keep our constitutional options open according to what is advantageous for Wales.

I favour the second option, and recommend the following underpinning principles for the proposed Sustainable Development Act:

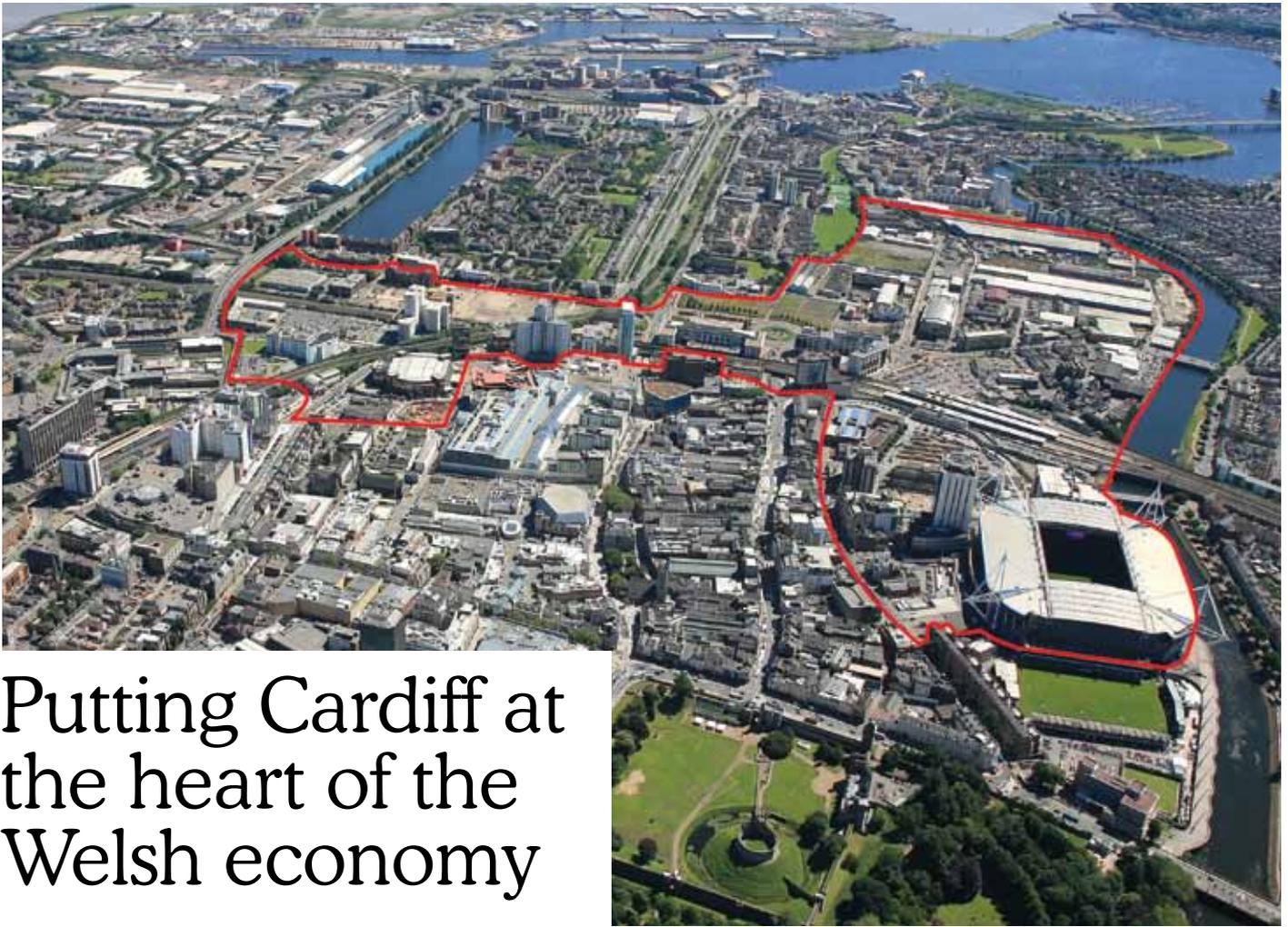
- Target and support environmental sectors which can contribute to economic growth.
- Create a planning and regulatory framework which will facilitate and accelerate the sector's development.
- Develop and sustain our environmental assets, including water and energy, for the economic benefit of the nation.

- Establish a hierarchy of considerations which will rank climate change, biodiversity and control of pollution higher than considerations of (subjective) visual aesthetics.
- Develop expertise in predicting and analysing international and European policy trends so as to help set the direction for our economic development.
- Ensure that Welsh businesses are informed about these trends and are thus able to take advantage of them.
- Ensure that understanding sustainability is a key element in the curriculum at all levels, so as to create a nation well-versed in the field.
- Accept that the well-being of the natural environment must be placed in the context of the necessity of improving Wales's economic performance.
- Set per capita GVA and economic growth within a wider framework of sustainable development indicators.
- Do everything possible to ensure that the result of economic success is strongly linked to social justice and community regeneration.

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**Cynog Dafis** is the former Plaid MP for Ceredigion and AM for the Mid and West Wales region. This is an edited version of a speech he delivered at the National Eisteddfod 'Maes Gwyrdd' last August.

Aerial photo of Cardiff's central area looking south to the Bay. The red line delineates the Enterprise Zone.



# Putting Cardiff at the heart of the Welsh economy

**Chris Sutton** explains why the centre of the Welsh Capital warrants the creation of an Enterprise Zone

Cardiff is a city that punches above its weight. It has a high profile, afforded by its status as a Capital City and host to the administrative hub of Welsh Government. Additionally, its economic strength is derived from its 'City Region' catchment of over 1.4 million people, which is more than four times the actual population within the city limits.

So, should an Enterprise Zone have been created in the heart of the capital, when there are clearly more disadvantaged locations across Wales? My response is an emphatic 'yes' for two reasons:

1. Cardiff is the driver of the Welsh economy and can deliver growth and employment for the wider city region. Cardiff has the capability to attract

regionally mobile investment projects that simply would not consider other locations.

2. There is unfinished business in terms of a missing link between the city centre and Cardiff Bay, with land available for development in close proximity to the city centre and central station.

The Enterprise Zone marketing proposition is based upon improved communications, not least rail electrification, close proximity to a highly successful, £1 billion-plus retail centre but also access to iconic cultural and sporting venues. Anyone with reservations should simply look back 25 years to the task facing the pioneers of Cardiff Bay, which was at that time an isolated, windswept

and muddy waterfront location, but is now transformed into an exemplar regeneration project.

Business Minister Edwina Hart has announced a balanced portfolio of seven Enterprise Zones across Wales. Each has a focus upon a designated sector, albeit that these are not exclusive:

- Anglesey – energy.
- Central Cardiff - financial and professional Services.
- Deeside - advanced manufacturing.
- Ebbw Vale – automotive.
- St Athan/Airport – aviation.
- Trawsfynydd - energy, environment, and information technology.
- Pembrokeshire's Haven Waterway – energy.

A view of Callaghan Square just south of the Great Western Main Line, planned to become the heart of the capital's financial district.



In arriving at these designations, the Business Minister consulted with business organisations. CBI Wales suggested that Enterprise Zone designations could be justified on the basis of areas of need, areas of “genuine economic opportunity”, or to reflect a particular niche. The resultant list is a balanced portfolio of all three of the above categories.

The Central Cardiff Enterprise Zone Board is closely aligned with the Financial and Professional Services Sector Panel. This Panel has already undertaken much valuable work in exploring indigenous growth and inward investment opportunities. There is a particular focus upon attracting back office and support functions from the London office market, with competitive employment costs and a highly regarded workforce being strong factors in Cardiff’s favour.

The Enterprise Zone is intended to create a focal point for investment and employment through the removal of barriers and the provision of incentives to encourage investment. The Central Cardiff Zone does not offer Enhanced Capital Allowances, as these are directed to capital intensive projects in Assisted Areas. However, what it does offer is a blend of the following policy levers:

- **Infrastructure**

As highlighted by the 2012 Welsh Infrastructure Investment Plan, there

is a need to deliver enhanced projects to enable each Enterprise Zone to generate jobs and growth. Central Cardiff has been given a major boost in this regard through the rail electrification programme. This will not only bring London within two hours travel time, but also increase the employment catchment through the Valleys rail improvements. There are also the emerging Metro proposals, including Cardiff Crossrail and potential light transit improvements from the city centre to the Bay.

- **Business rates**

The independent Task and Finish Group, headed by Professor Brian Morgan, stated that business rates are a policy lever that can be deployed to incentivise growth and jobs. The Group recommended the introduction of a “limited and targeted scheme in Wales based upon a capped fund with preference being given to projects within the Enterprise Zones and Welsh Government’s priority sectors”. The Task and Finish Group also recommended greater retention of business rates by local authorities and a longer period of exemption from empty property rates for new speculative development. Both

of these initiatives should impact positively upon the Enterprise Zone.

- **Extra funding**

A fund of £20 million was established for all Welsh Enterprise Zones for the financial years 2012-13 through to 2015-16, with a £10 million UK Government Barnett consequential supplemented by £10 million funding from Welsh Government. Applications for the first round of this funding closed in February 2013. The scheme operates under the *de minimis* state aid regulation, allowing support up to €200,000 over a rolling three fiscal year period for SMEs.

- **High speed broadband**

Securing access to next generation broadband is a key commitment of all the Enterprise Zones and Cardiff is set to get £11 million from the UK Government’s ‘super connected cities’ programme.

- **Training and skill provision**

The focus upon financial and professional services is likely to lead to investment projects which are labour intensive and, therefore, training packages may be an attractive option for potential occupiers. The Zone already benefits from the most generous training support for job creation

The Central Cardiff Enterprise Zone vision is to create a new financial hub with an additional critical mass of new floorspace which could potentially total up to one million square feet.

available in the UK. The Assisted Area map will be redrawn in 2014 and there is a case for including the Enterprise Zone in the next map.

- **Simplified planning**  
Secondary legislation can secure a simplified planning system via the use of Local Development Orders. My impression is that the Council is taking a more proactive approach to the re-use of secondary office stock, including the conversion of obsolete offices to hotels or student housing. This will generate indigenous demand within the capital.
- **Provision of new sites and buildings**  
To meet the needs of new and

emerging businesses, the Enterprise Zone needs to address the shortage of available Grade A offices. The potential is for up to one million square feet of new floorspace, which could accommodate more than 10,000 jobs. Certainly, Welsh Government has indicated its desire to support property development in this regard. Its recent acquisition of the Callaghan Square site provides the opportunity of a development capable of accommodating up to 500,000 square feet as a financial hub. Prime sites are available to the north and south of the mainline railway providing a range of options for potential occupiers.

The Central Cardiff Enterprise Zone vision is to create a financial hub with an additional critical mass of new floorspace which could potentially total up to one million square feet. However, the most inspiring visions are redundant without the capacity to implement change. In these challenging market conditions, the focus of Welsh Government should be upon delivery, including the provision of incentives to attract investment. This will not only create, but also safeguard, employment.

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**Chris Sutton** is Lead Director, Cardiff with Jones Lang LaSalle and a member of the Cardiff Central Enterprise Zone Board and the Business Rates Policy Review Task and Finish Group

RWE npower renewables

IN BUSINESS, IN WALES

INVESTMENT 

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- £335,000 directly invested into Welsh communities through our wind farm community funds in 2012 – that's half the total from Wales' entire renewables sector!
- we set up Wales' first wind farm engineering apprenticeship scheme and support Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths initiatives in local schools
- workforce growth of 70% since May 2008 – we now employ 105 people in Wales and support hundreds more through local contracts
- we already operate 270MW of installed wind capacity – around half the total amount in Wales – and now have consent to build up to 130MW more!
- we'll double this in 2014 with Gwynt y Môr offshore wind farm (576MW), and could deliver well over 300MW more from our future onshore projects.

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# South of the tracks

**Tony Grist** believes the future redevelopment of Cardiff Central Station could be used to unite a divided city

Leaving Cardiff Station, it’s hard to believe that you have arrived at a capital city, one that was ranked sixth in the world in 2011 by National Geographic as an alternative tourist destination.

The first offering is a rust coloured fence. Although it protects pedestrians from buses, it creates a barrier that forces visitors to the right or left, and bars them moving forward. Behind the fence, a series of 1980s designed canopies merge with buses to form another physical barrier. Further away a series of partially unoccupied 1960s buildings provide a backdrop. Finally, there are queues of black and white cabs jostling for position at the congested taxi ranks.

Yet we have an opportunity to change all this as part of establishing a new vision for Cardiff. Any redevelopment of the Central Station should be about the creation of a pivotal new place that sits within a wider strategy of city connections. That would also stimulate opportunities in other parts of the city, interacting with the arts and creative pulse of Cardiff and

creating a true gateway to Wales.

The prospectus issued in 1844 to build a railway through south Wales from a junction in Standish in Gloucestershire, to ship coal to London, was the beginning of a division of this area of Cardiff. The railway that came separated the areas north and the south of the Central Station. As in other industrial cities, the coming of the railways, in this case to carry coal, took little account of the communities they bisected.

At that time, Cardiff was also a city of canals, not dissimilar to Utrecht in Holland. They have been described as being as important as the M4 and the A470 are now to the industry of the region, and were also key to delivering coal from the Valleys to the docks.

However, we have seen the gradual removal of canals that could have contributed to a sustainable method of transport from the city to the docks. Meanwhile, we have seen the insertion of a railway that has had a divisive impact on the way a major city has expanded.

As the city moved forward into

the modern era, the area north of the railway developed from the mudflats left by Brunel’s redirection of the River Taff, into Temperance Town developed by Jacob Matthews in the mid 19th Century to house dock workers. Interestingly, this development was demolished in the 1930s at the request of the Great Western Railway to “improve the view” from the Railway Station. The creation of Cardiff Arms Park in 1881 and the development of the bus interchange in 1954 completed many of the current components of the area. The rail tracks created a division between the city’s retail, commercial and entertainment facilities to the north and more industrial uses to the south.

As the area to the south became industrialised and separated from the city by the railway, so the historic links between the Valleys and the Bay were broken. The green fingers that reach down through Bute Park to Cardiff Castle diminish as they pass through this area. However, future development could help replace this historic green connection that is only now apparent in the area around Canal Park on the west side of Butetown. Here the canal has been replaced by a linear park, which could be continued to Callaghan Square

and then on through St Mary Street, and High Street as a green link to the Castle.

In parallel, the banks of the Taff could be planted and provided with cycle and walkways as an additional north-south link that could start to repair this part of the city's accessibility. As these links are developed, the area to the north and south of central station could develop east-west connections that link in with these new access ways along the river, and from the Castle to Canal Park (see **Figure 1**).

So how can the station be used to create a new central space that stitches together the areas to its north and the south and stimulates opportunities on both sides? Well, you can literally go over or under the station to make these connections and there are many examples around the world where this is currently being done (see **Figure 2**).

In Utrecht again, the new elevated station concourse by Benthem Crowell Architects allows passengers to circulate between the old part of the city, the railway, and the new commercial district. The wide structure is reminiscent of a raised plaza, containing shops and amenities. At Napoli Afragola Station, Zaha Hadid Architects have commenced construction of a raised bridge-like structure that connects across the station incorporating services, amenities and access to platforms. At Croydon Station, Studio Egret West Architects have proposed a simple bridge across the tracks that also serve the platforms.

There are many ways to bridge over rail infrastructure, but the simple act of elevating people to an upper level, before crossing the tracks can often be seen as a barrier to pedestrian and spatial flow. Access across or under tracks at ground level creates a better spatial connection and avoids moving people up to get over obstructions. Examples of this form of connection include Bilmer Station in Amsterdam by Grimshaw, and the Minneapolis Downtown Interchange by EE&K which actually lowers the ground either side of the rail station to increase clearance.

The current north-south connections across Cardiff station are limited to its ticketed concourse tunnel. If this tunnel were expanded, or if more of the fill under the station were removed, then the connectivity both spatially and visually would be substantial. Of course, economic and engineering viability would be a vital part of the assessment of this proposal. However, this type of change could make a significant difference to this gateway station and transform it from barrier to 'connector'.

Using the recently completed St Pancras Station in London as a model, there is an opportunity for the ground level to be replaced with shops and ticketing, with passengers lifted up to platforms by escalators, lifts and stairs.

There is also an opportunity for direct access to a new river ferry system to the west of the station and ultimately a future Metro link to the east. The impact on potential



**Figure 1:** The potential for making green linear links through the heart of Cardiff, connecting Bute Park with the Bay.



**Figure 2:** The current north-south connections through Cardiff station are limited to its ticketed concourse tunnel. If this were expanded, or if more of the fill under the station were removed, then the connectivity both spatially and visually would be substantial.

public space to the north and south of the station could be immense, opening up new opportunities to the south and new connectivity across this part of the city.

In addition to the north-south connections, the east-west connectivity can also be improved as part of any improvements to Central Square on the north side. Currently, on leaving the station the majority of pedestrians turn east to the right. The development of the St Davids 2 shopping mall and the Hayes has reinforced this movement pattern. As a result, however, the traditional arcades have suffered a decline in patronage.

The development of Central Square at ground level could support new 'sheltered' movement patterns that draw people forward and then begin to distribute them equitably back through the existing arcade network. This begins to suggest a guideline for any development around the square and would introduce a new interpretation of the Cardiff arcade as a method of moving around the city under shelter.

The other major impact on the Central Square development is the Millennium Stadium. Dealing with occasional large



**Figure 3:** The Etihad Stadium in Melbourne is an example of a building type that could be emulated in Cardiff, integrating multiple public uses at ground level, including retail and cultural spaces, with commercial uses above.



**Figure 4:** The Brains brewery to the south of the railway line only has a few years left on its lease and presents an opportunity for re-development as a creative precinct.

movements of people across public space requires consideration of the types of spaces being created. The worst scenario is a wide-open space that is vacant for most of the time – and only busy during an event. The work we have recently carried out in Melbourne around the Etihad Stadium suggests a different scenario, similar to a shower head, that takes a large flow and divides it into smaller flows. The creation of a series of different scale lanes between stadium and station allows for the creation of spaces more suitable when games are not being played – more intimate, occupied, and therefore more vital.

In the same project, we have used a new building typology that provided for both commercial and public uses. This is a building type increasingly used around the world to activate public space at lower levels. There are many commercial use buildings in cities that do not provide any interaction with the public space at ground level. They may be transparent at ground level or have accessible private lobbies, but in general they shun the public and public interface, sometimes for reasonable issues associated with problems like security, but sadly, often due to issues associated with secrecy.

This new building type integrates multiple levels of public uses, retail,

cultural or other spaces, with commercial uses above (see **Figure 3**). By activating these lower levels, adjacent public space is also activated. This space can be left open or covered. It helps to create an activated public area, overlooked by the occupiers above, thus providing safety and security.

Having laid down a structure for cross-site access, with laneways and arcades that can cope with occasional stadium loading, and defined a building type that can provide a strategy for commercial and public uses, the proposition for a new vital public square falls into place. Surrounded by two or three levels of public activation, the square would become a dynamic centre of activity with a year round programme of events. These would be driven by visitors arriving from the station and moving to the city centre, with additional activity and surveillance from the higher levels of the surrounding buildings. The square also plays a role connecting the city to the river and at this location there is an opportunity for a different and special type of public space.

