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How sustainable is Bevan's NHS?

In our interview with Adam Cairns, chief executive of the Cardiff and Vale Health Board on pages 25-27 he says the Welsh NHS can be insulated from the increasingly market-driven health service in England. As he puts it, "Although they're commissioning more and more of their services from the private sector, at the end of the day the state still pays the bill."

The problem with this is that the amount the state will be paying in future is likely to fall substantially. There will then be a knock on impact on the Welsh block grant as a result of the way the Barnett formula, which determines the amount the Welsh Government receives, is calculated. These implications were made transparently clear in a speech Prime Minister David Cameron gave to the Lord Mayor of London's banquet in November. He said his government was sticking with the task of bringing down the deficit, and then added, "But that doesn't just mean making difficult decisions on public spending. It also means something more profound. It means building a leaner, more efficient state. We need to do more with less. Not just now, but permanently".

This is a significant change of emphasis that will have major consequences for Wales. When he became Prime Minister three years ago David Cameron said he hadn't come into politics to make cuts. They were being forced on him by circumstances. Now, however, he is talking about a permanent project of building a smaller state. Certainly, that is what Welsh Health Minister Mark Drakeford believes. As he tells us on page 25, if David Cameron wins the general election in 2015, he will have another five years to pursue a smaller state, after which "the NHS in Wales will be a very different organisation to the one it is today". That is why he believes the general election will be decisive in influencing future planning of the Welsh NHS. For, as he says, if Labour wins, although austerity measures would have to be continued for a while, at least there would be a UK government in power that believed in growing state services rather than reducing them.

The reality is, however, that whatever government is elected at Westminster in 2015, financial pressures on the Welsh NHS will be inescapable. Last September a Wales Audit Office report revealed that if the Welsh Government's spending allocations continue unchanged then health spending will rise from 42 per cent to 57 per cent of its overall budget within a decade. In his article on page 20 David Phillips, an economist with the Institute of Fiscal Studies, sets out in stark terms what this would mean for spending on other areas such as local government and economic development. The Welsh Government has changed tack in its budget for 2014-15 and is planning to increase real-term spending on health and social services by 1.3 per cent. But that means spending on local government will fall by 9.1 per cent and education by 11.5 per cent. If this were to continue for a decade then the Welsh Government's budget would be distorted beyond recognition.

In their interviews with us both Adam Cairns and Mark Drakeford acknowledge this reality. Drakeford has some interesting ideas about how health and social services could be redesigned to deliver services more cheaply and efficiently. Tackling the 20 per cent or so of medical interventions which he says have little or no benefit is one. Recalibrating waiting lists so that a points system is deployed to prioritise patients is another. Adam Cairns is thinking about alternatives to the way the market is used in England to produce health efficiencies and drive down costs, suggesting more transparency and reporting of results – a competition of naming and shaming between hospitals.

If they are to work such ideas will demand a major culture shift in the way the Welsh NHS is managed. Some heroic optimism is required to envisage that the necessary savings will be achieved without making the service unrecognisable compared with the one we have today. But at least we should welcome the fact that key leaders in the Welsh NHS are facing up to the difficulties they face.



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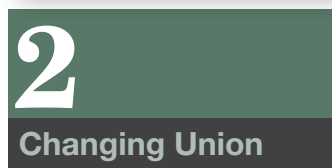
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Newsflash

• A Citizen's Service for Wales

Wednesday 22 January 2014 12.30pm – 2.00pm
Media Briefing Room, Senedd, Cardiff Bay
The first in the IWA Senedd Papers series will propose an innovative scheme to tackle the dual problems of youth unemployment and an ageing population in Wales.
Entry free but booking essential.

• Inspire Wales Awards launch,

sponsored by Western Power Distribution
Thursday 23 January 2014, 11.00am
Marble Hall, City Hall, Cardiff.
In conjunction with the Western Mail the Inspire Wales Awards are a national Awards scheme that honours and celebrates those who have made a significant contribution to Welsh life.
Booking essential - visit www.iwa.org.uk
or call 029 2066 0820

• Pints, Poems and Pies with Owen Sheers

Thursday 20 February 2014 6.30pm
Millennium Stadium, Cardiff
Owen Sheers in conversation with Felicity Evans
On the eve of Wales' crucial match against France the IWA invites you inside the players dressing room of the Millennium Stadium for an evening with WRU writer-in-residence Owen Sheers.
IWA members: £60 + VAT; Non-members: £75 + VAT
To book please call 029 2066 0820

• Robert Peston Gregynog Series Lecture

Thursday 3 April 2014 6.30pm
Great Hall, Aberystwyth Arts Centre
Robert Peston is the BBC's Economics Editor and an honorary fellow of Aberystwyth University. Prior to joining the BBC, he was political editor and financial editor of the Financial Times, City Editor of the Sunday Telegraph and a columnist for the New Statesman and Sunday Times

• IWA Annual Business Conference - City Regions:

Aspiration or Reality?
Friday 28 March 2014, 13.30pm
Venue to be confirmed
Speakers include Roger Lewis, Group Chief Executive of the Welsh Rugby Union and Chair, South East Wales City Region Board; and George Ferguson Mayor of Bristol, first independent mayor to lead a major city in Britain.
Booking essential. Visit www.iwa.org.uk or call 029 2066 0820.

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The Blue Route – A cost-effective solution to relieving M4 congestion around Newport

By Stuart Cole
Published in association with the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport
Digital download at www.iwa.org.uk

Size Matters: Making the National Assembly more effective

Published by the Changing Union project (IWA, Wales Governance Centre and Cymru Yfory/Tomorrow's Wales) in association with the Electoral Reform Society.
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—Essay

Clouds of witnesses

Peter Lord takes issue with the National Library's new policy of restricting access to its collection

My new book *Relationships with Pictures* is a sort of autobiography, though an oblique one, since it's built around a discussion of fifteen pictures, most of them from my own collection. I've tried to explain why they are important to me individually, but also collectively as the environment within which I function every day. Their physical presence represents the inner reality of my identity. They are the equivalent of the cloud of witnesses to faith spoken of in the bible, through which people 'seek a country', as expressed by St Paul.

Not everyone is lucky enough to be surrounded by paintings in their home, and that is why we need art museums – places that belong to us all, where we can experience the presence of our collective cloud of witnesses. However, in public institutions, and especially in places like Wales, where identities are conflicted and contested, the choice of witnesses is often problematic.

In 1993 I published a short volume *The Aesthetics of Relevance* in which I analysed the myth that Welsh cultures were in some way congenitally unvisual. I argued that the Art Department of the National Museum reinforced this damaging myth by showing too few Welsh pictures in its galleries. Worse, it interpreted those that it did display as marginal contributors to English high art tradition, rather than as expressions of Welsh cultural identities.

In short, the argument was that we were being presented with the wrong witnesses, and that the reason for this was ultimately political. It was a manifestation of internal colonialism. This accusation annoyed the Museum, and when the Welsh Academy decided to pursue the matter in public through a debate at the Chapter Arts Centre in Cardiff, they became even more annoyed. In an extraordinary move, the Museum approached the Crown Prosecution Service in an attempt to have the

debate banned.

The Museum's pretext was that the publicity material produced by the Academy had referred to certain unfortunate events concerning the Art Department that were *sub judice* at the time. Two policemen ascended the stairs to the office of the Academy in Mount Stuart Square and informed the Director of the position. When this fact emerged, even the *Western Mail* was moved to describe the Museum as "paranoid". Eventually, the police agreed that as long as the participants in the event didn't mention the *sub-judice* issue, the Museum would have no case against the Academy, and the debate could proceed.

In the absence of a representative from the Museum - the Director refused to participate - most of the 'debate' was pretty dull. However, ten minutes before the end the Curator of Art, Timothy Stevens, wandered in and the atmosphere changed. He was identified by one of the audience, who asked him if he would care to comment on the criticisms being made of his policies. His peremptory response – "Not really" – was followed by a stunned silence. Recovering her composure, the person who had asked the question pressed Stevens specifically on his hanging policy: "Well, you'll just have to wait until the new galleries open in October 1993, won't you," was his reply.

The debate and the reaction of the Museum, at first paranoid and then arrogant, was taken up in newspapers and periodicals for a time. People on both sides became rather angry.

The point is that pictures matter, because they come to represent, through interpretation in historical narratives, particular identities. They differentiate, and so become a focus of allegiance, especially in contested political contexts – or they did at that time. It was a time when, in this country, the political status quo was under challenge in many fields.

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Furthermore, in the particular field of visual culture, throughout Europe and the United States it was also a time when established historical narratives – connoisseurial, élitist, and sexist narratives – were being challenged by sociological and political readings of pictures. As John Berger expressed it in *Ways of Seeing*, in 1972:

“A people or a class that is cut off from its own past is far less free to choose and to act as a people or class than one that has been able to situate itself in history. This is why – and this is the only reason why – the entire art of the past has now become a political issue”.

At that time I conceived of the construction of human identities in terms of a matrix of three co-ordinates: place, language and history. It seemed to me that only within a coherent matrix of this kind was it possible for the individual to achieve the psychological security necessary to contribute to a confident and creative culture which could develop political, economic and artistic aspirations. Everything flowed from that.

However, I think the times are now so changed that a different focus on these questions is required. The debate at Chapter was not quite pre-digital. However, it certainly took place in a period when the extent to which the emerging digital technologies would accelerate and intensify dysfunctional tendencies in personal identification had yet to become apparent to most of us. It seems to me now that the use of these technologies is undermining the co-ordinates that appeared crucial in the 1970s and 1980s. A rift has opened between people for whom such co-ordinates remain fundamental, and those for whom the matrix of identity that they create is remote.

For many people, especially in urban life, place has become de-particularised to a point beyond restoration. Language as a marker of identity is decaying, not only because of language extinctions but also because of structural

homogenisation through the infiltration of English and, indeed, of new kinds of language that are technologically rather than psychologically structured. History has been revealed as mutable – as a retrospective construct of justification, rather than as a guiding path of truth.

In this changed context, my impression is that psychological security is located largely in detached and ephemeral superficialities of appearance and behaviour, that we might describe as fashion-identities.

They are chosen – the mantra of ‘choice’ being a characteristic manifestation of the capitalist myth that drives it all – from a digital catalogue that is territorially unlocated, that transcends particular language, and that is devoid of a sense of historical context. Of course, fashion-identities have always been a part of human personality, but in the past they have overlaid deeper and constant resources of location which the individual could access when necessary. I suspect that the ability to resort to such underlying realities is severely impaired by life in a dematerialised cyber-space to which many people presently seem addicted.

The ability simply to be present is apparently in terminal decline. Fixated on a screen, rather than looking out of the train window and contemplating the meaning of the passing landscape, or plugged into an i-pod when walking, rather than listening to the sound of the wind in the trees or the sound of feet on a pavement or of other voices, the materiality of place and time is wilfully – or perhaps just habitually – denied.

Much of the catalogue of fashion-identities is presented visually, even



To demonstrate the relationship between virtual and physical reality Peter Lord has in his hands the frame containing the picture shown on the screen in front of him, *Young Woman with Ringlets*, an 1847 painting by the Welsh portrait artist William Roos.

through the apparently familiar imaging of photography, and especially since photography no longer necessarily involves a dedicated camera, but rather a multi-function device, such as a phone. It is this aspect of the phenomenon that I would like to develop a little further, as representative of the wider question.

Recently someone stated that more photographs were taken last year alone than in all the previous history of photography – a history now approaching two centuries. The urge to record visually has reached the stage that, as another commentator rather concisely put it, “No interaction is deemed to have happened unless someone has taken a picture of it”. I would say that we are fast approaching a state of image dependency – that we are becoming image junkies.

The condition is manifested in trends that might seem to amount to a paradox, though I regard them as two sides of the same coin. To give you a commonplace example of the first, I notice that many people now, when they get married, apparently do so largely

for the purpose of creating a vast set of wedding photographs, or a wedding video. Creating the record of the event has become the meaning of the event. It is for this reason that I have never habitually carried a camera, so that the chief responsibility for memory is retained by recall through imagination. The ability to recall the past through imagination diminishes if it is not exercised, and its loss has implications not only for the understanding of personal experiences of the past, but also for the understanding of history as a concept.

On the other hand, very few of the millions of photographs taken each day ever achieve materiality, in the sense of the pictures that frame my sense of identity at home. The way that they are used – their meaning, in fact – is quite different. Their ephemeral nature suggests the words and phrases of a casual if not trite conversation – trite because it is a kind of conversation that takes place only because it can do so, and whose purpose is to demonstrate the speakers' access to a technology which is in itself an important part of their fashion-identity. At the press of a delete button, the pictures, like the words, are lost in the moment in which they are spoken or, rather, transmitted.

The pictures with which I live everyday are an expression in material form of the arguments that I made in the 1980s, which were directed towards reinforcing the matrix of the identity of my place. As a tangible manifestation of an idea of history, I hoped they made a contribution towards its evolution – towards finding St Paul's country, in the form of a collective particularity, of a sense of distinctness, that would invest with meaning the actions of the everyday life of individuals. In this respect, the materiality of the past seemed – and still seems to me – to be crucially important.

Artefacts witness the ability of human beings to find meaning through making. Often, it is the humanity of the artefact that fascinates or moves us most – simply the realisation that it *was* made, and outlives its maker. From his or her hands it comes for a time to our hands, and we experience its feel, its smell, its sound,

as well as the sight of it. Perhaps alone, perhaps in company, we experience it in physical space, not imagined, not reproduced in a book, and certainly not conjured in the virtual spaces that presently threaten to loosen our grasp of tangible reality. History is the after-image of that reality – an elusive phenomenon, difficult to focus upon, as it so rapidly fades. But in an artefact, the after-image of a vanishing moment of human existence is captured – the lost maker and the maker's lost world seem within reach. As Walter Benjamin put it in his essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*:

“The presence of the original is the prerequisite of authenticity... The situations into which the product of mechanical reproduction can be brought may not touch the actual work of art, yet the quality of its presence is always depreciated. This holds not only for the work of art but also, for instance, for a landscape which passes in review before the spectator in a movie. In the case of the art object, a most sensitive nucleus – namely, its authenticity – is interfered with whereas no natural object is vulnerable on that score. The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity, the former, too, is jeopardized by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter. And what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object.”

Walter Benjamin wrote this in 1936. So it is not a new worry, but it one that has been exponentially intensified in a generation. The significance of the materiality of pictures is now all but lost because of the ways in which we use digital technologies.

I want to draw your attention to how

this problem is beginning to affect us through the attitude of some museums to their collections. An assumption is beginning to be made that pictures – the physical pictures themselves – no longer matter, other than as the starting point for the creation of digital images. In a parallel retreat from tangible to virtual reality to that represented by social media, some museums are apparently of the opinion that the materiality of their collections is now irrelevant. The real stuff has become the image presented on screen. This is not a speculation but a fact, and to illustrate it I'd like to conclude by telling you about what has happened in the last two years at the National Library of Wales – though this is not a parochial argument. The National Library rightly advertises itself as “one of the great libraries of the world”.

Some time ago, I needed to see two 19th Century steel engravings – unremarkable and commonplace works, of no monetary value, rarity or fragility. I ordered the pictures from home on line and received the usual message that my request was accepted and that the works would be available at a particular time. I drove to the Library, and went to find the engravings. I was told by the person on the desk that I could not see them. I was taken a-back by this response, and when I enquired why, I was told that the works were available on line and so I must look at them there. If I wished to see the engravings themselves, I would have to fill in a special form, giving a specific reason why I should be allowed to see them, and that it would have to be sent to a senior member of staff for consideration.

The National Library presents to the public its policy on access in a document entitled 'Our expectations of readers and visitors'. The title alone signifies a developing institutional arrogance, an assumption of power and control, which echoes that of the National Museum in the 1980s:

“The Library will offer access to its collections subject to constraints of security, data protection, copyright, and any special conditions. In certain circumstances (*e.g. where the original*

has been microfilmed or digitised), the Library will not make the original available for consultation unless there are compelling reasons for doing so."

Already, the 'certain circumstances' cover all the oil paintings in the collection, and a vast number of prints and drawings – a number which will increase steadily as the whole collection moves towards digitisation.

Since December 2011 I have pursued the implications of this policy privately with the National Library, in the hope of persuading those in charge to change direction. However, since there seems to be no intention to do so, it is appropriate now to open the debate. Firstly, it is important to say that I am unreservedly in favour of the digitisation and presentation

of collections on line. I am not making a Luddite argument. Web-sites such as 'your paintings' are very valuable in widening awareness of the range of public collections and in facilitating research. However, digitisation is an *additional research tool*, and is not a replacement for direct access, and contact with pictures. Under the present policy at the Library, digitisation is being used as an excuse to restrict, rather than to widen access. It is a profoundly oligarchic tendency, hiding under the cloak of democratisation.

The first issue that arises is one of principle, and it derives from the idea of collective ownership. Works in the National Library are the property of the public, not of the institution, which merely holds them on our behalf.

The presumption must be that, unless

staff at the Library can present a very good reason for restricting access to a particular work, then it should be available for inspection on demand. The present policy reverses this presumption. The situation now, whereby members of the public may not experience the pictures that they own, unless they can give a reason deemed satisfactory by a senior member of staff, is unethical.

I do not suggest that there are no instances in which there may indeed be a reason for restricting general access, such as in the case of exceptionally fragile works. However, the fundamental presumption must be, as it always has been until the last couple of years, that works are available on demand for the inspection of the public. If staff at the National Library feel that there is good reason to withhold a particular work, then it is for them to make the case, not the other way around.

The second reason why open access to works in a visual culture collection must be the presumption derives from the purpose of making such collections in the first place, which is to meet our intellectual and emotional need for location. In a sense it is a practical argument. Visual culture is material culture – pictures are not images, but things. We are dealing with objects, the understanding and enjoyment of which depends on the ability to experience them in the original, and to handle them.

The people among whom I move tend to describe the need to experience pictures materially as a 'no-brainer'. They regard the revelation of the National Library's present policy first with incredulity, and then with incomprehension. My sense is that most people involved in this field, whether as researchers or simply as lovers of visual culture, will confirm that understanding a picture involves experiencing it. Restriction of that experience seriously damages the quality of understanding and, indeed, of research. Certain kinds of information can be gleaned from looking on screen at a photograph of an object. If that is sufficient, there will be no need to visit the holding institution to inspect the original. An institution may safely

An image from Peniarth 28, a 13th Century Latin text of the Laws of Hywel Dda, held at the National Library in Aberystwyth. The original is now locked away "to preserve it for posterity". However, in 1982 Peter Lord was able to hold the original in his hands "with no questions asked".





Hywel Dda memorial at Whitland - designed by Peter Lord to celebrate the codification of Welsh law in the 10th Century.

assume that anyone who goes to the trouble of turning up in person, asking to see a picture, has a good reason for doing so. The reason may be simply to experience the work, and that is reason enough. Simon Garfield, in a celebration of the printed word called *Just My Type*, expressed this deeply serious point with a light touch, in his comments on the Gutenberg Bibles at the British Library:

“These days, digitization enables us to view the copies online without the need for a trip to the Euston Road, although not to do so would be to deny oneself one of the great pleasures in life. The first book ever printed in Europe – heavy, luxurious, pungent and creaky – does not read particularly well on an iPhone.”

Those involved in digitisation deceptively refer to these screen images as ‘facsimiles’. This is a bastardisation of language. They are photographs. As recently as twenty years ago, if anyone had proposed that research for a thesis or a book about visual culture could be carried out on the basis of looking at photographs, they would have been dismissed as ridiculous. It has now become the ‘expectation’ at the National Library of Wales.

In 1982 I made my first working visit to the National Library. In what would presently be regarded as an act of remarkable naivety, I approached the desk in the Manuscript Department and asked to see a medieval law text called Peniarth 28. The text had been written in the 13th

Century and illustrated with drawings in black, red and green ink. I wanted to see it because I was preparing an application for the commission to design the Hywel Dda Memorial at Whitland, the purpose of which was to celebrate the codification of Welsh law in the 10th Century. I was directed to a table and the manuscript was brought to me, with no questions asked or eyebrows raised.

I was familiar with the pictures from photographs, but the physical experience of turning the pages of this ancient document and examining at first hand drawings made over 600 years earlier completely changed my perception of the significance of the commission. I am not given to spiritual hyperbole, but it was a transformational moment – and in effect it was the moment that both secured for me the commission and subsequently generated whatever quality there is in the memorial that resulted. Everything was changed by my intellectual and emotional reaction to that contact with Peniarth 28 as an object. Needless to say, in 2014, I would not be allowed anywhere near it. The manuscript is locked away, ‘to preserve it for posterity’, as the disingenuous institutional justification has it – disingenuous because, of course, posterity is a mythic generation of the future that will never be born.

There are probably a variety of motives for restricting access to collections at the Library, age-old curatorial élitism and saving money being among them. Digitisation has provided a new justification for acting on these inclinations

and constraints. However, the fact that denial of access to works in a public collection can be presented as if it were a normal evolution of policy reveals the emergence of a different and more problematic state of mind.

It appears that for some people the crucial importance of the experience of the past and of human creativity manifested in the materiality of an object is an impossibly difficult concept. It seems to me that this degree of incomprehension arises from the increasing dominance of virtual experience over tangible experience in a digitally mediated world. It has led to a gulf in understanding between materialists and image-dependents. The example of the National Library suggests that power now lies with the latter – with a group of people who have difficulty in conceiving of pictures as witnesses to anything beyond their current ‘status’ in a moment that disappears without trace at the press of a delete button.

The context in which we discussed the relationship between pictures and identity in the argument with the National Museum a quarter of a century ago has changed fundamentally. I fear that image dependency is now leading us to a condition of even more fundamental psychological fragility than we have previously experienced. The argument is no longer simply about the selection of witnesses appropriate to particular cultural histories – a selection which proved vulnerable to change through argument and campaign. It is now about our more fundamental relationship to the materiality, which is to say the very reality, of the past.

Peter Lord has discussed related issues in his essay ‘Homogeneity or Individuation? A Long View of the Critical Paradox of Contemporary Art in a Stateless Nation’, in Jonathan Harris, Ed., *Globalization and Contemporary Art*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, pp. 56-70. His latest book, *Relationships with Pictures: an Oblique Autobiography* is reviewed on page 82. This essay is based on a lecture given at Chapter Arts Centre in July 2013 for the IWA ‘Coffee Shop Debates’ series.



New team takes charge at IWA

The Institute of Welsh Affairs is changing. Three new appointments complete the changes to the small professional team following the appointment of Lee Waters as Director in the spring.

Jessica Davies-Timmins has joined as Events Manager, with responsibility for a busy year round programme, including the IWA / Western Mail Business Awards and the Inspire Wales awards. Former Marketing and External Relations Manager at the University of South Wales, Jessica brings rich experience in marketing and events.

Laura Knight also has a strong track record in commercial events management, organising conferences internationally for Automotive World. She joins the IWA as

Office and Finance Manager.

Jessica Blair completes the new team as Policy Analyst. Formerly a researcher with the Conservative group in the National Assembly, she has worked in Brussels and has recently completed an MScEcon in Welsh Government and Politics at Cardiff University.

The trio join Kirsty Davies, deputy Director of the IWA since 2008. Former Director John Osmond continues to edit the Welsh Agenda and Click on Wales.

The changes at the think tank are set to continue with the search on for a new Chair of trustees. Geraint Talfan Davies is to step down in early 2014 after having led the board of the charity since 1992. Six of the board members are also due to end

their terms of office next year.

The IWA is also relocating to a new, smaller, office at 56 James Street in Cardiff Bay at the end of 2013.

"These are exciting times at the IWA" said Lee Waters. "After reaching the milestone of 25 years as the leading independent voice in debates about Wales' future, it is vital that we regenerate.

"The new team is up for the challenge, but we can't do it alone. It is essential that we draw on the strength of our members, as well as increasing the number of people who support us. Everyone agrees that the role of the IWA is crucial, but we cannot take our future survival for granted".

Launch of Senedd policy papers

The IWA is launching new series of discussion papers early in 2014 to spark debate about important policy issues. The Senedd Papers will be launched with a lunchtime panel discussion in the National Assembly, which members are free to attend.