With the definition of the north side of the station and the opportunity to connect spatially and visually under the tracks, the southern site becomes viable as an extension of this new public space. The existing Brewery only has a few years left on its lease,

so opportunities should be explored soon. It could be opened up as a tourist destination surrounded by linked small businesses (not unlike the Heineken Brewery in Amsterdam), or redeveloped as a different type of ‘creative precinct’ offering converted creative incubator spaces and a centre for start-up creative industries in Cardiff (see **Figure 4**).

There are many stakeholders to be drawn together to make a reality of such a major city re-invention. They include Cardiff Council, the Welsh Government, Network Rail, landowners and developers, and many specialist advisers and consultants that need to share a vision for reinvention on a city scale. The answer is not just about transport strategy, or even commercial opportunities. Rather, it’s about how all these skills can be brought together to heal part of the city that has been neglected for many years. The prize would be to create a new heart for the Welsh capital that is vital, sustainable, and economically viable now and for the future.

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## Articles

Heads of the Valleys education poverty gap

All we need is English n'est-ce pas?

# Heads of the Valleys education poverty gap

Lizzie Swaffield, David Egan and Danny Saunders report on an initiative to improve school attainment in Merthyr and Blaenau Gwent

There is an education poverty gap in the Heads of the Valleys. The number of 15-year-old students achieving GCSE A\*-C grades in English/Welsh and Mathematics in Blaenau Gwent is 35 per cent and in Merthyr Tydfil 39 per cent. This compares with 50 per cent for Wales as a whole.

The Heads of the Valleys Education Programme has an ambitious target of achieving 70 per cent of students in these authorities achieving GCSE A\*-C grades in the core subjects by 2020. The Programme is being driven by the Universities Heads of the Valleys Institute, a partnership between the local authorities, Coleg Gwent and the merged universities of Glamorgan and Newport. The aim is to recruit more than 4,000 students by 2014.

The focus will be two new lifelong learning campuses. Last year the Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone opened. Located on the former steel foundry in Ebbw Vale, it includes a tertiary campus for all local post 16 education, an integrated primary and secondary school, and new centres for Leisure, Arts and Energy.

Twenty miles to the west *Coleg Merthyr Tydfil* is in the process of being built, alongside a new Arts Centre on the site of the old Town Hall. All local post-16 education in the town will be delivered through the College by September 2014.

Two related programmes are being developed to support the targeted student attainment levels:

## 1. Enhanced support for student learning

This will be achieved by student mentoring systems which target D/C borderline learners as well as those who have the potential for obtaining A and \*A star grades. Mentoring will be reinforced by undergraduate

involvement in order to raise awareness and deploy the significant resources of nearby universities.

## 2. Strengthening teaching and leadership

This is being led by two former head teachers with strong reputations for leading successful secondary schools. They are facilitating a detailed and intensive middle management workshop and coaching programme targeting Heads of Departments of English and Mathematics with continual emphasis on data, tracking, early intervention and effective approaches to learning and teaching.

The success of these initiatives will underpin all other Heads of the Valleys Education Programme activity since it is dependent upon an increase in the numbers of learners with appropriate entry qualifications for higher education and training. The Programme is aiming to achieve standards that are common in more advantaged parts of the country:

- Every child to be ready to benefit from school.
- All students to progress successfully from primary to secondary education and to fulfil their potential.
- High percentages of 16 to 19-year-olds gain a good Level 2 qualification including English and mathematics.
- High percentages of 19-year-olds to progress into further or higher education, training or employment.
- Significant improvements to be achieved in the skills levels of the adult population.

The Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone, opened in September 2012 on the site of the former steel foundry in Ebbw Vale. It combines a tertiary campus for post-16 education with an integrated primary and secondary school, and new centres for leisure, arts, and energy.



Activity is being guided by work streams covering early years, transition between primary and secondary schools, progression to colleges and universities, adult skills, and support for learning. All of this means ensuring that the Heads of the Valleys are provided with excellent teachers, coaches and advisers. In turn this means strong leadership and the creation of learning communities that share their successes whilst also approaching challenges openly through collective action.

A major challenge is the transition of young learners as they move from the later part of primary education into early secondary education, the 8-14 age group where the most dramatic decline in education attainment takes place in the Heads of the Valleys, particularly among pupils who are in receipt of free school meals.

A task and finish group has been investigating the problems facing this group of young people, many of whom move from a smaller school in which they are well known to their primary class teacher, to a larger secondary institution where they may have 12 or more different teachers within a more complicated learning environment.

The group has identified models of good practice, including the Cabot Learning Federation involving ten Academies in Bristol, Weston super

Mare and Bath in the education of 5,000 students between the ages of 4 and 19 sponsored by local universities and employers. These partnerships pioneered radical curriculum re-organisation, with more emphasis being placed on skills compared to subject knowledge. They also introduced vertical tutoring – where young people from different year groups learn together - with significant improvements in achievement.

Developments like this are leading to more integration and closer planning between primary and secondary schools, with common approaches to pedagogy and leadership involving shared staff development between clusters of primary and secondary schools. Particular attention is being given to ensure that literacy and numeracy are owned by all subject areas rather than merely regarded as an additional responsibility for isolated English and Mathematics departments. This is being seen as a critically important whole-school issue that draws upon the experience of Inclusion leaders inside and outside schools.

In addition to raising standards of literacy and numeracy there is also a strong and proactive interest in the early development of employability through work based learning. This is a priority given the nature of the Heads of the Valleys area where many children grow up in families where 'worklessness' is

both endemic and inter-generational.

The experience of the Glyncoch Community Partnership in Pontypridd is considered invaluable because it views the 8-14 year old as both a learner and a community member. Additional educational experiences are being provided by out-of-hours provision, focused on informal learning in relation to literacy, numeracy and other skills.

Above all, the most important within-school factor is the quality of teaching that students experience. This points to the need for much closer working between Senior Leadership Teams, including teachers from primary and secondary schools spending time on professional development in each others' institutions. Local authorities also need to collaborate on making joint appointments, such as a Director of Learning and Teaching for 8-14 provision to encourage dissemination of effective practice between schools within the Heads of the Valleys area.

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# All we need is English *n'est-ce pas?*

**Ceri James** reveals Wales has the shortest period of compulsory foreign language learning in Europe

There is a fairly commonly held view that despite the claims of Mandarin Chinese, English continues to be the language of business, IT, the Internet and indeed the only tongue we really need in order to travel the world and meet people. Even those who do not dismiss foreign language learning entirely claim that we are getting things badly wrong in our schools.

Three years ago Welsh MP and former Minister for Europe Chris Bryant stated that French, still the most commonly taught foreign language, was now “useless” and questioned why we weren’t teaching more Mandarin, Spanish and Arabic – languages he claimed were “more useful for business”.

Whilst I would disagree strongly with the point about French - after all it is spoken in many countries around the globe, and has official status in a number of developing countries - I do agree that we need to broaden the range of languages on offer to our schoolchildren. We could also do much more to harness the pool of linguistic talent that already exists in Wales.

As well as English and Welsh, a survey conducted in 2005 found that 98 different languages were spoken by pupils in Welsh state schools. With about a quarter of our children already bilingual by virtue of the Welsh-medium system, we have a huge opportunity to develop national competence in third and fourth languages.

However, given the reality for foreign

language learning in Wales today, talk of diversification or expansion is fanciful. Consider the facts. The teaching of modern foreign languages has suffered a notable decline in Welsh schools, colleges and universities over the last 20 years. Unlike in England and, indeed, throughout the EU, they have never been a compulsory subject beyond Key Stage 3 (11-14 years) in Wales and at present there appears to be no plan to introduce them at primary school level.

This is the shortest period of compulsory foreign language learning in Europe. Ironically German, which is in great demand on websites such as [multilingualvacancies.com](http://multilingualvacancies.com), has disappeared from many of our schools.

From a high of 55 per cent in 1995, foreign language teaching in Welsh schools to GCSE level has fallen to about 25 per cent of the Welsh cohort. In areas of high social deprivation such as Blaenau Gwent, this percentage is as low as 11 per cent. A number of schools do not run a GCSE class at all, and there are centres where A/AS Level groups are no longer viable.

There is no escaping the fact that the supply chain feeding our universities and businesses is in a parlous state. Perhaps as a result of this pressure, modern foreign language departments have been axed at both Glamorgan and Newport Universities, increasing the perception that they have become subjects for the élite.

At a time of high youth unemployment and increasing mobility of labour, Welsh school and college leavers find themselves at a disadvantage, lacking as they do the linguistic skills and intercultural knowledge to compete for jobs. Take-

up rates for EU mobility schemes such as Erasmus and Leonardo are low in Wales, as they are in the UK in general compared with other EU states. These schemes bring learners greater fluency in other languages, but also a range of ‘soft skills’ much valued by employers. A recent CBI skills survey indicated that a high proportion of businesses are dissatisfied with the levels of foreign language skills amongst new recruits from the UK.

So what is being done? The Welsh Government has an action plan entitled ‘Making Languages Count’, plus an ‘International Education Programme’. It funds the Centre for International Languages and Teaching Cymru (CILT) to work with schools, local authorities, businesses and a range of partner organisations to increase the number of pupils opting for foreign languages and raise awareness of the benefits which language skills bring in terms of employability.

In particular CILT Cymru is promoting the Triple Literacy project which aims to improve standards in literacy as well as to boost confidence in language learning. It helps children make connections between English and Welsh and build upon their prior language learning skills and strategies to introduce a modern foreign language, thereby developing triple literacy.

For the first time, teachers of modern foreign languages, Welsh and English are collaborating rather than ignoring or competing with each other. Pupils at Triple Literacy project schools are less confused by grammatical work as there is now a whole-school policy on issues such as terminology, marking schemes and raising literacy levels. Learners are becoming

much more aware of the similarities between languages, and are able to use their prior knowledge to decode new words and meanings. Cognates such as 'fenestr' and 'fenêtre', 'Bäckerei' and 'bakery', 'puente' and 'pont' may not be immediately obvious, but once alerted to new reading strategies pupils find that they can approach challenging texts with greater confidence.

So much for schools, but what is happening in higher education? In his remit letter to the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, Education Minister Leighton Andrews has designated modern foreign languages, along with Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths, as 'Subjects of Broader Importance to Wales'. In response to this, the Council has funded the 'Routes into Languages Cymru' project, which seeks to increase the number of foreign language students at Welsh universities.

Managed by CILT Cymru in partnership with all 11 Welsh universities, Routes Cymru has generated a wealth of events for young people, careers-related resources and collaborative projects between schools and universities. A team of Student

Language Ambassadors now delivers talks to schoolchildren about the joys of studying foreign languages abroad as well as within our own universities. Collaboration with SeeScience means that hundreds of science, technology, engineering and maths ambassadors are delivering a similarly upbeat message about combining scientific and linguistic skills.

Aberystwyth University is providing language lessons in a range of languages to five centres in Ceredigion offering the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification. This is giving Welsh Bacc candidates the opportunity to 'taste' a new language such as Italian or Japanese, which they may then wish to pursue as a non-specialist subject if they go to university. Higher education 'ab initio' courses are now common, making it possible to pick up a new language at a later stage.

Despite the inevitable competition for 'bums on seats', there is a growing sense of shared purpose between university language departments which has led to much sharing of ideas and good practice.

Recent figures provided by the British Council show that there has been an increase in student 'outward mobility' in recent years.

In other words, greater numbers of undergraduates are choosing to take advantage of EU-funded opportunities to study part of their course at a European university, or to undertake a work placement abroad. Some have been delighted to find that exotic locations such as La Guadeloupe are classed as EU territory!

Professor Colin Riordan, Vice-Chancellor at Cardiff University, has set a target of 17 per cent of his students to participate in outward mobility schemes by 2017. This bold move will ensure that students of all disciplines, not just those studying foreign languages, will enhance their CVs and ultimately their employment prospects. They will also widen their experience, boost their self-confidence and make friends for life. In these straitened times it is easy to forget the enormous personal satisfaction which language-learning can bring.

For those that prefer less 'fluffy' arguments, I leave you with a quotation from business executive Sarah Grain of *Eriez Magnetics*, a multinational company that has a major plant in Bedwas, "The growth of our business is primarily exported and use of foreign languages is vital to this success. Having permanent access to language skills saves considerable time and money."

Perhaps it will be the bottom line that finally convinces us to act by making a serious investment in foreign language skills. If we are swept along by the anti-European bandwagon and fail to address our parochialism, the consequences for Wales and our future economic and cultural well-being could indeed be dire.

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**Ceri James** is Director of Centre for Information and Language Learning Cymru. Information about its Compact, Business Language Champions' 'Triple Literacy' projects can be accessed at [www.ciltcymru.org.uk](http://www.ciltcymru.org.uk). More information on foreign language teaching at university level can be accessed at [www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/cymru](http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/cymru)



Blackwood Comprehensive school pupils taking a NVQ business language course pupils visit Eriez Magnetics Europe at Bedwas, winners of the IWA's 2012 Business Award for best use of foreign languages. They hear how the language skills of the firm's employees are winning engineering contracts for Wales across the world. Eriez are offering an apprenticeship to local pupils with language skills.

# 5

## Health

### Articles

The obesity epidemic

Lifestyle change versus medication

# The obesity epidemic

Zoë Harcombe asks how many more people will become overweight before we cut back on processed carbohydrate foods high on fructose

In a study of formerly obese people, researchers at the University of Florida found that virtually all said that they would rather be blind, deaf or have a leg amputated than be obese again. That is the extent of our desire to be slim. Yet two thirds of people in the UK, USA, and Australia are overweight and a quarter obese. Why?

To be slim, to achieve the thing we want more than our sight, hearing, or mobility, we are told that we just need to 'eat less and do more'. The British Dietetic Association's advice is "One pound of fat contains 3,500 calories, so to lose 1lb a week you need a deficit of 500 calories a day."

So, why don't we just follow the advice? Why on earth do we have an obesity problem, let alone an epidemic, when we so desperately want to be slim? I set out to answer that question in the late 1980s. This article is a summary of my findings.

In 1972, World Health Organisation statistics recorded that 2.7 per cent of UK men and women were obese. Fewer than three decades later, in 1999, the same statistics found 22.6 per cent of men and 25.8 per cent of women were obese. Two thirds of UK citizens are now overweight or obese. The USA started from a slightly higher base and displayed a virtually identical trend, with 70 per cent of today's Americans either overweight or obese.

The starting point for understanding the obesity epidemic is the question: what changed in the late 1970s and early 1980s? Was there one thing that happened that could explain the

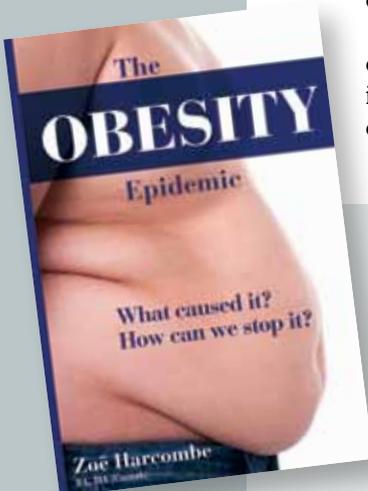
sudden and dramatic increase in obesity?

Yes there was. In 1977 the USA changed its public health diet advice. In 1983 the UK followed suit. A more accurate description would be that we did a complete U-turn in our diet advice from 'starchy foods are fattening' to 'base your meals on starchy foods'. Obesity has increased up to ten fold since – coincidence or cause?

In the 1970s, the fact that fewer than six people in one thousand were dying from heart disease was of great concern to America. American public health advisors wanted a solution. During the 1950s the American scientist Ancel Keys attempted to prove that cholesterol consumption was the cause of heart disease. He failed and he acknowledged this. He then tried to prove that saturated fat consumption causes heart disease, despite this having no logic, not least because saturated fat and cholesterol are found in the same foods.

At the time that Senator McGovern was looking for the first *Dietary Goals for the United States*, the Keys' theory was *not* the only idea available for consideration, but it was the best promoted. The rest, as they say, is history.

The USA changed its dietary advice and the UK followed. We told people that fat was bad and carbohydrate was good, not because we *knew* either fat to be bad or carbohydrate to be good. At the time we changed our advice, the only 'evidence' for fat being bad was a feeble suggestion that, in seven handpicked countries, heart disease tended to be related to cholesterol



### Overweight Wales

Wales is the most overweight country within the United Kingdom where obesity has more than doubled in the last 25 years. More than 50 per cent of adults in Wales are overweight and around 27 per cent are obese. The body mass index, a measurement which compares weight and height, defines people as overweight (pre-obese) if the ratio is between 25 and 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup>, and obese when it is greater than 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup>. The proportion of Welsh people classified as either overweight or obese is predicted to increase to 85 per cent by 2020 unless remedial action is taken.

levels, which tended to be related to saturated fat intake. The inference was that heart disease tended to be related to saturated fat, although cholesterol intake was not intrinsically related.

The association was never proven. We had no evidence that carbohydrate was good – just the admission that, if we tell people not to eat fat they must eat something. As the National Advisory Committee on Nutrition Education's paper *Proposals for nutritional guidelines for health education in Britain* put it in 1983:

“The previous nutritional advice in the UK to limit the intake of all carbohydrates as a means of weight control now runs counter to current thinking and contrary to the present proposals for a nutrition education policy for the population as a whole... The problem then becomes one of achieving both a reduction in fat intake to 30 per cent of total energy and a fall in saturated fatty acid intake to 10 per cent.”

So started the obesity epidemic. There have been no trials to attempt to justify the replacing of fat with starch in our diet, as the following authorities testify:

- “There has been no controlled clinical trial of the effect of decreasing dietary intake of saturated fatty acids on the incidence of coronary heart disease nor is it likely that such a trial will be undertaken.” (Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy, *Diet and Cardiovascular Disease: Report of the Panel on Diet in Relation to Cardiovascular Disease*, 1984).
- “It has been accepted by experienced coronary disease researchers that the perfect controlled dietary trial for prevention of coronary heart disease has not yet been done and we are unlikely ever to see it done.” (Stewart Truswell, ‘Review of dietary intervention studies: effect on coronary events and on total mortality’, *Australian New Zealand*

*Journal of Medicine*, 1994).

- “The ideal controlled dietary trial for prevention of heart disease has not yet been done and it is unlikely ever to be done.” (Letter from the Food Standards Agency to Zoë Harcombe, 25 September 2009).

Without undertaking the definitive study, we have nonetheless tried to post rationalise the U-turn in dietary advice. We claim that saturated fat directly causes heart disease. We claim that saturated fat causes heart disease through cholesterol. We claim that saturated fat is trying to kill us and unsaturated fat is trying to save us. We claim that a magic ratio of polyunsaturated fat to saturated fat will save us, despite the fact that it is unachievable with a natural diet. We claim that there is such a thing as bad and good cholesterol and that the former is trying to kill us and the latter is trying to save us.

Finally, we claim that food we have been eating for thousands of years will kill us and modern-man-made-spreads will save us. We have claimed some quite extraordinary things since Ancel Keys' Seven Countries Study and we have no more evidence now than we had then. We still have no consistent association, let alone got anywhere near proven causation.

As for the possible benefit of carbohydrate, we have not even bothered to post rationalise this. To do so would be pointless – we have decided that fat is bad, so we must eat carbohydrate, so it could only be unhelpful to find anything wrong with carbohydrate.

The crucial change which took place in the late 1970s in America and in the early 1980s in Britain was the increase in fructose sugar used in the manufacture of processed carbohydrate foods. This was due to its cheapness and relative abundance in maize crops. As Dr Robert Lustig, of the University of California, put it in his 2009 article ‘The Fructose Epidemic’ (*The Bariatrician*, the

*American Journal of Bariatric Medicine*):

“Fructose consumption (as both high fructose corn syrup and sucrose) has increased coincidentally with the worldwide epidemics of obesity and metabolic syndrome. Fructose is a primary contributor to human disease as it is metabolised in the liver differently to glucose, and is more akin to that of ethanol. When consumed in large amounts, fructose promotes the same dose-dependent toxic effects as ethanol, promoting hypertension, hepatic and skeletal muscle insulin resistance, dyslipidemia and fatty liver disease... Fructose from any source should be regarded as ‘alcohol without the buzz’. Obesity prevention and treatment is ineffective in the face of the current ‘fructose glut’ in our food supply. We must learn from our experiences with ethanol and nicotine that regulation of the food industry, along with individual and societal education, will be necessary to combat this fructose epidemic.”

Lustig charts an inexorable rise in fructose consumption across the Western world. Prior to 1900 Americans consumed approximately 15 grams a day, mainly from fruit and vegetables. By World War II this had increased to 24 grams per day. By 1977 it was 37 grams a day; by 1994 55 grams a day; and by 2009, when he published his article, 73 grams a day. Now it was being mainly consumed in fizzy drinks, and processed biscuits, cakes and pastries, and especially by children.

We have forgotten that we eat for nourishment. We have a vital need for nutrition and we have lost this basic value in our dietary advice. If we had stayed true to the principle of why we eat, the most nutritious foods would be evidential in any analysis of fat, protein, vitamins and minerals. They are the liver, sardines, milk, eggs and greens favoured by our elders and not the fortified cereals and margarines

favoured by conglomerates and, reprehensibly, far too many dietary advisors alongside.

An industry originated marketing campaign, five-a-day, has become the leading public health message in tens of countries across three continents. It is spoken of as if there is overwhelming evidence behind it, when the reality is that there is none. Worse, if the proponents of pick-a-number-a-day knew what Dr Richard Johnson, author of *The Fat Switch* knows, they would surely revise their opinion of fructose and never mention fruit juice again. As Johnson explains: fructose-containing sugars cause obesity not by calories but by turning on the fat switch:

“Those of us who are obese eat more because of a faulty ‘switch’ and exercise less because of a low energy state. If you can learn how to control the specific ‘switch’ located in the powerhouse of each of your cells – the mitochondria – you hold the key to fighting obesity.”

The ‘switch’ is triggered by the release of uric acid contained in fructose, which contributes to insulin resistance and obesity. So large portions of food and too little exercise are not solely responsible for weight gain.

We have slandered and libelled the most nutritious macronutrient – fat and we have promoted and praised the least nutritious macronutrient – carbohydrate. We don’t need to look far to understand why. The most nutritious foods on the planet are those provided by nature. The most profitable foods on the planet are those provided by food manufacturers.

As the demonisation of real food has gathered pace, fledgling and long-standing food and drink companies have become multi-billion dollar empires. PepsiCo, the world’s largest convenient food and beverage company, is bigger than 60 per cent of the countries in the world. An immense and profitable industry has grown on the back of the low fat, high carbohydrate advice that we invented. Human beings have become

high fat and low health in parallel.

When people talk about ‘the obesogenic environment’, they do so as if this were some inexplicable phenomenon that crept up on the world and made everyone fat. We created this obesogenic environment; it did not happen to us. We told people to avoid real food and to eat processed food. We passed legislation to introduce trans fats and sweeteners into our food chain. We allowed our children to be given toys, cartoon characters and junk food by ‘strangers’.

We have facilitated the comprehensive infiltration of the food and drink industry into our dietary advice – nowhere more so than in the fattest nation on earth, America, where we have gone as far as legislating the relationship, so that only the food industry sponsored American Dietetic Association can advise the unsuspecting public. We put cakes, cola and sweets on government posters, pyramids and plates of role model healthy eating. We welcomed food and drink industry funds turning global sporting events into advertising arenas for their products. We continue to revere sports and pop stars, who are paid millions of dollars to endorse products that they likely don’t consume themselves. We care more about the profitability of Kellogg’s and McDonald’s than we do the health of our citizens.

Had we changed our advice for the wrong reasons and to the wrong advice without consequence, we would have been fortunate. We have not been fortunate. We have paid an enormous price for this change; with a tenfold increase in obesity. Furthermore, more people are continuing to become obese and the obese are continuing to become more obese and we have not yet had the first generation born to our most obese generation. It is not unreasonable to say that on the back of one man’s study, first adopted by one American Governor and then the world, we have an obesity epidemic.

As obesity doubled for UK adults between 1972 and 1982 and then almost doubled again by 1989 and then almost another time by 1999, the urgency and desperation to lose

weight was palpable. The advice that people were given was the same as the advice that made them overweight in the first place: eat less fat and more carbohydrate. In other words, eat less real food and eat more processed food.

Eat less/do more became such a common mantra that anyone who didn’t ‘get this’ was declared stupid. What these critics didn’t know is that we had evidence going back to the early 20th Century that eat less/do more did not work - Francis G. Benedict, *Human vitality and efficiency under prolonged restricted diet*, 1919. The level of failure was later quantified at 98 per cent – by Albert Stunkard and Mavis McLaren-Hume in ‘The results of treatment for obesity’, *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 1959.

Another irony could be that we ignored the brilliant and unbiased study done by Ancel Keys and favoured instead the one where he set out to prove an already held view. In his *The Biology of Human Starvation* (1950) Keys did the definitive study to show exactly what happens when we manage to restrict calorie intake and that even this can only be achieved ‘in captivity’, due to the hunger that ensues. We know from this Minnesota experiment that calorie restriction results in a disproportionate reduction in energy expenditure and metabolic activity and that the ‘circular reference’ will defeat the dieter in weeks.

As we tried to fix a crisis, without making the connection that we started it, we compounded the challenge by proceeding on the basis of flawed assumptions, both theoretical and empirical.

The theoretical error we made was to simplify the application of the laws of the universe to the world of dieting. We got the first law wrong and ignored the second law. If we had considered both properly, we would have realised that obesity is not a simplistic outcome of energy in (overweight people eat too much) and energy out (overweight people are too sedentary). We would have realised that energy in can only equal energy out if the body makes no

internal adjustment whatsoever. Not only is this biochemically impossible, the internal adjustment made by the body, in response to changes in energy intake and energy requirements, is likely to be far greater than any change in fat reserves that the body will make.

Empirically, we got hold of a calorie formula, we know not from where, which we hold to be true and continually prove to be untrue. One pound does not equal 3,500 calories. We will not lose one pound if we create a deficit of 3,500 calories. The most fundamental tenet of the diet world fails basic scrutiny. Worse, seven public and obesity health authorities the Department of Health, NHS, British Dietetic Association, Dieticians in Obesity Management, Association for the Study of Obesity, National Obesity Forum and National Institute for Clinical Excellence - all failed to prove their formula and none knew from whence it came.

If we carried on teaching children that London is the capital of America, when we knew this to be wrong, there would be uproar. Yet when the hopes of 1.5 billion overweight people depend upon an equally wrong, but vastly more serious, untruth, we continue to lie.

We know that any answer to the obesity epidemic must explain what has *changed* since around 1980. The answer, therefore, can *not* be found in something we have been eating for over one hundred thousand years (real food – especially fat). The answer can *not* be found in anything we have been eating less of during the past thirty years (real food – especially fat). The answer *can* be found in anything we have *not* been eating for over one hundred thousand years (processed food – especially carbohydrate). The answer *can* be found in anything we have been eating *more* of during the past thirty years (processed food – especially carbohydrate).

Similarly, the answer can *not* be found in the other half of the energy in equals energy out oversimplification. Sedentary behaviour did not cause the obesity epidemic. Exercise will not cure it.

When we put the following factors



Zoë Harcombe, who lives near Newport, is a nutritionist with Diplomas in Diet and Nutrition and Clinical Weight Management. Her book *The Obesity Epidemic: What caused it? How can we stop it?* was published in 2010.

together we can see that carbohydrates are uniquely suited to weight gain and uniquely unsuited to weight loss:

1. Obesity is not a simplistic imbalance of energy in and energy out but a far more complex matter of how, biochemically, the body can store or utilise fat. Carbohydrate is the unique macronutrient that facilitates fat storage and prevents fat utilisation.
2. Fat and protein calories have jobs to do within the body – they contribute to the ‘up to’ 85 per cent of energy requirement determined by metabolic rate. On the other hand, carbohydrate doesn’t - it needs to be burned as fuel or it will be stored as fat.
3. Insulin has been called the fattening hormone for good reason. Carbohydrate calories stimulate the release of insulin whereas fat and protein calories do not.
4. Fat and protein calories have substantial metabolic advantage over carbohydrate calories. A low carbohydrate diet can thus simulate a low calorie diet, by as much as if a 25 per cent reduction in calorie intake had been made, but without the accompanying desire to eat more and do less.

5. As far back as 1956, studies have shown low calorie diets to be far less effective than low carbohydrate diets.

The food that we have been advising people to eat more of is the very food that enables fat to be stored and disables fat from being utilised. Carbohydrates, not calories, are the critical determinant of obesity and the epidemic thereof.

At the outset I quoted the brilliant University of Florida study of how much people would rather be something else than obese (Colleen S.W. Rand and Alex M. C. Macgregor, ‘Successful weight loss following obesity surgery and the perceived liability of morbid obesity’, *International Journal of Obesity*, 1991). The precise numbers were that, rather than be obese, 100 per cent of those researched would rather be deaf, 89 per cent would rather be blind and 91 per cent would rather have a leg amputated. Proposed solutions are that we wire the jaws, or staple the stomachs, of our fellow humans. The suggestion that we might return to eating the way that we did, before we needed to invent such drastic procedures, is instead seen as radical.

Our decision to move away from the diet that we have evolved to eat has led to two thirds of the ‘evolved’ world being overweight and a number wishing that they were literally anything else, rather than obese.

As Barry Grove observed, in a presentation to the Weston Price Foundation inaugural European conference in London in 2010, “Man is the only chronically sick animal on the planet.” That’s because man is the only species clever enough to make his own food and the only one stupid enough to eat it.

How many more obese people do we plan to produce before we stop feeding them man-made food? Will the man-made obese ever forgive us for what we have already done? Will we ever forgive ourselves if we make any more? Is it really so preposterous to suggest that we simply return to eating the real food that our planet provides for us? The real food that we used to eat, before we got so fat we’d rather be blind.

# Lifestyle versus medication

**Judy Hutchings** says behaviour change should be a goal for all professionals working with patterns of behaviour that contribute to illness

There is little systematic discussion of the challenges to effective service delivery for children with behaviour or developmental problems and at risk of abuse. Despite the many cases that have been highlighted in recent years, child protection referrals are increasing. Reports from 'service delivery disasters' such as the deaths of Victoria Climbié highlight the following problems:

- Collaboration on joint record keeping, referral processes and information exchange and deciding who can have access to information.
- Lack of agreement about what constitutes risk and how to weigh competing evidence in the area of child protection. For example, in the case of Shafiea Ahmed the concerns of school staff were not given sufficient attention.
- Lack of managerial systems to detect institutional bad practice, even in residential settings where there are many staff present, as was identified in the North Wales Children's Home Inquiry or the treatment of patients at Winterbourne View, in Bristol.

There is a tendency, too, to medicalise problems – to ascribe them to illness – when psycho-social explanations are more appropriate. This is particularly prevalent in the United States where, without a diagnosis that has a medical response, treatment is not covered by insurance. In the US psycho-social

interventions are less available than in the UK and surgery and prescribed medication are dramatically higher. However, we are seeing a growing trend in the UK in the same direction.

Medical diagnoses are particularly likely when a problem increases. For example, in Wales there has been an increase from 5.9 to 23.8 per cent of young school aged children rated by their teachers as inattentive over the past 25 years. A medical explanation can lead to a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and the prescribing of stimulant medication. On the other hand, a psycho-social approach focuses on teaching the necessary replacement skills.

At least some of this large increase in these behaviours must have environmental rather than medical determinants. Nonetheless, despite positive evidence from trials of the effectiveness of psycho-social interventions, prescribing of medication is increasing rapidly.

The current obesity epidemic among children in Wales presents similar challenges. Currently thirty-six

There is a tendency, too, to medicalise problems – to ascribe them to illness – when psycho-social explanations are more appropriate. This is particularly prevalent in the United States where, without a diagnosis that has a medical response, treatment is not covered by insurance.

per cent of children under 16 in Wales are overweight or obese, and 19 per cent are obese. We are seeing a growth of invasive surgery for adults with obesity but lifestyle explanations suggest different solutions.

Another example is different explanations for behaviours among children with Aspergers syndrome,

Autism, Dyslexia or other diagnosed developmental difficulties. Given the challenges of their condition it is not surprising that they often develop challenging behaviour problems. Some parents are told that aggression and non-compliance are part of the condition. However, families can be supported to identify and teach new skills whilst still acknowledging that their children will always face challenges. Undoubtedly they are the collateral damage arising from the conditions these children experience. But left untreated they can result in a double handicap.

Meanwhile, there is a lack of training in effective behaviour change. As with the examples above, many conditions dealt with by the NHS - such as cancers, cardio-vascular problems, diabetes and other physical and mental health difficulties - result from, or are worsened by, patient lifestyles. They include poor diet, lack of exercise, alcohol consumption and smoking.

In 2005 the number of deaths attributable to smoking, one of the biggest avoidable causes of morbidity and mortality in the UK, was over

100,000 (19 per cent of all deaths). The direct cost to the NHS in 2005–6 was £5.2 billion. NHS drugs to deal with lifestyle diseases, including obesity, diabetes, alcoholism and smoking have been estimated to cost £750m a year, with obesity now costing more than any other disease.

The lack of effective classroom

management skills training for teachers is another example. It also applies to training in social work, nursing and medicine, where behaviour change, weight loss, substance misuse reduction, and improved parental monitoring of children are intervention goals.

There is a general lack of understanding of the principles of encouraging behaviour change that have come from a century of research into human learning. Behaviour change is a goal for all professionals working with lifestyle patterns that contribute to a wide range of illnesses, from cancer, diabetes, obesity and heart disease to mental and physical health difficulties. Yet it does not form part of the curriculum in the core professional training of doctors and many other health professionals. This is despite its relevance to criminology, education, health and social care.

Instead, we should be introducing into the mainstream education of professional carers, knowledge about

motivational interviewing, and how to help people engage in a behaviour change process. We too often hear that people are not motivated to change when, as professionals, it is our job to help them to achieve this.

Too many staff continue to deliver interventions that have no evidence. They believe that what they do works because it seems logical. In some cases the programme may simply have no effect but in others it can lead to worse results than doing nothing. This was highlighted by the Scared Straight programme, intended to deter delinquent youth from crime by showing them life in prison. It was logical, but unfortunately it increased crime and there are plenty of other examples.

All this points to the need to ensure that in future we:

- Provide better training for health, education and social care managers in interpreting evidence and identifying evidence-based programmes.

- Ensure that staff are adequately resourced and skilled to deliver evidence-based programmes effectively and that all staff are aware of what interventions are being delivered and how to avoid mixed messages to service users.
- Ensure that all people involved in behaviour change interventions, the majority working in the public sector, are given the underpinning knowledge to achieve this.

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**Professor Judy Hutchings** is Director of the Centre for Evidence-Based Early Intervention at Bangor University. Examples of how the Centre is tackling some of the problems highlighted in this article are available through its website <http://www.centreforearlyinterventionwales.co.uk>

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# 6

## Social Policy

### Article

Slavery still current in 21st Century Wales

# Slavery still current in 21st Century Wales

**Katie Harris investigates the extent of human trafficking on our streets**

It was one o'clock in the morning and a woman was running through the empty streets. Since arriving in the UK a week before, she had been deceived, sold and raped by 49 men. Terrified, confused and unable to speak English, she had taken her life in her hands by escaping from the house in which she was being held captive.

Later on, this woman was picked up by the police and then taken to a safe house. Slowly, using Google translate, her story came out. She had been promised a cleaning job in a London hotel to support her husband and children back home in Lithuania. Instead, she had been sold, abused and exploited.

The location of the house where she was being held was Blackwood and the officers who picked her up were members of the Gwent police. Human trafficking is not confined to developing countries or global megacities. It is a reality in modern-day Wales.

Neither was this an isolated incident. Between April 2009 and May 2011 the UK Human Trafficking Centre logged 34 potential incidents in Wales, 17 of which were verified. But this may be the tip of the iceberg. Daisy Cole, of the Welsh Refugee Council, says:

“There are many people who aren't being recognised as victims. We know from our work that there are a lot more people who present trafficking indicators which should lead to their formal identification as trafficking victims.”

Human trafficking is an extremely lucrative global business, second only

to the drugs trade. It is estimated to be worth about £20 billion a year and affects every country in the world.

Generalisations are difficult to make. A recent Home Office report pinpointed Nigerians, Vietnamese and Romanians as the top three nationalities for potential trafficking referrals. But the UK came in at number six, showing that vulnerable UK citizens are as susceptible to be trafficked as their foreign counterparts. As Huw Watkins, an anti-human trafficking consultant and ex-senior detective with the Gwent police, says:

“In terms of the make-up of victims, probably the biggest number of trafficked victims that I've had anything to do with have been white Welsh girls. And for every case of a girl going missing and being exploited, an equal number if not slightly more boys are going missing.”

There is an assumption that trafficking is wholly about sexual exploitation. However, Daisy Cole points out that it can also involve forced labour, domestic servitude and even organ harvesting:

“Colleagues from a range of agencies have reported cases where young boys have been trafficked in the Valleys, cannabis farms have been set up, quite dangerously with electric fences, and young boys have been bricked in, no windows, doors locked”.

A well-known case in 2006 involved the death of a Vietnamese immigrant, Tran Nguyen, who was beaten and dumped at the Royal Gwent Hospital as a result of losing a cannabis crop. With a wife and two children to support back

home, Nguyen was working illegally at a cannabis plantation in Newport. In the wake of his death, Gwent police discovered over 20 cannabis factories in Newport alone, operated by criminal gangs and utilising slave labour.

Recent efforts have been made to raise the profile of human trafficking in Wales. The presence of an all-party group on the subject within the National Assembly, chaired by Labour AM Joyce Watson, reflects both acceptance that trafficking does happen and a political will to tackle it.

Last November, an international conference on human trafficking was hosted by the Cardiff-based Black Association of Women Step Out (BAWSO) in partnership with the Welsh Government. A number of experts were brought together to facilitate policy discussions and explore potential solutions to the crime.

Also announced at the conference was the appointment of Stephen Chapman, former deputy director at the UK Border Agency, as the second anti-human trafficking coordinator for Wales. This post does not exist in England or Scotland, causing some to argue that Wales is leading the way in the anti-human trafficking initiative.

Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults has been devolved to the Welsh Government. However, the transnational nature of human trafficking necessitates cross-border cooperation. Stephen Chapman emphasises that in addition to local alliances, he is working with colleagues across the UK, Europe and the rest of the world. As he says, "Partnership is key – I'm putting out my hand to anyone who wants to work with me".

Whereas Wales has been praised for leading the way in the fight against human trafficking, some NGOs argue that more decisive action needs to be taken with more traffickers being brought to justice.

According to a Home Office report published in May 2012, the "covert nature of human trafficking makes it particularly difficult to identify victims

and secure convictions." Indeed, a total of 165 human trafficking offences were charged across England and Wales in 2011-12. Yet in 2011 the number of successful convictions across England and Wales was only eight.

Moreover, the figures on human trafficking convictions can be misleading. Traffickers brought before the courts may not end up being prosecuted for trafficking offences but may instead be prosecuted for a number of other possible offences, such as rape, kidnapping and assisting unlawful immigration.

BBC Wales has reported that Welsh councils could be breaching UN and European protocols because 18 out of the 22 local authorities do not have specific policies to tackle the issue. In addition, the security of border controls at Welsh ports such as Holyhead has been called into question, causing some speculation as to whether Wales is a 'soft touch' for traffickers.

But who are the traffickers? Many operate in huge, cross-border criminal networks and highly organised gangs. Yet families and individuals may also be party to it, sometimes out of naivety. As Huw Watkins says, "If you have a situation where life is cheap and people think, 'I can make money doing that', people will do it".

Jim Stewart, director of the faith-based charity Gweini, emphasises that the fight against trafficking needs to be a multi-agency action with NGOs, health authorities, and the police all engaged.



"It's only by working together that we will be able to address the issue because everyone's got a different part of the jigsaw," he says.

For his part, Stephen Chapman is adamant that he wants to make Wales a hostile place for traffickers. Stressing the point that human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery, he is determined to continue raising the agenda. "And that's my biggest challenge – to get that awareness-raising message out there," he says.

The Lithuanian woman is now back with her family and the investigation into what actually happened is still ongoing. She is very much a survivor, but her exploiters have yet to be brought to justice. There are many other trafficking victims out there whose tales are not being told.

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**Katie Harris** is a journalism postgraduate student at Cardiff University with a background in English Literature and International Politics.

# 7

## Environment

### Articles

Food co-ops tick right boxes

Why a barrage is a step too far for the Severn

Gower grower Brian Jefferys enjoys visits from pupils from Saron Primary School near Ammanford who sell his produce. In the process they learn about where food comes from.



## Food co-ops tick right boxes

**Richard Reast** on a down-to-earth scheme helping to put One Planet Wales on the map

Delivered by the Welsh Government's Rural Regeneration Unit, the Community Food Co-operative Programme provides quality, affordable fruit and vegetables to communities through local food distribution networks. Since 2004 it has established more than 300 food co-ops across Wales.

They are run from community and school settings by teams of volunteers, with support from seven regional Food Development Workers. Some co-ops provide additional produce such as eggs, meat, fish or wholefoods depending on

demand. The programme has 75 direct suppliers, including growers, wholesalers and local shops.

More than 1,400 volunteers gave up their time each week to help run the co-ops. As each volunteer gives an average of two-and-a-half-hours each week, this equates to over 160,763 volunteer hours per year. The co-ops account for just under £1 million of income to Welsh businesses. For every £1 spent, approximately £1.84p is being generated. In addition the public is making a 33-50 per cent saving compared with equivalent produce at the big four

supermarkets.

Food co-ops link local volunteers who run the food co-ops to a local supplier, whether a grower, retailer, or wholesaler. A simple payment and delivery system enables the customers to order and pay weekly in advance for their fruit and vegetable bags. The co-ops run on a not-for-profit basis so all money collected goes directly to the supplier, with the co-ops designed to have no running costs.

Customers collect their fruit and vegetables at an agreed venue during food co-op opening times, and at the same time place orders and pay for the following week's produce. A guaranteed sale on produce in advance reduces the risk of food being wasted. All co-ops are provided with reusable bags-for-life into which bulk produce is packed, so packaging is minimal. By making the supply chain shorter and promoting lower carbon produce such as fruit and vegetables, food co-ops are doing their bit to further reduce the overall carbon footprint of food.

Although community food co-operatives have been established throughout Wales, priority is given to deprived communities such as those found in Communities First areas. Consumption of fruit and vegetables in Wales is considerably lower than the UK average and in areas of deprivation consumption is lower still, which has a knock on impact on the health profile and levels of obesity of local people.

The underlying reasons why people living in deprived areas may choose a diet of poor nutritional value are complex, but there appear to be links between levels of self-esteem, the impact of social problems and choice of food. In these areas there is a higher dependency on high starch, high calorific cheap foods. Access to affordable and fresh fruit and vegetables can also be very low particularly in a car dependant culture. If the fresh produce costs more and is hard to access, food choices will tend towards cheap, quick and filling comfort food of poor nutritional value. Food co-ops make



Children from Pandy infants school at Aberkenfig, Bridgend, visit an older people's community centre in the village which also acts as a food co-op distribution centre, an example of how co-ops can bring communities together and improve cohesion.

sustainable healthy diets more affordable.

The project aims to develop and introduce sustainable practices to improve health through collaborative action to link local farmers and wholesalers to consumers. Under this way of buying and distributing food, produce can be sold before it has left the ground thereby reducing waste, improving freshness and helping to sustain smaller more traditional growers whose livelihoods are under threat.

Partnership is a key element of the programme. Food Development Workers work with a myriad of local groups and agencies to sustain the momentum of food co-ops through offering mutual support whilst ensuring that volunteers stay in a leadership role. By empowering local people to run their own co-ops without running costs or paid staff, co-ops escape from funding dependency. Once they are up and running they only need arms length support from their Food Development Worker.

The programme is part of the Welsh Government's local sourcing action plan, encourages the reduction of food miles and more sustainable practices, supports local growing and purchasing of fruit and vegetables, thus creating greater links between urban and rural areas. It has won numerous awards including the Carnegie Trust Welsh

'Rural Sparks' Champion, the World Health Organisation's 'Counteracting Obesity' award and the Public Health Wales award for 'Good Practice'.

The range of venues and benefits of co-ops are huge. Co-ops in schools provide pupils with opportunities to learn about running a not-for-profit business and satisfy objectives for the healthy schools and eco-school programmes. There are co-ops run by the homeless in drop in centres, by people with learning difficulties.

They exist in community centres, church halls, in work places and virtually any setting you can think of. The food co-op model we have devised can be delivered by anyone. Our youngest volunteers are five years old and our oldest are in their eighties.

Co-op volunteers gain skills and confidence through the empowering nature of giving up their time for the benefit of their communities whilst helping to promote 'one planet living'. We are creating a more sustainable food system for the future.

**Richard Reast** is a Food Development Worker for the Welsh Rural Regeneration Unit. For more information on its work and the location of your nearest food co-op visit [www.ruralregeneration.org.uk](http://www.ruralregeneration.org.uk)



# Why a barrage is a step too far for the Severn

**Peter Jones** advocates exploring renewable projects compatible with the protection of wildlife in the estuary

In responding to climate change Wales needs a three-pronged approach to cutting emissions from fossil fuels:

- A drive for greater efficiency, requiring behaviour change.
- Rapid spread of community and household-based micro-generation technologies, especially solar and wind.
- Investment in a mix of renewable technologies.

The first response will need to lock into a more general approach to living more sustainably and responsibly. We will need to increase investment in energy efficiency measures and drive forward

The Severn estuary provides a habitat of unique importance for 74,000 wading and water birds as well as migratory fish, and is protected under EU and international legislation. Photo: RSPB.

a domestic retrofitting programme to ensure reduction in consumption and to encourage sustainable use.

The second response, a major programme for micro-generation, will have the added benefits both of creating possibly thousands of long-term installation and maintenance jobs, whilst also increasing public awareness and responsibility of energy use.

In responding to the third, tidal power in the Severn estuary should undoubtedly play a part in the renewables mix. However, there are alternatives to a barrage that would have a far lower impact on the special estuary environment. No only that, so far as a barrage is concerned we are told

by Hafren Power, the consortium behind the latest scheme, that their proposal cannot be up and running until around 2025. However, this will be approaching ten years too late to deliver the urgent carbon reductions we need.

We should be pressing ahead now with other tidal projects. For instance, the land-attached tidal lagoon in

much of which would have been lost and destroyed had the original Severn Tidal Power Group scheme gone ahead. In the event of an environmentally damaging project, adequate and appropriate compensatory habitat would need to be found for the disturbed and displaced birds and other wildlife. This is unlikely to be easy or

environment that could result from a barrage construction might attract common water bird species, such as mallard, but would not be a habitat for the current internationally important assemblage, or a haven for winter migrants.

This change would be a natural disaster – destroying something special and unique - and replacing it with something unremarkable. In addition, although a barrage might provide some protection from marine-driven flooding from tidal surge, the real flood threat is in the estuary upstream environment from the fluvial flooding that results from prolonged heavy rainfall. A barrage could actually make this worse.

It is frustrating that there has been a lack of detail published by Hafren Power about the scheme at this stage. The detail of the project design, especially of the proposed turbines, has still not been made public. It is therefore impossible to assess its potential impact, especially on the upstream estuarine environment, which has been at the heart, hitherto, of environmental objections. There have been repeated assurances by spokespeople for Hafren Power that their new design and mode

Certainly, we need to be careful about how we proceed with any project within the Severn estuary. A barrage in this unique environment could be devastating for the 74,000 wading and water birds of international importance that use this dynamic estuary, including Bewick's swan, dunlin, pintail, ringed plover, shoveler and shelduck.

Swansea Bay could make a valuable contribution to delivering zero-carbon electricity, albeit not on the scale of the proposed barrage. Other tidal lagoon locations around the Welsh coast offer the possibility of delivering emissions reductions without the environmental damage that still remains in prospect from a barrage in the Severn. Tidal stream and wave energy can also be expected to contribute.

Certainly, we need to be careful about how we proceed with any project within the Severn estuary. A barrage in this unique environment could be devastating for the 74,000 wading and water birds of international importance that use this dynamic estuary, including Bewick's swan, dunlin, pintail, ringed plover, shoveler and shelduck.

The estuary is also of importance for migratory fish, invertebrates, plants and riverine, estuarine and inter-tidal habitats, as well as for geomorphological features. Much of the estuary – and its tributary Usk and Wye rivers – is protected under EU and international legislation. These protections are to safeguard the biodiversity and habitats of the estuary,

affordable in the context of the Severn.

The Severn Estuary is highly designated because it is unique. It is a vital link in the Natura 2000 network of protected sites that provide 're-fuelling stops' for many thousands of birds that migrate across Europe. The upstream



Shelduck in flight along the estuary shore. Photo: RSPB.

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## WELSH UNIVERSITIES

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**Sêr Cymru - £50m scheme to enhance and build upon the research capability in Wales.**



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# 91%

of graduates from full-time first degree courses in Wales are employed within **six months** of leaving higher education - higher than the UK average.



Universities contribute more than **£2 billion** a year in gross expenditure to the Welsh economy, with international students alone generating a value-added contribution of over £140 million.

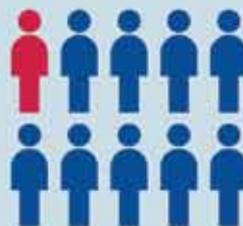
Universities are major employers in their own right - collectively they have **24,600** employees with a total turnover of **£1.2bn** located in Wales.

Based purely on patterns of expenditure, for every £100m that is invested in higher education, £102m will accrue to industries.



## INNOVATION

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Welsh universities generated **10%** of all UK graduate business start-ups and more than **10%** of estimated turnover, despite representing only **5%** of UK higher education.

Welsh universities are currently working in partnership with the aim of Wales becoming a distinctive open education nation by 2013/14, where students and lecturers from across the globe will be able to access world-class material from its institutions.





The lighthouse at Newport Wetlands, a nature reserve created in 2000 to mitigate losses of wildlife habitat as a result of the building of the Cardiff Bay Barrage. Photo: Laura Cropper.

of operation will meet the objections of various environmental organisations to the original Tidal Power Group barrage proposal. If this is indeed the case, when will these new operational features be made known?

frequently go unchallenged. Any criticism from an environmental perspective is dismissed as relating to the previous project and, of course, not applicable to their own improved design. Unless and until Hafren Power can demonstrate that their new

development, and its approach to the Severn can be considered a test of the commitment behind this promise. The challenge should be to harness energy from the Severn in the most sustainable way possible.

Tidal energy in the Severn may well contribute to making a significant long-term contribution towards meeting global emissions reduction and the UK's 80 per cent carbon reduction target by 2050. However, a barrage would come too late to address the urgent need to tackle emissions now

## The Welsh Government has promised world-leading legislation on sustainable development, and its approach to the Severn can be considered a test of the commitment behind this promise.

Assessing the potential environmental impacts of a project whose design is not known is, to say the least, difficult. The secrecy has enabled Hafren Power to repeat claims on their own behalf that

proposal can overcome environmental objections, we remain sceptical that they can address these concerns.

The Welsh Government has promised world-leading legislation on sustainable

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**Peter Jones** is Conservation Officer with RSPB Cymru

## Articles

Cultural  
apartheid on the  
airwaves

When  
Caernarfon was  
the print capital  
of Wales

# Cultural apartheid on the airwaves

**Gareth Rees** says Radio Wales smacks more of a British regional than a Welsh national channel

Radio Wales describes itself as “the nation’s broadcaster”. According to the BBC Trust, the station’s remit “is to be an English language speech-led service for listeners seeking programmes about the life, culture and affairs of Wales. Programmes should focus on local and national concerns but also address matters of UK and international significance”. The Trust refers to the culture of Wales, not the English language culture of Wales.

Last summer Radio Wales scored ten out of ten on matters of UK significance. Its coverage of the Diamond Jubilee, the Olympics and the Paralympics was massive, highly informative and enthusiastic. However, the contrast between its coverage of these events and major Welsh language based cultural events going on at the same time could hardly have been more marked.

There is, of course, far more to Welsh culture than that which is mediated through or linked in some way to the language. Yet, at a national level the historic, rich and unique eisteddfodic tradition surely should command substantial attention from ‘the nation’s broadcaster’.

An individual and intermittent listener can easily get a false impression of overall broadcasting balance and,

as with any other listener, I have my own cultural and political leanings and sensitivities. Nonetheless, much of the output might as well have been coming from a London-based BBC (Wales) rather than from BBC Wales in our own capital city.

Prominent coverage of the Olympics torch journey through Wales was to be expected, as was that of the Diamond Jubilee, but in both cases it seemed out of proportion. On the morning of Monday 2nd June there was only brief coverage by Good Morning Wales of the start of the Urdd Eisteddfod, which on a proportional population basis attracted crowds probably well in excess of those gathering in London for the Jubilee. The Urdd Eisteddfod is one of Europe’s largest youth cultural events, of which the whole Welsh nation, not just Welsh speakers, can justifiably be proud - 15,000 competed, almost as many as in the Olympics.

Most people in Wales would have wanted and expected London’s Olympics to be featured prominently by Radio Wales, particularly the 30 Welsh competitors. Given this, it was perhaps not surprising that the coverage given to the National Eisteddfod was probably even more cursory than in recent years. Just a small fraction of the fervent

Most people in Wales would have wanted and expected London's Olympics to be featured prominently by Radio Wales, particularly the 30 Welsh competitors. Given this, it was perhaps not surprising that the coverage given to the National Eisteddfod was probably even more cursory than in recent years.



Climber Sir Chris Bonington holding the Olympic Flame aloft on the summit of Snowdon at the end of May 2012 – "Prominent coverage of the Olympics torch journey through Wales was reasonably to be expected, but it became not far short of incessant".

enthusiasm expressed for what was happening at London's Olympics might, however, have attracted thousands more monolingual English speakers to give the Eisteddfod a try. The contrast in coverage between the Olympics and the Eisteddfod was huge, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

The Olympics is, of course, a four yearly event of massive global importance which was taking place in the United Kingdom for the first time in 64 years, and the Eisteddfod is an annual and uniquely Welsh festival but the balance should have been very different.

The opening concert featured Only Men Aloud, Only Boys Aloud and a new choir; Only Vale Kids Aloud (a great many of them drawn from local English-speaking homes). Matthew Rhys took to the stage with the National Youth Orchestra of Wales (the first national youth orchestra in the world) for the first-ever Welsh narration for Britten's Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra; there was the admission to the Gorsedd of John Hartson, Shane Williams and Stephen Jones; the UK premiere of Karl Jenkins' new choral work *The Bards of Wales* (the libretto being a poem which is part of the Hungarian national curriculum) with soloists Dennis O'Neill and Rebecca Evans; a Dutchman winning the Bass solo; and an almost empty stand commemorating the

immense personal sacrifices made by Trefor and Eileen Beasley in the cause of the bilingualism that is now taken almost for granted.

Little of this seemed to make its way on to the airwaves via Radio Wales. Indeed, the impression was of rather more enthusiastic coverage being given to bog snorkelling and wife-carrying in Llanwrtyd Wells in the last week of August.

Radio Wales appeared to do little towards trying to correct common misconceptions about the Eisteddfod which can militate against people deciding to go for the first time. Many are still unaware of the extent to which the Eisteddfod has endeavoured to reach out to all sections of society in Wales, and to become a friendly and welcoming festival for monolingual English speakers. The Radio Wales web-site mentioned the Eisteddfod but any detailed information could only be obtained via Welsh language links.

The one Eisteddfod story Radio Wales did cover prominently was the unfortunate collection of paintings by a single artist which included graphic references to a fairly recent murder in Aberkenfig. Although Eisteddfod officials had not been aware of the nature of the references, their response to the understandable distress of the murdered girl's mother did, as reported, seem slow and initially inadequate. This was

newsworthy, but Radio Wales gave it a number one slot and covered it over three days.

On the Saturday morning, the third day of adverse coverage, this item was juxtaposed with further coverage of Jade Jones' gold medal in the taekwondo, including gleeful reporting that, unlike some footballers, she had sung 'God Save the Queen'. The coverage of the Olympics was overwhelmingly positive throughout. Their overall financial cost to Wales received little if any attention, though on one estimate it was approximately £450 million.

The station's apparent difficulty in relation to the Welsh language manifests itself in other ways. Poor pronunciation of place names continues to be tolerated. And how many Radio Wales listeners will have been aware that last year saw the 50th anniversary of the founding of *Cymdeithas yr Iaith*? Apart from Frank Hennessy's excellent Celtic Heartbeat programme on a Sunday evening, and Adam Walton's and Bethan Elfyn's programmes on a Saturday evening, listeners are given little exposure to Welsh language mediated folk and popular music.

What little Welsh language music is played on Radio Wales would appear to be confined to fairly minor representation on dedicated programmes, rather than being a



Jamie Owen, a regular presenter on Radio Wales with chat shows that have to straddle tastes stretching from Radio 2 to 4.