The first in the series will be A Citizen's Service for Wales by Andy Bevan, founder of ICP Partneriaeth which promotes European Voluntary Service activity in and from Wales. The paper will be launched on 22 January with a discussion on tackling the twin challenges of youth

unemployment and an ageing population.

Along with Andy Bevan speakers will be Simon Thomas, Plaid Cymru AM for Mid and West Wales, and Christine Chapman, Labour AM for Cynon Valley.

Plug in daily to the IWA network at www.clickonwales.org

Here's what some contributors have been saying in recent months...

—24/7/13

Calvin Jones wanted a Welsh stock market to promote co-operatives and mutuals

It is this uneven access to money that has seen government-sponsored regeneration and development programmes spend hundreds of millions to arguably limited effect. It has seen multinational energy companies almost completely monopolise renewable installation in the UK, at the same time as communities have done very little to increase their own energy resilience. By excluding organisations solely purposed at enriching shareholders, a Welsh stock market could be specifically aimed at linking quality projects with a social return with interested potential investors.....It is an area where Wales could steal a real march on the rest of the world.

—7/8/13

Terry Stevens said tourism should not be afraid to backing winning destinations

In Wales, we now have to tackle the structure and organisation of tourism at the destination level if we are to achieve the ambitions for growth. We must identify and focus our efforts on a limited number of leading destinations that are most likely to be able to deliver the new tourism vision for Wales. This is exactly what has happened in Scotland, Denmark, Austria and Switzerland to great effect. We must not be afraid of backing winners. That means prioritisation and a process that inevitably leads to some casualties. However, 'rising tides do lift every boat'.

—14/8/13

Paul Salveson spelt out the vision of a new foundation to promote the North of England

Nobody would under-estimate the difficulty of moving towards regional government for the North. Yet the need to counter, on the one hand, the economic and political dominance of the south-east, and the increasingly confident and autonomous Scots and Welsh, is becoming increasingly urgent. An 'English Parliament' is not the answer to the North's problems.....We're interested in developing links with activists in Wales whose vision of a decentralised, inclusive and co-operative future fits with our own.

—16/8/13

Guto Bebb MP was not impressed with our use of EU funds

When I discuss my concerns about this issue the answer I get from many politicians is that the situation would have been seven times worse without such funding. Although there is a smidgeon of factual justification for such a statement, it is a weak argument in response to our failure to do better....The plain truth is that Wales' economic performance since 1999 has been so disastrous as to prove without doubt to me that our use of European funding has been an unmitigated failure.

—23/8/13

John Kay argued that that the economic question should not be the key to the Scottish referendum

Scottish independence is not primarily an economic issue. Anyone who goes to the ballot box in 2014 believing either that they should vote 'no' because independence for Scotland would be likely to be an economic disaster or vote 'yes' because they believe it is likely to lead to an economic bonanza, has failed to review the issues sensibly. This is not, in my view as an economist, a debate which should be conducted primarily on economic issues; any more than the independence debate in the United States or India or Ireland was primarily about economic issues.

—2/9/13

Peter Stead paid tribute to a Welsh rugby legend who died that month

Sport for Cliff was largely a matter of personality. It provided an arena for his own athletic and social skills whilst at the same time allowing him to fraternise with a rich cast of wonderful characters whose humour, slyness and opportunism he came to relish. As a grammar school boy he loved that mix of teachers, policemen and miners that peopled the Welsh game and he relished the company of Irish story-tellers, Scottish worriers and English toffs that made the international game so fascinating.

—11/9/13

Geraint Talfan Davies reported from Barcelona on Catalan national day

Symbolic declarations of sovereignty may be water off a ducks back to Westminster politicians delighting in our largely unwritten constitution. However, Catalonia's 2006 Statute of Autonomy – despite being accepted by the Madrid Government of the time – has now been referred to Spain's constitutional court. Welsh jurisdictional rows between Cardiff Bay and Westminster might well be labelled 'Spanish practices'.

—23/9/13

Richard Marggraf Turley looked at the Welsh role in developing military drones

A fortnight ago 100 campaigners staged a protest outside West Wales Airport, timed to co-incide with the DSEI arms fair.....The issue is how we choose to project Wales into the world. To be sure, the Watchkeeper drone doesn't itself carry missiles – as its name suggests, the system is used for intelligence, surveillance and target acquisition. However, its specifications include a laser designator, synthetic aperture radar/ground-moving target indicator and range finder. The lingo is that of precision, of pinpoint accuracy. We should suspend what Coleridge called our "believing minds".

—26/9/13

Thomas Hall examined how Wales could meet its recycling targets

If Wales is to successfully tackle its waste issue, and turn the food waste stream into something positive with great potential, whilst meeting the public's expectations in providing a sustainable, environmentally friendly solution then Anaerobic Digestion facilities need to be a key part of the mix. Suitably sized facilities need to be established close to the source of the waste in order to minimise the carbon footprint of the process. The aim must also be to treat a local problem for the benefit of the local economy.

—1/10/13

Jamie O'Hara sang the praises of Wales's new Active Travel Act

There have been attempts to increase cycling levels before, but all too often money allocated to cycling has been allocated from end of year underspend. That means that what has been built has been the easiest, rather than the most useful...Legislation will not only mean that every Welsh council will have a duty to deliver on active travel, but they will have a planned network of routes to ensure that available money is spent much more wisely.

—3/10/13

David Melding AM was adamant that Welsh public services cannot thrive without the market

In setting itself against market mechanisms the Welsh Government faces an enormous challenge in maintaining a rather 20th century view of the state. The lack of choice and competition in the delivery of public services in Wales must end. A radical re-think in the way we fund and manage public services, like health and education, is urgently needed to deal with profound financial pressures we are facing....The Welsh Government have up until now been almost devoid of competition in their public services, this needs to change.

—30/10/13

Tim Williams was unconvinced about teaching Welsh in English-medium schools

The same problem applies to Mandarin in our schools as to Welsh or German for that matter. Schooling alone has never been effective as a vehicle of language acquisition. And for those who ask why cannot we emulate those primary schools in Shanghai spending much of their afternoons immersed in English medium tuition, I say: even in Shanghai English has a compelling economic rationale which appeals to ambitious families. It is now everywhere, on the internet, in business and in popular culture. And by the way, the Chinese are not sentimental about language, with Cantonese now giving way to Mandarin and English as spoken languages. They are rigorously instrumental about language. As the majority of the Welsh have always been, apart from a linguistic minority unfortunately over represented in public life.

—1/11/13

Robert Jones was sceptical about Wrexham's proposed new super-prison

Studies have shown they generate few linkages to the wider economy. This includes a failure to attract "significant numbers of associated industries" to the local area. So whilst an auto plant may attract the development of electronic companies, radio assemblers and delivery companies – research suggests that prison's often fail to generate such similar levels of economic development. Likewise, other studies have failed to find any positive relationship between prison building and a growth in retail development...In view of such findings, the UK government's efforts to promote the Wrexham 'super' prison under a veil of economic advantages and increased employment is, at best, misleading.

4/11/13

Sarah Stone wanted health and social services to be brought together

We have a big opportunity to create a coherent structure, which would give critical mass to local government, better to meet the many challenges which face it, to link health effectively with social care, to have a far more consistency across Wales, and to tackle the many unjustifiable postcode lotteries. Underpinning this would be local democratic accountability working with and supporting public engagement on a range of levels. Change is going to happen, structural reform is a necessary bridge to the future. It is an enabling step for the major work which lies on the other side.

6/11/13

Keith Towler said low household income should not be a barrier to adoption

It is the responsibility of the Welsh Government and adoption agencies to support prospective adopters from the beginning and to ensure children are listened to and their needs are handled in the correct way. Placing a child with the right family is crucial and should always be highest priority in the adoption process. However, the shortage of adopters in Wales is a growing challenge that prevents deserving children and young people from finding a "forever home".

12/11/13

David Llewellyn saw the landscape as a source of economic renewal

The most recent data provides evidence of significant health benefits from engaging communities in outdoor 'green' exercise, which is more easily accessible than traditional gym-based exercise and hence overcomes many reported barriers....The unique natural, and indeed cultural, landscapes of south Wales afford magnificent opportunities for the proposed city region. In conjunction with major projects such as the Metro, innovative strategic approaches to work with our natural assets can help address major issues in housing, urban renewal, and health.

Dreaming fiction in the Valleys



Imaginative writing that illuminates our future

Peter Stead

For more than forty years Dai Smith has been helping us understand and appreciate the importance, complexity and vibrancy of industrial South Wales through the era of Coal – and for him the capital ‘S’ is essential.

In his *In the Frame. Memory in Society: Wales 1910 to 2010*, truly his *magnum opus*, Dai Smith brilliantly examined all those influences that had allowed him to understand and appreciate the full cultural texture of the society of which he was a product. At the same time he confronted the issue of how the values of that culture could be transmitted to a new generation. His answer, of course, was to show how the story and manifestations of that society had been written into our consciousness. It was a book that fully explained and justified the notion of a writer, in this case a cultural historian, as the true leader and guide of a country that was in danger of losing its soul.

Even as we were relishing what some had interpreted as ‘the last word’, came the news that Dai Smith had a novel in the pipeline. We all knew of his literary training and love of fiction but the general assumption was that his enthusiasm for his mentors Gwyn Thomas and Alun Richards, and his passion for Raymond Chandler and Chester Himes could only result in an exercise of spoof Valleys-noir, a

Chinatown set in Ton Pentre. Surely the years of instruction were to be rounded off by a dose of entertainment.

We should have known better. *Dream On* is certainly entertaining but equally it is nothing less than a sequel to, a partner of *In the Frame*. They should stand next to each other on the shelves and be read in association. What the author is doing here is taking us into those areas which were not public, not a matter of record, places where the historian, the memorialist, traditionally could not travel.

For decades historians and writers of fiction have been mutually suspicious and indeed hostile as they have jealously guarded their sacred rules and jurisdictions. In fact a minority of scholars and most readers have always known that in understanding any culture fiction and histories have to be taken together. Only very occasionally has an individual writer taken the plunge and opened up that debate by decisively illustrating the need for language to be used imaginatively as well as a matter of record. With Dai’s twin books we can enter a new era in which we can discuss the political and cultural values of Wales in a richer and more sophisticated manner, one which may well allow the values of the past to permeate our future.

To negotiate the transition from history to fiction Dai opens with a short chapter in which a dying Labour politician studies the proof of his press obituary which had been sent to him by a friend. It prompts him to reflect on his career and, in particular, his relationship with the Valleys constituency which he had represented. Readers should not rush too quickly through this on-the-face-of-it simple nine-page tale, a brilliantly bold literary device. In it Dai has accomplished many things, to begin with a poignant short story. A reflection on possible political under-achievement

is followed by a personal romantic memory and a smart joke about ‘taking our longings’ with us which eclipses any ideological considerations.

This is charming fiction but surely we are being offered more. Is the author offering an interpretation of his own career and especially his relationship with a South Wales to which he returned after studying at Oxford? How will his service in championing his own society be judged? There had been no ‘major practical achievements’ but had his chosen path of writing essays and biographies been sufficient? Had he sufficiently justified his technique of dealing with ‘not the leaders but the led’, with ‘Voice Off’ and ‘Vox Pop’, those who ‘waited in the shadows’ and who lived in what Gwyn Thomas called ‘The Terraces’?

So pointed and thought-provoking is this c.v. that quite possibly we are not merely being asked to consider the career of a fictional politician or even that of the author of this book but rather how a culture as a whole has performed in judging itself. The full poignancy comes as we contemplate those things that our culture has failed to achieve. The ex-MP to whom we have been introduced is dying but the wider question is whether we ourselves have the time to put things right. From the outset the author is setting a challenge. In these initial nine pages he sets an agenda for the rest of the book. They define the context which enables a set of short stories to become a novel.

The stories authentically fill out a South Wales culture. In a prose that is occasionally and not surprisingly epigrammatic, frequently poetic, often amusing and always compelling, we are guided through a society that lived with the memory of war, survived major strikes and lock-outs, experienced deprivation and affluence, was fascinated by America and which sustained an intense participation in popular culture with music, film and rugby vying for precedence. This may sound like familiar territory. Yet the essence of *Dream On* is that all

these themes are worked out in terms of relationships, the bonds between erstwhile friends and even more within families between parents and spouses. Smith himself talks of “a jumble of relationships to be savoured”.

That process of savouring however does not preclude dishes that leave a nasty taste in the mouth. Dai Smith does not do bland and in several stories there are expressions of disappointment and anger at the mediocrity, opportunism and self-promotion that he suggests has occurred in our public-sector dominated public life, whether it is in politics, education, sport or the Labour movement. It is almost as if the author has taken his texts from Nye Bevan who warned about “imprisoning reality in our description of it” and the dangers of “exchanging the inspiration of a pioneer for the rewards of a lackey”. *Dream On* will occasion many blushes, further emotional spasms, and perhaps even a few telephone calls to solicitors.

All this admonition and anger is well integrated into the story telling. There is never any danger of the book’s predominant mood being threatened. Its ambience might well surprise those who only know Smith from his more academic texts. All the values, personal or public, that are lauded in these stories are manifested in personal relationships that are overwhelmingly parental or romantic. Tears may well come to the eyes of some readers, but Dai cleverly avoids sentimentality by trusting in his story-telling powers as he rounds off in true crime-thriller style. He has learnt from the great Ross Macdonald that it is ultimately women who make most things happen. Any History that excludes them is a crude over-simplification. They are right at the heart of things here carrying the banners of our identity and our hopes for the future.

Peter Stead is a cultural historian of 20th Century Wales.

Changing the dream into a wakened reality remains a Welsh project

Jane Aaron



Dream On is an injunction, an exhortation to the reader not to give up on the socialist aspirations which in the first half of the 20th Century characterised the communities of the south Wales Valleys. Tripartite in form, with three central fictions, each divided into three sequences, and the whole framed by a prologue and epilogue, it asks what happened to the spirit of 1945, who prevailed over whom, and what, now, is to be done.

Experience recollected in bafflement rather than tranquillity is of the essence of each sequence. In ‘Never Felt More’, as in the introductory piece, a World War II baby in late adulthood recalls his childhood in the Valleys, and the experience of a haunted generation which “had been spared war but not the consequences of war”. Two of the central protagonist’s friends are the children of American G.I.s billeted in the Valley, and both are lost to him and to their community. The first is a black girl, after her persecution by a schoolteacher affected by his Japanese prison of war experience, and the second the victim of his mother’s attempts to mould him into a bizarre reincarnation of his dead officer father.

In another tale the narrator and his widowed mother are patronised by a moneyed garage owner, ‘Uncle’ Jack, who showers on them rationed treats and grooms the mother into performing semi-erotic masquerades for his voyeuristic pleasure, which the boy inadvertently witnesses. Reminiscent in tone of Gwyn Thomas’s early short stories, (for example,

‘Simeon’) this sequence employs the grotesque to symbolise the rifts opened in communities as a consequence of war. Yet this is the generation expected to bring into full realisation their returning fathers’ dream of a post-war socialism, rooted as it was in a coherent communal political consciousness now lost to their offspring.

In ‘Who Whom’, the middle sequence, the class struggle has been transmogrified into the game of rugby which now provides the community with its only available working-class heroes. Richie ‘Gravedigger’ Davies has acquired his nickname because of his propensity in his 1970s heydays to pummel his prostrate opponents on the field with such calculated ferocity that it looked as if he was burying them. This technique was encouraged by his rugby coach who, “when the Valley was still littered with the useless dicta of its political past” had heard of Lenin’s dictum ‘Who Whom’ (that is, know your enemy, and prevail over him before he prevails over you), “and re-applied it to the mechanics of back row play”. But an older Richie is aware that he has lost sight of the ball, that he had once known “who the who was who did it to others” but now “somehow, the who was us doing it to us. And not understanding it”.

In the book’s last, more extended sequence, ‘No Photographs of Crazy Horse’, however, the “us who are doing it to us” understand with perfect clarity what they are doing. A gang of five once active supporters of the 1984-5 Miners’ Strike have become the movers and shakers of 21st Century south Wales, intent on directing into their own pockets the flow of European money entering the Valleys for the intended purposes of community regeneration. But they are foiled by Billy Maddox, another former activist who had left the Valleys in dismay after the failure of the Strike, and now returns to clean up its corruptions at the call of his much younger half-sister Haf. This is a novella à clef in which much of the humour resides in guessing at the possible real-life models for the characters and institutions satirised in the tale.

Eventually Haf and Billy, through

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threatening the exploiters with exposure, succeed in transforming their plans for a head of the Valleys gated tourist resort, with the locals serving only as domestics, into “a new city on the hill for ourselves”, to which “our young musicians and film-makers and writers and dancers can come, on generous bursaries” to study in “Institutions of Learning that can envision not just administer or tinker with, a future... Let it be open, let it be young, and let it be ours”. But as these words are spoken by the charismatic but profoundly self-centred Sir Ceri Evans, public spokesman for the gang of five, a measure of doubt remains as to whether the plan will be fulfilled. So Haf persuades Billy to stay in the Valleys to help her ensure that this time “it is done differently. Slowly. With no let-up”, thus indicating her astute awareness of the perpetual vigilance needed to maintain and advance the goals of socialism.

However, Haf, the figure of hope and youthful promise, is problematic. She has been reared by two of the most corrupt characters in the text, Branwen and Maldwyn, who left her to the mercies of a nanny and a boarding school - presumably not in the Valleys. So where has she acquired her rooted sense of values? One can hardly suppose, at least from the evidence of this text, that it was from her nanny, for every other female character in the book is either avidly materialistic and intent on weaning their menfolk away from the camaraderie of the mine or the rugby club to a white-collar job and do-it-yourself tasks in the temple of the home, or lost in sensuality, either as the helpless victims of men or their would-be enticers.

For example, when in his Communist youth Sir Ceri spoke to the masses, “women generally just wanted to fuck him”. Apart from Haf they seem as a body incapable of political thought. The central sequence of ‘No Photographs of Crazy Horse’ is made up of series of maxims. The wisdom of Billy’s father, ‘his old man’, a Communist collier turned WEA lecturer, is telling and thought-provoking. But it would have been interesting to have it matched by a series of reflections from the

Welsh devolution is of surprisingly little account here either. The existence of the National Assembly is not looked to as potentially helpful in the region’s development.

young green hope, Haf. As it is, the reader is barely allowed a glimpse into her mind; she is not a fully-rounded character, for all her importance in the plot and in the aims of the book as a whole.

Moreover, one aspect of Billy Maddox’s character makes it difficult to see him as the steady aider and abetter of Haf in the task of leading the Valleys on to a new dawn. At one point in the text, he arranges a meeting with his opponents, buys a hammer with cold intent on his way to it, and smashes the weapon into the genitals and face of one of Maldwyn’s bodyguards. Though an act of revenge for a beating he had formerly received in the attempt to silence him, this is gratuitous violence, unnecessary in terms of the plot, as Billy already has the documentary evidence needed to bring to a halt the gang’s activities. It hardly seems an ideal example of the kind of model of leadership he will provide for the Valleys youth in their ongoing struggle.

So is this tale intended primarily as a sardonic version of Raymond Williams’ *The Fight for Manod*, written up in hard-nosed detective noire style? Surely we cannot be intended to take seriously the sudden revelation that Billy’s and Haf’s grandfather, and the father of ‘his old man’ the Communist collier, is none other than D. A. Thomas, the coal magnate? As history the disclosure has a point to make. The creator of the Cambrian Combine could indeed be said to have inadvertently fathered the syndicalists that arose to defend the workers against his monopoly, and thus acted as catalyst in the formation of Welsh socialism. But it would have been more in keeping with the general tenour of the text to have created fictional counterparts for these historical figures rather than have the old man sit down with Margaret, Lady Rhondda, to discuss their common parent. The historian

seems to have got the better of fiction-writer here.

Nonetheless, precisely through its combination of tongue-in-cheek romp and serious reflection the book succeeds in its aims of celebrating the continuing vitality and potential of the Valleys communities, for all their current loss of committed political activism. No thanks to the rest of Wales, though, which has very little part to play in this profoundly regional fiction. No reference is made here to the possibility that Welsh socialism ever drew strength from any Welsh resources outside the Valleys. The notion that those internal migrants into the area from rural Wales might have brought with them community values bred by rural traditions of co-operation, long centuries of resistance to Anglicised landlords, and the democratic self-authorizations of the religious nonconformists, is never mooted.

Welsh devolution is of surprisingly little account either. The existence of the National Assembly is not looked to as potentially helpful in the region’s development. Yet if, instead of focusing his attention on impressing the cosmopolitan world with his coal empire, D. A. Thomas had thrown in his lot with Lloyd George and the Cymru Fydd movement in 1896, those returning World War II soldiers would surely have found it far easier to establish a truly democratic socialism in an already devolved Wales than they did still yoked to a Tory England bidding its time to rid itself of Aneurin Bevan and his followers. But that is to “dream on”. How to change the dream into an awakened reality is, of course, the problem shared alike by all Wales’ regions. This book certainly helps in revitalising a sense of future potential rooted in past realities.

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Lingering melancholia of the coal age

Daniel G. Williams



In probing the meaning of Welsh lives in the 20th Century, Dai Smith's fine novel *Dream On* offers sophisticated meditations on history and community, the past and present. Indeed, despite disagreeing with this or that emphasis, it initially seems hard to say anything about 20th Century south Wales that the novel doesn't say better itself. In trying to approach the novel from a less historical angle, what strikes me is the profound sense of melancholia that pervades much of the characters' lives and thoughts.

In his study *Beyond Ethnicity*, Werner Sollors talks about 'Indian Melancholy', referring not to how Native Americans process their history of genocide, but to how dominant American culture romanticizes and naturalises "the cult of the vanishing Indians". The rhetoric of the 'vanishing Indian and his fate' serves to legitimize the future of the white conqueror. It is at those moments when America is most shamefaced and traumatised by its betrayal of its own democratic ideology (in slavery, in the genocide of Native Americans) that it most virulently espouses human values and a national community.

The most substantial, interesting and successful section of *Dream On* is entitled 'No Photographs of Crazy Horse'. The reference, as the novel tells us, is to the Oglala Sioux war chief who was assassinated in 1877. In the symbolic world of *Dream On*, Crazy Horse approximates the narrator's father. The father's photo is captured by his photographer son, Billy. However, an art of surface observation fails to grasp the essence of the 'old man' and his

life: "something had fled. Had drained away. Something had been beheaded. Something had been killed". If the father's spirit cannot be captured, then neither can that of his generation. Crazy Horse seems to stand allegorically for any society which cannot be captured in conventional narratives of history or of fiction. In fact, the 'old man' questions whether the history of his Wales can be accessed at all, and in one of several passages that could be read as acerbic self-critiques by the author, the father is described as despising the post-war generation's "parasitical identification with others who would be made mere ciphers in the subsequent drive to harvest their experience".

Gwilym, "a railwayman's boy" with a PhD, is available for "blithe comment on TV and radio on 'Our People's History'". This is a Welsh industrial version of Sollors's 'Indian Melancholy'; a 'proletarian melancholy' in which the industrial past is consumed and represented in ways that legitimise the emergence of a post-industrial generation. The old man barely conceals his contempt for his son's occupation as a photographer, and draws attention to the fact that photos offer a wholly false, 'celebratory' view which ignores "the ineffable melancholy of life".

In his 1917 essay on 'Mourning and Melancholia', Sigmund Freud identifies two kinds of grief. According to Freud 'mourning' is a healthy response to loss; it is finite in character. Freud tells us "we rest assured that after a lapse of time" mourning "will be overcome". On the other hand, melancholia is pathological; it is interminable. Freud describes melancholia as a kind of consumption:

"An object-choice, an attachment of the libido to a particular person, had at one time existed; then, owing to a real slight or disappointment coming from this loved person, the object-relationship was shattered. The result was not the normal one of a withdrawal of the libido from this object and displacement of it on to a new one, but something different ...

The free libido ... was withdrawn into the ego ... to establish an identification of the ego with the abandoned object. Thus the shadow of the object fell upon the ego ... The ego wishes to incorporate this object into itself, and the method by which it would do so, in this oral or cannibalistic stage, is by devouring it."