Folk singer and songwriter Amy Wadge with Frank Hennessy, presenter of the Radio Wales' "excellent" Celtic Heartbeat programme on Saturday evenings.

natural, intermittent component of random every day listening. Such compartmentalisation effectively shields the casual listener from exposure to Welsh language culture.

Radio Cymru reports extensively on what goes on in the English speaking world, and has for a long time played English language music. Indeed, the

### Radio Wales has a challenging path to tread in a quite rapidly changing country and budgetary constraint cannot make its task any easier.

English language has always had far greater exposure on Radio Cymru than the Welsh language has on Radio Wales. Monolingual English speakers in Wales should have access via the nation's broadcaster to rather more information about matters concerning, and events and culture mediated through, the national language.

In recent months there has been an informative and well-balanced phone-in programme about S4C on its 30th birthday and a wonderful programme on Waldo Williams, featuring prominently the recently retired Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams. But programmes such as these are unusual, and so all the more remarkable when they occur. Radio Wales's influence, indicated by the size of its audience, behoves it to strive for an editorial balance that properly reflects its remit.

The station's cultural leanings are in turn reflected in its political coverage. It is difficult to avoid the

impression of institutional bias in favour of constitutional conservatism. The contrast between the station's enthusiasm towards British festivities in London and uniquely Welsh festivities in Wales last summer strengthened the suggestion of an unstated mission to portray Wales principally as part of a much greater united kingdom.

Many Welsh interests, concerns and topics unrelated to the language are often presented well and with appropriate enthusiasm, especially when they sit easily within the wider British context. However, there seems to be a reluctance when it comes to showcasing some more distinctive aspects of Welsh national identity. Apart from its coverage of international ball games, in which Welsh nationality has been strongly reflected since the 19th Century, the overall feel of Radio Wales is often more that of a British regional than a Welsh national channel. Anglo-American popular music increasingly dominates, and for Radio Wales the 'national' newspapers are those produced in London.

Radio Cymru's approach to coverage of the political parties appears to be more equitable. Different parts of the BBC are keen to preserve independence from each other, but if there is a difference in the balance of party political coverage between these two

stations, how can this be justified, given that they presumably operate under the same editorial guidelines concerning balance and even-handedness?

Radio Wales has a challenging path to tread in a quite rapidly changing country and budgetary constraint cannot make its task any easier. It is difficult for a station intended for listeners seeking programmes about the life, culture and affairs of Wales to achieve high levels of audience satisfaction when a sizeable percentage of the population come from outside the country and when only two thirds of the population identify themselves as Welsh. There may well be a perceived need to reflect such demographic change. But can these pressures justify the station straying from its specific remit? Certainly, there is a wide range of alternatives for listeners looking for something else to choose from.

Radio Wales has strayed from its remit. It should re-examine its responsibility as a major public service broadcaster within a small country with burgeoning self-government and with a highly distinctive indigenous culture, but where the latter is under threat from both anglicisation and globalisation. The nation's broadcaster should do more to satisfy listeners seeking programmes about that culture. Much better coverage of this year's National and Urdd eisteddfodau would be a start.

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**Dr Gareth Rees** is a consultant oncologist.

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# When Caernarfon was the print capital of Wales

Karen Owen celebrates the mid 19th Century print and news revolution

In 1811 there was no such thing as a 'newspaper' in Wales. There were many reasons for this. They included the extortionately high price of paper, the taxing of adverts, a William Pitt-led ban on the sharing of 'dangerous' information that could stir the masses, together with the impracticality of travelling and distributing any publications.

Two hundred years later, in 2013, the Welsh newspaper industry is not just in decline. It's on its knees. That is if it can be called a 'Welsh' industry at all. Again, there are many reasons for this. They include the increase once again in the price of paper; the multi-national companies and their monopoly of the news (from 'national' dailies to our local weeklies), the 24-hour news channels and websites that break stories internationally within minutes, as well as all the new social media that makes everyone a potential 'journalist'.

Yet, in the mid 19th Century there occurred what can only be described as a print and news revolution in Wales. And it was to last the most part of a century. It happened as the working class population soared. The number of readers increased substantially, thanks mainly to the Sunday Schools of the nonconformist chapels. And what's more, the revolution happened through the medium of Welsh.

It's hard to imagine that up until the Second World War, towns such as Pwllheli, Dinbych, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Dolgellau, Y Bala, Caerfyrddin, Abertawe, Merthyr Tudful, Caerdydd and Casnewydd, had thriving printing businesses producing weekly, monthly and quarterly newspapers and

magazines in the two official languages of Wales – without Welsh Books Council or Welsh Government grants.

And the foremost of these, labelled the Ink Capital of Wales, was Caernarfon.

The business of publishing newspapers – and I use the word 'business' intentionally – has never existed in a vacuum. The printing industry has always been hand in glove with many social and economic factors. And the same was true in Caernarfon in the mid 19th Century.

From 1801-1841, the population of Carnarvonshire (sic) nearly doubled from 41,521 to 81,093, when the total population of Wales (in 1801) was 587,000. Slate quarries were drawing workers from far and wide, and villages were being newly built or expanded in order to house them and their families.

And in these flourishing villages were the chapels, community hubs where a high percentage of the population were drawn nearly every weeknight to engage in all kinds of entertainment and activities, from choirs to drama clubs, from the Band of Hope to prayer meetings and literary societies. Sunday Schools also became places where the thinking working classes were able to discuss and debate life and death issues, as well as learn to read Welsh (in order to be able to read *Y Beibl*). They were also taught to sing the sol-fa Modulator and, therefore, became music 'readers'. This led to a surge in number of choirs and brass bands.

In 1847, there were 249 Sunday Schools in the county of Caernarfon, frequented by a total of 14,260 children

under 15 years of age. Because of the surge in readers, the first library in Caernarfon was opened in 1833, in Pendist above the printing works of William Potter & Co.

Those who could and wanted to travel, were able to move about freely by now. In 1812, the Cob in Porthmadog was opened. The Menai Bridge followed in 1826. By 1836, it took only 36 hours to travel by horse from Caerdybi to London. But what is difficult for us to comprehend today is that all the businessmen opening print works and launching newspapers and magazines in Caernarfon in that period, were making money from their initiatives.

As well as the financial side of things, newspapers and magazines published in Caernarfon were political forums. So much so that David Lloyd George set up his own newspaper (with two editions) in order to make sure that he was elected in 1890. Another business which saw the potential of launching its own magazine, was Nelson department store on Bridge Street. *The Nelson* was first published on 1 March, 1888. Its editor was the new part-owner of the shop, Morris T. Morris, who wanted to offer his readers articles on lifestyle and fashion, rather than the usual religion and politics.

As a direct result of the lowering of the taxes on advertising and stamp duty to 1d, the first edition of *Y Papyr Newydd Cymraeg* was published on 22 September 1836. It branded itself as "the one and only weekly Welsh newspaper at the time of its launch". Its price was 2½d, but was due to rise to 3d. In 1835, the Carnarvon Herald was on sale for 7d, and was selling 346 copies a week.



Jan Morris with son Twm, star performers in the forthcoming Caernarfon INC Weekend.

### Caernarfon INC Weekend

Over the weekend of 7-9 June Galeri in Caernarfon hosts a series of interviews, exhibitions and walking tours to celebrate the town's history of printing and publishing. To mark 30 years since the last edition of *Sulyn*, Gwynedd's first Sunday newspaper to be published in Welsh, Bethan Jones Parry interviews its editor Dylan Iorwerth. Karen Owen interviews the photographer Arwyn 'Herald'. Vaughan Hughes talks with editor and poet Meic Stephens. Poet Twm Morys is in conversation with Jan Morris about her ten years as foreign correspondent with *The Times* and *The Guardian*, culminating in her 'scoop of the century, her dash down the flank of Mount Everest to get the news of its first ascent to London in time to coincide with the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

there was a general lack of interest in politics and religion.

However, well into the 1950s Caernarfon continued to be an important hub for all kinds of printing. Today, as you wander along Bridge Street, Pool Street, Y Maes and Eastgate Street, Turf Square and High Street, there are buildings still standing that were part of that Welsh, dirty, political and illustrious inky past.

.....  
**Karen Owen** is a freelance journalist and poet.

That was the beginning of a revolution which we can now only look at in wonder. Between 1836 and 1857 there was a 70 per cent increase in the number of newspapers and periodicals sold in Caernarfon town itself.

By 1857 *Yr Herald Cymraeg* (first published 19 May 1855) was selling 9,000 copies a week. By 1869, twelve years after its launch, it was up to 14,000 a week. Meanwhile, the *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald* and *North Wales Chronicle* were selling 1,300 and 900 copies respectively. Between 1811 and 1855 I have counted 18 magazines that were published and printed in Caernarfon.

Such was the power of the Welsh language press that, in 1857, under 'Miscellaneous Notices' in the *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald*, an anonymous writer observes: "The Welsh press... There are no signs of its demise; on the contrary, it is now more actively energised than ever... when will the language perish?"

From 1860 it became possible for Welsh journalists to make a living from writing for newspapers. And that was a major factor in the revolution.

In 1874 a row broke out between the owner of the *Herald* newspapers and the Reverend Evan Jones, Minister of Capel Moriah. It involved the election of the owner of Penrhyn Quarry George Sholto Douglas Pennant as Conservative MP for Caernarfon over the Liberal candidate, Love Jones Parry. One result was the launch of a new 'working class' newspaper called *Y Genedl Gymreig* ('The Welsh Nation'). Later another version called *Y Werin* was launched, specifically aimed at quarrymen and priced ½d. Between 1886 and 1888 *Y Genedl Gymreig* was selling 23,000 copies a week.

In 1889 William Jones Parry, a militant from Bethesda began work at *Y Genedl Gymreig*. He was keen to see it combine with *Yr Herald Cymraeg* to form a new Welsh daily newspaper in Caernarfon. Talks took place between the two companies, but nothing came of them.

World War I proved a grim reaper of newspapers and magazines in Wales. During hard financial times, readers were spending their money on essentials. Paper was expensive. And



*Fishlock's File*

## Word slingers who can make a corgi laugh

Trevor Fishlock says a hole in our national trouser needs mending

### Articles

*Fishlock's File:*  
Word slingers  
who can make a  
corgi laugh

### Books and writing:

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estuary

In the footsteps  
of Y Gododdin

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A man of  
superior parts

How yr Wyddfa  
enters the soul

Lyrics that riddle  
our consciousness

Stuck in Splott

What Wales can  
do for a poet

A vital piece missing from the national jigsaw of Wales needs to be restored. Its absence leaves many of us with an ineradicable sense of incompleteness. In these difficult times some scholarship or other prize should be founded to encourage its restoration to public life. As we turn the pages of our national newspaper we are aware of the lacuna. The people's need is for a small drawing consisting of a few lines and a few words. We want a little work of art that is sharp and pertinent, to wit a cartoon with its origins in the human life of Wales. It should be funny and perspicuous enough to dissolve the rust on the facial muscles that detonate a smile.

We sympathize. We know this hole in the national trouser is difficult to mend. Cartoonists are less common than the okapi. Surely there must be one among our three million people.

The *Western Mail*, I have to say, does a remarkably good job. I read it daily. It is our tribal notice board. There are excellent people writing it. The times are not easy for producing newspapers; and cartoonists must be fed, clothed and given clean straw to sleep on.

The trouble is that the daily cartoon is an American job and it's not the artist's fault that his brand of humour,

perhaps cranked out in Buffalo Falls, Idaho, does not tickle the giggle glands of Upper Cwmtwrch and Llandwrog. The laugh-quotient is rather low.

Now I have lived in America and have long admired the star cartoonists of the great American newspapers. I have a diploma in American humour. Also in the humour of India: as a former resident and avid consumer of the Indian press I enjoyed many witty and telling brilliant cartoons.

But isn't there some journalistic cliché about horses for courses? A cartoonist needs to have been steeped and sharpened in his culture before he dips his sharp little pen in the inkpot. I have several waspish cartoons I bought at a market in Moscow. The artist who sold them to me had his nose freshly bloodied by thugs who disapproved of his humour. They could never have appeared in Soviet newspapers.

Such scorpion stings and bile were an intrinsic part of the vigorous history of the British press from the 18th Century. If some of it makes modern comment look tame, today's cartoon caricature, satire and the barb of ridicule still form the basis of arresting and controversial editorial pages.

The historian Peter Lord demonstrates in his remarkable book

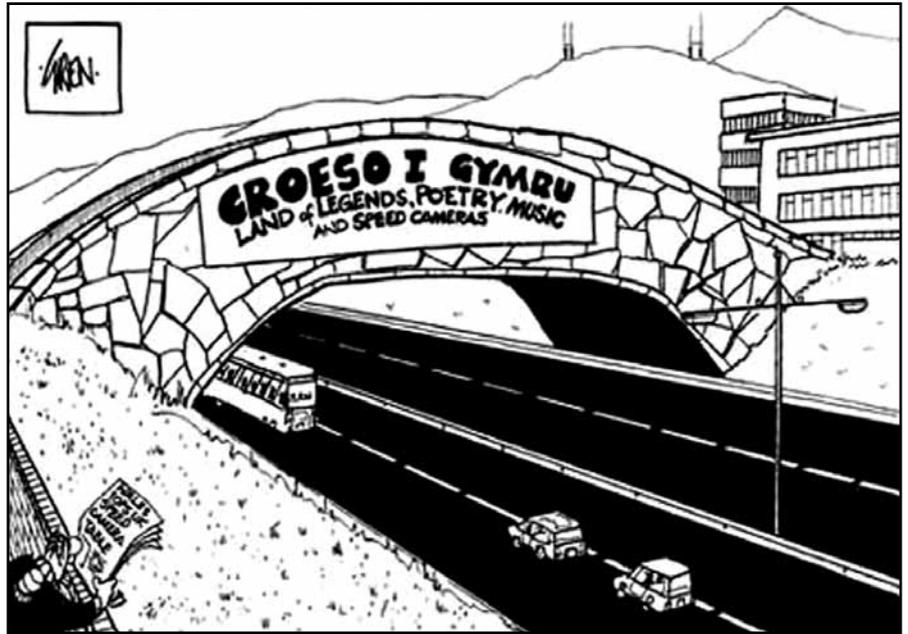
## But isn't there some journalistic cliché about horses for courses? A cartoonist needs to have been steeped and sharpened in his culture before he dips his sharp little pen in the inkpot.

Words with Pictures that Wales has a large part in the history of malicious, scornful, cynical, vulgar, political and cruel and comic art. Anyone thin-skinned enough today to be ruffled by twerpish remarks from east of the border needs to examine the raw, ribald and xenophobic art and verses of the 18th and 19th Centuries - complete with goat-riding Welsh aristocrats. Eyebrows still rise.

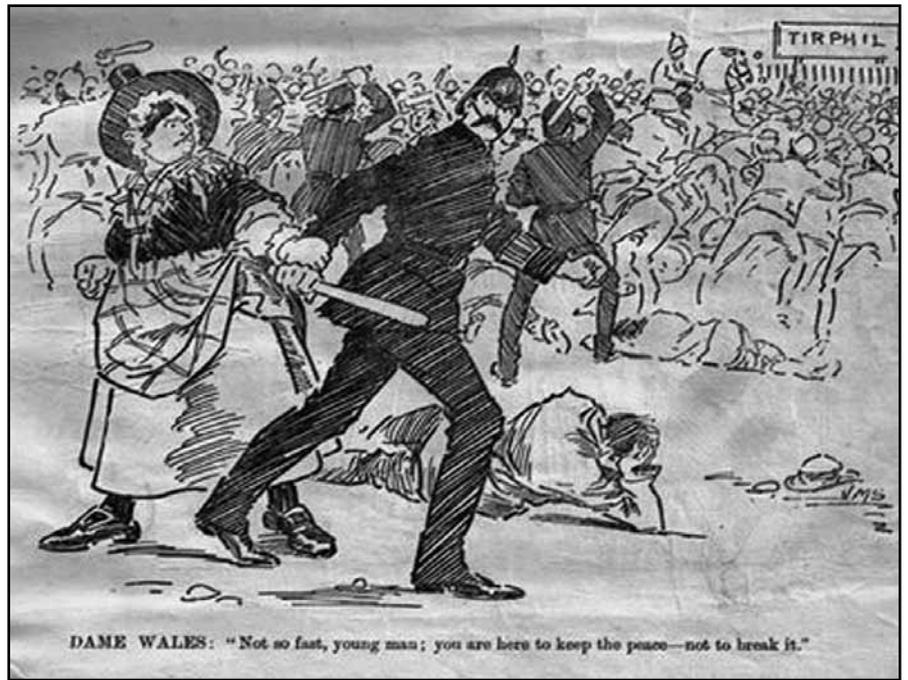
The cartoonists of Victorian and Edwardian Wales, like the *Western Mail's* Joseph M. Staniforth, described their own country and society, the industrial and political unrest, Lloyd George and the fortunes of the rugby teams. Staniforth created the rotund and tall-hatted Dame Wales to comment on behalf of the people.

For 38 years the talented Gren Jones created his Dai-capped world of Valley Wales in the *South Wales Echo*. It came complete with the town of Aberflyarff, the rugby ground, wise sheep and terraces winding over precipitous hills. His was an aspect of a distinctive seam of Welsh comedy that included Ryan Davies and Ronnie Williams, and Max Boyce. They and a generation of writers mirrored the life and humour of a world that has largely gone with the mining; though the fly-half factory is still working.

In its place a different kind of Wales is emerging. We want humour to help us along, a dash of irreverence, a mirror in which to see ourselves. Buffalo Falls is fine and dandy but it doesn't make the smile muscles work very much. We need cartooning fit for the time and place, artists with sharp quills, Welsh wordslingers who can make a corgi laugh.



A typical take by Gren (Grenfell Jones, 1934-2007) who drew daily cartoons for the *South Wales Echo* for more than 35 years before retiring in 1999.



Joseph M. Staniforth (1863-1921) worked for the *Western Mail*, *Evening Express* and *News of the World*. Here he has his Dame Wales confronting police at a strikers' 'riot' in 1898. In his *The Visual Culture of Wales: Industrial Society* (1998) Peter Lord describes Staniforth as "the most important visual commentator on Welsh affairs ever to work in the country."

# Edging the estuary

**Peter Finch** reports from a place where there is enough water to drown us all

You can't see it but it is. The land here is sinking. It has been since the last ice age when the great sheets miles thick that pressed the northern parts of these islands into the ground began to melt. Freed of their encumbrance the rocks below began to lift.

It's known as post-glacial rebound. Scotland is pushing up into the air at the rate of a centimetre a year. But at our island's other extremity, down here where the Cornish peninsular and the fringes of Wales face the withering Atlantic, the land is subsiding. It's descending slowly among its shales, mudstones and limestone sheets. Going down.

I've walked it, nearly all of it, along this enormous estuary, at some time or other. It was just land meeting sea when I first encountered it as a child, taken to the pebbles of Penarth to watch the brown waves crash on the grey rocks under a sun reluctant to shine for too long. Did the ground move? Who could imagine such a thing.

Recent decades, however, have seen the results of slow irrevocable change. Fiercer seas, higher coastal walls, flood water on the streets, sandbags where there were never sandbags before. The globe warms and the ice caps return their waters to the

oceans. The land sinks as the seas rise.