Is this not the process being enacted by Billy in taking photos of his father for the exhibition which he ultimately names 'No Photographs of Crazy Horse'? Consider the following passage:

"His old man submitted to one last photograph. It was of his clasped hands. The veins were bunched and somehow pulsing, even in their stillness. ... Photographs were a piled-up detritus of humanity. A tangle of hair. A sullen neck. An arthritic knee ... He called the exhibition and the book of it he made 'No Photographs of Crazy Horse'. And when it was finished, he said goodbye to the old man and left. He never saw him again. He carried him inside himself, and would now forever."

Human bodies are broken up by the photographs in preparation for the final 'cannibalistic' image of the son carrying the father "inside himself". But this process of devouring and swallowing, to which the old man 'submits', is not a straightforward process. Freud notes that as the libido turns back on the ego, so do feelings of guilt, rage and punishment. Implicit in Freud's essay is the profound ambivalence that continues to be generated around the 'swallowed' object. The melancholic's relationship to the object is now no longer just love or nostalgia but also profound resentment. As the contemporary critic Anne Anlin Cheng notes, the "melancholic is not melancholic because he or she has lost something but because he or she has introjected that which he or she now reviles". The melancholic subject is therefore stuck in more ways than just

temporally; “he or she is stuck - almost choking on - the hateful and loved thing he or she just devoured”. The hateful and loved thing which chokes the narrator of *Dream On* is the ‘old man’ and the unrecoverable Wales that made him.

The ‘old man’ represents a Wales where coal was king, a Wales where titans of capital such as D. A. Thomas, Viscount Rhondda, on the one hand, and giants of trade unionism and radicalism such as Noah Ablett on the other, reflected a self-confident Wales whose loss can only be lamented in nostalgic terms: “How large their lives were. How central was their Wales. How significant was coal itself. How it all still lingered”. *Dream On* broods self-reflexively on the effects of that lingering presence. Billy is representative of the post-war generation. The generation that “sucked the welfare tit with astonished gratitude” but who, in adulthood, “opened the door” and let themselves out “into the world which our fathers had left for us to die in”, a world where there “was less and less to be representative about more and more of the time”. These are the keynotes of the novel’s melancholia. The old man feels that his son’s generation consumed the strikes of the early 1970s as “an orgasmic shudder orchestrated by the pimps of history”, a view that is given some support when the narrator notes that the 1970s strikes offered the upwardly mobile post-war generation a “credibility” which ignored the fact that they had the “bonus of not being personally doomed thereafter”.

Like the works of Alun Richards and Raymond Williams, whose very different voices seem to echo through this novel, the broader observations on history are related to individual stories and psychologies. The narrative of ‘No Photographs of Crazy Horse’ is driven by a plot of unknown parentage. The narrator, Billy, is unsure as to whether he’s the biological father of Haf, the child of his contemporary and past-lover, Bran. If, following an extended conversation he realises that the young woman Haf is “more stone than flower”, she is also more Ann Summers than R. Williams

Parry as she turns to her possible father and “spoke the sentence I knew I had to hear. ‘Do you want to fuck me, too’”. In a final twist it transpires that the ‘old man’, Billy’s father, is in fact Haf’s father too. Thus the past literally by-passes one generation to embody itself in the future. The generation of men represented by Billy, Gwilym, Ceri and Maldwyn is rendered impotent and obsolete as the patriarchal figure who hovers over the novel’s events returns to father the generation after their’s.

This is, surely, one source of a barely articulated resentment towards the ‘old man’, but also a powerful representation of his lingering presence. The underdeveloped female characters make *Dream On* an intense meditation on masculinity, and it seems that men formed by coal mining and war are more potent than the artists, academics, unprincipled politicians, and arts administrators of the post war generation. The section ends with Haf telling Billy that “you need to be here”. But “caught between the icy dismissiveness of my old man and the despair at our generational failure”, it’s no surprise that Billy lives in New York.

The late American historian Christopher Lasch once noted that “a denial of the past, superficially progressive and optimistic, proves on closer analysis to embody the despair of a society that cannot face the future”. *Dream On* does not deny the past. It does not ask how we as a nation might ‘get over’ or ‘go beyond’ our industrial history. It asks us what it means, as social, political and subjective beings, to grieve for a past that is ‘lost’ but ‘still lingers’

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Trying to forge a future that’s worth living

Angela Graham



I was very struck by sentences early in the book. Of children born ‘in the Valley’ near the end of the Second World War we read:

“What we knew inwardly was more than what we saw. And what we saw was invariably damage... our lives were formed less by the endlessly fresh discoveries of one thing after another which children must make, and much more by having to absorb, without apparent resistance, the dead weight of lives soaked in their own unwanted experience. Lives which had led to us. We would be spared war but not the consequences of war. That single fact permeated and tethered our lives.”

On re-reading the book I found that I had mis-remembered the phrase that made most impression on me. I had remembered the phrase, “unlived life” whereas Dai Smith has actually written “unwanted experience”. This made me think. I cannot give the source for the famous Jungian phrase about nothing having a stronger effect on children than the unlived life of their parents, and I can’t argue convincingly that there is nothing that outweighs this effect. However, I do believe, from experience, that the assertion that a parent’s unlived life weighs on the child is true.

Both phrases carry a sense of experience which is rejected in such a way that the individual never comes to terms with it. “Unwanted experience”

suggests a lack of choice. But all lives contain “unwanted experience”, unavoidable circumstances. Why does such “unwanted experience” loom so very large in this community? Is there something which makes it particularly difficult for this community to properly embrace and master experience that was never sought?

The weight of a community’s past on its future is a key theme in the book. Its title, *Dream On* (which manages to be at once cynical, soporific and idealistic) points to the dangerously binary nature of dreams. If you want to annoy idealists, tell them they’re dreamers but then, famously, the delineation of a dream of change is one of the most powerful means of inspiring action and commitment.

Since this is an unconventionally-structured novel - the publisher’s blurb calls it a “composite novel” – a term I don’t find enlightening other than as a way to describe the twists in style

and a kind of inverted snobbery bamboozle right and left.

History is touted as the key to future prosperity through exploitation of heritage. Yet though the people of the Valley can be commandeered to help sell their history, they have lost the ability to forge a present or future that’s worth living. And, in any case, it isn’t the people who are at the forefront. The people of the present, as a cohesive unit, are absent from the novel, though here and there the work of artists springs up to, somehow, blazon that somebody somewhere sees what’s going on and going wrong:

“It had been seen, then. The structure of that culture which I, too, had once had inside me, and held and let fall. It had been seen, here, variously, and transfigured into something it was not other than as a vision that was as unmistakably real as it had once

the means of challenging the erstwhile revolutionaries of the Miners’ Strike era in their plots to enrich themselves while doing some patronising good for the plebs. Ultimately, among sub-plots to do with illegitimacy and who’s-the-father? conundra, we are offered the conclusion that what it’s all about is:

“Home, yes. But a kingdom yet to come. Or if not, what had been the point of lives that were otherwise mere existence... ? ...No... Nothing worth having was worth repeating but passing through wasn’t the same as passing over. You could not answer by default. What was singular, as experience, still had to be connected if meaning was to be derived.”

It’s connection that matters. More than that, it’s one-ness between people that matters. A one-ness that is presented via a film scene watched by a father and son. The father says:

“See. That’s not acting, boy. That’s for real. That’s what I’ve been telling you. That’s to come... See. And he did. It was registered with him. How to live a life. Or try. From birth. With or without a certificate.”

If you want to annoy idealists, tell them they’re dreamers but then, famously, the delineation of a dream of change is one of the most powerful means of inspiring action and commitment.

and protagonist between the book’s sections - there is no simple, single path trod from cover to cover by a central figure. It is a book that has to be read as it comes and time is needed to let the pieces fall into a graspable pattern.

Here’s how it looks to me. There’s something rotten in the state of the Valley. There’s a sentimentalising, gullible streak in the people; a readiness to trust “those who are one of us” no matter how patronising and on the make they are. The people and their lower-level representatives have been battered about the head so often with the term “regeneration” that they can’t resist it any more. Bureaucracy

been actual... In all this work there was not a trace of the identikit Valleys, stereotyped and drooled over in words and images by force of their once eccentric particulars and through a vestige of falsely assembled narratives... If the past was a place that made the present a prison for the mind then this blotchy capture of living was a signal for release.”

The artists have done their part but who has any power to make the vision a reality? Dai Smith chooses a Sam Spade-like, hard-bitten, insider/outside photographer (a man who sees) as

At the end there’s the slender hope that a young woman will be able to unseat the villains by working “... differently. Slowly. With no let up.”

This is a hard message for Dai Smith’s Welsh readers and a subtle message. Who is the messiah of the kingdom yet to come? Not Sir Ceri Evans, suave man-of-the-people politician. Yet it is politics that will save. Politics of a new kind in which everyone of us takes responsibility for dealing with our own “unwanted experience” but – crucially - takes it together. Somehow.

Angela Graham is a TV producer and writer.



Parciau Cenedlaethol Cymru

mwya darlun
prydfarth...

- Generadu dros £1biliwn o wariant gan ymwelwyr bob blwyddyn
- Denu 12 miliwn o ymwelwyr
- Cynnal dros 12,000 o swyddi
- Cartref i 80,000 o drigolion, sy'n mwynhau gwell iechyd a gwell ansawdd bywyd
- Cael eu gwerthfawrogi gan bron i 90% o boblogaeth y DU



Parc Cenedlaethol
Arfordir Penfro
Pembrokeshire Coast
National Park



BRECON BEACONS
NATIONAL PARK



SNOWDONIA
NATIONAL PARK

Wales' National Parks

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a pretty picture...

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- Attract 12 million visitors
- Support over 12,000 jobs
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1

Health

Articles

Sustaining spending on the NHS will hit rest of the budget

Demand and budget cuts will force health change

The dilemmas of Welsh health decision-makers

How to save money and improve health outcomes

Sustaining spending on the NHS will hit rest of the budget

David Phillips analyses the Welsh Government's change of priorities in health funding

The UK government is part way through significant cuts in spending on public services as it attempts to deal with the large hole in the public finances. As part of this, grants from the Treasury to the Welsh Government have been reduced in real terms each year since 2009–10, and look set to continue to fall until 2017–18. This would mean an unprecedented eight years of retrenchment in public services spending in Wales. It is in stark contrast to the first ten years of devolution, when the Welsh Government enjoyed substantial year-on-year real-terms spending increases.

One of the biggest beneficiaries of the years of plenty for public services before the financial crisis was the NHS. After accounting for economy-wide inflation, the Welsh Government increased spending on health by almost two-thirds between 2000–01 and 2009–10. During the same years, the increase in health spending was a bit larger in England and a bit smaller in Scotland, but it is clear that governments across Great Britain were prioritising increases in spending on the NHS.

However, as it has grappled with austerity since 2010–11 the government in Cardiff Bay has made rather different decisions about NHS spending to the governments in Edinburgh and Westminster. Despite substantial cuts to overall spending on public services, both the Department for Health which funds the NHS in England and the Scottish Department for Health have seen their budgets roughly increased in line with economy-wide inflation. In contrast, between 2010–11 and 2013–14, spending on the Welsh Health and Social Services Main Expenditure Group – of which almost all goes towards health – is set to have fallen by 9.7 per cent, which is actually slightly larger than the overall cut to the Welsh Government's budget.

In other words, while spending on the NHS in England and Scotland has been 'protected',

at least relatively, this has not been the case so far in Wales. Instead, by cutting health spending, the Welsh Government has been able to impose smaller cuts on other services than is the case in the rest of Great Britain. For instance, the cut in its Local Government budget between 2010–11 and 2013–14 has been 4.7 per cent, compared to cuts of 6.2 per cent in Scotland and 9.7 per cent in England for broadly comparable departmental budgets.

The Welsh Government's draft budget for 2014–15, published in October, represents a major change in priorities. Next year, despite a real-terms reduction in its overall budget of 1.2 per cent, the Welsh Government is planning to increase real-terms spending on its Health and Social Services by 1.3 per cent, with spending on the day-to-day management and provision of services up 0.7 per cent and investment in new facilities and equipment up 14.5 per cent. Small spending cuts planned for the following year mean spending on the Health and Social Services is set to be at a similar level in 2015–16 as today. This stands in stark contrast to the average 3.3 per cent reduction in spending in each of the last three years. So, although it is not planning to undo the cuts to health spending already made, the Welsh Government is planning to protect the Welsh NHS from additional cuts over the next two years.

This change in priorities was not unexpected. There has been growing evidence that the Welsh NHS has been struggling with its financial straightjacket and there is political pressure from the Conservatives to protect health spending. But there is rarely such a thing as a free lunch. In order to protect health spending, the Welsh Government has had to impose deep cuts on other services, with the budget for local government set to fall 9.1 per cent over the next two years, and the budget for the

Education and Skills set to fall 11.5 per cent. ‘Protecting’ an area of spending during an era of austerity – especially one as big as the NHS – inevitably involves more difficult choices for other spending areas.

In a report published earlier this year the Institute of Fiscal Studies analysed the prospects for the Welsh Government’s budget over the next 12 years, and explored the trade-offs that would need to be faced when allocating spending to different service areas. This showed clearly that continuing to protect the NHS from further cuts would likely necessitate further substantial cuts to other budgets.

Under our baseline scenario, where the UK government is able to find a further £10 billion in benefit cuts or tax increases, the UK’s deficit is reduced as currently planned, and where spending on health and education in England continue to be protected after 2015–16, the Welsh block grant would be approximately 5 per cent lower in real terms in 2017–18 than today. Protecting

However, it is possible that the UK government decides against further tax rises or benefit cuts, and feels that the large cuts already imposed on unprotected services mean that it is not possible to continue protecting the English NHS and schools from cuts.

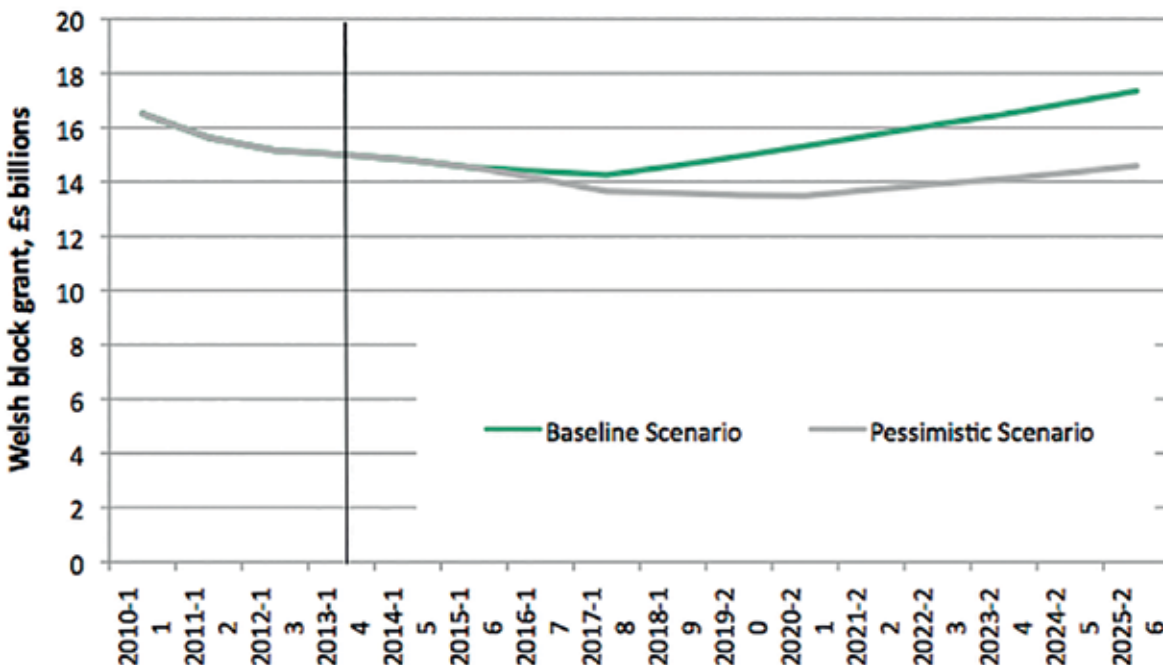
health spending from cuts for all four years would require cuts to other services that average 9 per cent. Extending protection to schools and social services spending, which the Welsh Government has also listed as priorities, would mean cuts of 13 per cent to remaining areas over the next four years.

However, it is possible that the UK government decides against further tax rises or benefit cuts, and feels that the large cuts already imposed on unprotected services mean that it is not possible to continue protecting the English NHS and schools from cuts. In this case, the Welsh block grant would be 9 per cent lower than today in 2017–18. Protecting health spending

in these circumstances would require cuts of, on average, 15 per cent to other spending areas. Extending protection to schools and social services too would increase the cuts to unprotected services to an average of 24 per cent. For instance, coming on top of the cuts already delivered, this could take the amount spent on the Department for the Economy, Science and Transport, for instance, to 40 per cent below its 2010–11 level. These are large cuts indeed.

Unfortunately even when its Budget starts growing again, increasing spending on the NHS at a rate required to meet the projected rises in costs and demand would mean very difficult choices elsewhere in the budget, unless those

Figure 1. Scenarios for the Welsh block grant to 2025–26, £ billions, 2013–14 prices



Notes: Welsh block grant includes the Welsh Government’s resource and capital DEL.
Source: Authors’ calculations

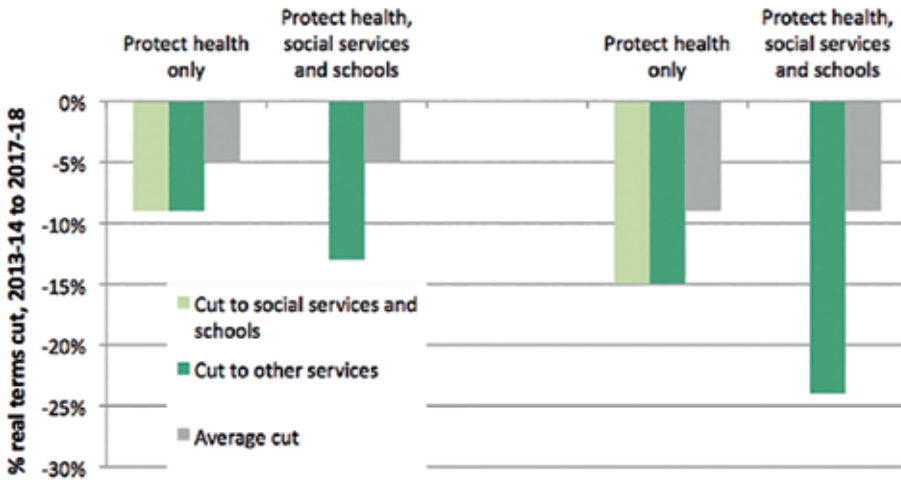


Figure 2.
The trade-offs facing the Welsh Government between now and 2017–18

Notes: Figures for social services and schools refer to Welsh Government funding for these services via funding support for local government and the Health and Social Services MEG. Locally-financed (via council tax) spending on schools and social services are excluded from these figures.

Source: Authors' calculations

pressures can be ameliorated.

Our baseline scenario does show the Welsh block grant 16 per cent higher than today by 2025–26, and 5 per cent higher than in 2010–11, which may seem like a significant increase. However, once you start thinking about what this might imply for different service areas you can see that this is not the case.

For instance, imagine that the Welsh Government protected health, schools and social services from further cuts between now and 2017–18, and thereafter increased spending on all services in line with the increase in the overall Welsh budget. This would allow health, social services and schools spending to rise by 22 per cent in real terms by 2025–26, while allowing a 6 per cent average increase in the budgets of other service areas. But over 12 years, this equates to an increase of just 1.7 per cent a year for health. And given the cuts already made to the NHS budget in Wales, the increase would be just 0.7 per cent per year over the 15 years between 2010–11 and 2025–26. This is far below projections for what is

estimated to be needed to cope with the ageing population, and the tendency for productivity growth to be relatively low in labour intensive sectors such as health.

The Welsh Government is planning on the basis of cost-pressures of about 2 per cent per year in real-terms between 2013–14 and 2015–16, a period during which public sector wages are being held down (which cannot continue forever), while the Nuffield Trust identifies longer-term cost pressures of about 4 per cent per year for England – unfortunately, longer-term estimates do not exist for Wales.

Raising the average increase in the health budget to 2 per cent per year – the lower of these cost pressure figures – for the period between 2010–11 and 2025–26 would mean real-terms increases in health spending of around 5 per cent per year after 2017–18. Combined with the need to increase spending on social care for the elderly, such increases could leave spending on unprotected areas almost a quarter lower than today in 2025–26, and still falling thereafter by over 1 per cent per year.

All this means that, unless cost

pressures can be reduced, providing the necessary funding for health, social services and schools will mean austerity for other departments will become a longstanding feature of the budgets of many Welsh departments, even when the overall Welsh budget returns to growth.

If this looks difficult, under our most pessimistic scenario for the Welsh block grant, where further spending restraint is required after 2017–18, the difficulties the Welsh Government would face in trading off spending on different services are difficult to comprehend. Providing the same kinds of increases in the health, social services and schools spending as set out above would imply cuts to areas such as transport, culture, and housing that would have to be implausibly large.

Setting out these scenarios serves the purpose of focusing minds. To help ameliorate such difficult choices, it is vital to get a better understanding of the demand and cost pressures facing public services in Wales, and to develop policies to try to reduce those pressures. The Welsh Government - and indeed, governments in Westminster and across the developed world - will need to develop long-term strategies for improving productivity in the provision of public services and managing the demand for those services. Even then, the choices will be difficult. But without such a long-term and strategic approach, the challenges will be harder still – and harder than they need to be.

David Phillips is a Senior Research Economist at the Institute for Fiscal Studies. He is author of its recent report *Scenarios for the Welsh Government Budget to 2025–26*, commissioned by Wales Public Services 2025–26, and funded by the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives, the Welsh Local Government Association and the Welsh NHS Confederation. Wales Public Services 2025 is an independent programme, based at Cardiff Business School, looking at the fiscal, demographic and other pressures which public services in Wales face over the next decade and beyond.



"There is no compelling case to screw up Bevan's blueprint and consign it to the bin of history ..."

Demand and budget cuts will force health change

Marcus Longley argues that we need to organise NHS Wales in a radically different way

Strategy is all about choices, and choices are hard. In health, there is no escaping the need for choice. In the first decade of this century, spending on health increased by about 7 per cent each year in real terms. This was an unprecedented period of growth which took the UK close to the average health spend of comparable countries in Europe.

But in the future it is likely that the Welsh block grant will grow by no more than an average of about 0.5 per cent above inflation each year between 2010 and 2025 (*Scenarios for the Welsh Government Budget to 2025-26*, Institute for Fiscal Studies, September

2013). Even if health spending in Wales is protected as much as is humanly possible, this will leave the Welsh NHS facing a radically different future. That rate of growth will not keep pace with demographic change, and a huge gap will opened up between supply and demand.

So we need to choose a different NHS, or endure one which struggles more and more with each successive budget settlement. But in what way will the NHS be different? Certainly, there is no compelling case to screw up Bevan's blueprint and consign it to the bin of history. We want to keep our baby, but we must change the bathwater in which it lies.

The Welsh NHS does lots of great things. Every day it sustains a hugely complex service which astounds thousands of people with its technical expertise and disarming acts of kindness and compassion. It takes all comers, without judgement or awareness of means. It provides access to the most complex care through a simple, modest local front door, staffed by doctors and nurses who field every complaint and actually handle 90 per cent of all patient contacts. And its 75,000+ staff are undergoing a safety revolution, as they increasingly challenge themselves to provide care more safely, and reduce the several thousand preventable deaths each year.

But there are three major challenges where 'more of the same' would be disastrous. First, we need a *new compact between personal and social responsibility for health*.

I suspect that most adults in Wales know what constitutes a healthy life – no smoking, moderate alcohol, some exercise, weight control, and five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. They certainly should do, given that each year we spend in excess of a third of a billion pounds informing and persuading them to lead such a life. And yet, almost three quarters of us regularly achieve just two or fewer of these five requirements, a figure which work by the pioneering epidemiologist Peter Elwood in Caerphilly suggests may barely have changed in the past 30 years.

Put simply, we all now have a choice. We can continue like this. If we do, we will need to find a lot more money every year for the NHS to keep us alive, and voters don't seem keen on this. Or we need a completely new approach to 'nudging' people to be healthier. Over decades it took a combination of education, opportunity, incentives, sanctions, and legislation to shift our smoking habits. Are we ready for a dose of libertarian paternalism when it comes to obesity and exercise? Wales needs some truly radical thinking here.

Secondly we need to think about *improving efficiency in the NHS*. No

one would argue against this, but until recently we have turned a blind eye to underperformance. All too often data in key performance areas is poor and not believed, or kept behind closed doors, encouraging the public to become complacent. Examples of variations between hospitals include:

- Death rates at weekends.
- Differences in mortality rates.
- Lengths of patient stay.
- Sluggish responses to patients who need to move on.

Increasingly the NHS is facing up to its inadequacies, and most importantly is realising that it can actually get better. Reliable data, measuring things that matter, and always in the public domain, are effecting more change to the NHS in Wales than barrow loads of central directions and political exhortation ever could. There is something irresistible about like-for-like comparisons which show you in the bottom half of the league table.

sometimes sceptical and demoralised workforce that change actually is possible.

Many staff in the NHS will have experienced working for an organisation that all too often failed to tackle the really 'wicked' problems. The NHS seemed to work really well at the level of the team or department, where problems seemed to be tractable. But those issues which crossed several departments, or linked the ambulance service and the hospitals, or even (heaven forbid) required the NHS and Social Services to work together – forget it! There is little more depressing than an organisation which has come to believe that some problems simply cannot be solved.

The third great challenge is *integrating health and social care*. Most of modern healthcare depends upon several professionals working together as a team around the patient. The complex NHS sometimes struggles to achieve this feat. Social Services, the NHS and the third sectors together really struggle. It seems that the easy option – the default

A new strategic direction for health in Wales would need to start by protecting and nurturing all those design features which are timeless. This is a major challenge, maybe even an overwhelming one as budget cuts bite. The most successful organisations seem to be able to reduce their costs by perhaps as much as 5 per cent a year, while maintaining output levels over an extended period. We are asking more than that of our Health Boards.

NHS Wales must tackle the three great challenges simultaneously. Each have this much in common – previous approaches have all failed to deliver the scale and pace of change we now desperately need. So for each, we need a completely new approach.

On *public health*, we either decide to will the collective change, or we must will the extra NHS expenditure entailed. We need a national conversation on this, which starts with a recognition of past failure.

On *efficiency*, we need much more information – reliable, relevant, and right in your face. I don't think that a market in healthcare is the necessary corollary, partly because of the complexity and unintended consequences of such 'fake' markets. But we do need to design and create our alternatives to market mechanisms, including a clear understanding of relative costs between different service providers.

On *integration*, we need ambitious targets and a national will. In Scotland, the consensual approach was tried and failed, and now all health and local government are marching to the same drum beat. Let's learn the lessons.

Am I optimistic that these challenges will be addressed? We are a small, homogenous nation, wanting the same things. Anyway, what's the alternative?

The NHS seemed to work really well at the level of the team or department, where problems seemed to be tractable. But those issues which crossed several departments, or linked the ambulance service and the hospitals, or even (heaven forbid) required the NHS and Social Services to work together – forget it!

But we are still in the foothills, pulling on our walking boots. So, we need internal challenge – an internal 'commissioning' function in every Health Board that refuses to tolerate mediocrity. We need to provide services in the optimal configuration, not the one bequeathed by history. And we need public service leaders who can show a

position – is to cooperate with others only to the extent that it doesn't interfere with one's own objectives.

We have had exhortations to do better in this area for years. There will soon be a new law which can compel it. But what we still struggle to identify are effective incentives, sanctions and enablers to overcome the default position.

Marcus Longley is Professor of Applied Health Policy with the Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care at the University of South Wales.

The dilemmas of Welsh health decision-makers

John Osmond interviews Health Minister Mark Drakeford and (overleaf) Cardiff and Vale Health Board Chief Executive Adam Cairns about the stark choices they face in sustaining the NHS in Wales

We're facing a fork in the road at the 2015 general election," the Welsh Health Minister declared. "The government at Westminster has an ideological view that the state is too big. By 2015 they will have spent five years reducing it. If they are presented with another five years of doing that, the NHS in Wales will be a very different organisation to the one it is today."

These words, spoken in Mark Drakeford's office on the fifth floor of Ty Hywel in Cardiff Bay, were delivered in measured terms. He reflected that the Conservative's ideological position was perfectly defensible, though he profoundly disagreed with it.

When Mark Drakeford became Health Minister in Carwyn Jones' reshuffle last March he set himself three immediate tasks. They were to see his part of the legislative programme – in particular the Organ Donation Bill – through the Assembly; to prepare for the coming winter pressures; and to achieve a resolution of the hospital reconfiguration changes underway in north, mid and west and south-east Wales. To a large extent this agenda is now out of the way, with the exception of a few decisions on hospital changes that will be resolved in the next few months.

What is increasingly on the Health Minister's mind is dealing with the longer-term funding crisis that is looming on the horizon of the Welsh NHS. For gathering there is a perfect storm of a sharp reduction in resources, coupled with rising demands from an ageing and increasingly unhealthy population.

Mark Drakeford fervently believes that if Labour wins at the 2015 general

election his job will be made a lot easier. He is in no doubt that pressures on spending would continue for about two years, but at least there would be a UK government in power that believed in growing state services rather than reducing them.

He acknowledges, however, that whichever way it goes the NHS in Wales will have to change. For instance, in September a Wales Audit Office report found that if the Welsh Government's spending allocations continued unchanged health spending would rise from 42 per cent to 57 per cent of the budget within a decade.

Faced with an unsustainable financial future Mark Drakeford says he has three options - to make the NHS do less, to charge for some services, or to re-design the way services are delivered. He says there is very little scope for making any significant savings from the first two. In terms of reducing NHS interventions he mentioned treatment for infertility or for varicose veins. Neither condition was life-threatening and so it could be argued that the NHS should not be involved in their treatment. However, retreating from the provision of such services would achieve only marginal savings.

As for charging, the favoured candidate would be free medical prescriptions that cost the Welsh Government £30 million a year. However, Mark Drakeford defended continuing with this policy because Wales is a low-income country. If charges were introduced many people would simply fail to pay for the medicines they need that prevent more serious illnesses down



Health Minister Mark Drakeford - "People have to be persuaded to take responsibility for their own health..."

the line, so driving up costs in other parts of the service. In any event, while significant, a saving of £30 million would not be a solution to the funding crisis facing the Welsh NHS.

Which leaves redesigning the Welsh NHS so that it delivers in a completely different way. How can this be done? Mark Drakeford suggested four ways, two that he was following through in the immediate future, and a further two, more visionary and longer-term ideas.

First, and most immediate was streamlining the delivery of hospital care. He gave as an example the provision of stroke services that are currently delivered at 17 separate sites around Wales. In contrast London, which has three times the population of Wales, delivers its stroke services out of just seven centres and achieves better outcomes.

Secondly, people had to be persuaded to take more responsibility for

their own health. There was little point in the health service providing people with a hip replacement if they were so overweight as to make the procedure ineffective. "People already know the health risks from behaviours such as smoking or drinking immoderately," said Mark Drakeford. "We have to explain the implications for NHS treatment in a more direct way than in the past."

In the longer-term he is contemplating more far-reaching strategies. The first is a concept of 'Prudent Medicine' being developed by the Welsh Government's Bevan Commission that advises on long-term health policy. Based on what is known in Canada as 'Parsimonious Medicine', this refers to delivering appropriate health care that avoids wasteful treatments and interventions. Mark Drakeford estimates that as much as 20 per cent of NHS treatment either fails to deliver any beneficial result or does actual harm. He mentioned the over-prescription of some medicines and the hospital admission of some elderly patients who are then treated in an aggressively medical way – "over days exhaustive tests are undertaken and a list of ailments produced for which little can be done."

His second longer-term idea is to look at the hospital admissions practice in New Zealand where waiting lists have been abandoned in favour of a points system. GPs referring patients to hospital fill in a form listing the detail and severity of their condition. The forms are then scored by a panel of consultants on the basis of clinical need and admissions allocated accordingly, up to a number that can be accommodated by a set budget.

A problem with all these policies is that they are contestable in various ways. Few would argue that the concentration of specialist services in a smaller number of centres can achieve more efficiency and effectiveness. However, there is little consensus about the centralisation of accident and emergency and maternity services away from hospitals in places like Llanelli and Haverfordwest.

Dealing with lifestyle behaviours like smoking and obesity requires cultural shifts in society that can take decades.

'Prudent' or 'parsimonious' medicine similarly requires a cultural shift amongst NHS staff and will be opposed by some as the introduction of overt rationing into health care provision. Equally, replacing lists with a points system could lead to doctors 'gaming' the system or even judicial review of decisions.

Mark Drakeford acknowledges

such difficulties but said he would not flinch from making hard decisions. His strategy appears to be operating in two phases. The first takes the Welsh NHS to the 2015 general election, and he is confident that the system is robust enough to survive intact until then.

After that, it all depends on which fork in the road Britain takes. If Ed

How to save money and improve health

Adam Cairns, Chief Executive of the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, is responsible for an annual turnover of £1.1 billion, which is about 7.5 per cent of the Welsh Government's budget. And he's overspending, a fact that's been in the news.

In November he told the Assembly's Public Accounts Committee he had to make savings of £56.7 million in this financial year, which means he will have to reduce his workforce by around 380 posts by March, on top of 180 that have gone since April – out of a total payroll of 14,500.

It was an announcement that brought Unison members on to the steps of the Senedd in protest. But Cairns says we have to have a grown-up debate about health spending. "In the past we have operated on annual budgets with pressure on managers to find artificial ways of reducing costs as the end-of-year approaches. So vacancies were held over, training programmes were delayed and so on, but ultimately savings weren't made and deficits grew.

"In the past, too, the Health Boards became used to being bailed out by the Welsh Government which led to a culture of dependence. Now we've agreed a three-year plan with the Welsh Government and with our own clinicians and other staff, to put our budget into balance."

He says reducing staff costs has to be part of this because they represent 60 per cent of the Board's spending. But more

fundamentally, ways have to be found to improve the way services are designed and delivered. "We're changing the way our doctors and nurses go about their business," he said, pointing to 73 different schemes that are currently underway. "We are demonstrating that we can achieve improvements and save money at the same time."

He gave two examples. The first was general practitioner prescriptions of cortisone inhalers for people suffering from asthma. It was discovered that 80 per cent of patients were receiving too high a dose of the inhaler, and would be better treated by a lower dose. The prescriptions were changed accordingly, saving money and improving health outcomes at the same time.

The second was centralisation of treatment of cancer of the liver, esophagus, pancreas and stomach. A trial was undertaken involving 650 patients to assess the outcomes of the change. The result was a 20 per cent reduction in mortality, a 50 per cent increase in curative results from surgery, a 70 per cent reduction in complications resulting from surgery, and a three-day reduction in hospital stays.

But will these kind of changes be enough to keep the Health Board within budget in the coming years? "It will be a challenge but what are our choices?" Adam Cairns asked. "The health service is in a different place from local

Miliband is installed in Number 10 Mark Drakeford seems confident that the health service in England will be brought back from the brink of privatisation and significant new investment will be found to restore it to something that Aneurin Bevan would recognize. In which case the Welsh NHS will continue to benefit from Barnett funding consequential that

will enable it to do the same.

On the other hand, if the Conservatives are allowed another five years in power all bets will be off. A more radical approach will be needed to address the dilemma of funding an unsustainable Welsh health service. Contemplating this prospect, and the potential it has for injuring the NHS in

Wales, an edge of bitterness crept into Mark Drakeford's tone. "In England the NHS is becoming a lottery, driven by the pursuit of profit," he said. "In future, if this government are given another five years, the bottom line for the NHS will be the extraction of profit." The question will then be how Wales can escape the same fate.



authorities when it comes to responding to spending cuts. They can say, 'Oh well, we'll just have to close our libraries'. But what service do we provide that we can simply shut?"

At the same time he conceded there would have to be structural change within the Welsh NHS. "We have 133 hospitals in Wales for a population of just over three million people. That's not sustainable. But we have to get much better at persuading people of the need and case for change. You can't do it if the doctors are against you. One man in a white coat is better than ten men in suits in making the case for change."

The same was true of persuading people to change their lifestyles. For instance, Cardiff and the Vale Health Board has instituted a policy for persuading obese people to undertake a weight reduction programme before undergoing surgery. "An obese person risks severe complications," said Cairns. "There is evidence that such people facing surgery are much more receptive to taking responsibility for their own weight. We should take advantage of that."

Another challenge is integrating

health and social services. The two local authorities and the Health Board In Cardiff and the Vale have come together in a three-year project to better integrate the delivery of health and social services.

Teams are being located in the same buildings, common IT systems are being put in place, with greater collaboration between managers. As Cairns put it, "People tend to leap to structural solutions around reorganization of one sort or another when what matters is professional integration of service delivery."

He has been in post 18 months. A law graduate he was previously Chief Executive at the Shrewsbury and Telford NHS Trust where he led a consultation on a reconfiguration of hospital services. "I've come to Wales because the system here operates on social democratic principles – progressive universalism, if you like," he said "The system here is also much less complex than in England where it is fragmented by the commissioning split.

"Wales is fulfilling the promise of integrated health care. Here we put together GP services, primary and community care, hospitals and public health. We can have a whole system approach which is potentially much more efficient."

He believes that in Wales we can

develop a different and better system compared with the one across the border. "We can insulate ourselves from England," he insists. "Although they're commissioning more and more of their services from the private sector, at the end of the day the state still pays the bill.

"In England the philosophy is to use the market and competition to produce efficiencies and drive down costs. This implies a readiness to accept that some institutions will go under, that they will fail. But why should we work a system in the expectation that part of it is going to fail? In Wales we need to find an alternative to the market to drive improvement." He suggested two ways:

- Transparency and a culture of reporting results in collaboration with Community Health Councils, and being open about targets and how well they are met. "The driver will then be a moral one," Cairns said. "Clinicians, doctors and nurses will not want to see their departments or parts of the service failing to meet agreed targets."
- Comparison with the highest standards around the world, which he says is the best way to measure levels of achievement.

He said we have to be more sophisticated in finding ways of lowering our costs and improving health gain. And he added, "I'm optimistic. After all, the intellectual heft of the health service is much greater than most organisations enjoy. Virtually all our staff have first degrees. My money is on them finding creative ways for figuring out how to change things."

2

Changing Union

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Tax powers would enhance the Assembly's engagement with the electorate

Eurfyl ap Gwilym unravels what the UK government is saying in response to the Silk Commission

In November the UK Government finally gave its response Part 1 of Silk Commission's report on tax and borrowing powers for the National Assembly. Of the 31 recommendations to the UK Government it is claimed that 30 have been accepted in full or in part. One recommendation regarding air passenger duty was rejected and the remaining two were directed at the Welsh Government.

However, such a numerical approach misses the most important point. The Silk Commission's first report had the carefully worded title *Empowerment and Responsibility: Financial Powers to Strengthen Wales* and this has been reflected in the title of the UK Government's formal response. One of the guiding principles for the Commission was that as well as having spending responsibilities any government worthy of the name should be accountable for raising a material proportion of its revenue.

Any government should also be incentivised to grow the economy. Currently the Welsh Government has no powers to raise revenue. As such it is unique within those OECD states that have a measure of decentralisation to 'sub-national governments'. It is now clear that the UK Government accepts this important principle. It agrees that it should share income tax powers with the Welsh Government as well as being willing to devolve two minor taxes: stamp duty land tax and landfill tax.

Income tax sharing powers will give future Welsh governments responsibility for raising approximately £2 billion of revenue. Without these powers, the two minor taxes to be devolved account for only approximately £200 million a year and set against the annual expenditure by the Welsh Government of £15 billion fails the materiality test. Thus the sharing of income tax powers is central to the argument advanced both by Silk Commission and now accepted by the UK Government.

However, the question of whether or not future Welsh governments will have the power

to set differential rates of income tax is critical. The Scottish model does not allow Scottish Ministers to set different rates for basic, higher and additional rates of income tax. The Silk Commission gave the term 'lockstep' to this locking together of changes to the three rates. The Commission examined the Scottish model in detail and concluded that "there was a convincing case for the Welsh Government to be able to vary the rates for each band of income tax independently".

The model proposed by the Silk Commission would allow political parties in the National Assembly to offer to the Welsh electorate a wider choice of income tax options. For example, one political party might propose cutting the top rate more than the basic rate while another party might favour cutting the basic rate and increasing or leaving unchanged the two higher rates.

However, if the three rate changes are locked together as in the Scottish model it will make it very difficult for parties to propose any material changes to the three rates of income tax. If a party wished to cut the additional rate from 45 per cent to 40 per cent this would mean that the basic rate would have to be cut



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 in September 2014. See the project's website www.changingunion.org.uk

from 20 per cent to 15 per cent - which would be far too costly in terms of lost revenue.

On the other hand, if a future Welsh Government wished to raise either the higher rate or the additional rate by 5 per cent it would have to raise the basic rate from 20 per cent to 25 per cent. This would be far too high an increase to impose on the vast majority of Welsh taxpayers who pay income tax at a basic rate of 20 per cent. Thus the income tax varying powers of future Welsh governments will be severely circumscribed if the 'lockstep' model is adopted.

It was for this reason that Silk Commission proposed a more flexible model. When the Commission visited Scotland many recognised that the proposed Welsh model was a superior one.

In its response to the Silk report the UK Government has rejected this recommendation and wishes to impose a lockstep. It is to be hoped that this can be challenged and overturned in Parliament. If there is a No vote in the Scottish referendum next September and a future UK Government decides to offer more tax powers to Scotland it is quite possible that one element of the package will be removal of their 'lockstep'.

One of the Commission's recommendations was that non-domestic rates should be fully devolved. This has been accepted by the UK Government. Council Tax is already devolved and fully devolving non-domestic rates together with the devolution of Stamp Duty Land Tax will give a future Welsh Government full power over property taxation. This offers the possibility of adopting a different and more holistic approach to such taxes in the future.

Another potentially significant Commission recommendation accepted by the UK Government is that the National Assembly should be given a power to legislate with the agreement of the UK Government to introduce specified taxes and any associated tax credits. Such a measure is included in the Scotland Act 2012. The Welsh



Nick Clegg and David Cameron at their Press Conference in the Senedd in November 2013 when they agreed 'in principle' with the Silk Commission's tax recommendations.

Government should retain the revenue from such taxes without a deduction from the block grant. This power will not only allow the introduction of innovative taxes but will mean that Wales could be a test bed within the UK for such measures. Such a measure would, for example, have made the introduction of the plastic bags levy much easier.

As well as dealing with taxation the UK Government has agreed to give the Welsh Government limited borrowing powers. What they seem to have in mind is that:

- In the short term the Welsh Government will be able to use its existing borrowing powers, inherited from the Welsh Development Agency, to fund certain major road investments without an offsetting reduction to the block grant - the amounts have not yet been specified.
- In the longer term the Welsh Government will have access to wider borrowing powers linked to the new tax powers – the details are unclear at present but the UK Government appears explicitly to tie the potential levels of borrowing to the devolution of income tax powers. As its response says, "The precise levels of capital borrowing will therefore depend on the outcome of the income tax referendum..."

The devolution of the minor taxes will provide Wales with the ability to service a debt stock of approximately £1.5 billion over ten years. To put this in perspective the current capital investment budget of the Welsh Government is £1.5 billion per year. Thus, while welcome, these borrowing powers are only a modest increase on the current position. This increase also needs to be put in the context of severe cuts in the Welsh Government's capital budget in recent years, with a real terms cut from £2.1 billion in 2009-10 to £1.4 billion in 2012-13. Thus if the Welsh Government seeks substantial borrowing powers it will need to support the devolution of some income tax powers.

While the recommendations of the Silk Commission were initially welcomed by all four parties in the National Assembly, the Welsh Government has stated that it does not foresee calling a referendum on income tax powers "any time soon" and sees the replacement of the current funding arrangements (the Barnett Formula) as a precondition.

The UK Government in its response has limited itself to the current agreement whereby at each Spending Review it will review with the Welsh Government the question of convergence. This is one of the features of the Barnett formula which means that, over a number of years, spending per head in Wales falls to the England level irrespective of relative need. The UK Government's position sidesteps addressing any current

underfunding of Wales. While most observers believe that Wales has been ill-served by the Barnett Formula since its introduction in the late 1970s there is no obvious linkage between the funding formula and the devolution of some income tax powers.

One concern advanced has been the hypothetical case of a future UK Government deciding to reduce spending on the NHS in England and requiring people to pay directly, in part at least, for some of the health services they receive. In such a case under the current funding formula there would be a consequential reduction in the Welsh block grant. This would leave the Welsh Government with a limited number of difficult choices. It could either initiate a similar reduction in health spending in Wales or maintain the same level by raiding other programmes funded by the block grant, such as education or housing.

What would happen if income tax powers were partly devolved? In such a case the Welsh Government in addition to the two options currently available would have a third: it could raise income tax to make up the shortfall. Whether such a course of action was taken would be a matter for the government of the day and it would be accountable to the Welsh electorate for its decision. Thus in this case partly devolving income tax powers would not leave Wales any worse off than it is now and does provide the political parties in the National Assembly with an additional policy option.

A second possible reason for insisting on the reform or replacement of Barnett as a precondition for a referendum is the fact that Wales has been unfairly funded over many years. That this is so goes back to estimates made by the Treasury at the time of the formula's introduction in the late 1970s. The outcome of a relative needs assessment that showed Wales was indeed being underfunded was ignored. To add insult to injury in the sharing out of funds the population of Scotland was rounded up and that of Wales rounded down.

More recently the Holtham Commission estimated that Wales was underfunded in 2010-11 to the

tune of £400 million a year. Perhaps the Welsh Government fears that the UK Government's response to the underfunding would be that the Welsh Government was free to raise income tax to make good the shortfall.

The Welsh Government's judgement may be that it believes it can use the referendum as a bargaining chip with the UK Government with respect to reforming or replacing the Barnett Formula. However, given its history since the Barnett Formula was introduced by Labour in the late 1970s one wonders how much bargaining power the Welsh Government has. Indeed the response of the UK Government to the Silk Report provides it with the leverage: if the Welsh Government wants substantial borrowing powers it will need to acquire income tax sharing powers.

Of course, one step the current Welsh Government could take to address this issue is to get the Labour Party in London to commit to replacing Barnett if it wins the next UK General Election in 2015. If the lockstep model is passed into legislation by the current UK Government then Labour could also commit to replacing it with the more flexible Silk model.

Another approach would be for all four parties in the National Assembly to unite in pressing the UK Government to review the current funding arrangements. Given that the principles underlying the Commission's recommendations have been accepted by the UK Government it should be amenable to reconsidering the fair funding issue, although this is unlikely to happen until after the Scottish referendum in October 2014.

A third concern is that when Wales has taxation powers there will be a reduction in the block grant. As pointed out in detail in the Holtham Commission report, the way this reduction is quantified is of considerable importance. The Silk Commission echoed the Holtham Commission report and favoured the index deduction method for reducing the block grant, which is being introduced in Scotland. Clearly this matter will have to be the subject of detailed negotiations

between the two governments. However, given the positive approach adopted by the current UK Government to the partial devolution of income tax it should not be beyond the wit of the two governments to agree a fair way forward.

A fourth concern is that Wales is poorer than England and has a weaker income tax base, which therefore provides a weak foundation for funding, unless the Barnett formula is reformed to reflect needs. The Silk Commission was very much aware of this argument. What matters is how fast the income tax base is growing, not the size of the existing income tax base. There is no reason to believe that the income tax base in Wales will necessarily grow more slowly than England, and indeed devolving taxes will incentivise faster growth.

Over the coming months there will be much discussion of the detail now that the UK Government has given a fuller response to the Silk Commission report. It is to be hoped that sight is not lost of the bigger picture. There is a need to empower future Welsh Governments and to incentivise them to focus more on improving the economic health of Wales. At present in formulating its policies and legislation the Welsh Government does not have to concern itself with their impact on its revenue. The crucial linkage between income and expenditure, a hallmark of any properly empowered government, does not exist in the case of Wales.