Coming up the Estuary, a waterway so wide that all sense of land containment has vanished, there is no hint that this ceaseless rippling expanse of grey brown sea might be a harbinger of our collective future. In *The Drowned World* (Gollanz, 1962) J. G. Ballard postulates a water-locked, dystopian land, barracked with silt and entangled with Jurassic plant life. His drowned future London is a "nightmare world of competing organic forms returning rapidly to their Palaeozoic past". The planet, but not quite as it is now.

In *The Flood* (Gollanz, 2008) Stephen Baxter has a different take. Here the waters rise, predictably at first, and then unaccountably fail to stop. They drown the towns, the cities and then move on to the hills. The Welsh mountains and the moors of the West Country become islands. Tors and peaks emerge from the advancing seas as last bastions for civilised life. Eventually all that is left are the high peaks of Snowdon and the crowning rock outcrop of Scafell Pike, phone masts on top. They bear the flags of their nations, a last hurrah to who we were. Then they vanish under the unrelenting waves.

Already the Severn has shown what it can do. Four hundred years ago flood waters swamped the levels on both sides, from Carmarthen to Gloucester. Farms, castles and turnpikes went under. There was great loss of life and, among a God fearing Christian population, the idea that this was retribution, the work of the Devil. The land was filled with dread. From out there on the choppy oceans it could come again. The defences we've since built along the coastal edges are testament to our continuing fears. Build a wall. Keep the sea out.

And we could build and build those walls, a great water-repelling stone and iron fence surrounding our countries. The sea risen a hundred meters, the land surface languishing in the dark swampy shadow a hundred metres below. We could save ourselves and, like Malé, capital of the Indian Ocean Maldives built large, hang on as we were. We could do that. But we probably won't.

Architects, being the visionaries they sometimes are, have proposed alternative futures. Already in Holland houses float. They sit on watertight basements and when the waters flood they rise on their tethers to bob on the water's surface. When the waters recede they return to hard land. Each dwelling has a floating front path and a small boat. There are also proposals out there for whole retreating cities. Conurbations will be built hard on the coast's edge but sitting on rails. As the waters advance these new retreating villages with their buildings mounted on concrete skids and iron rails will be dragged back up the coastal plateau to higher ground. Whole urban complexes will shift inland. Architects from the London-based firm Smout Allen have made proposals which suggest that threatened future cities will move as if they were boats being hauled from the waves.

And if our Welsh estuarial conurbations and structures cannot be hauled away from the sea on rails then they could be made to hover. Structures can be attached to air balloons and allowed to move upwards



Gulls edging the estuary near the sand dunes at Kenfig Pool. Photo: Peter Finch.

into the skies. Cloud City has already been proposed as an emergency solution for New York should Manhattan succumb to rising water and hurricane. Somehow, though, in the Severn Estuary's prevailing westerlies I can't see that quite working here.

Beyond architecture the fantasists have proposed wild fixes that include the use of anti-grav, of magnetic repulsion, of buildings which repel water by chemical solution, of structures which encase themselves in air-tight domes and remain where and as they are – cities created below Eden project roofs, safe in their bubbles below the waves.

What might be the Estuary's nearer future? As of 2011, following the collapse of part of Fontygary Caravan Park onto the beach below, the Welsh Government has put in place a new flood and coastal erosion strategy. It calls it that and it's good politics to be seen to be responding to events. In reality, however, it differs little from that which held sway on both the Welsh and English sides of the

Channel before. Hold the line and where that's not possible step back.

There's a future out there of risen water and steady withdrawal. As the walls are threatened and topped by the sea, first on exceptional days and then increasingly far more regularly, they are left as they are. Managed retreat.

The Severn Estuary, the Severn Sea, the waters where Wales runs out and where England begins. They are such an attraction to those who live nowhere near them. Water has such an enormous pull which is something I, who live right by it, find hard to understand. Back in the days of the USSR's communist bid for world domination my state-allocated female minder took me on a trip south to the Caspian Sea. I was on an exchange visit, a young writer the communists clearly wanted to influence.

We'd started from land-locked Moscow, where she lived in a regulation tower block among the vodka drinking masses and mamushkas with fat bellies and empty baskets hanging on their arms.

# Representing the wind, wave and tidal stream industries in Wales



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Coal now imported (from Poland) at Newport Docks. Photo: Peter Finch.

My minder was used to life in the cold land-locked northern cities. It was all she knew. We flew south across the great and endless lands of the Soviet Union. When we eventually reached the Caspian, a flat and oil-scummed pool on the sand coloured Steppes, with no rock edge nor wave action, no seaweed, no wind-blown

**I've met students in the centre of Cardiff who do not regard the capital as a port city, are unaware of the true extent of its water front and, in any event, do not recognise the sea for what it is even when standing at water's edge.**

white horses, no seaside paraphernalia of donkey rides and whelk stalls, none of that, she rushed forward and on her knees washed her face in the bitter waters. The sea, the sea. She'd never seen it before. The coast was a place to which she had never been. Despite the oil derricks stretching out across the waters and the presence of the ugly smoking city of Baku to our backs, for her this was a revelatory

and holy moment. For me it was just a visit to a distant pond.

On the Severn's coasts I get the sense that, despite its omnipresence and categorically certain rise, our sense of the sea is in retreat. In the city ports of Bristol, Cardiff, Newport, Barry, Port Talbot and Swansea the docklands are being

engulfed by gentrification. Apartments for the rich. Places to dine on lobster and duck with black bean sauce.

Dock traffic is a fraction of what it once was. There are so few ships at sea. The dock labour force has shrivelled. Men do not leave port in trawlers looking for fish. The docklands themselves are surrounded by high security fences, the short cuts down port roads are no longer

open, the truncated Royal Navy visit less frequently. They don't have the ships. The whole sense of us as a maritime nation is in retreat.

City dwellers and, increasingly, too, those who live further out in the dormitory coastal towns and villages, are losing their sense of being by water. They take no part, they do not look. Seafaring words like *offing* and *anchor* no longer litter their language. They do not toe the line. They have never slung their hooks. There are those in Gloucestershire who do not know their county has a coast line. I've met students in the centre of Cardiff who do not regard the capital as a port city, are unaware of the true extent of its water front and, in any event, do not recognise the sea for what it is even when standing at water's edge. Flat Holm and Steep Holm, out there on the real sea, the island beacons and proof that this is a maritime place, are seen as a sort of wallpaper. If they are seen at all.

But tell this to the sea fishermen who occupy the difficult to get to coastal rocks with their rods and their hip flasks and you'll get a very different answer. So, too, from the increasing number of coastal walkers and those who sail from the honeypot marinas or the muddy piers that dot both English and Welsh coasts. It's not all lost.

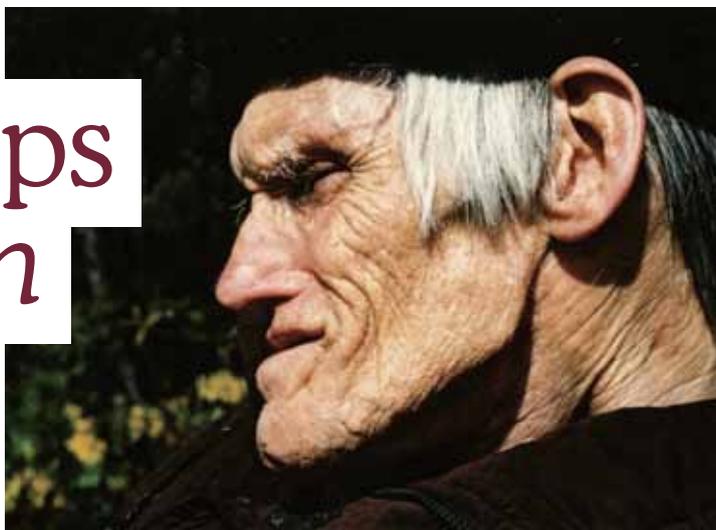
French sailors from a port visit by one of their navy's coastal minesweepers were seen wandering the capital's nightclub streets. They looked very French and extremely maritime in their whites, their bellbottoms and their red bobble topped sailor's hats. But among the drunken revellers dressed as vampires, schoolgirls, lumberjacks and characters from super hero movies, they came over more as a stag party who'd spent a bit more than usual on their costumes. The sea, the sea. Not anymore.

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**Peter Finch's *Edging The Estuary*, his psychogeographic adventures along the edge of Wales' principal waterway, of which this is an extract, is published by Seren this Spring.**

# In the footsteps of Y Gododdin

**Nigel Jenkins** looks back at the life of poet, translator and literary critic Tony Conran



Once in a very rare while, a Welsh writer of English is able, through his or her poetry, to reach beyond the narrow confines of literary Wales to make a significant statement to the nation as a whole. This was achieved by Tony Conran in his magnificent *Elegy for the Welsh Dead in the Falklands*, written in response to Mrs Thatcher's bloody electioneering in the South Atlantic.

I was privileged to be present at the poem's first performance – by Tony himself, assisted by his wife Lesley – at a fringe event during the 1982 Pontardawe Music Festival, an annual event at which Tony often camped, being a committed aficionado of traditional music. There were no more than a dozen gathered around a snooker table in the back bar of the Victoria Inn, where the poetry readings took place. However, it was clear to everyone present that this powerful poem, drawing its energies from Aneirin's great sixth-century lament *Y Gododdin*, was destined to be considered one of the great poems of the 20th Century. The poem was soon being widely published, and no anthology of contemporary 'anglo-Welsh' poetry could be deemed sufficient to its pretensions without Conran's elegy.

Tony Conran, who was also an editor, essayist, playwright, storyteller, literary mentor and a writer of wonderful letters, made a seminal, Modernist contribution to the English-language literary culture of Wales. To many readers and writers, he was no less important than R.S. Thomas, being profoundly influenced by Welsh-language literature and Welsh culture and

history. Certainly, he was the more formally adventurous of the two poets, and the more capacious and generous in his vision.

Tony was born in 1931 at Kharghpur in Bengal, his father being employed as a locomotive engineer on the Indian railways. Wales, he insisted, had always been an imperial country, up to its eyeballs in the British Empire, and in dire need of renegeing on Britain and all that Britain stood for. The wandering Conrans liked to keep a toe-hold in what had become their native north Wales, although Ireland was the clan's original home. Because of ill health (he was born with cerebral palsy), Tony was brought back as an infant to live with loving grandparents, at first in Liverpool and then in Colwyn Bay. Separated from both parents from 1939 to 1945, and from his father from his sixth to his fourteenth year, he missed the sense, in his early years, of belonging to a community. In comparative isolation, and from an early age, he wrote not only poetry but, ever the experimenter, all kinds of drama, from verse tragedies to bedroom farce.

From Colwyn Bay Grammar School he progressed to the University College of Wales, Bangor, where he took a first in English and philosophy, and wrote an MA thesis on 'The Social Conscience of the Romantics'. He became an Anglican as he entered college, but turned to Catholicism soon after he left.

It was then, in 1955, as he said later, that "the catastrophe came, I ... found myself with a clerk's job in Chelmsford – darkest England if ever there was one" (interview in *Modern Poetry in Translation*,

Spring 1995). Though a dispiriting period, there were compensations. New working-class friends helped broaden and deepen a political consciousness which was to remain socialist. And in Chelmsford public library, with fumbling Welsh but a decent dictionary, he spent his evenings on the work that would issue a decade later in the *Penguin Book of Welsh Verse* (1967). It sold 13,000 copies all over the world and established his reputation as the pre-eminent translator of Welsh-language poetry. The book's long and, eventually, influential introduction was at once a concise cultural history of Wales and a challenging bardic manifesto. Among appreciative readers was the leading Australian poet Les A. Murray who wrote:

"I had never seen translations as brilliant and immediately convincing as Conran's... they were poetry of a high order in themselves, and reflected a tradition that was clearly of major importance."

Les A. Murray, 'A Tribute to Old Delight' in Nigel Jenkins (ed.), *Thirteen Ways of Looking at Tony Conran*.

His motives, as he explained in the preface to the second edition (published as *Welsh Verse* by Poetry Wales Press in 1986, and frequently republished since then by Seren Books), were in part political:

"My English-speaking countrymen in Wales were being treated as if they were immigrants in their own country, potential Englishmen and women who, if they persevered,

might well inherit the green and pleasant meritocracy of England's nineteen-sixties Jerusalem... If any separate existence was to be possible for Wales... then the Welsh past had to be made available for English speakers. They had to be made aware that their own civilisation was as radically different from the English they were aping as (shall we say) Persian or Swahili... Of course, I wanted a Welsh nation created. It hasn't happened very much yet, but you never know."

His Essex exile ended in 1957 when John Danby, chairman of the English department at Bangor, found him a job as (officially) research fellow and tutor – in practice, as “permanent bard of the place”. In 1977, he and his wife Lesley were married. Their eldest daughter Marged (later known as Maia) was born the same year, followed by Alys in 1981. He retired from the University in 1982, to concentrate full-time on his writing.

*Formal Poems* (1960), the first of some dozen or more books of original poetry (not to mention over two dozen pamphlets), declares by title the centrality to his vision of poetic form and structure. Tony Conran long argued, and his poetry sought to demonstrate, that it is a sense of Welsh form and bardic purpose, rather than mere Welsh content, that will most fully distinguish Welsh poetry in English from the anglicising school of empiricism and self-expression. A literary Modernist in the line of Pound, Basil Bunting, Hugh MacDiarmid and David Jones (and perhaps the last), he had no time for the poetry of demure ego, whimsical anecdote, genteel suburban regret and detail-obsessed imagism. He saw himself, in the Welsh tradition, as first and foremost a praise poet, praising and elegising not – these days – a prince or a regional lord but friends and fellow architects of a distinctly Welsh civilisation. Two books in particular stand out in this respect, *Castles* (1993) and *All Hallows* (1995), both of them complex, extended works constructed according to a keen sense of musical pattern (indeed, the

latter is subtitled ‘A symphony in three movements’), and singing the praises of a wide range of poets and artists.

Although he was reluctant in most of his poetry to foreground his own experience, he broke with that self-denying ordinance in his last collection, *What Brings You Here So Late?* (2008), a single autobiographical poem in which he movingly evokes what it was like growing up with cerebral palsy in wartime Bangor. Representing, as he wrote in the *Western Mail* (6 September 2008), “my own ‘coming out’, a public acknowledgement of myself as a spastic”, the poem went on to document his struggles for a place in the social world, against the backdrop of the Thatcher years, and then his coming to grips with death prior to undergoing spinal surgery to halt increasing physical paralysis.

Although more intimately acquainted with, and influenced by, Welsh poetic forms than any other writer of English, Tony Conran was a thoroughgoing internationalist and shameless ransacker of other art forms, particularly music, dance and painting. Indian ragas, Kathkali dance, the music of Mozart, the hidden symphonic structures of Wordsworth, Japanese haiku (he was, in the 1960s, Wales's very first haiku poet), Chinese *shih*, the visual revolution of Cubism, to name only a few of his delights, were hardly less important to his synthesising artistry than *cynghanedd*, the *cywydd*, the *englyn milwr*. Poetry, for him, was an art that called for performance, and he drew on a rich fund of musical and dance traditions to tour many a roadshow, involving actors, dancers, musicians and even visual artists in the interpretation of his poetry. He could see similar potential in the work of other poets, and toured a memorable production of *The Angry Summer*, Idris Davies's dramatic poem about the 1926 miners' strike (an edition of which he edited for the University of Wales Press in 1993).

Tony Conran had a profound sense of the interconnection and morality of art. It is characteristic that as a translator he should have taken with such passion to the poetry of Waldo Williams, whose recognition that we have “un gwraidd /

Dan y canghennau” (one root beneath our many branches) chimes with Conran's hiraeth, at the hillfort of Tre'r Ceiri, for “The warm belonging root of us” (*Castles*).

As someone bereft of a sense of community in his youth, and as a poet-translator whose imagination had held him shivering in the darkness of Cynddylan's devastated hall, Tony Conran was moved by a powerful imperative to define and defend and invent upon this patch of Earth a place he could call our own. The building of such a Wales was not something, of course, that he or any poet could accomplish individually – nor would he have expected to, seeing himself, like David Jones, as “adding to the deposit” upon which the desired nation might be realised. For Wales is a country, quite unlike W.H. Auden's, in which poetry has made a great deal happen.

Some forty years ago, in an essay in *Artists in Wales: 2* (1973), Tony Conran exhorted artists not to demolish, in imitation of the alienated loner of arty individualism, but to honour other people, strengthen the bonds between them – and give gifts. All his writing life, he made a speciality of giving gifts – poems to honour a marriage, a visit, a parting, a birth; indeed, his entire career has been a gift to our culture of inestimable value.

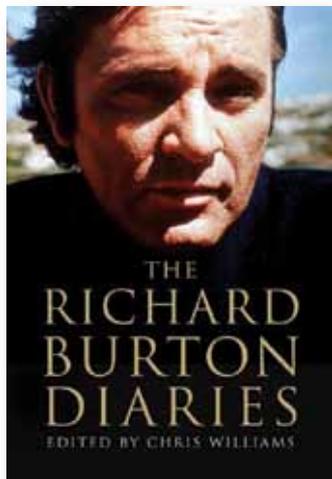
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**Nigel Jenkins**, poet, essayist, psychogeographer and director of creative writing at Swansea University, edited *Thirteen Ways of Looking at Tony Conran* which was presented to its subject by the Welsh Union of Writers at a day-long festival celebrating the work of Tony Conran, in Bangor at the end of the UK Year of Literature 1995. Born in 1931 Tony Conran died in Bangor on 14 January 2013. He was buried at Bangor New Cemetery, following a packed funeral service at the church of Our Lady and St James, Bangor. He is survived by his wife Lesley and their daughters Maia and Alys.

# Reviews

## A man of superior parts

Peter Stead



*The Richard Burton Diaries*

Edited by Chris Williams

Yale University Press 2012, £25.00

One of the most familiar and appealing titbits of Burton lore is the story of how, on one of his early visits home from California, the regulars in Pontrhydyfen's Miners' Arms challenged him to admit that he was the greatest actor in Hollywood. "Well", replied the returning hero, "Marlon Brando isn't bad". "But", replied the local spokesman, "you can beat him, Rich, can't you?"

The popularity of this old chestnut reminds us of how widespread that particular trope was in the industrial Wales of the early and mid 20th Century. In every village 'the favourite son' (and it was sons in those days), whether he was a tenor, middleweight, outside half, centre forward, doctor or preacher, was seen off on the London train by a crowd confident that he would return as the equivalent of world champion. In that crowd there were many who treasured the finer aspects of culture and learning. But the real common denominator was the need

for home-grown excellence merely to be acknowledged by the wider world. The syndrome lives on, of course, in the Welsh media's love of celebrity.

If the "you can beat him, Rich" story tells us much about the Welsh cultural mindset it also provides a terrific clue to explaining the career of Richard Burton. In his intriguing Diaries, handsomely printed by Yale University Press and fastidiously edited by Swansea University's Chris Williams, it often seems as if the actor is still replying to the boys in the pub. Burton never allows us to forget that theatre had always bored him but clearly he always has an eye on the work of those seen as his rivals: "I do not wish to compete with Olivier or Gielgud and Scofield and Redgrave etc, as they are too 'actory' for my liking".