Such empowerment will also engage the citizens of Wales more closely with the National Assembly. It is noteworthy that citizens take a very active interest in the annual UK budget because they know decisions on taxation and public spending impact on their everyday lives. When the National Assembly has income tax sharing powers one would expect a more intense engagement by the public in the affairs of the National Assembly, a feature that has been sadly lacking in the first fourteen years of its existence.

Eurfyl ap Gwilym is Plaid Cymru's economics adviser and its nominee on the Silk Commission.

Irish referendum vote shows way for Wales

Rosemary Butler welcomes a new report advocating an increase in the number of AMs in the National Assembly

The need for an Assembly with greater capacity, with more AMs, is the worst kept secret in Wales. It is welcome therefore that the Changing Union project and the Electoral Reform Society have begun to lift the roof of the Senedd to see what is really going on inside. It is the first time since the Richard Commission that such detailed consideration has been given to the number of Members the Assembly needs to operate effectively. The analysis draws on our experience in the Assembly to date and the operation of similar parliaments and Assemblies from elsewhere, all of which points to the need for more Members.

The Assembly has 60 Members, to make laws and hold the Government to account. But the reality is, as the report rightly highlights, that once you take away those who are Government Ministers and other office holders such as myself, only 42 Members are available to do the detailed scrutiny work in our committees. So, there are only 42 Members to scrutinise £15 billion of taxpayers' money, and to scrutinise the government on the big issues of today - the future of our health service, our education system and the economy. On top of that they have to make sound, thoroughly scrutinised laws for our nation.

In my evidence to the Silk Commission, I recommended 80 Members. The *Size Matters* report has gone a step further and proposes 100. This is based on an examination of a wide range of evidence that reinforces what we knew to be the reality of the demands on Members' time and the challenges we

are facing today in Wales.

Week in, week out as Presiding Officer I see the demands on Members' time, the breadth of issues they deal with and the multiple roles some have to undertake. For example, three Members chair committees, in itself a significant responsibility, but they also sit on two other committees. A quarter of those 42 members sit on three committees, half sit on two. One would simply not find the same level of committee workload on Members in Westminster, Holyrood or Stormont. Some Members will spend a good day and a half of their week in committee meetings, and two afternoons participating in Plenary. That may sound perfectly reasonable. However, the reality is that each of

those meetings will require them to be on top of a large volume of complex legislation, evidence or draft reports on diverse and important issues. They need time to read, digest, research alternative proposals and prepare their views.

A handful of Members are also leading their own legislative proposals, something which I have always been keen to champion. In addition to 12 committees, there are almost 50 cross-party groups engaging Members in varying levels of activity and numerous events to attend both in Cardiff and in our constituencies and regions.

The scrutiny of the recent Human Transplantation (Wales) Act 2013 demonstrates the significance of the work of Members and the ambition and seriousness with which they approach their responsibilities. We had marathon debates on the Bill as it passed through the various stages and there is no doubt that Members' scrutiny of the legislation was rigorous – whatever their stance. The law was improved because of the scrutiny of the Assembly.

As Chair of the Business Committee, which organises the business of the Assembly, I see first hand how the Assembly is attempting to deal with the

The Senedd is already capable of seating 80 members.



Main recommendations of the *Size Matters* report

- Leaving aside Ministers and other office holders, only 42 of the present 60 AMs are available to hold the Welsh Government to account and scrutinise legislation. This compares with 113 in the Scottish Parliament and 522 at Westminster. It means AMs have to attend multiple committees. They are always in a hurry, constantly moving from one meeting or issue to another. Many say that they do not always have time to read, let alone reflect properly on their documents ahead of meetings.
- The present allocation of elected representatives between local authorities, the National Assembly and Welsh MPs and Peers at Westminster is poorly distributed. More could be made of existing resources if we had fewer MPs and Peers at Westminster, and fewer paid councillors, but a greater number of AMs in Cardiff Bay.
- A comparative analysis of equivalent small nation and 'Regional' legislatures elsewhere in the world indicates that 60 members are extremely few for a legislative Assembly that also provides an Executive. The analysis finds that for an institution with the National Assembly's functions, at least 100 representatives is the norm.
- A history of the half-century leading to democratic devolution in 1999 illustrates the arbitrary way in which the number of 60 Members came about. In all previous proposals the recommended membership never fell below 75, and generally assumed a figure of around 100.
- To bring it into line with the capacity of other comparable legislatures the National Assembly should have around 100 members. This would add approximately £10.1 million to the Assembly's current annual running costs of £49.5 million, which is a small price to pay for the benefits that would accrue.

pressures on its capacity, in particular, to ensure that detailed examination of legislation and policy is the norm. Members are becoming more vocal in debates about the need to allow sufficient time for robust scrutiny and we have increased the number of weeks when the Assembly meets. I also Chair the Assembly Commission, which provides the support services the Assembly requires.

Recently I initiated a review of the support provided for committee work with the aim of enabling our committees to be 'world class' in their impact and influence. This has focused on tailoring our services – such as those of our excellent in-house research and legal teams - to allow those 42 Members to be as effective as possible in their committee work and to ensure they have the professional development opportunities to equip them with the requisite skills. The independent Remuneration Board, which sets the financial framework within which Members must operate,

has created a Policy Research Fund to allow Members to commission their own research to support the development of policy thinking. All of this is good, sensible stuff, but it only masks the fundamental issue – we have too few Members.

The UK Government's recent announcement on the Silk Commission's Part 1 report means that greater financial powers will be devolved to the Assembly before the end of this Parliamentary term. Whatever the extent of these powers, this increase in responsibilities only serves to reaffirm the need for more Members, to robustly scrutinise the Welsh Government on tough decisions around Welsh taxation, spending and borrowing.

In Ireland, too, there has been public debate about the necessary number of elected politicians. In a referendum in October the people voted against abolishing the Seanad, the Upper House of the Irish Parliament. The result was close and the key arguments resonate here. Led by Taoiseach Enda Kenny, the Yes campaign was simple. Getting rid

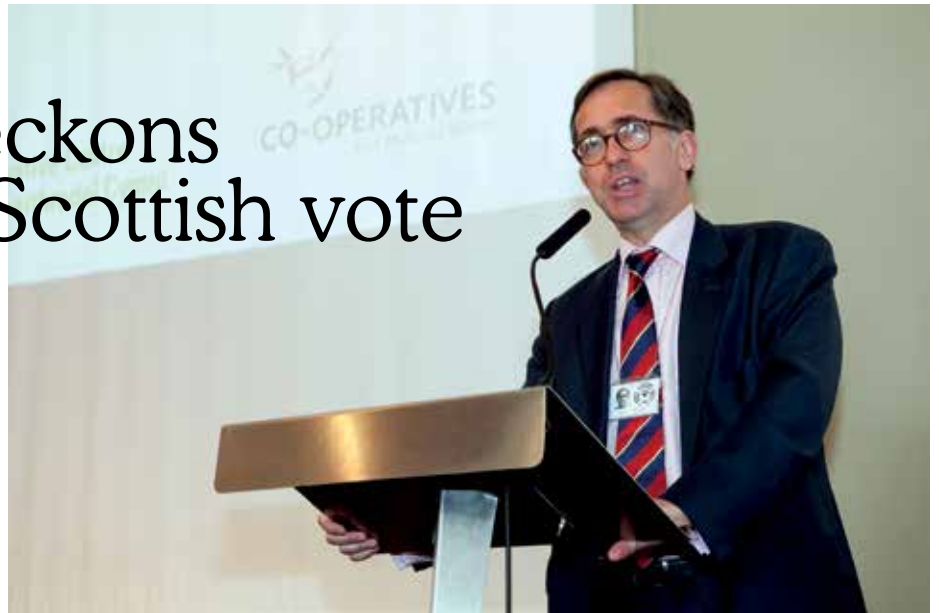
of the Seanad would save money and mean fewer politicians. On the other hand, the opposing 'Democracy Matters' campaign, focused on the importance of scrutiny and holding the government to account, especially in today's tough economic climate when it has such difficult decisions to make. It also stressed the benefits of bringing diversity of views, new faces and fresh thinking into politics.

I set out my case for more Members in my evidence to the Silk Commission earlier this year. The *Size Matters* report adds welcome intellectual analysis to the debate. More politicians in a time of austerity is not a popular argument to make. But I believe it is a strong one and, as the people of Ireland have shown, an argument that can be won.

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Rosemary Butler is Labour AM for Newport West and the National Assembly's Presiding Officer. *Size Matters - Making the National Assembly more effective* can be downloaded at www.changingunion.org.uk

Instability beckons beyond the Scottish vote

Peter Riddell warns that the real threat to the union could be posed by the 2017 referendum on EU membership



David Melding AM - "Willing to think constructively about constitutional change".

The future of the United Kingdom is not just about Scotland and the referendum on independence in September 2014. The question involves all three of the devolved nations. One of the bizarre legacies of the devolution legislation of the late 1990s is that political developments outside England are largely ignored in London unless something dramatic happens, like the referendum. It is almost as if the English, and, in particular, the London political and media worlds say that now that Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have devolved powers, we no longer have to be interested.

As an Englishman, albeit with close Scottish ties only two generations back, I have found that the only time I hear a serious discussion about the future of the union is when the Scots, Welsh and Northern Irish are involved. Apart from a few passionate advocates of an English parliament, the English are largely uninterested. That was what made the IWA's discussion on David Melding's new book, *The Reformed Union: the UK as a Federation* so interesting. It also explained why there was surprising common ground on the issues, if not the solutions, between him and fellow panelists Labour AM and former

minister Leighton Andrews, and former Plaid MP Adam Price at the launch of the book in London in September.

Of course, David Melding is an unusual Conservative. Not only is he a very rare supporter of the Alternative Vote, he is also willing to think constructively about constitutional change, rather than just oppose most

face immediate existential challenges". This could affect the peace process in Northern Ireland while there would be debate about creating a new union between England, Wales and Northern Ireland, possibly on a federal basis, or a Northern Ireland state or condominium.

A No vote might not be decisive and, anyway, will probably only be

As an Englishman, albeit with close Scottish ties only two generations back, I have found that the only time I hear a serious discussion about the future of the union is when the Scots, Welsh and Northern Irish are involved.

proposals He is a pro-Union federalist. Indeed, a key part of the Melding case is that — Yes or No — the Scottish independence referendum will have a lasting impact on the coherence of the multi-national state and hence for those living outside Scotland. As he argues, "If the Scottish people vote to secede, Northern Ireland and Wales would

achieved by proposals for enhanced Scottish autonomy on domestic affairs. In Melding's view it is more important to promote a new Union rather than just "obdurately defend the old". Any coherent settlement needs to use more explicit federal mechanisms. Moreover, such an approach, and an associated Constitutional Convention, needs to be

Not surprisingly, Ministers and officials in Whitehall design policies for England and it is often hard for the Welsh Government to convince their opposite numbers in London that this can produce substantial, and costly, anomalies for Wales.

announced beforehand.

There was widespread agreement between the diverse speakers that the current position is not stable. Whether Scotland votes Yes, or, as the current opinion polls suggest, No, everyone assumes that some version of Calman, or a more ambitious Devo Max will be adopted during the rest of the decade with more fiscal powers. And the government of Wales is in flux not just as we await further instalments of Silk but as the existing arrangements pose increasing problems. The division of responsibilities between Westminster and Cardiff Bay is being tested even without further statutory changes. This is partly because the relationship between London and Cardiff is inherently more ambiguous in constitutional terms than between London and Edinburgh, despite the changes of recent years. As significant, as Leighton Andrews pointed out, are the results of policy divergence. This, of course, started during the Blair era with the NHS, but is now producing increasing problems over welfare provision, such as the ending of the educational maintenance allowance in England but not in Wales. Not surprisingly, Ministers and officials in Whitehall design policies for England and it is often hard for the

Welsh Government to convince their opposite numbers in London that this can produce substantial, and costly, anomalies for Wales.

Yet, as Adam Price pointed out with characteristic brio, there are also broader questions of national identity. The Scottish question is a question for us all—“whatever the result, sooner or later we are going to need a referendum-all-round on what the future holds”.

And there is the ill-defined English question — ill-defined in part because England so dominates the United Kingdom, and in part because no one has found a convincing answer. English regionalism has yet to recover from the debacle of the defeat of the half-baked plan for an Assembly in the North-East in 2004, while the campaign for an English parliament has yet to take off.

Nonetheless, the Future of England survey, an annual poll conducted by the universities of Edinburgh and Cardiff, and the Institute for Public Policy Research, shows that the English are increasingly discontented. Indeed, they are beginning to see themselves as a national community that demands recognition. A growing number have begun to distinguish between Englishness and Britishness.

In a sense this is the constituency

which the UK Independence Party has tapped into, not just over Europe but also over immigration and broader claims that ordinary, English, people are being ignored by the Westminster political class.

As one acute questioner, a senior civil servant, asked, “Where will it all end?” No one knows. But, far more than members of the coalition Cabinet or senior civil servants in Whitehall recognize, the question is much more than how Scotland votes next September. Change is underway in Wales and Northern Ireland as well. And as important as the 2014 vote will be the promised 2017 referendum on membership of the EU. If the overall vote is to withdraw - and particularly if England votes differently from Scotland and Wales - then the Union will really come under strain.

Peter Riddell is Director of the Institute for Government, a former political journalist and author of seven books on British politics.

Loose ends of asymmetrical constitution building

James Mitchell asks how the Scottish referendum will affect Wales

It has been frequently noted that constitutional debate in the UK occurs in silos and that responses to one set of pressures often fail to take account of implications for other parts of the state or constitution. Establishing devolved government in three components of the state around the same time at the turn of the last century was as close to simultaneous constitutional deliberation as has been achieved. Even then, however, debates on Welsh, Scottish and Northern Ireland devolution occurred in relative isolation.

Devolution has been accommodated in Westminster and Whitehall with as little change as possible. Its loose ends – the ‘English Question’, the West Lothian Question, Barnett – are seen as either necessary evils of an asymmetrical constitution or unfinished business that

will create major tensions and problems at some point in the future.

Northern Ireland has long been seen as a place apart with a marked reluctance by other parts of the UK to consider whether devolution there might have lessons or implications for the rest of the UK (rUK). The UK is neither a unitary nor a union state but a state of unions. Each one that constitutes the United Kingdom was different at the outset and has evolved differently.

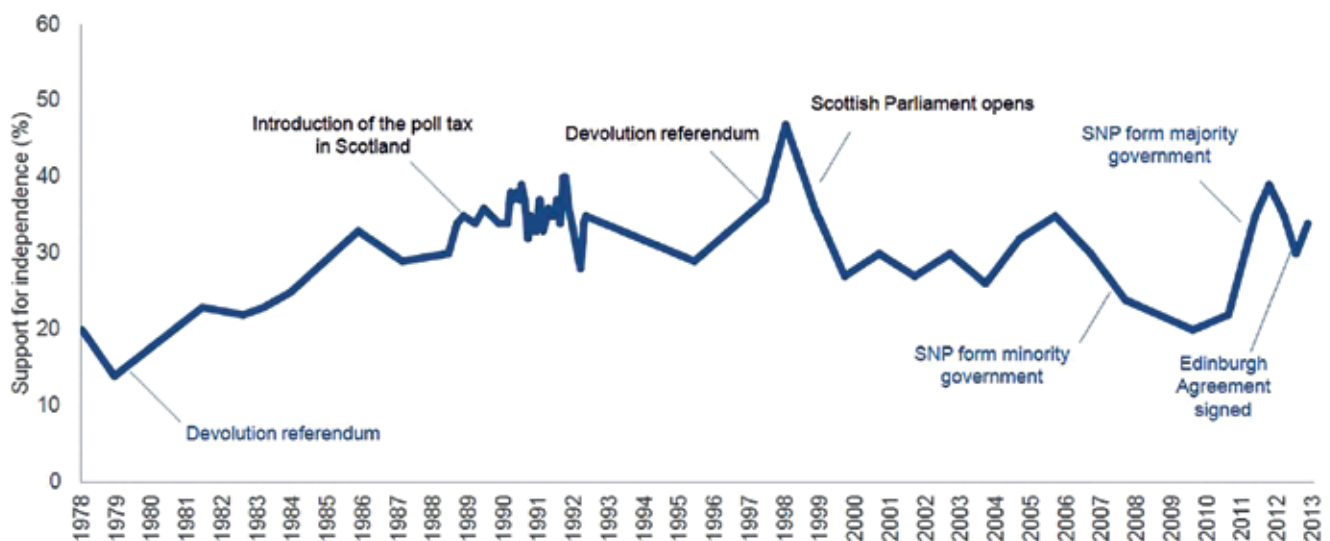
Union with Wales was founded on conquest and with little effort to accommodate anything distinctive about Wales. Union with Scotland was based on a treaty in which key Scottish institutions were given protection. Over time, these unions have evolved in similar directions but at different speeds, accommodating different manifestations

of national distinctiveness. The development of Wales as a distinct polity in the 20th Century resembled, even followed, Scotland through the growth of distinct national political institutions. Administrative devolution culminated in democratic devolution. But Welsh devolution was and remains quite different from Scottish devolution.

Complicating matters have been developments since the establishment of democratic devolution. They have occurred in silos with little heed to how they might impact on the UK's asymmetries. The UK Government is expected to respond officially to the McKay Commission Report on the consequences of devolution for the House of Commons at a time of change in devolution. The West Lothian Question arises because of Holyrood's legislative powers, but the primary legislative powers in Wales further complicates the matter. If Scotland is to be given more powers or becomes independent that will also affect the nature of the West Lothian Question.

Scots pay little attention to what happens in Wales, often exhibiting the

Fluctuating opinion poll support for Scottish independence between 1978 and 2013.



Data taken from MORI and Ipsos MORI polling (1999-07 data taken from Scottish Social Attitudes Survey)

Ipsos MORI



condescension they perceive and feel aggrieved about from England. Growing evidence suggests that the combination of the European Union and a vague awareness of devolution is awakening a sense of collective self in England. Probably more than any part of the UK, Wales adopts a more outward-looking perspective, looking to learn and gain momentum from change elsewhere. This reflects its weak position within

others. The combination of cuts and the referendum has raised questions of fiscal equity up the agenda.

Back in April 2010 Liberal Democrat Alistair Carmichael, who became Secretary of State for Scotland in October 2013, argued that the Barnett Formula should be “scrapped”. He said it should be replaced with “a needs based” formula and that voting Lib Dem was the way to do this. Confusingly,

under any illusion that it will be easy to agree an alternative but the opportunity for reform may arise immediately after the referendum.

It is unclear what might happen in the event of a No vote as far as Scottish devolution is concerned. The Prime Minister has stated that devolving any further powers to Scotland will only be discussed after the referendum. The Liberal Democrats are committed to some form of federalism, involving more powers for the Scottish Parliament but have either been unwilling or unable to press this within the coalition in London. Labour’s position remains obscure.

In the absence of a clear commitment to any more devolution, the most likely outcome of an emphatic rejection of independence is that no new powers will be granted in the foreseeable future. It is equally probable that debate on the UK’s territorial constitution will enter a period of stability. There are always competing demands on the UK Government’s agenda, not least the European question which is likely to dominate UK politics in the next few years.

If the main parties at Westminster are reluctant to commit themselves to further devolution to Scotland in the context of the referendum, then the prospect of a major concession to Wales is not out of the question because of the silo approach to constitutional reform. But London’s appetite for devolution mongering is limited and tends to follow pressure or when devolved government impinges on government at the centre. The UK may be a state of unions but that does not mean that change to one union does not have implications for other unions, only that this can occur in a variety of ways that are difficult to predict.

What has held back successive UK Governments from reforming or removing Barnett has been a fear of a Scottish backlash.

the UK rather than signalling virtue. The strong tend to be most parochial in politics. But how will the referendum on Scottish independence affect Wales?

If Scotland’s constitutional journey comes to a juddering halt next September will that stand in the way of the further development of Welsh devolution? If Scotland votes for independence will Wales follow this course?

Any effort to consider the constitution as a whole is difficult due not only to silo constitutionalism but the dynamics of devolution. The cliché that devolution is a process, not an event has far-reaching implications. There are two key aspects of the debate in Scotland likely to affect Wales: fiscal relations and implications for the UK as a state of unions. Each of these is likely to be affected by the referendum regardless of the outcome, though different outcomes will have potentially different impacts.

Nothing eased the establishment of devolution more than the sums of public funds that were sloshing around the system in the first decade of devolution. Few cared that one part of the state benefited more than others so long as all gained. But a very different scenario prevails in fiscally straitened times. As cuts are imposed, devolved and local government become more conscious of how they are treated compared with

after his appointment as Scottish Secretary he also said the “easiest way to get rid of the Barnett Formula is to vote for independence”. At Labour’s recent conference his opposite number, Margaret Curran, said Barnett should be replaced, though that is not what her party says in Holyrood.

So if we take the statements about Barnett at face value we are left a little confused. Of course, we have heard all of this noise around the subject of Barnett before. But the difference is context. What has held back successive UK Governments from reforming or removing Barnett has been a fear of a Scottish backlash. In the event of a substantial No vote, there may be little reason for London to hold back on reform. In the event of a Yes vote, the main impediment to reform will be removed. The best prospect of Barnett surviving will be a narrow No vote.

The case for reform has been made repeatedly but the context now exists in which change may be possible. However, the opportunity to press for change may be time limited. While it is easy to identify the problems with Barnett, reaching an agreement on an alternative will prove troublesome. Calls for a ‘needs based formula’ are little more meaningful than calls for reform. The concept of ‘needs’ is highly contestable. No-one should be

Professor James Mitchell is ESRC Scotland Fellow at the University of Edinburgh. With Gerry Hassan he is editor of *After Independence*, published by Luath Press in November.

The WRAP logo consists of the word 'WRAP' in a stylized, white, sans-serif font on a dark blue rectangular background.

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Newport's blue route

Stuart Cole examines options for by-passing the Brynglas tunnels on the M4 north of Newport

Articles

Newport's blue route

Age of the City Region

How housing can boost rural economy

There is a consensus that additional capacity is required to cope with peak period traffic congestion on the M4 around Newport. There are three main reasons:

- The Brynglas Tunnels on the M4 directly to the north of Newport are an acute pinch-point, reducing a six-lane motorway to four lanes. In July 2011 the M4 was closed for two days after a lorry caught fire in the Brynglas tunnels. Nearby structures - the Usk Bridge to the east of the Tunnels and the canal bridge to the west - accentuate the difficulty of any road-widening project.
- There were faults in the original design of the Newport northern by-pass / northern distributor road, later linked in to the M4, including the lack of a hard shoulder for some of its length. This reduces its capacity for current traffic volumes.
- The M4 is used by local traffic as a local distributor road for short journeys within the local urban area.

The Government has put forward the following three options for overcoming these problems, but has rejected the first two and is now only considering building a new motorway at a significant cost:

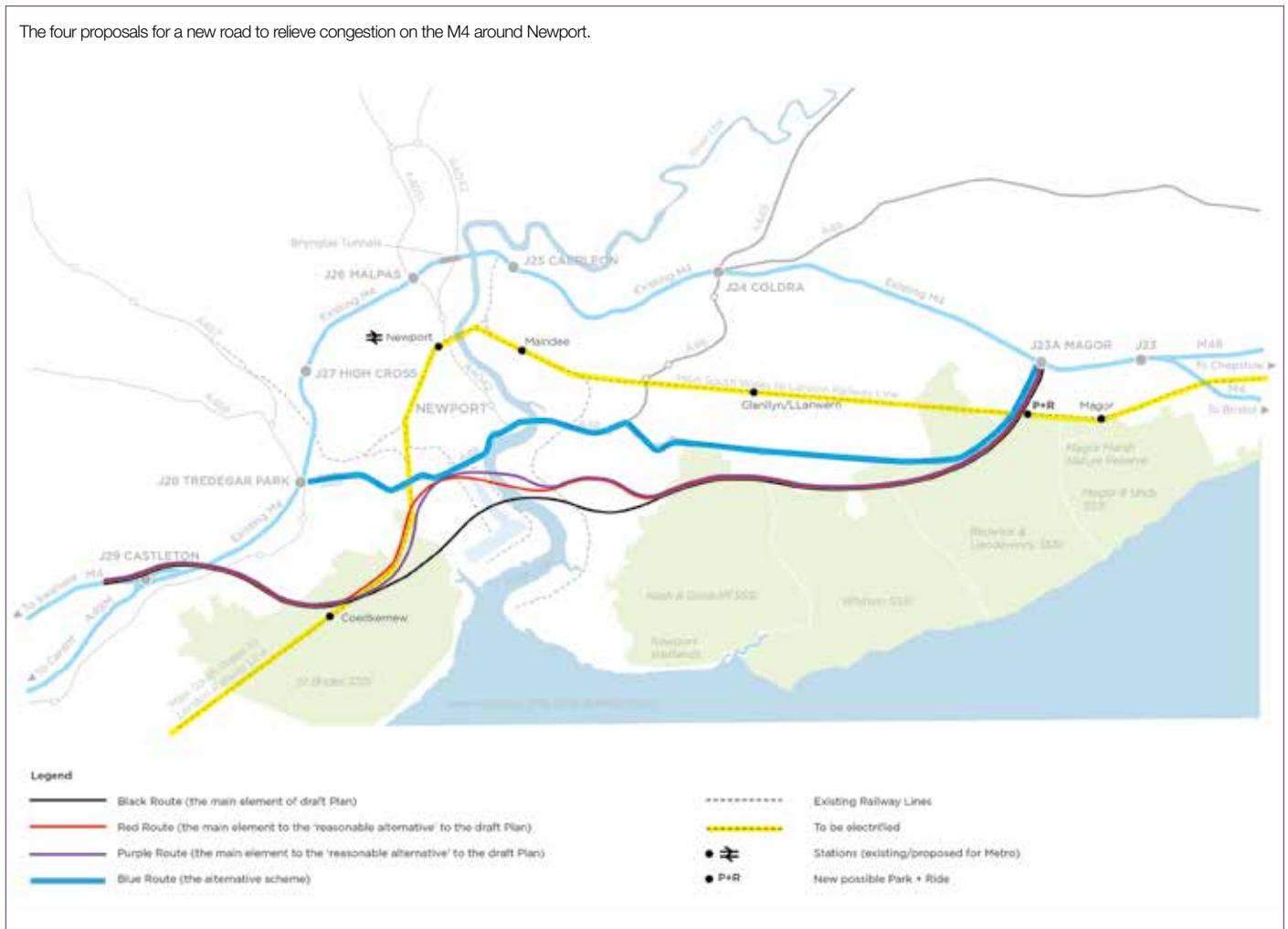
- Using the existing A48 but improving it by upgrading the present junctions on the route that impede the free flow of traffic with new bridges and underpasses – that is, building grade separated junctions. This was known as Option C and would cost £345m.
- Building a new dual-lane carriageway – known as the Red Route – at a cost of £830m.
- Building a new road to full motorway standards – known as the Black/Purple route, at a cost of £936m.

A fourth option put forward by the author, and developed from a Welsh Government plan in 2007, uses a combination of the A48 Newport Southern Distributor Road around Newport and the former Steelworks Road to create a dual carriageway to motorway standard. This is known as the Blue Route, and would cost £380m.

The cost estimates for these four options are based on Welsh and UK Government figures. They assume each scheme to have an opening year of 2020, and include costs for construction, acquisition of land and property, preparation and supervision, and traffic-related maintenance.

The issue is whether the Welsh Government's present motorway option

The four proposals for a new road to relieve congestion on the M4 around Newport.



provides an unnecessary increase in capacity and in consequence unnecessary expenditure. My argument is that the fourth option, the Blue Route, would be a more appropriate solution, delivering what is needed at a much lower cost and with significantly less impact on the environment. It would have a lower capacity than the motorway option favoured by the government but would be sufficient to cope with the estimated need.

The Blue Route involves an upgrade of the A48 and the 'Steelworks Road' - a length of industrial roadway purchased by the Welsh Government in 2010 for building a motorway at a cost of £7.7 million. It would follow a line to the south of Junctions 23a and 24 on the east side

My argument is that the fourth option, the Blue Route, would be a more appropriate solution, delivering what is needed at a much lower cost and with significantly less impact on the environment.

of Newport, to Junction 28 in the west. The roads would be re-constructed as a two-lane, dual carriageway at motorway standard. The land that has been acquired on either side of the Steelworks Road is sufficient for widening to a three-lane motorway standard at a future date if this is needed.

The present traffic flows on this route are lower than were expected. This is a consequence of the number of intersections which disrupt the free flow of east west traffic. Grade separated junctions, where the traffic flow is unimpeded, would give these flows greater priority.

A key question in deciding between the various upgrades is calculations about future traffic forecasts. After the

The Blue Route would solve the congestion issue on the M4 as it arises. Moreover, since it could be built earlier than the Black/Purple route it could ease congestion earlier. Combined with the Metro and rail electrification it would provide more than adequate relief to congestion over the period to 2035.

recession ends, will there be a lower level of car usage in absolute terms or will the rate of increase be similar to that in the immediate pre-recession period?

An additional consideration will be the Welsh Government's plans to create a Metro light rail system for south-east Wales, as outlined in its *Cardiff Capital Region Metro Impact Study*, published in October 2013. This is an ambitious scheme, which will take between 10 and 15 years to deliver, at a cost of about £1.5 billion. There is no doubt that it will have a major impact on ameliorating traffic congestion around Newport.

The Welsh Government's consultation paper *M4 Corridor around Newport* forecasts a need for 20 per cent more traffic capacity by 2035. An additional motorway (the Black/Purple Route) is estimated to divert up to 40 per cent of existing traffic away from the present M4. This is far more than adequate as a solution to current and future capacity problems.

On the other hand, the Government estimated that Option C was only expected to divert between 6 and 10 per cent of the traffic. This suggests that the Blue Route, which would utilise the Steelworks Road, would divert around 15 per cent. This may well be a conservative estimate.

The consultation paper takes no account of the impact of rail electrification or the Metro developments along the M4 corridor. The Newcastle Metro built in the 1990s, and the Bordeaux Tram network completed in 2004, reduced peak traffic flows into those cities by over 30 per cent. A similar impact could be expected in Newport and Cardiff. Electrification of the South Wales Mainline alone would reduce M4 peak traffic flows by up to 15 per cent, the so-called 'sparks' effect which has occurred on most other similar electrification schemes.

The Blue Route would solve the congestion issue on the M4 as it arises. Moreover, since it could be built earlier than the Black/Purple route it could ease congestion earlier. Combined with the Metro and rail electrification it would provide more than adequate relief to congestion over the period to 2035.

Even with the UK Government's forecasts showing a 20 per cent growth in traffic flow between 2012 and 2030, the Blue Route will satisfy capacity requirements to 2025. However, the more likely change in car usage is a low percentage increase, with the current plateau continuing for some time. The forecast for growth in the Welsh Government's consultation document

has already been shown to be in excess of actual flows for 2012 and 2013.

The main pressure for relieving congestion on the M4 around Newport has come from the Federation of Small Businesses, the Institute of Directors, and CBI Wales, with only the latter supporting the Welsh Government's position. The FSB supports the Blue route, while the IoD says it would welcome a scheme which solves the M4 congestion problem and is future-proofed to extend road capacity if required. Only the Blue Route, in conjunction with the Welsh Government's plan for rail electrification and the Metro, will achieve that.

Stuart Cole is Emeritus Professor of Transport with the Wales Transport Research Centre at the University of South Wales. This article is an extract from his report *The Blue Route - the cost effective solution to relieving M4 congestion around Newport*, published by the IWA in association with the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in December 2013. The report can be downloaded at www.iwa.org.uk.

Age of the City Region

Kevin Morgan explains why Wales is finally coming to terms with connecting the Valleys with the coast

Of the four depressed areas that were designated for economic relief by the Special Areas Act of 1934 – namely south Wales, north east England, west Cumberland and Clydeside – only south Wales retains this sad status. For the next round of EU regional policy, covering the period 2014-2020, West Wales and the Valleys will be classed as a ‘less developed region’ in the classification of the European Commission.

Shorn of the diplomatic language, this signals nothing less than a deep developmental failure in Wales and a devastating indictment of 80 years of British regional policy. Indeed, if nothing improves in the coming generation, the south Wales Valleys will have to confront the anniversary from hell: a hundred years of relative economic decline.

One of the most serious criticisms levelled at the 1934 Special Areas Act – aside, of course, from it being too little too late – was the fact that it severed the region from its towns by excluding Cardiff, Newport and Swansea from the coalfield, the area that had been targeted for relief. This rendered the task of economic regeneration virtually impossible because, by excluding the urban centres, the legislation excluded the focal points of development and ignored the inter-dependence between places within the region. In fact, south-east Wales presents a classic case of the spatial inter-dependence of regional economies.

Cities are not self-sufficient entities no matter how much they pretend to be, and this is especially true of Cardiff. Indeed, few cities have been as dependent on their regional hinterland as the Welsh capital. Without the dramatic growth of the coalfield in the south Wales Valleys, there would have been no commercial logic for the Bute

family to build port facilities and, without export facilities, Cardiff would never have become a ‘coal metropolis’ in the early years of the 20th Century.

Although the city and the Valleys were mutually dependent from the outset, the nature of this relationship changed radically after 1920, when in employment terms the coalfield peaked. Thereafter the economic flows from the Valleys to the city were decreasingly of products in search of an export market and increasingly of *people* in search of a labour market. But these flows were not confined to the prosaic world of work. Over time these travel-to-work flows from the Valleys to the city were complemented by travel-to-shop, travel-to-travel and travel-to-play flows as Cardiff developed into a larger and more varied consumption centre for the region as a whole, particularly for young people.

labour markets were becoming increasingly entwined.

This zero sum mentality helps to explain the antipathy in parts of the Valleys to the development of Cardiff Bay, which was thought to have benefited from public investment that might otherwise have been deployed to regenerate the deprived communities of the upper Valleys. To allay these fears the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation sought to present the Bay as a boon not just for the city but for the city-region as a whole, a strategy that might have been more credible if the region had an integrated public transport network that made connectivity routinely available to all.

The concept of the city-region made its Welsh political debut in 2004, when it was positively endorsed in the *Wales Spatial Plan* as a strategy for south east Wales. The region was referred to as “the



1.4 million people live within 20 miles of Cardiff.

If the centre of economic gravity was shifting from the coalfield to the coast, politicians in the coalfield were loath to acknowledge the fact. Instead of capitalising on the growing interdependence between the city and its hinterland, politicians in the Valleys were more likely to frame their interests in self-referential terms. Imagining regional development to be a zero sum game, they saw Cardiff’s gains as the Valleys’ losses, even though their respective

capital network” because the Welsh Government could not bring itself to say the Cardiff City-Region. The section on the city-region combined a factual statement about the present with an aspiration for the future, when it said:

“South East Wales is Wales’ most populous area. It is characterised by major economic and social disparities. The coastal zone is now the main economic driver, and



Roger Lewis, new Chair of the South East Wales City Region Board, with Edwina Hart, Minister for Economy, Science and Transport.

Board of the South East Wales City Region

- **Roger Lewis** Chief Executive, Wales Rugby Union, Chair.
- **Cllr Russell Goodway** Cabinet Member for Finance and Economic Development, Cardiff Council, Vice Chair.
- **Prof Colin Reardon** Vice Chancellor, Cardiff University, Vice Chair.

Members

- **David Stevens**, Chief Operating Officer, Admiral Insurance.
- **Matthew Hammond**, Wales chair, PriceWaterhouseCoopers.
- **Dan Langford**, Group marketing and communications director, Acorn Recruitment.
- **Ann Beynon**, Wales Director, BT.
- **Cllr Bob Wellington**, Leader Torfaen County Borough Council.
- **Cllr Brendan Toomey**, Leader Merthyr Tydfil Council.
- **Cllr Peter Fox**, Leader Monmouthshire County Council.
- **Cllr Bob Bright**, Leader Newport City Council.
- **Professor Julie Lydon**, Vice Chancellor, University of South Wales.
- **Professor Brian Morgan**, Professor of entrepreneurship and director, Creative Leadership and Enterprise, Cardiff Metropolitan University.
- **John Phillips**, Regional Secretary, GMB Union.

its competitiveness needs to be sustained to help raise the economic potential of Wales as a nation. The heavy commuting flows between the Valleys and the coast mean that the area functions as an interdependent but unplanned urban network. This gives rise to pressure on the transport infrastructure. Cardiff is a relatively small capital city. It is important for Wales as a whole that Cardiff becomes significant internationally, but to do this requires a much greater 'mass' of population and activity. Already, Cardiff has a close functional relationship with

its immediate neighbouring towns, particularly Barry, Pontypridd and Caerphilly. This needs to be built on constructively, making Cardiff the focal point of a coherent and successful urban network in south east Wales, enabling it to share its prosperity... The area will function as a single networked city-region on a scale to realise its international potential, its national role and to reduce inequalities".

Had the concept of a 'single networked city-region' been acted upon in 2004, Wales would have found itself in the

vanguard of city-regionalism in the UK. It wasn't and Wales was reduced to being a laggard instead of a leader. Although the ten local authorities in south east Wales have been collaborating in a loose fashion on a wide range of activities – such as public transport, spatial planning, economic development and waste management – this fell well short of what was happening in leading city-regions, like Manchester in England and Stuttgart in Germany.

Why is Wales embracing the city-region concept now? The answer has three parts – intellectual climate, cross-border competition, and a new political commitment on the part of the Welsh Government.

As regards intellectual climate it is not too much of an exaggeration to say that governing élites around the world have been gripped in recent years by what we might call *metrophillia*, such is the pro-urban bias in developmental narratives today. Some of the most influential books on economic development – like *Triumph of the City* by Ed Glaeser, and *The Metropolitan Revolution* by Bruce Katz for example – have unreservedly extolled the role of cities and city-regions in promoting wealth, health and even happiness! To support this pro-urban policy bias, economists have pointed to the strong correlation between productivity, innovation and agglomeration, furnishing an economic rationale for burgeoning urbanisation.

Cross-border competition also played a part because the Core Cities in England began to embrace the city-region concept after Labour's preferred model of English devolution – elected regional assemblies – was defeated in the north-east referendum in 2004. Through a series of bespoke 'city deals' with Whitehall, the Core Cities have been acquiring new powers to regenerate their metropolitan economies, putting urban areas in Wales at a competitive disadvantage.

The combination of intellectual climate and cross-border competition revived the city-region concept in Wales, where policy-makers were receptive to anything that could boost the fortunes of

the Welsh economy. The most tangible sign of this new political commitment came in Autumn 2011, when the Minister for Economy, Science and Transport Edwina Hart asked Dr Elizabeth Haywood to chair a City Regions Task and Finish Group to explore the applicability of the city-region concept to economic development in Wales (a group of which I was a member). Published the following July, the report issued a total of 22 recommendations, the most important of which was the green light given to the creation of city-regions in south east Wales and Swansea Bay.

As well as identifying potential economic benefits, the report argued that a city-region would also allow for a more strategic approach to planning, learning and skills, transport and housing allocation, all of which needed to be planned on a regional rather than a local scale. The thrust of these arguments was generally well received, a positive reaction that was confirmed in October 2012 when a plenary debate in the National Assembly demonstrated broad cross-party support for the conclusions of the City Regions Final Report. This was the surest sign that the age of the city-region had officially dawned in Wales.

The end of the beginning of city-regionalism in Wales was the launch of the City-Region Boards. The Swansea Bay Board was launched on 18 July 2013 comprising the Leaders of the four local authorities in the area together with four representatives from the business community and two from the higher education sector. The launch of the City-Region Board in South East Wales was more protracted, not least because there were ten local government Leaders in the region but only four local government seats on the board. In the event Mrs Hart agreed four local government representatives with Councillor Bob Wellington, the Leader of the Welsh Local Government Association.

Having resolved the local government dilemma, the Minister unveiled the full City-Region Board in a statement to the National Assembly in November 2013 and listed in the panel on the facing page.

One of the many inponderables

facing the new City-Region Boards is the impending report from the Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery chaired by Sir Paul Williams. This is widely expected to recommend a radical reduction in the number of local authorities in Wales – from the current 22 to fewer than half that number perhaps. The uncertain fate of local government structures was one reason why Mrs Hart decided to leave the operational details of the City-Region Boards to be fleshed out at a later point in time. But such details – particularly with respect to which powers they will assume and what resources they will have at their disposal – will make or break these fledgling bodies. The Welsh Government has a dual role to play in shaping the future evolution of city-regionalism because, as the Haywood Report said, “it must both drive the city region agenda and delegate powers and responsibilities to the city regions”.

It would be a great shame if the political agenda in south east Wales got side tracked into a petty squabble about the name of the city-region. Around the world city regions tend to brand themselves around the name of the largest and best known city, which suggests that the name ought to be the Cardiff City Region rather than the anonymous placeless landscape conjured up by the *Wales Spatial Plan*, which referred to “the capital network”.

A more ambitious agenda would be for the city-region debate to focus on substantive issues, such as social, economic and ecological projects that could have a transformative effect on the region’s health, wealth and wellbeing. Three such projects spring to mind.

Top of the list of potentially transformative projects is the south Wales Metro, which is so much more than a mere transport project. As Mark Barry and his colleagues in the Metro Consortium have argued, the Metro affords an opportunity to develop denser and better connected communities around Metro stations, thereby reducing car use and relieving road congestion. Among the many ingredients needed for a successful Metro, innovative finance and political consensus are arguably

the most important and the City Region Board would be well advised to address these two issues without delay.

If better connectivity is the first priority, then a close second is innovation and economic development. A potentially transformative city-region project in this category is the new Innovation Campus being designed by Cardiff University, with its twin sites at Maindy Road and Heath Park. Although the Innovation Campus is physically located in Cardiff, it is designed to be a resource for the city, the region and the nation as a whole because, with its accent translational research, it will help to pioneer the knowledge economy across Wales. Among other things, it will also help to secure funds from Horizon 2020, the EU’s research and innovation programme, offering commercial opportunities to firms throughout the country.

Green infrastructure played a major role in fashioning the Stuttgart city-region because it allowed municipalities to integrate their local parks into a seamless regional landscape park, a process that did much to overcome the parochialism of local mayors. The Valleys Regional Park presents a similar opportunity to local authorities in south east Wales because, as well as being an untapped resource for health and wellbeing, it is a major piece of green infrastructure that needs to be viewed and valued in terms of its potential contribution to eco-system services.

While each of these projects addresses a different theme – namely connectivity, innovation, and sustainability – their common denominator is the fact that they are projects that have transformative potential on a city-regional scale as opposed to projects of purely local significance.

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How housing can boost rural economy

David Goodwin outlines a scheme for affordable homes in the Welsh countryside



The former slate quarrying village of Abergynolwyn in Meirionnydd. Photo: John Briggs.

Why should our hearts sink when we see yet another large site being cordoned off for a housing development? Why do we see new housing as a form of unvarying environmental pollution rather than as something that contributes to our surroundings and enhances our community?

And why is it that we can't build affordable houses in our towns and villages for people who will contribute to community life and provide a balance against dormitory or second homes? Well, we can do these things. All it takes is a little imagination and some help from the government who after all, claim that they, too, want to find solutions.

This proposal puts forward the idea of hundreds of small-scale projects of five to ten houses each, threaded into villages across the country. Projects would be largely self-funding, have virtually no negative impact on the environment and aim to house a broad social mix of people, generating considerable economic, social and

cultural benefits to communities and the wider society. Moreover, by producing around 7,850 houses across Wales – based on the number of planning authorities and their average number of villages - these projects would make a massive contribution to the current housing shortage.

Taking affordability first, the key is to outlay a reasonable, non-inflated price for the land and to separate the design of the new housing from its construction. It is this very combination of land acquisition, design, construction and marketing all within one high profit-making organisation which is the problem with the cost and the quality of much new housing.

The Welsh Government should require each Local Planning Authority to identify small parcels of brown or green-field land of approximately 1.5 acres, the average size of a field, within existing villages and other settlements.

Sites will not have planning permission nor be involved in current applications. These are generally

Taking affordability first, the key is to outlay a reasonable, non-inflated price for the land and to separate the design of the new housing from its construction.

known as 'exception sites' but will be much smaller than the norm. Land will be acquired at a realistic 'special cost' of between £40,000 and £50,000 per acre – that is, about four times the value of good agricultural land.

The second key requirement is to separate design and construction, as traditionally is the case with public funding. This means these projects can be put out to competitive tender by local building contractors, whose profits are much lower than those of volume house builders.

To achieve the kind of quiet design excellence that people want, it will

be necessary also to split the design process into two stages. Under Stage One, architects and conservation architects of proven ability will be appointed by the local planning authority to establish the basic design brief and produce the preliminary design to a sustainable and high standard, incorporating elements of the local vernacular domestic architecture. Schemes should consist of a range of house-types, sizes and layouts, with linked and separate dwellings, as appropriate. The designers will be retained to ensure that original principles are maintained in design Stage Two, to be carried out by others.

Before Design Stage Two can happen, the question arises as to who should inhabit these beautiful and affordable houses. Surely there would be no shortage of takers? However, if we want to achieve a diversity of occupancy where public money will have initially been involved, neither selection by points nor via the open market would be appropriate. Selection in general can be made by setting conditions such as family, background or essential work ties to an area. However, to avoid bias at an individual level this would have to be random. In other words, selection would be by lottery, albeit a targeted and local one.

Over a period, all Phase One projects across the country would be packaged up with a high level of publicity and Lottery Tickets sold for the acquisition of plots. The sale of the tickets would balance the cost of the preliminary publicity, administrative and initial professional work involved.

The purchaser would select which size of property and to which projects their tickets should apply. There would be qualifying terms as stated and strict conditions preventing any commercial or second home acquisition. The winners would have won the right to purchase title to the freehold of a plot for as little as £5,000. Lucky them, you might say. But there is always an element of luck involved in one person



An example of integrated new housing in the village of Bunbury in Cheshire, incorporating elements of local vernacular domestic architecture.

achieving home ownership where another does not, whether by family money or by meritocratic means. The important thing here is to increase the rural housing stock in a desirable way.

Upon winning their plot, new owners and their own designers would be able to proceed with adjustment to the plans and detailed design. Construction proposals would be prepared either individually or as a group using a standard form of agreement, employing local architects and builders or possibly self-build, according to the practicalities on site. The total cost of the dwellings would be well below the current market price on completion, which would be encouraging for the providers of mortgages. The same rules governing eligibility for tickets would apply to future purchasers and be written into deeds as covenants.

Would communities feel differently about additional homes being created in this way? Well, it would make a contribution to keeping communities together for one thing, and it would tend to benefit the use of local shops and pubs and the numbers attending local primary schools. Also employment would be given to a range of local

builders, construction professionals and producers and suppliers of materials, all to the benefit of local economies.

More widely, the built-in, high standard of these schemes would provide an object lesson for future proposals, including those by volume house-builders. Moreover, as it unfolds, the process would stimulate interest in society as a whole, countering the common feeling people have of being distanced from such major initiatives.

We have, unfortunately, drifted into a universal way of procuring new housing when it is plainly not the answer in every situation. So why continue with this single approach, when for the sake of a little effort, it would be possible to make a significant improvement in virtually every rural community.

David Goodwin is a graduate of Nottingham University School of Architecture and worked in Bristol, London and Liverpool before setting up practice in 1980 in north Wales and Cheshire, predominantly concerned with housing.

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Carwyn's 'One Wales' philosophy spikes Plaid's guns

Michael Sullivan argues we are witnessing the rebirth of social democracy as a result of Labour's co-option of Welsh nationalism

The ideological architecture for post-war UK social democracy was put in place by the 1945-51 Labour governments. The chief architect was the late Tony Crosland. His arguments were made most cogently in *The Future of Socialism* (1956) and *The Conservative Enemy* (1952). The creation of a post-war welfare state and a planned economy had civilised UK capitalism. A system that required social and economic inequality had been transformed into one where the achievement of greater equality and social justice were both desirable and possible.

If Crosland was the architect of post-war social democracy, the foundations were laid by T. H. Marshall's theory of citizenship. He believed the welfare state could mitigate the insecurity and economic inequalities caused by unregulated markets. Like the civil and political rights that preceded them, the welfare state's social rights were part of citizenship entitlement. The right to welfare is connected with full membership of the community.