Three of this quartet had been knighted and, notwithstanding his distancing himself, Burton provides ample evidence that he was an avid reader of the annual honours list. Similarly, in Hollywood Burton keeps his distance but nevertheless is not unprepared for any prizes on offer ("I am now the most nominated leading actor in the history of the Academy Awards who has never won"). He sees 'very few films' but closely studies the form. He admires Brando's "extraordinary talent" but, comparing their reputations ironically, the diarist asks whether anyone has ever "understood a word he has said". Evidently he was keeping this contender within his sights.

The Burton Diaries have deservedly received critical acclamation. For the Daily Telegraph they were "the publishing sensation of the season", and for the Spectator "the most captivating book of the year". For anybody's printed diaries to work there has to be a consistently strong, distinct and intelligent voice. In particular, in his passing comments on his associates we detect the confidence and authority that is Burton's hallmark. Olivier is "practically a dwarf" with a "vulgar streak". Franco Zeffirelli is "a ruthless, selfish, multi-faced ego-mad coward".

This tone is there throughout and fearless judgement is passed on critics, waiters, doctors, colleagues and writers. We know that a telling, cryptic, entertaining and memorable verdict is always imminent.

In July 1969 Burton reflected that good doctors are as rare as good actors – "about ten of us – out of ten thousand – are not derivative and repetitive". Two days later he picked up on this point and in so doing takes us to the core of his public and literary identity:

"I suppose that deep down, though I hate to admit it, I am a proper actor and the parts I play do affect me slightly. There is always one part of me that is looking on and I am aware that I have become authoritative... I've always been like that but playing a King (Henry VIII) has accentuated my natural assumption of superior means".

Burton was aware that Olivier had once described him as "a natural aristocrat". In 1971, trying to understand his own confidence, Burton confessed to always having been "an awful academic snob" and that there was "no mind in the film business... that I didn't despise... compared to my own". His mind was "a mountain peak" on which he "could look down on the despicable ants" in his industry. One can speculate too that his sure sense of self was in part both physically and sexually determined.

It is Burton's confidence and condemnation of all that is mediocre that makes the diaries so entertaining. We are always aware that we are in good hands wherever the film locations, hotels, restaurants or parties are situated. His honesty always helps and the confessions of ill-temper and over-indulgence come at regular intervals. Just as common are the discussions of his wealth and possessions and in this respect it is the total honesty and lack of affectation that keeps us on his side. In 1968 he calculated that he and Elizabeth would soon be "worth about

\$12 million between us. About \$3 million of that is in diamonds, emeralds, property, paintings, (Van Gogh, Picasso, Monet, Utrillo, John etc.) so our annual income will be in the region of a \$million". The purchase of the yacht and the private plane are treated as if they were merely pieces of kitchen equipment.

Elizabeth Taylor, of course, is the co-star of the Diaries and we learn that at first they were partly written for her: she was to follow this honing of his intellectual persona. He leaves us in no doubt of his admiration of her "brilliant" acting and her physical beauty and charms. However, from the outset it is the way in which the initial Antony and Cleopatra relationship was morphing into a real life 'Virginia Woolf' scenario that holds our interest. Generally Burton's discussions of sex and anatomy remind us that he grew up in those decades before the 1960s 'discovery of sex'. His fascination with Taylor even has its schoolboy-side: her 'bum' could almost have had its own entry in the index. The growing list of both their ailments testifies to their over-indulgence.

Burton willingly admits to over-indulgence, lack of sleep and depression but at the same time he keeps the door closed on several areas of private grief. Many dark nights of the soul must have gone unrecorded or unexplored. In 1969 he explained that his "muscular intelligence" prevented him from believing in God and that he suspects that "the last sound to be heard on this lovely planet will be a man screaming. In fear and terror. It might be me".

He begs that, like his father, he would go silently or perhaps with "just one admonitory and despairing 'Fuck you'". A decade later the scenario darkens. Still appearing live on stage and fighting the booze he becomes haunted by a Kafka letter that suggests that the Day of Judgement will in effect be a summary court in which every person will examine and judge their own soul in what will be an "agony of self-examination". This entry ends with a longing for "the panacea of a drink... a double ice cold vodka martini... an hour of sweetly melancholy euphoria. I

shall have a Tab instead. Disgusting."

What guaranteed the publishing success of the Diaries was the great surprise experienced by the reviewers when they discovered that Burton was a real writer. It is the literary dimension that gives both body and soul to this book. He has that need of the compulsive reader to report on every book whilst nevertheless appreciating Somerset Maugham's warning that "reading is a disease". Reading promiscuously was a refuge but he understood that penning his own words would be his destiny. He liked Francis Bacon's remark that "writing maketh... an exact man".

Chris Williams rightly suggests that the Diaries were a form of self-review and discipline but also an exercise on the way to something substantial. He yearned for "the immortality" and "permanence" guaranteed by the published book. Entry after entry carries his own or other people's suggestions as to what he should write. He read countless novels but that "unreal" and "contrived" form was too "tricky". All the evidence suggests that all the time it was the great autobiography that was there staring him in the face. He was also uniquely qualified to assess the social mores of Europe, America and Britain. Now it is the Diaries that will bestow that immortality.

Chris Williams begins his book with a fascinating quote by the actor William Redfield who worked with Burton on his North American Hamlet. Redfield reported that he had found Burton to be "a deeply educated and remarkably unself-conscious man", someone who "combines education with intuition to an unusual degree". Clearly, as editor, Williams was confident that this was the interpretation of Burton that his published Diaries would convey. The editor concludes his own beautifully balanced introduction by inviting us to discover a more varied and complex Burton than we might have expected: we are offered "a Richard Burton who reads, who thinks, who longs to write". Readers will duly discover a formidable authorial presence in these Diaries. Richard Burton is back with us and, of course, very much

on his own terms.

Inevitably this highly pleasing book has stimulated a fascinating debate and that is how it should be. For decades the Burtons have been the property of the gossip columnists and the celebrity boosters but the need has always been for a cultural assessment. The point at issue is why a brilliantly acclaimed actor turned his back on one of the most sophisticated theatrical cultures in the world and then developed a degree of contempt for film, the most popular and satisfying art form of the 20th Century. In September 1971 he assembled a lengthy explanation of his career choices and tackles his critics head-on with what can only be described as considerable disingenuousness. The profession of acting is culturally defined and particular cultures have every right to analyse in detail the careers of individual players. It is for this reason that the cultural critics of London and New York have taken the Burton Diaries so seriously.

At one point in 1969 Burton complains of Brando's "under-articulation" and confesses how he "longs to take him in my teeth and shake enthusiasm into him". Well, why didn't he? And that is the question that one is forced to ask at so many points in Burton's career. Yes, we can appreciate the repetitive boredom of acting and the banality of many films. Yet very rarely does he contemplate the possibilities of the art forms he inhabits and of how he could play a part in enhancing their complexity. His aversion to English theatrical snobbery and Hollywood crassness justifies for him a quite remarkable alienation from what were major cultural endeavours. He really has nothing to say about the medium of Film and the outstanding auteurs (directors and actors working in America).

Coming nearer home Burton, for all his Welsh nostalgia, poetry reciting, avid reading and perusal of honours lists, ultimately had no cultural dimension, no cultural antenna. He loved to think of Joyce's Ulysses: but why didn't he play Bloom? After all Molly was at hand. He berates the crowd at Harlech Television. Why didn't he do something about

it? Under Milk Wood apart, he never played a Welshman (there were some feeble initiatives). Of course, Wales was underdeveloped culturally at that time but why on earth didn't he try to explore and promote the latent energies of which he was evidence? One can never forgive Burton his cultural chastity.

It was his opting out of culture that has infuriated reviewers such as Simon Callow for whom Burton "sneered" at other actors whilst himself only "intoning narcissistically". Other reviewers probed more deeply. Frederick Raphael wonders why Burton was "driven to scowl so furiously at a world which did him such lavish favours". He concludes that "in telling all, he never quite says enough for us to be sure".

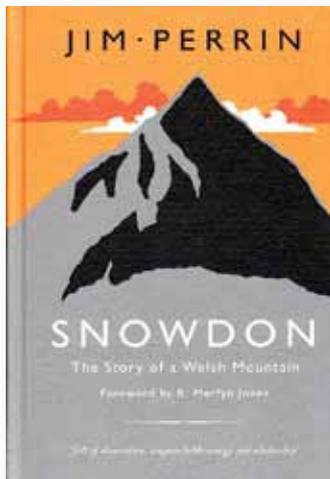
It is testimony to Burton's many levels that even after reading this weighty tomb we feel a need to know more. In an intriguing review in the New York Review of Books Fintan O'Toole provides one of the best descriptions ever of Burton's stage presence and in the process wonders whether "the point about Burton is not that he was a great actor who fell into a void. Perhaps the void was always there". O'Toole suggests that "it was precisely the shadow, the darkness, the empty space around him that made him such a potent presence". To have taken acting more seriously might well have taken him out of the security zone that he had put together.

And so one of the most successful and interesting Welshmen of modern times was a self-educated, exiled atheist and alcoholic who comes to the cultures that created him only courtesy of film, recordings and now his diaries. It would have given Richard Burton an enormous kick that, almost thirty years after his death, the citizens of Wales, England and the United States are still debating not only the nature of the man but also what his career and personality, both equally fascinating and infuriating, have to tell them about themselves. Richard Burton is not going to go away.

**Peter Stead** is an historian and cultural commentator.

## How yr Wyddfa enters the soul

Bethan Gwanas



*Snowdon: The Story of a Welsh Mountain*  
Jim Perrin  
Gomer, 2012, £14.95

I wasn't sure at first. I love Jim Perrin's shorter prose, his recent article: *Wales: why winter is the time to savour Snowdon* (clickonwales, 2 March) for example, is superb. But I've had problems with his style in the past. It teeters on the brink of being over-flowery and I've often felt that it could do with a bit of weeding. That's just a matter of personal taste, of course; many people love it. Anyway, having to review "the life story of the British mainland's finest mountain ... parcelled in Jim Perrin's ribboned prose" worried me. But I'm relieved to say that I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It's quirky and romantic, as expected (that's the kind of guy he is), and yes, his style did tend to run away with itself at the start. However, I was soon drawn into his obvious love for mountains, rock-climbing, stories and legends, literature and the Welsh language - things I also happen to love.

Having walked and climbed up Snowdon many times myself, and read quite a bit about the early climbers, I wasn't expecting to learn much that was new to me, but once again, I was

proved wrong. The amount of research is admirable. If you want to know absolutely everything (well, almost) about yr Wyddfa, look no further. He has included quotes from the likes of George Borrow, Thomas Pennant, Gerald of Wales and O.M. Edwards, so if you're too busy or lazy to read their whole works, you'll get some of their best bits in this information-packed hardback volume.

There are some fascinating snippets, like the fact that the first recorded rock climb in the area may well have been Owain Glyndŵr's escape up a chimney on Moel Hebog back in 1400; and the fact that the botanist Edward Llywd's 150 volumes of observations were not accepted by Jesus College, Oxford because of a quarrel with one of the fellows, and that most of his priceless notes were sadly lost in fires after being split up and sold at auction. And that Coleridge could have written a masterpiece about his ascent of Snowdon if it hadn't been bloody raining.

I especially enjoyed his personal anecdotes and opinions, and loved his rant about the 'magnificent wild goats' which roam these hills, and his outrage that the National Park 'conservationists' are 'threatening' and culling these 'gorgeous rascals.' This is happening, says Perrin, mainly because they raid "the inappropriate cottage gardens of incomers" (elsewhere referred to as "prissy Surrey retirees") and allegedly eat the rare plants on cliff ledges (although Perrin points out that they they actually go for richer grazing elsewhere) and play havoc with the Park's woodland regeneration schemes. I'm with Perrin on this one. They've roamed these hills for 10,000 years, so leave them be. I always become childishly excited when I see them.

I'm so very glad that he has a chapter about the stories and legends of the area, as too many visitors arrive and leave knowing absolutely nothing about our wealth of folk tales - apart from the one about a dog called Gelert. Nor are they (or most Welsh people) usually aware of the ancient history of Wales and the fact that the name 'Wales' is actually Saxon and means 'foreigners.'

Are we the only people in the world who call themselves foreigners, I wonder? Oh, and if you're not from Wales and don't know why Edward I is not a king we particularly like, read this book.

Non-climbers may find the large portion given to "the vainglorious triviality of climbing" rather long, but Perrin is a rock climber, so what did you expect? I enjoyed this chapter, but then, I have also done a few routes in my time (with no style or finesse whatsoever, but what the hell, I was in my element) and I too, have climbed up Lliwedd in the snow and ice, an experience which ranks with the best of my life.

Pleasingly, he notes that the locals (especially the copper miners) would certainly have been more competent climbers than the upper-class English visitors who came here from the late 1880s onwards to indulge in "their newly-invented 'sport'" of rock-climbing. Perrin lets loose here, not even trying to disguise his contempt for the snobbery of the "port-raddled ... elect" of Geoffrey Winthrop Young, C.E. Mathews and their Oxbridge ilk. Although, to be fair, he does go on to mention the better aspects of the former. Men like Colin Kirkus are given deserved attention, and later his fellow-Mancunians, Joe Brown, Don Whilans and Ron Moseley, who, between them, took rock-climbing to another level and made Snowdonia a rock-climbing Mecca.

But there's more to the mountains than pleasing weekend visitors. People need to be able to make a living here too, and Perrin does examine the negative effects of tourism and sheep-farming. I'm glad to say that he is firmly on the side of the shepherds, but he used to be one, so he understands. As for the real carbuncles, he's strongly against "abominations like the Cwm Dyli pipeline", but he, as do I, appreciates the "sense of the working lives" and "the lovely mineral tints and hues" of the remains of the copper workings around Llyn Llydaw and Glaslyn. That bit was crying out for a photograph, but there is not a single one in this book.

I know only too well the constraints of publishing, and realise that the power of Perrin's words are meant to paint the pictures, but I do wish the publishers could

have found room for a striking photograph or two. I also feel very strongly that there should have been a map in the first chapter, where he describes his "eccentric clockwise circumambulation" of the mountain. I became a tad confused there. Yes, I know I could have studied my OS Landranger, but a simple map of the route he took within the book's pages would have been so much simpler, especially for any readers who are not familiar with the lie of the land.

There are also too many footnotes, although their content is often fascinating. For example, the old name for Glaslyn was Llyn Ffynnon Las, which is so much prettier. But I would have liked to know why it was changed and by whom. Also 'Nant Gwynant' is apparently "an invented nonsense" (Ordnance Survey cartographers strike again). It's actually Nant Gwynen, a name which was still around at the beginning of the 20th Century, so Perrin uses that name faithfully throughout the book. Come to think of it, it sounds so much better to the Welsh ear than the hard rhyme of Nant Gwynant. Another footnote points out that the well-tramped 'Pyg' track, should actually be the 'Pig' track, as the path and original name existed long before the Pen-y-Gwryd hotel was built. All very informative, but I do wish he'd managed to include more of this information in the actual text itself, and not as footnotes.

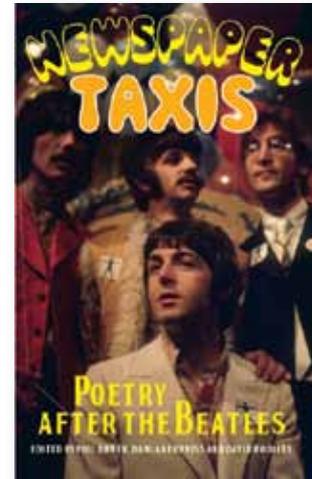
The foreword by R. Merfyn Jones is excellent and the inclusion of part of 'Bro', a poem by T.H. Parry-Williams (1887-1975) in the final chapter was the perfect choice. Interestingly, no attempt has been made here to translate or even paraphrase a single word, and I applaud that decision. Poetry, after all, gets lost in translation. But take my word for it, this eerily beautiful poem captures the way some places just become part of your soul and never let go.

Da iawn, Jim. Llyfr gwerth chweil.

**Bethan Gwanas** is novelist, dramatist, travel writer and broadcaster.

## Lyrics that riddle our consciousness

Susie Wild



*Newspaper Taxis: Poetry after the Beatles*  
Edited by Phil Bowen, Damian Furniss  
and David Woolley  
Seren, 2013, £9.99

Before reading *Newspaper Taxis* one would be forgiven for wondering if there is anything left to say about the Beatles. By the time you reach *The End*, however, this thoughtful anthology of 74 poems will have proved that there is and that poets are the people to write it. Indeed, the book has plenty to please, please you and me. It collects together poems that respond to the music and to the influence of the Beatles on the way we lived then and now. As the anthology editors write:

"Beginning as a beat group setting boy-meets-girl to rock'n'roll behind a chorus of screams, in the decade of their unsurpassed career the Beatles brought together high and low culture, making it ours in an era when popular culture was defining the times, not just being defined by them... Fifty years after their first LP, their influence is still felt in every form of music, each field of the arts, every corner of the world."

Their lyrics riddle our consciousness, like the writing in sticks of rock ('n'roll). There

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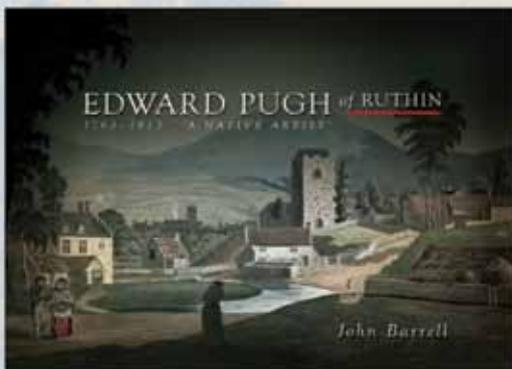
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# EDWARD PUGH *of* RUTHIN 1763–1813

## 'A Native Artist'

by John Barrell, Professor of English, Queen Mary University of London



Edward Pugh was a Welsh-speaking artist and writer who produced compelling landscape images of Denbighshire, Monmouthshire, north Wales and London, and who wrote the best available account from the period of a tour in Wales. *Edward Pugh of Ruthin* is the first book to consider the artist's work in detail, and shows how his landscapes reveal a wealth of local knowledge and how they dramatise issues of great importance to Wales in his time, including the effects of the war with France on industry. Almost all the competing pictures and tours we have of north Wales were made by English artists and writers, none of whom can tell us about life in north Wales with the same insight as Pugh.

March 2013

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is poetry in Beatles albums – the poetry of life – the casual brilliance of songs capturing the hearts and minds of their times and beyond. This continuing influence resonated at the London Olympics’ closing ceremony, which saw ‘Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds’ newspaper taxis circling the arena, and then lending their name to this anthology.

Many others also lent their name for inclusion. A charity compilation – all royalties are being donated to Claire House Children’s Hospice in Merseyside – the book attracts the Gold Disc stars of the Poetry World. Among the household names included are Carol Ann Duffy, Roger McGough and Simon Armitage. Allen Ginsberg and Philip Larkin also join the magical mystery tour through a nostalgic Britain, voices carrying far, far beyond the streets of Merseyside:

“No bankers, fireman, or barbers figured in this Midwestern teenager’s microcosm, yet I sang of them again and again... Penny Lane lay just around the corner every time I sang” (*Penny Lane*, Illinois, Carrie Etter).