However, the creation of *New Labour* and Tony Blair's election victory in 1997 signalled a shift away from this approach. The notion of a *Third Way* promulgated by social democratic theorist Anthony Giddens, now became the guiding hand of contemporary Labour politics. One of its central arguments was a redefinition of social democracy, emphasising responsibility rather than rights, and work rather than welfare in order to meet the social and economic challenges of new times.

One of the consequences of devolution was to create a space for a different interpretation of social democracy in Wales and Scotland where Labour continued to adhere to the older definition. Labour-led administrations in Cardiff and Edinburgh retained Old Labour's

commitment to the welfare state as an engine of equality, social justice and social inclusion based on the political values of universality and social solidarity.

For the Welsh Government this definition of social democracy distanced its administration from some of the principles and many of the policy actions of the New Labour project at Westminster. Its 'clear red water' philosophy, enunciated by Rhodri Morgan in a speech at Swansea University in December 2002, distinguished Welsh from English social policy.

The method of making policy as well as the substance of policy diverged from the 'English model'. Welsh policymaking was rooted in co-operation, rather than competition and on 'voice' rather than 'choice' as the best way of strengthening the influence of citizens (rather than consumers). In developing diverse and responsive services, it aimed for a greater equality of outcome, rather than simply of opportunity. The devolution dividend included an increasing differentiation in the tone emerging from Labour in Cardiff and London.

This policy differentiation continued into a third Assembly term but was accompanied by an even more substantial change, the 'One Wales' coalition between Labour and Plaid Cymru. Meanwhile, in the face of economic crisis, the Labour Government in London replaced social democracy with a sort of social liberalism.

For both Welsh Labour and Plaid Cymru social policy has played a part in nation building. Prior to devolution Labour could present devolutionary ambitions as an opportunity to craft Welsh solutions to Welsh problems. It was also an answer to the legitimacy of the Conservative writ being

imposed in Wales. No more than a handful of Conservative MPs had been elected in four general elections. So devolution and the left of centre social policies that resulted were expressions of both general political values and of national identity.

The Welsh Government has used the new powers it gained in 2006 and 2011 to introduce a raft of legislation on social care, environmental issues, school transport, the use of the Welsh language and children's rights. Meanwhile, the red-green Labour Plaid coalition that emerged from the 2007 election put constitutional change at the top of its programme for government, including:

- A commitment, without qualification, to a referendum on further powers for the Assembly at or before the 2011 Welsh election.
- A Convention looking at the case for further powers leading up to the referendum.
- An independent Commission to review the Barnett formula through which Wales was allocated funding.
- A commitment to consider devolving powers to Wales over criminal justice, and a new Welsh Language Act.

Of course, there have been those in both parties who argue against the meshing of social democratic and nationalist concerns. It's also probably true to say that if nationalism in Wales was of a political variety (as it is in Scotland), rather than cultural and linguistic (as it actually is), fewer within the Labour movement would have feared its influence.

Yet, to a large extent such concerns have been groundless. Even fears at the 'Cymricisation' of Wales' civic space linked to an increasing emphasis on the promotion of and spending on the Welsh language has raised less than the odd yelp. This remains the case even as the



Launch of the 'One Wales' government in July 2007. Labour First Minister Rhodri Morgan and Plaid Deputy First Minister Ieuan Wyn Jones face the media on the steps of the Senedd following the announcement of their coalition Cabinet.

Welsh Government debates enforcing new legal standards over the use of *Cymraeg* by public and private bodies.

The proposition embedded in 'One Wales' – of Labour formally breaking bread with the supposedly hated nationalists – was the first and so far the only truly seismic post-devolution shift. What it ultimately signified was a general recognition of Welsh Labour's evolution since 1998 into a particular type of soft-nationalist party, espousing what might be called a 'One Wales' identity politics. In doing so it has operated within a post-devolution consensus in Cardiff Bay to which all the major parties, even to an extent the Tory Group, adhere.

Inside the 'One Wales' cultural milieu, Welsh Labour's rhetoric has trumpeted the particularity of a 'small nation' and people with 'Welsh values' and 'Welsh attitudes' declared to be very different to 'the English way'. In turn they make 'Made in Wales' policy solutions necessary to match. Every element in 'One Wales' which caused critics to denounce it as a nationalist Trojan horse – the focus on Barnett, more powers and promoting *Cymraeg* – are now owned by Welsh Labour. They are basic points of Carwyn Jones' political philosophy. The result is a broadly soft-nationalist consensus.

Arguably it has spiked Plaid's

guns. Where critics within Welsh Labour saw 'One Wales' as a vehicle to take the nationalists to the 'gates of independence', the actual legacy has been Plaid's decline to third party status. After all, if there are two social democratic, soft-nationalist parties in Wales, doesn't one become surplus to requirements?

Two last words from contemporary Plaid Cymru politicians. Dafydd Elis-Thomas talks of nationalism "growing out of the bowels of Welsh social democracy". Adam Price argues that Plaid will save social democracy in Wales while the latter implodes in England as a result of the election of a Conservative-Liberal Democrat government in 2010. Exactly how all this plays out is dependent – in large part – on Plaid keeping its implicit promise to ensure Welsh Labour is honest, nationalist and social democratic.

Professor Michael Sullivan is Vice-President (Strategic Partnerships) and Professor of Policy Analysis at Swansea University. This is a summary of a paper he gave to a seminar on Welsh nationalism at the University of Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona in November: <http://cataloniawalesseminar.weebly.com/welsh-nationalism-seminar.html>

Welsh Water can provide a model for Royal Mail

Peter Hain says a Labour government should adopt a Welsh ‘not-for-dividend’ model for the postal service

The Government badly undersold Royal Mail shares – rewarding private investors at the expense of taxpayers – by selling the public shares in a service it already owns. And privatisation has also placed the proud legacy of the universal postal service under serious threat. Yet there is an alternative model which could avoid that threat, and is achievable even under the 2012 Postal Services Act which delivered Royal Mail privatisation. It hails from Wales in the form of Welsh Water.

But first, the problem. The National Federation of SubPostmasters (NFSP) has called privatisation a “reckless gamble with the future of the post office network” because rewarding shareholders will inevitably push what remains an essential public service to cut corners and cut quality of service.

Experience elsewhere of mail privatisation – for instance in the Netherlands and New Zealand – demonstrates that. Although the Universal Service Obligation – the right of every address to receive a delivery through their letter box whether in remote Snowdonia or central Cardiff – is enshrined in the Postal Services Act, it only covers the bare minimum.

Much of the essential detail is set by the regulator Ofcom and could easily be changed whilst still remaining legally compliant. For example, Ofcom recently looked in various ways at what the public has come to expect from the universal service and what could be modified to make it cheaper to run. Ofcom considered getting rid of First

Class mail to all areas (and therefore the next-day service), reducing quality of service standards and cutting delivery days from six to five a week.

Meanwhile on 23 December 2012 the *Daily Telegraph* reported that Conservative ministers were thinking about future changes to the USO and that an all-Conservative government could seek to relax the USO.

Costlier elements of the universal service such as Royal Mail’s air network would become vulnerable to cuts,

the less well off, for the inner city and the rurally remote. These tariffs could make the difference between home delivery and picking post up from the sorting depot – a genuinely fear-inducing prospect for the elderly or disabled. Private companies like TNT already charge extra – sometimes a third or a half more – to deliver to more remote locations.

Yet the universal service provided by Royal Mail makes a vital contribution to life in remote and rural communities. The

A worry highlighted by many is that like other privatised utilities – gas, electricity and telephones – different services and tariffs might spring up, further entrenching the potential difference in service for the rich and the less well off, for the inner city and the rurally remote.

leaving areas of Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and parts of England losing between a quarter and half of the service standards enjoyed by urban areas. A worry highlighted by many is that like other privatised utilities – gas, electricity and telephones – different services and tariffs might spring up, further entrenching the potential difference in service for the rich and

daily delivery helps people in these areas to access online shopping and prevents many older residents from feeling isolated. The Post Office is the heart of the high street in many rural areas and helps to sustain local economies.

But it could be fully protected by converting Royal Mail into a not-for-dividends company rather like Welsh Water which originated from a similar

stock market flotation in 1989 but hit problems until it was eventually transformed in 2000 into its current status as a private company limited by guarantee.

Royal Mail's recent profitability means it could comfortably raise investment capital through its own profits, becoming a self-financing, not-for-dividends company like Welsh Water. Royal Mail could then borrow from money markets at a significantly cheaper rate, just like Welsh Water. The website of Glas Cymru/ Welsh Water describes how they have operated since 2000, summing up exactly what a privatised Royal Mail should be:

"A single purpose company with no shareholders that is run solely for the benefit of customers."

Not only is it perfectly compatible with

the Postal Services Act 2012 but it also successfully combines social obligations and commercial imperatives. There is nothing in the legislation that would prevent a future Labour Cabinet from establishing for Royal Mail a similar structure such as a Company Limited by Guarantee that was used for Network Rail.

This plan is also supported by the Communication Workers Union which represents Royal Mail Workers, 96 per cent of whom were against the Government's plans.

Such a model would not necessitate adding to Government debt and there would be no cost to the taxpayer. As a not-for-dividends company itself, Welsh Water's financial surpluses are reinvested in the business.

The company has the highest credit rating in the water sector which enables it to borrow money more cheaply to

fund investment. Welsh Water finds it cheaper to raise capital at below market rate because it is not caught up in the usual speculator driven merry-go-round. Under the terms of its license Glas Cymru may not operate in sectors other than water, just as Royal Mail would be restricted in its operations.

Welsh Water provides a cheaper and more reliable service across Wales (and some border areas in England) than any other UK provider. If our collective pride in the universal postal service that Royal Mail provides is to survive, I believe that Labour should include in its manifesto a pledge to establish Royal Mail on a similar basis to Welsh Water.

Peter Hain is MP for Neath, a former Secretary of State for Wales and a Government Minister for 12 years.



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Why Labour could lose half its income

Mark Lang examines the implications of a fundamental shift in relations between the trade unions and the party they created

In September one of Labour's largest donors, the GMB Union, decided to cut its affiliation fees to the Party by around 90 per cent, reducing its commitment by approximately £1m per year. The Union also made it clear that it would be spending significantly less on wider Labour Party campaigns and initiatives.

The GMB was responding to Labour Leader Ed Milliband's proposed reforms that would mean the Party's affiliated unions could only join up those of its members who agreed to become direct individual members of the Party. The GMB's response to significantly reduce its affiliation fees suggests that some union leaders believe that only a small proportion of their members would choose to join the Labour Party individually. In the case of the GMB, Britain's third largest union, it will be cutting its affiliated membership from 420,000 to just 50,000. It is important to note the distinction between affiliation fees and other donations made by the unions to the Party to help fund its campaigns and activities, particularly during an election year.

This series of events was prompted by the recent situation in Falkirk where Unite, another affiliated union, was accused of exerting undue influence over the selection of a Parliamentary candidate. Although the claims were later withdrawn, as no evidence could be found of any improper activities,

Ed Milliband announced a review of the relationship between Labour and the unions to be undertaken by former Labour Party General Secretary Lord Collins. This is due to report in full at a special Labour Party Conference in the spring of 2014.

Labour's initial response to the GMB's announcement, which appeared to take it by surprise, was that it got the majority of its funding from small donations and individual membership fees, and was therefore not concerned by the GMB's decision. It determined to press ahead with reforms.

However, during the election year of 2010 when the Party's activities, campaigns and staffing increased, according to the Electoral Commission the Labour Party received £25.2m in donations. Without trade union income this would have been £11.7m – a substantial cut of more than half. If other unions were to follow the GMB there would be a major cut in the Party's resources, substantially reducing its capacity to fight election campaigns.

The argument for wider state funding of political parties has yet to garner significant support, though should Labour pursue this agenda it may well gain backing from the Liberal Democrats. Despite recent difficulties in discussions on the issue between the two parties, it is likely to be a key issue following the next general election should any one party fail to gain a majority.

It has been suggested that one concern that has prompted the GMB into action, and which may prompt other unions to follow suit, is the impending ten year ballot of union members about the future of union political funds more generally. Trade unions are required to conduct such a ballot every ten years to



Labour leader Michael Foot, MP for Ebbw Vale, addressing the Wales TUC's annual conference at Porthcawl in 1981 on the catastrophic return of mass unemployment. Photo: George Wright.

allow them to collect a political fund from its members to fight campaigns, from which they have funded their affiliation to the Labour Party. Union leaders are concerned that, when they are balloted next year to renew the fund, their members may not agree that it should be simply handed over to the Labour Party.

Whereas the current debates on the trade union-Labour Party affiliation fees could lead to a significant decline in the Party's income, it is important to understand that there is far more complexity to the relationship than media representations of shallow arguments would seem to suggest. It would be a gross simplification to suggest that the debate is purely about Party funding. Seminal research undertaken by Lewis Minkin and others has exposed the complexity of the relationship. Minkin's book *The Contentious Alliance – Trade Unions and the Labour Party* (1991) offers conclusive evidence that the post-war relationship between them has been governed by a set of unwritten yet robust 'rules' based on mutual support, respect for

one another's autonomy, and a sharp division of labour between the 'political' and 'industrial' wings of the movement.

Despite exaggerated claims by the media and politicians, Minkin shows that regardless of their massive financial contribution to the Party, union leaders have tended not to exert major influence over Party policy. Indeed, if anything union leaders have tended to actively support the position of the Labour leadership in the internal affairs of the Party. It is therefore, both wrong and unhelpful to present these recent changes to trade union affiliation fees as in some way removing the trade union stranglehold over the internal affairs of the Party, which simply does not exist. Should, as it is anticipated, the Collins Review recommend that unions have to ballot their members on affiliation fees, it could be argued that the Party's leadership itself will breach the historic unwritten rules of the Labour Party-trade union relationship by instructing

the unions on their own internal affairs.

Another important dynamic to consider is that this debate is largely about affiliation fees and the number of members that unions choose to affiliate to the Labour Party, and not the wider range of support that the unions give to the Party. This is potentially of more significance at the sub-UK level of Labour Party-trade union relationships.

My own research has highlighted the significance of the Labour Party-trade union relationship in Wales, and in particular the important role the unions played in the establishment of devolution through the institutions of the Labour movement in Wales in the 100 years leading up to 1999. How much the unions will continue to support future Labour Party election campaigns in Wales, or other campaigns such as for the London Assembly or Scottish Parliament, remains unclear. The Party spends significantly less on these elections than it does on UK Parliamentary campaigns,

but should the unions also chose to reduce their wider donations to the Party, then funding these campaigns will become increasingly difficult.

The trade unions gave birth to the Labour Party, and developed a strong bond with it and over 100 years of shared history and achievement improving the lives of working people. There is little doubt that the Labour Party-trade union relationship will endure. However, the reforms envisaged should be taken in the wider context of a gradual formalisation of relationships that has been evident throughout their history.

Mark Lang, a former member of the Welsh Labour Party Executive, is an Honorary Associate of Cardiff University. He works as Senior Researcher at CREW *Regeneration Wales* and is Chair of Glandŵr Cymru – The Canal and River Trust in Wales.

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Articles

PISA challenge to Welsh education

Power play in growth of Welsh medium education

PISA challenge to Welsh education

Philip Dixon says seeing Welsh GCSE-drilled youngsters performing in Pisa is like watching a rugby league side playing rugby union

For months the pundits told us to prepare for bad news when the Pisa results were announced on 3 December. Despite this the First Minister was optimistic. "I expect to see an improvement in our PISA results in December," he told the Senedd in October. However, by November Huw Lewis, his new Education Minister, was issuing health warnings. It would be "unrealistic" for Wales to better its position from the "extraordinarily poor" Pisa results of 2010. The actual results were even worse than many expected.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development runs Pisa - the Programme for International Student Assessment - every three years. It tries to evaluate education systems across the world by testing "what 15-year-olds know and what they can do with what they know" in the key subjects of reading, mathematics and science. The programme began in 1997 and 68 countries now take part. Wales joined the programme in 2006. Unfortunately, since then we have shown regression rather than progress. The accompanying table shows how Wales is slipping down the overall ranking in the national league tables. Overall we now underperform the rest of the UK by some margin:

- In reading, 15-year-olds in Wales scored 480, but Scotland scored 506 points on average, England scored 500 and Northern Ireland 498.
- In maths, Wales scored 468 points on average, compared with 498 in Scotland, 495 in England and 487 in Northern Ireland.
- In science, Wales scored 491, compared with England's average score of 516, Scotland's 513, and 507 in Northern Ireland.

The programme began in 1997 and 68 countries now take part. Wales joined the programme in 2006. Unfortunately, since then we have shown regression rather than progress.

Responses to the Pisa results verge from the ludicrous to the sane. Some are simply Pisa-deniers, the flat-earthers of our day. They argue that no comparison is possible. Indeed, some countries such as India have pulled out of Pisa citing this very reason. Such exits might be more believable if they weren't all from the bottom of the league. More credible voices have been raised about the methodology as seen in recent exchanges in the Times Educational Supplement and elsewhere.

But like it or lump it these statistics do give some sort of temperature test for the health of education systems. And, of course, in our case it confirms a lot of other depressing data.

Those who accept Pisa again divide into the ludicrous and sane in their remedies for recovery. Some, including the Westminster Tories argue that the abandonment of SATs and league tables over a decade ago are to blame, conveniently ignoring the fact that England's Pisa performance has stagnated. Closer to home others have blamed the Welsh language (despite

Wales' international Pisa ranking out of 68 countries

	2007	2010	2013
Reading	27	38	41
Maths	31	40	43
Science	20	30	36



many Pisa leaders being bilingual nations), the abolition of grammar schools (despite the fact that leading Finland has a fully comprehensive system), or the absence of Morris dancing from the curriculum. OK, I made that last one up but you get my drift.

Saner analyses have come in the shape of pointing out the chronic underfunding that Welsh education has experienced. The spending gap per head between England and Wales with is now around £600. Successive Welsh education Ministers have tried to minimise the impact that this underfunding is having on education. However, the gap is too large for it to have no detrimental effect at all. Our Pisa decline, as well as our poor GCSE performance compared with England, has taken place alongside the growth of the funding gap.

Others have pointed out the accountability vacuum that existed once SATs and League Tables were abolished. Despite repeated warning nothing was put in their place. Overall the decade immediately after devolution could be characterised by three Ds rather than three Rs: denial, drift, and dither.

Things changed with the advent of

Leighton Andrews in 2010. Not wanting to 'waste a good crisis' he used the Pisa results of that year to issue his wake-up call. In his 2011 speech, *Teaching Makes a Difference*, he went as far as to say that he wanted Wales to be in the top 20 nations by 2016. That now seems impossible.

When Huw Lewis surprisingly and, if rumours are to be believed, reluctantly, found himself catapulted into the role of Minister for Education he could have had little doubt that the new brief would be a tough challenge. He has so far negotiated some of the rocks pretty well. The pace of local government consortia reform has picked up, an essential review of curriculum has been announced, and he has gone down well with the profession as someone without the porcupine tendencies of his predecessor. But Pisa was always the spectre at the feast.

The task ahead is huge, especially given the financial constraints that now beset us. Gaming of Pisa may produce some limited short term gains but they will be transient. We also need to plan properly for the fact that the next set of tests will be computer based. Longer term, deeper change is necessary. We need to align and inform our system with the

values and skills that permeate Pisa. This is not just because we want to improve our scores. More importantly, it should be because by valuing and promoting the sorts of skills that Pisa measures we will improve our children's education, their life chances and our economy.

The Welsh Government has rightly insisted that we will keep the principle of GCSEs - no retreat here to the Gvian dystopia of a two-tier exam system. However, we will also need to align our curriculum and qualifications with the skills that the OECD tells us are essential for the modern world.

Another recent survey of adult skills by the OECD revealed England and Northern Ireland lagging behind the rest of the world. It showed no real gain in skills across the generations, and thus shone a light on the current nature of GCSEs. It is odd to say the least that year on year GCSE results have improved but that these gains are not mirrored in international surveys.

Tristram Hunt, the new Shadow Education Minister in Westminster, fell into the elephant trap of trying to square that particular circle. The debate about grade inflation is superficial. Is there something flawed about the content, form, and delivery of current GCSEs which do not promote skills as they should? Is there too much teaching to the test, too little space in the curriculum for innovation, and an overemphasis on regurgitation that has not produced the independent, adaptable learners that we need?

Comparing our current GCSE-drilled youngsters performing in Pisa is almost like watching a rugby league side playing rugby union – something is off key.

What of the future? There is a tremendous amount to do. By 2016 the ship has to be turning. Wales has to show that our community comprehensive approach to education works. It's as blunt as that.

.....
Philip Dixon is Director of ATL Cymru, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers.

Power play in growth of Welsh medium education

Aled Eirug finds a major challenge for the language is that it continues to be used outside the school gates

The number of Welsh language schools in south-east Wales has grown from three in 1949 to almost 80 today, including 15 comprehensive schools. A new book *Parents, Personalities and Power: Welsh medium Schools in South-East Wales*, edited by Huw S. Thomas and Colin H. Williams, reminds us of the extent to which this growth has been contested.

Welsh medium secondary education is internationally famed for its quality, and this book describes and analyses the 'historic treasury' of the interaction of parents, personalities, power and politics that has combined to create the present patchwork of provision. It concludes that Welsh medium education has played an important part in fostering Welsh identity, a growing belief in self-government and self-regulation, and an ever-increasing self-respect among those forerunners who had been disempowered by monolingual education.

The growth of Welsh medium education is described as one of the 'little miracles' of post-Napoleonic Europe. The most fascinating part of the story is the extent to which key officers, local and national politicians interacted with the parents' campaigns. Colin Williams asserts that, "There is no understanding of Welsh-medium education except through politics and power, and through aspirations,

assertiveness and ambition".

There were what he and Huw Thomas call "intelligent operators" including council officials such as Gwyn Daniel, Keith Davies and Gwilym Humphreys, advisers such as Gwilym Prys Davies, and national politicians such as John Morris, Nicholas Edwards and Wyn Roberts

The debate over Welsh medium education was mainly conducted with the local authorities, and led by pressure from parents coordinated through Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg (Parents for Welsh medium Education). In Glamorganshire County Council, and later Mid Glamorgan Council, the close relationship between supportive Directors of Education and political leaders such as Llew Heycock and Philip Squire was crucial. This account highlights the dynamic tension between reluctant bureaucracies and dedicated campaigners who were sustained by

and disappointing, therefore that in this account their voice is silent.

The book considers the stereotypes associated with Welsh medium schools, in particular that they are 'snob schools' – "veritable Etons" in the words of one visiting academic in the 1960s – academically outstanding, and that pupils from non Welsh speaking families are at a disadvantage. Thomas disproves the first accusation, confirms the second perception, and rejects the third assumption. An unequivocal conclusion of the book's analysis of the performance of the Welsh medium schools are that their standards, achievement and attainment are high.

The contribution of Michael Jones, leader of the parents' campaigning group RHAG, and the fascinating saga of the controversial re-organisation of primary schooling in Canton by the former First Minister, Rhodri Morgan, are colourful and incisive

It is noteworthy that more often than not the campaigning parents were not Welsh speaking themselves. Their motivation was to give an opportunity for their children to learn and use the Welsh language of which they had been deprived.

"faith, of conviction and of hope".

It is noteworthy that more often than not the campaigning parents were not Welsh speaking themselves. Their motivation was to give an opportunity for their children to learn and use the Welsh language of which they had been deprived. And it is remarkable that 80 per cent of children in the new Welsh-medium schools came from exclusively English speaking homes. It is unfortunate

reminders of the centrality of politics to the development of Welsh medium education.

One of the most interesting contributions is that of Jeni Price's consideration of the social language usage patterns of pupils in Welsh medium schools. She underlines a general concern that the growth of Welsh medium schools has not led to an increase in the use of Welsh in a social



In November 2013 First Minister Carwyn Jones launched the Welsh Government's *Live in Wales: Learn in Welsh* campaign at Ysgol Gymraeg Trelyn, Blackwood, where he read a Welsh language story to children in the reception class. The three-year campaign will target expectant parents and parents with children aged 0-3, offering them information and advice so that they are fully informed when making a decision on whether to send their child to a Welsh-medium or bilingual school.

setting outside school. This study points to the role of teachers and auxiliary staff in Welsh medium schools and their reluctance to use Welsh informally outside the classroom.