The same three co-editors put together *The Captain’s Tower*, another Seren anthology of poetry which celebrated Bob Dylan’s 70th birthday, whilst Phil Bowen has also edited a previous Beatles anthology, *Things We Said Today* (Stride, 1994). Here, the key moments, milestones, strange symmetries and missed chances are charted. The Beatles’ first album *Please, Please Me* was launched in 1963 a year that also saw Sylvia Plath’s suicide, so delicately linked in Paul Farley’s poem *11th February 1963*. Carol Ann Duffy hears the gunshot that killed John Lennon in *Liverpool Echo*. Jeremy Reed writes on the death of Brian Epstein:

“The curtains drawn all day at Chapel Street / on the residual blues.”

Split into three parts: ‘Younger’, ‘So Much...’ and ‘Younger Than Today...’ the book begins with a poem from Sheenagh Pugh. In *Going to Liverpool* a middle-aged woman travels on business to

where my youth is preserved.  
The fashions I’ve followed,  
the songs I know by heart,’



Meanwhile, on another train, in another carriage, Roger McGough is accosted by two Swansea women who ask him:

Where are you from now?  
Oh aye, diya know the Beatles then?  
Liar!

For everybody knows the Beatles, whether they like them or not, as Kenny Knight has it in *Beatlemania*:

You were never one of my heroes, Paul  
I was into cowboys, and cowboys  
Didn’t play bass guitars

From train journeys to rites of passage and coming of age, in the oft-quoted staple *Annus Mirabilis* Philip Larkin writes:

Sexual intercourse began  
In nineteen sixty-three  
(Which was rather too late for me) –  
Between the end of the *Chatterley* ban  
And the Beatles’ first LP.

Rupert Loydell and Peter Finch both tackle the mind-altering, life-changing *White Album* well. Memories included in *Newspaper Taxis* are young and bold and loud, and also quiet, subtle, sad. Seren Poetry Editor Amy Wack’s thoughts are poignantly drawn back to watching *Yellow Submarine* in the “flickering dark” with her late sister:

I sometimes still feel as if you’ve  
abandoned me to sleep  
while I’ve had to watch the whole  
outlandish spectacle  
pass by without you. No wonder I am

always nudging  
someone to say:  
“Wake up! You’re  
missing this!  
You’re missing the story! You’re missing  
the music!”

We also see a new generation of poets adding their voice to the expected canon. Forward Prize shortlisted Rhian Edwards reminisces on a girlhood in which she seemed to enjoy “pretending her father is a Beatle” in her poem *Parents’ Evening*. She and Lizzy Lister might have had a scuffed-knees fight – “My dad says he was the drummer who left the Beatles”. I picture my-Dad-was-better-than-yours playground wars. Another rising star, Kim Moore’s ‘This Boy’ is a warning pen portrait of the young John Lennon:

He was born  
without brakes, this boy who wouldn’t  
wear  
his glasses, who dreamt of circling  
above Liverpool in a plane, climbing  
higher  
and higher until the city disappeared  
from sight.’

I cannot conceive that there is a band today that they’ll be writing poems of in fifty years which is, perhaps, the point. So when the:

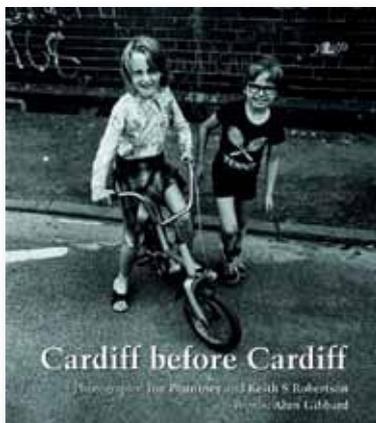
*Newspaper taxis appear on the shore,  
Waiting to take you away.  
Climb in the back with your head in  
the clouds.*

And let them.

**Susie Wild** is the newly-appointed editor at Parthian Books

## Stuck in Splott

Peter Finch




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*Cardiff Before Cardiff*  
Photographs by Jon Pountney and  
Keith S. Robertson.  
Y Lolfa, 2013, £12.95.

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Calling a collection of photographs from the 1970s *Cardiff Before Cardiff* might not have been the best of ideas. I was expecting the place that once sat on the capital's muddy river delta before the city was formed to come leaping out from Jon Pountney's new book.

Instead I got the grainy 70s reminding me of how it was forty years back among the working class terraces of Splott. Home ground for many potential readers, shots from a time that has not yet faded from consciousness, a place near enough still to touch.

Pountney's book is a mesh of coincidence and artifice. It centres on the work of Cardiff street photographer Keith S. Robertson. In the 70s and early 80s, armed with a Leica Rangefinder, Robertson shot the Splott streets as he saw them – peopled, rich in shadow, always in black and white. His pictures were engaging, rich in character, and, as events proved, transcend time. His studio was in Warwick Hall, off Whitchurch Road. He fell behind with the rent and was thrown out by the landlord who told him that his possessions, including all his photographs, were forfeit and would be burned. For decades Robertson imagined that this, indeed, is what had happened. But, amazingly, he was wrong. Somehow

300 print and negative originals survived. They were stuffed in drawers and hidden in boxes, untouched as the years went on. By chance they were discovered by another photographer, the young Jon Pountney, who rented the same Warwick Hall space for his studio forty years on.

Pountney could see the skill in Robertson's originals and tracked the photographer down. Together the two men embarked on the current project – to select the best from Robertson's older originals and retake those shots today, as near as they could. Same subjects, same locations. Following a few diversions via web sites, exhibitions and the involvement of the *South Wales Echo* - always keen to put the city's working class history in the spotlight - the outcome is the present book.

The idea of retaking the past is not new and especially not new for Cardiff. The American photographer John Briggs has covered this ground before. He took a mass of shots of Splott and the Cardiff Docklands during the seventies and then revisited his subjects again in the new millennium to record the changes. His books, *Before The Deluge* and *Taken In Time* are both local best sellers.

However, what Pountney has done is to attempt a merging. Apart from those detailed in the introductory narrative no photographs are ascribed in *Cardiff Before Cardiff*. There are no notes designating subject, era taken or the name of the photographer who clicked the shutter. How can you tell which is a Pountney photo and which a Robertson, or which come from today and which from 1970? It's difficult to tell. And this, I guess, is precisely Pountney's point. In some places the past and the present do not alter. How much has changed in the Capital's great walking suburbs? The blossoming Bay and the burgeoning centre may now be totally transformed but in Splott things have stuck.

If you look hard, however, there are a few clues. A sign announces the National Lottery. The Western Mail, shown in its former broadsheet manifestation, sits on a newsagents counter. A hoarding advertises the long gone Leo's supermarket. A brand new Ford Anglia shines outside a boarded up building. The Tubes and Pete Tosh play Sophia Gardens. Cranes sit on the side of the now landlocked East Dock. But mostly the past and the present

are indistinguishable. This is Pountney's great achievement. He has almost entirely mimicked the older photographer's style.

Together the two photographers have revisited the places and where possible shot again the people shown in Robertson's originals. Viv Grainger is displayed, v-neck sweater and 70s shirt standing outside the then functioning Grosvenor pub. He's shown again 40 years on, crisply knotted tie, glasses, more wrinkles, standing outside the Borough. There are two shots of Splott's main thoroughfare, Carlisle Street, one full of businesses the other with those enterprises largely closed down. Peter the Barber lounges, full head of hair, inside his shop in the 70s. He stands outside it today, less hair but the same man. Tony Bunce poses beside his Cortina in 1970s Habershon Street. His daughter, Leanne, stands beside her Fiesta in the same location today.

You won't learn that much about the Capital's cityscape from this book. The photographs show faces far more often than streets. Buildings are in the background. Change is discrete. What you

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**How much has changed in Capital's great walking suburbs? The blossoming Bay and the burgeoning centre may now be totally transformed but in Splott things have stuck.**

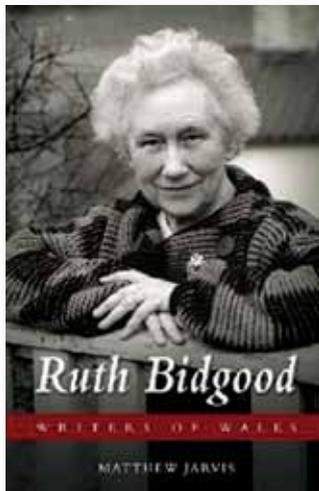
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will see is a detailed social record of how a working class residential suburb doesn't alter that much when the planners leave it alone. Kids play. Men lean on walls. Families gather around open doors. Cardiff may be the world's newest capital and a place of dynamic growth and scintillating change but it still retains a residue of what it was in the streets where tourists never go. Pountney and Robertson before him have ensured we know this. They should be celebrated for what they've done

**Peter Finch** is a poet, pscho-geographer and literary editor of the *welsh agenda*.

## What Wales can do for a poet

Angela Graham



*Ruth Bidgood*

Matthew Jarvis

Writers of Wales series, University of Wales Press, 2012, £16.99.

In his preface Matthew Jarvis is very clear about what should be expected from this book. Ruth Bidgood's noteworthy writing on local history is considered only as it relates to analysis of her poetry. Furthermore, this study of her poetry "is not intended to be primarily a work of biographically based literary criticism... I do not generally seek to prioritise the life as a way of understanding the poetry, apart from one very important personal decision: her move to mid-Wales in the mid-1960s." On the penultimate page he asserts that, "it is the *totality* of what Bidgood offers up, in terms of her mid-Wales poetic engagements, which is of primary significance". It is not so much this or that poem but "the intertwined richness between poem and poem, over years of poetic thought". It is that many-threaded braid which Jarvis painstakingly follows, by means of individual poems, while also standing back to appreciate the pattern that emerges over a life's work.

This doubly attentive scrutiny he does well. There is a temptation for those who study the work of creative people to foreground their own insights too much so that the reader is dazzled more by the interpretation than the original. That does

It is that many-threaded braid which Jarvis painstakingly follows, by means of individual poems, while also standing back to appreciate the pattern that emerges over a life's work.

not happen here. The poetry takes pride of place and the life does not overwhelm the work. The reader's appetite for the poetry is sharpened, as it should be.

Ruth Bidgood's family bought a holiday home in Abergwesyn, north Breconshire, in 1964 and after her divorce in 1974 it became her permanent home. She was already in early middle-age when she focussed on poetry, publishing her first collection *The Given Time* in 1972. Jarvis makes a persuasive case for his perception of Ruth Bidgood's work as ultimately, "a writerly process of what is called (in certain environmentalist circles) reinhabitation". This is a willingness to engage with a place not only as it is in the present but as it was in the past, and not only with the place but with its non-human as well as human inhabitants. In this process Jarvis sees an epic quality because Ruth Bidgood is open to so many facets of her home patch, over a significant length of time, that her concerns can be said to be on an epic scale. To quote Georg Lukács she is engaged with "the extensive totality of life".

June sun  
seemed uncensorious. Today  
all the valley's imagined words  
were warm. I sat by the stream  
and listened.

'Back', from *Time Being* (Seren, 2009)

Jarvis's survey covers Ruth Bidgood's twelve collections. It usefully includes an unpublished letter to *Poetry Wales* from 1989 in which she considers her radio poem *Hymn to Sant Ffraid*. It is stimulating to hear her 'first-hand', as it were, as she rebuts or accepts a critic's reading of her work and poetic intentions. The select bibliography, list of local history publications, her miscellaneous writings, interviews and videos plus critical discussions and reviews should leave no one short of material on this poet. In Jarvis's selections from her work, she comes across as assured, in possession of herself (not as easy as it sounds), and undemonstratively

able to demonstrate the complex, as in this:

There are days when waves of  
unremembered life  
tumble in, one upon another, almost  
irresistibly. You can feel the thuds  
through the soles of your feet, through  
blood and bone,  
all the channels and sluices of the body.  
'Symbols of Plenty' from *Symbols  
of Plenty: Selected Longer Poems*  
(Canterbury Press, 2006)

I almost gave up at the start of the book because of the author's unwillingness to paraphrase Ruth Bidgood's more mundane or prosaic remarks. There is a good deal of this over-careful quotation in Chapter 1 which makes it a jerky reading experience. Matthew Jarvis is Anthony Dyson Fellow in Poetry in the School of Cultural Studies, University of Wales Trinity Saint David and he properly respects the scholarly desiderata. Yet I feel he could relax into expressing Ruth Bidgood's experience in his own words a little more occasionally for the reader's comfort.

"University was an experience much  
treasured by Bidgood, and she 'flung'  
herself into it 'with zest'."

"Indeed, this 'mixture' of heritage was  
something that she suggests caused her  
'sorrow' when she was young."

But it is easy to rise above this gripe and be rewarded by this careful, almost loving, and certainly erudite meditation on what one poet has done for a part of Wales and what that Wales has done for her, and on what that relationship has to offer us. It's there for the reading, in the poems.

**Angela Graham** teaches documentary film-making at the School of Journalism, Media, and Cultural Studies, Cardiff University.



# Who can pass the toga test?

Peter Stead

In his book *Calon*, a fascinating take on Welsh rugby, the author Owen Sheers cleverly reveals that, for all the talk of *tir* and *pridd*, the truth is that a team of expert technicians have turned familiar players into super-human heroes. And yet the great paradox remains for, as the poet Keats had taught Sheers, “in the very temple of delight veiled melancholy has her sovereign shrine”. The Grand Slam of 2012 was followed by a whitewash in Australia. That is the lesson every player and fan has to learn. Perhaps it’s the lesson at the heart of the modern Welsh experience.

There are still moments when I have to pinch myself just to ensure that I am now actually living in a Wales that has been constitutionally recognised, that there is indeed a Welsh Government, a National Assembly and Welsh Ministers are sworn in by high-court judges. We have travelled a long way very quickly. And yet even as the externals of the nation are secured and amended the inner core continues to break up. We have bought expensive wrapping paper but the produce to be wrapped is not as fresh as it used to be.

Undeniably there are things happening in Wales in which we can take great pride. The new electronic technologies, the creative arts and a bilingual popular culture have empowered many individual youngsters. There is something refreshing about the way in which one is likely to

hear Welsh accents on beaches and in bars around the world. And yet the plain truth is that Wales is a far less interesting country than it was a couple of decades ago.

The Wales I really knew and cared about was defined by labour, by work in industry and agriculture. People, too, were defined by the work they did and those jobs defined communities and radiated values. In my old Wales that culture of work was buttressed by clear value systems that were infinitely rewarding and distinctly Welsh. More than ever I am now aware of how the chapels and schools of Wales once ensured that a debate on moral values and an emphasis on intellectual and artistic fulfilment were at the heart of everyday life. Of course, that old Wales gave rise to a distinct political tradition but our radicalism was always one aspect of a richer culture.

I willingly concede that my Welsh patriotism is defined by a nation that no longer exists. And yet I still care and want once again to be proud, not just of a constitution but of a culture. Every day I assiduously read the *Western Mail* and watch the Welsh TV news bulletins and invariably have to wait for the reports of sporting success that will compensate for the dreary preceding litany of crimes, accidents, floods, fires, scandals, job losses and disastrous educational reports. It’s not easy being a Welsh news junkie. The communal orgasm that quite naturally accompanied the splendid 30-3 result in March was a reaction both to a great performance and a whole year of *Wales Today*.

That old Wales quite readily bestowed a political identity and one easily understood Nye’s ‘language of priorities’. But who would be a politician today? Where do they start? What the *Western Mail* and *Wales Today* reveal is that there is only one great problem to be tackled and that problem is Society. The great irony of Mrs Thatcher’s most famous remark is that it was made at the very moment when Society was not only proving its existence but taking over completely. In the old days it was Work that called the tune, while Society was a spontaneous affair that only needed fine tuning. Now Society is all that we have. It demands attention but nobody knows what to do with it.

Meantime Society conquers all. Just consider the list of its triumphs. It has seen off the churches which mistakenly thought it was a matter they had to confront and endlessly debate. It has undermined health care by insisting on a social context. It has totally ruined education and disoriented youngsters by making schools laboratories for deluded theorists. Society’s master plan was to convince people that there was such a thing as Social Science and consequently a whole breed of consultants were licensed to cloud our sense of reality.

In politics Society’s greatest victim has been the Conservative Party, not least in the shape of David Cameron. Our Prime Minister is a classic consultant, an advertising executive, who somehow senses that Society is an issue and that tackling it is a guilt-assuaging exercise. It is almost embarrassing to see him trying to get an angle on what Society means. But to be fair, perhaps Society has done for party politics in general. That is certainly the case in Wales.

Recently I have enjoyed escaping into the world of classical politics. Excellent performances of the Royal Shakespeare Company’s *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus* by the National Theatre of Wales. A reading of Ferdinand Mount’s proposition that we have much to learn from ancient Greece and Rome has allowed me to appraise Welsh politics afresh. I now apply classical standards. Our First Minister passes with flying colours. I have no difficulty in seeing him coming to the Forum in his toga. But who else passes the toga test? And yet all the time the call is for added powers and additional AMs. In other words what is being asked for is for more opportunity to debate that troublesome matter of Society.

Sitting proudly in the Stadium for the 30-3 Show I envisaged Carwyn in his toga stepping forward to address the crowd. That is the immediacy we need in Welsh politics. For too long we have left things to consultants and politicians, to those who accept the sway of almighty Society. The real leaders, the toga wearers, need to stand directly before pupils, parents, patients and citizens and point to the things that we can do together. We are a people wanting to be released and awaiting instruction. We can, all of us, be better than Society.

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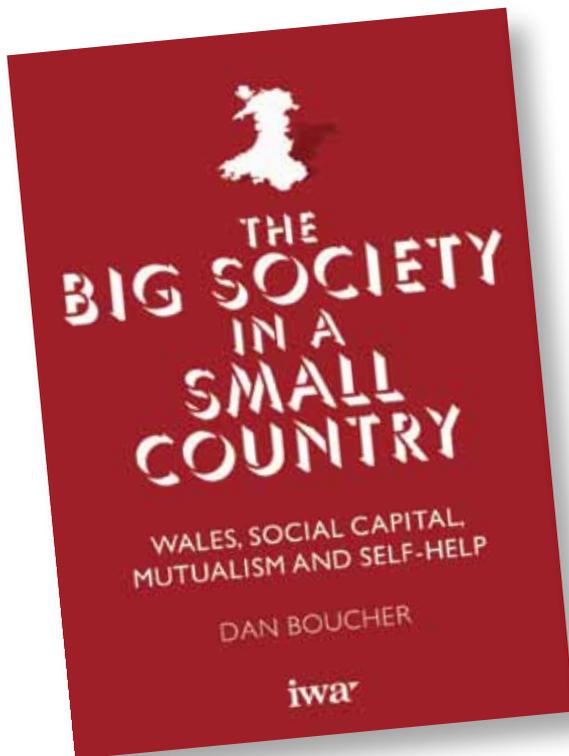
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Dan Boucher was the Welsh Conservative Assembly Candidate in Swansea East in the 2011 election. Today he works in public affairs at Westminster, also managing a team covering Stormont, Holyrood, Brussels and Strasbourg.

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Mark Barry is a Cardiff-based economy and transport policy consultant.

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