This echoes the conclusions of the Government's recent *Cynhadledd Fawr* listening exercise, which emphasised that practical and social use of the language rather than its status should be the priority. This view is shared by First Minister Carwyn Jones who is now responsible for the Welsh Government's Welsh language policy. He has admitted that although they attend Welsh medium schools, his children tend to speak English to each other at home. An overwhelming challenge for the Welsh medium education sector is to ensure that the language of the classroom is also a social language that is used beyond the school gates.

Jeni Price's research in ten schools in south-west Wales suggests that from secondary school onwards, the Welsh language is linked more with learning, structure, order, routine and enforcement, whereas the English language is linked with contemporary culture, media, web-chatting and socialising.

This book is 'top down' in its approach, and does an excellent job of describing why Welsh medium education in south east Wales is considered to be such a success. It raises important questions both for the planning of Welsh medium education and the extent to which it is effective in transferring the language from an educational to a social context. However, with the exception of Price's contribution, it lacks consideration of the experience of the pupil in the Welsh

medium school system, and what that implies for future policy in this area.

The authors suggest that further work should concentrate on other sub-regions of Wales and at other national and international comparative levels. But perhaps the first place to start might be with the pupils themselves.

Aled Eirug was an adviser on Welsh language education to Leighton Andrews AM, former Education Minister in the Welsh Government. *Parents, Personalities and Power: Welsh medium Schools in South-East Wales*, edited by Huw S. Thomas and Colin H. Williams is published by the University of Wales Press.

6

Environment

Articles

Sustainable development slips down Welsh priorities

Wales hit by quotas extended to under ten metre fleet

Sustainable development slips down Welsh priorities

Gareth Wyn Jones finds that while the evidence for climate change gets ever more stark politicians increasingly side with the sceptics

Last September the International Panel on Climate Change increased its assessment of the likelihood of man-made climate change to 95 per cent. The medium-term risks are becoming clearer, including sea level rise and acidity as well as more extreme weather and higher global temperatures unevenly distributed. Despite the foreboding of senior scientists, who see this as mankind's gravest threat, the public and, more importantly, a section of the political class have become more sceptical. The report's reception by the media, including the BBC, was muted and the public mood unchanged.

The contrast with the media treatment of the typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in early November could not be starker. An event, likely aggravated by global warming, was given blanket coverage with no expense or gas emissions spared to fly senior reporters there for their short pieces. The scientific background was largely ignored. I do not recall a signal popular report that climate-induced sea level rise is at its greatest around the Philippines. Few note that storm intensities can be expected to grow as the sea temperature continues to rise. It's worth recalling that Munich Re, the re-insurer, find a steady rise in climate-related claims whereas those from other natural disasters show no such trend. The increasingly parochial London media seem only to respond to a few dramatic disasters.

The mismatch is both a problem and a wonderful excuse for government inaction. It is problematic because

the evidence tells us we must leave the great majority of **existing proven** hydrocarbon resources in the ground **unused** to avoid very serious consequences. Also there are long time lags in Earth Systems that unwind in future changes e.g. rising sea levels. Our slow human responses also risks triggering fast-forward reactions that will aggravate warming, for instance by massive methane releases from degrading tundra and the shallow Siberian seas. Meanwhile, our current conventional energy sources are fragile while prices rise and fuel poverty spreads. Speedy practical action should be both vital and prudent.

How therefore are we to understand the current socio-political impasse, be it in Wales or internationally?

Unscrupulous self-interest can explain the behaviour of the oil and gas giants and coal barons. Their wealth has spawned denialist think tanks and web sites, mainly in the US, that promote doubt with cherry-picked half-truths, coarse misunderstandings and sometimes lies. Current profit is all-important and the hydrocarbon reserves are balance-sheet assets. Recognising them as global climate-health liabilities would have far-reaching, perhaps catastrophic, financial implications. Small wonder they fund denial.

There is no question but that the climate record is complex. Changes do not, and should not be expected to, proceed in a regular pseudo-linear manner. Our understanding of basic equilibrium energy import from the Sun

Figs.1 A and B

and export from our planet to avoid a continuous change in temperature and stop overheating or cooling is not in doubt. Without the subtle natural greenhouse effect, our planet could be frozen or too hot for life. However, the regulatory and atmospheric and oceanic circulatory systems, which modulate and disperse this energy are extraordinarily complex and chaotic. An excellent illustration is the behaviour of the Arctic sea ice. Last year there was a precipitous fall (see *the welsh agenda*, Autumn 2012), but this summer there was a partial recovery in extent - ecstatically and misleadingly reported in the Daily Mail. Figures 1a and 1b show the trend in ice extent and the continuing decline in volume. Hopefully, the steep declines from 2009 to 2012 are only 'accidentally' related to our series of poor summers. More importantly this varying behaviour provides plenty of scope for the 'deniers', 'dissemblers' and lobbyists.

There is a more profound issue. Our Anglo-American economic model is based on a free-market, competitive creed and a cult of individualism. Thus bankers and others are justified in amassing huge fortunes (despite our public financial bail-outs) and the poor, sick and those on benefits are open to be demonised as wasters and free riders. The concept of 'common good' has been degraded, and human transactions monetarized. Consumerism reigns. Global competitiveness and the private sector are seen as the keys to progress. Unfortunately the rich have large carbon footprints and a life style to which we aspire. However, our atmosphere, oceans, climate, weather and biodiversity are quintessentially 'common goods' which, economically, are externalised and often ignored. Thus Peter Lilley, from a private sector perspective, sought to rubbish both Lord Stern's warnings and his assessment of the global investment required to contain the problem.

An important caveat is that other forms of capitalism based on a social

democratic model do moderate these assumptions and, even within the US, the tradition of local activism offers fierce resistance to the Wall Street ethic. The climate 'worriers' write about international and inter-generational justice, about recognising personal responsibility and the need for a personal carbon ration and for emissions regulation and legal obligations. All this is interpreted as a 'socialist threat' to the entrepreneurial spirit, to individual liberty, and to the American dream. Reason enough to vilify the scientific message and the messengers.

Beyond there is our human nature.

Prophets of doom are never welcomed. The work of behavioural economist and Noble Laureate, Daniel Kahneman, has shown that our natural short-term reactions to events are rapid, superficial and optimistic. We try to create a coherently acceptable story from limited information. Our decisions may be irrational but they help us cope.

We depend heavily on recent experience and on priming. Our response to climate change is weather-dependent! We resist deep, hard thought, even more so in this age of instant satisfaction and a highly visual digitized culture. Climate change,

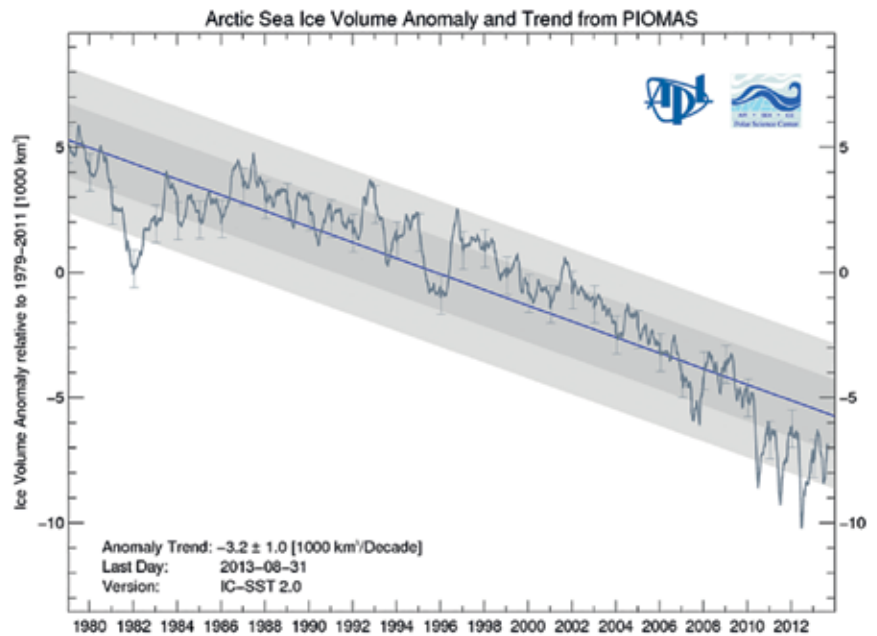
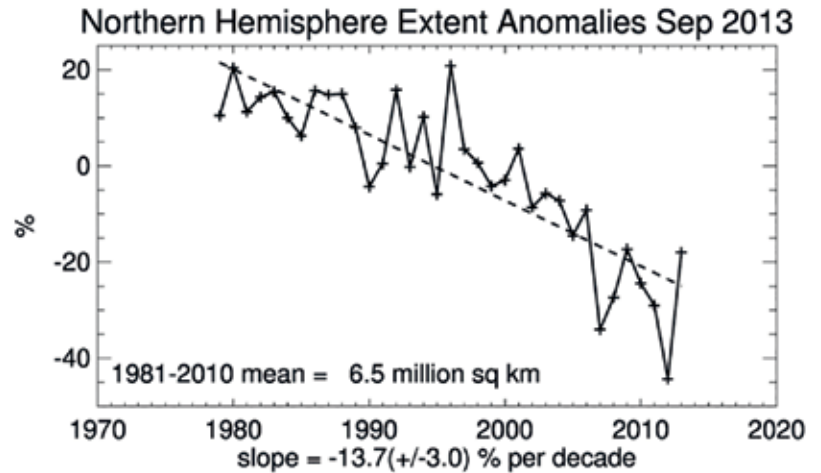
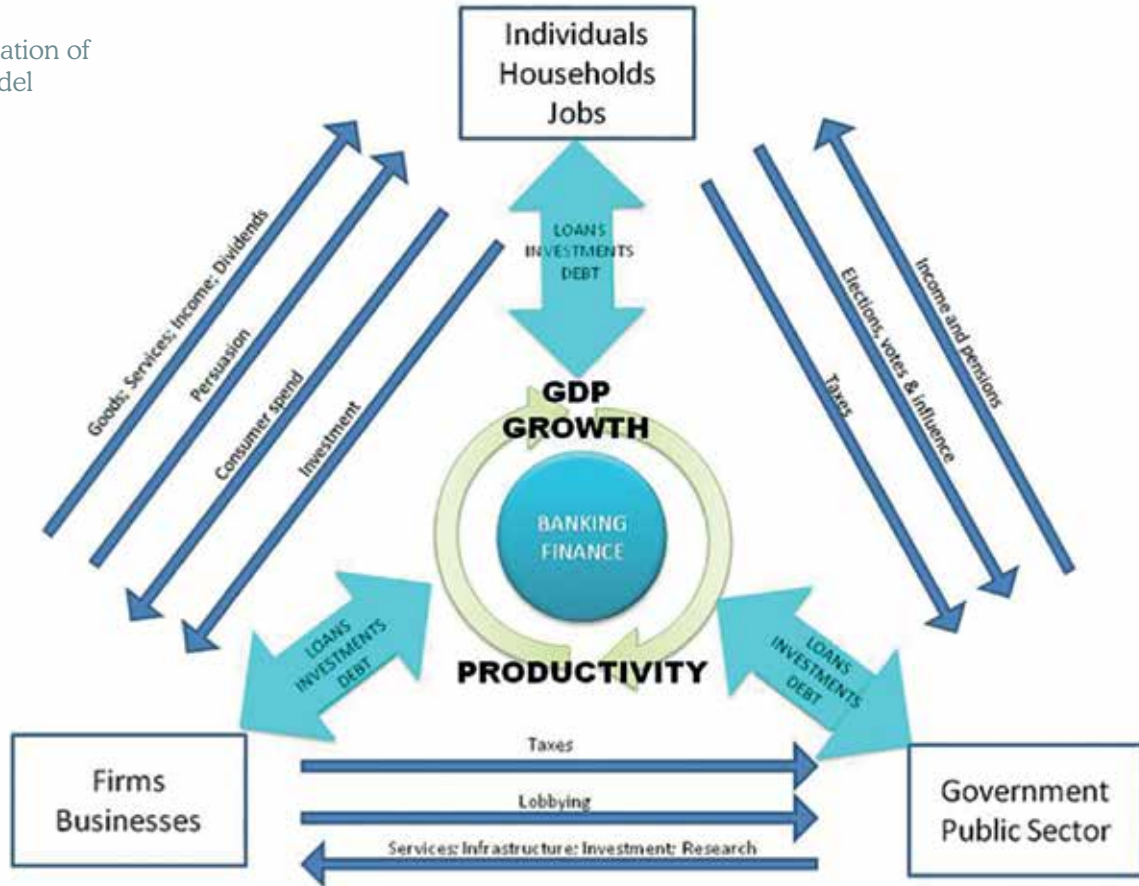


Fig. 2 Interpretation of Galbraith's model



consequently, seems:

- Unreal.
- Far in the future.
- Out of our grasp – what difference can we make as a tiny proportion of a global population of 7 billion?
- A threat to living standards, which we prefer not to address, or to our neighbourhoods, for example wind farms, which we will fight.
- To depend on those same scientists who gave us Foot and Mouth and a number of unrealised scares - remember the millennium computer non-crash?

Much more real issues are our standard and cost of living, health and our next holiday in the sun if we can still afford it. "Sufficient unto the day the evil thereof".

Our hopes, fears and doubts are the stuff of politics. And we are in very real bind. In my contribution to the IWA's *Wales' Central Organising Principle* –

legislating for sustainable development (2012), I drew heavily on John Kenneth Galbraith's insights. He saw our affluence as arising from a bargain between us - the public - government and politicians, and business and industry to maintain economic activity and create work almost at any cost (Figure 2).

This dynamic system he saw as intrinsically unstable as it is powered by debt that all parties have a vested interest in ignoring. He foresaw crashes as being inevitable unless the system was rigorously regulated. The system is strongly centripetal and its dependence on debt empowers financiers. However, Galbraith did not anticipate a globalised electronic world making taxes optional and investment and capital so mobile, nor trading regimes so complex that in the words of Niall Ferguson: "Even nothing can be money". I liken us to being on a treadmill whose speed (GDP) must accelerate at 2-3 per cent a year (greater in China) to keep us

employed and support public services, and from which we cannot dismount without deep discomfort. Our treadmill consumes natural resources including, of course, energy. And sometimes us?

In a five-year electoral cycle and a world in which businessmen, politicians, and ourselves are scraping to acquire small advantages over each other - such as cheaper energy and fewer regulations - long term rational planning is at a premium. Responding to future climate change and achieving real sustainable development becomes a mirage. Nigel Lawson thunders that, if we do not find, frack and burn hydrocarbons, the international financial and commercial system will disintegrate. Instinctively he dismisses the evidence for climate change, but as *The Economist* insists 'facts are facts'.

We are faced with two opposite threats: *Homo envirus* emphasising our biophysical and social exposure and inter-generational and national inequity; and *Homo economicus* who,

while accepting our economic fragility, believes in the redemptive power of the market. Paradoxically, a Westminster government committed to debt elimination has decided to underwrite personal debt to encourage home buying to speed up the GDP treadmill before the next UK election. Galbraith would be amused - and possibly gratified that his insight has such longevity!

Where does this leave climate change and energy policy in London and Cardiff Bay? As might be expected from the analysis above, the signals are very mixed and ministerial opinion appears divided. It is difficult to develop a coherent policy that will command wide acceptance and there is no evidence this has been achieved, even as it becomes more and more pressing. Thus Westminster is

- Closing the most greenhouse gas polluting power stations, but seeking to increase airport capacity.

- Taxing CO2 inefficient cars, but giving tax breaks to fracking.
- Offering long term guaranteed returns to nuclear power stations at the same time as subsidising wind power – both in the face of vigorous opposition, while we are warned of the dangers of winter power cuts.

In Wales climate change has slipped well down the political agenda in response to pressures to re-set the conventional 'affluence treadmill'. Green growth had emerged but is constrained. The current separation of responsibilities between Cardiff and London in relation to powers over energy and water, is clearly a nonsense. We need to control our own resources, which almost certainly are significantly greater per head than England's, as they are key to sustainability and to greater public engagement.

This political ambiguity inhibits green job creation and the evolution of a more

constructive, more localised economic development model. Sustainable development has been rebranded as 'sustainable futures' which allows more wriggle room. Unfortunately the scientific and economic reality is that we have to make long-term decisions and investments **now** even if they will only have some impact way in the future. For example the Welsh Government has approved a policy to increase Wales' woodland coverage from about 300,000 to 400,000 hectares. Yet this will not materially affect net emissions nor our space heating resources for 15 to 20 years. Progress is frustrating and painful.

Professor Gareth Wyn Jones is former Director of the Centre for Arid Zone Studies at Bangor University and Deputy Director of the Countryside Council for Wales.



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Wales hit by reduced quotas to the under ten metre fleet



Fisherman hauling nets at sea in an under ten metre vessel.

Jeremy Percy explores the dilemmas facing Wales' fragile inshore fishing industry

In 1945 Aneurin Bevan famously stated that Britain was an island built on coal and surrounded by fish. He went on to say that only an organisational genius could arrange a shortage of both at the same time. Over the last thirty years, the organisational genius of the European Commission, ably assisted by short-term economic interests and political expediency, have conspired to make Bevan's second statement a reality in relation to fish stocks.

The bad news is that in EU waters, about 50 per cent of assessed stocks in the Atlantic and nearby seas are still considered as overfished, rising to 80 per cent in the Mediterranean and affecting five out of seven stocks in the Baltic. Equally serious is the lack of data for many stocks with the condition of 64 per cent of fish stocks in EU waters unknown.

In the case of the Irish Sea that laps Welsh shores, there are significant concerns over the state of stocks generally. Yet things are beginning to look up and the figures above are all reducing year on year, with a resultant increase in many stocks, not least due to a publicly funded reduction in the number of larger UK vessels in past years.

Fisheries management at any level is a massively complicated issue, with opportunities for confusion and obfuscation. Equally, the way that permitted catches are decided on an

species such as Cod, Plaice, Sole, and Haddock. Each Member State fleet then gets its own percentage allocation of the whole, based on historic catches.

Until this year, the UK allocation, or quota, for each species in each fishing area was then further subdivided between UK vessels of less than ten metres in length and those over ten metres. And this is where it gets complicated.

Historically, the over ten metre fleet were originally provided with log books to record their daily catches. Despite asking repeatedly to be treated in the

Fisheries management at any level is a massively complicated issue, with opportunities for confusion and obfuscation

EU basis and then shared out is less than straightforward. Ostensibly based on scientific advice, the EU Commission and European fisheries ministers set the overall total allowable catches on an annual basis for all the main commercial

same way, the under ten metre fleet were refused log books and told that as their efforts made little impact on stocks, they should just carry on without any effective reporting requirements. This has led to the current situation where

the over ten sector receives 96 per cent of the UK quota, with under tens getting the remaining 4 per cent.

This was all very well until 2005, as the under tens were largely ignored and allowed to fish on without undue regulation. However, at that point the EU introduced a new system that required first sale buyers of quota species from the under ten fleet to record and report their purchases. The resultant information appears to have come as something of a surprise to officials, as it showed this sector of the industry actually caught relatively significant amounts of quota species. As a result there was to a swift reduction in the quotas allocated which then pushed many smaller scale fishers who were reliant on access to quota species either out of business or into non quota species such as Bass and shellfish.

On a UK basis, fisheries are a devolved issue. In Welsh territorial waters local management is the responsibility of the Welsh Government, albeit with a significant presence of large EU fishing vessels operating in our waters under 'historic rights', the efforts of which are largely outwith the control or influence of Cardiff Bay.

Wales has a total registered fishing

fleet of 479 vessels, 440 of which are less than ten metres in length. About 95 per cent of these vessels rely primarily on potting for shellfish rather than pursuing finfish quota species. Apart from the quota issue, this focus on shellfish is largely due to the rich diversity of Welsh inshore waters that abound in lobster, crab, prawns and whelks. Notwithstanding weather and tides - Wales has the second highest tidal range in the world, and we all know about Welsh weather - they are available for capture for most of the year, as opposed to more mobile finfish species, and can be profitably pursued in small boats.

However, this overwhelming reliance on shellfish is a fragile business. The vast majority of catches are exported to the continent where the economic crisis has slashed both demand and prices. Climate change and rising sea temperatures are having a double impact. On the one hand new species such as Spider Crab have been brought to our shores in great numbers to the benefit of inshore fishers. On the other, increasing ocean acidification will eventually prevent shellfish from making shell -plainly a disadvantage for species with an exoskeleton.

Smaller scale inshore fishers do

not have the capacity to pursue stocks elsewhere and so are entirely reliant on what comes to them. Their ability to diversify effort across a range of both quota and non quota species is key to their profitability and, of course, reduces reliance on any one species. This traditional flexibility is vital but is constrained by lack of access to the quota that is required before they can legally pursue many species.

This situation has been made dramatically worse recently through an agreement by the devolved administrations to move away from access to a common pool of quota available to the whole of the UK under ten metre operators (many of whom never need or use it), to one where that common pool has been divided between them on the basis of historic track records. Wales has been seriously disadvantaged by this decision as our primary reliance on shellfish over the years means that we have little effective track record on finfish quota species. Whilst this may not have an immediate impact on the majority of fishers, it will significantly restrict their vital ability to diversify fishing effort as markets change and species composition in Welsh waters varies over time.

Officials are working hard to make up the shortfall in access to quota that stands to blight the future of the Welsh industry. But it is seldom easy to get back what one has given away. The recently reformed EU Common Fisheries Policy provides some hope for both fish stocks and fishermen. However, it will be of little use to Welsh fishers if they don't have access to the quota to be able to land finfish and are forced to stand idly by on the harbour wall, watching other fleets, from England and elsewhere, harvesting Welsh resources in Welsh waters.

Jeremy Percy is Chief Executive of NUTFA – the New Under Ten Fishermen's Association.



Fisherman clearing lobster pots in Cardigan Bay.

7

International

Article

Small-scale
beekeeping in
the developing
world

Quilting for
Africa

Small-scale beekeeping in the developing world

Martin Jones describes how a Welsh-based charity is making a big impact in Uganda

China is investing heavily in Uganda, for instance with this new road through Kamwenge, population about 17,000, in the western part of the country. Wales' contribution is on a smaller but smarter scale.

Almost every international NGO involved in development has some form of beekeeping project. The common practice is to give expensive European-style hives to poor farmers in an effort to improve their efficiency and productivity. Yet this approach completely misses one crucial and important fact. It is *expensive*.

Apart from costing around £200 these hives are complicated and expensive for beekeepers in the developing world to maintain. As a result more often than not they are gutted of their machinery and used as storage tanks

On the other hand local-style hives are quick, easy and inexpensive to make. Using local materials they cost as little as 60p to get started. They allow rural small-holders to easily up-scale honey production at low cost and effort. While they may not be as 'productive' in a conventional sense as European-style hives, for subsistence farmers they demand very little in terms of labour.

Due to its low cost, this method of beekeeping is accessible to some of the most economically vulnerable around the world. Beekeepers place many hives in the forested areas of the developing world, allowing bees

to forage for nectar and pollen from a variety of flowers – rendering the forest a productive asset for local communities without the pressure to clear it for farmland. And due to the nature of the beekeeping practised in these *fixed comb* hives, the beekeeper is able to continue with their principal livelihood – often subsistence farming – without the financial, land, or time-commitment required with their more expensive, intensive counterparts. This is *extensive* beekeeping.

The *Bees for Development* charitable trust, based in Monmouth, has helped thousands of the poorest farmers around the world to supplement subsistence farming with profitable beekeeping. Our flagship programme is the Uganda Honey Trade Project where we are working with a small, cooperative in Kamwenge, Western Uganda to help farmers sell the small quantities of honey and wax they harvest to the distant market in the capital Kampala, at a fair price. Rather than selling the 20-30kg they can produce individually, small-scale farmers can boost their incomes by forming a cooperative to enable them to sell to distant markets at a scale that brings real income. In

the first three years of the project the cooperative has increased from trading around 250kg of honey to more than 14 tonnes in 2012-13.

Growing a small cooperative at the rate that has been achieved in Kamwenge is not without its challenges. Grant-dependency is often an unavoidable reality in many parts of the developing world and careful management has been required to ensure that the funding that comes from the project does not subsidise unprofitable activities. We have worked closely with management and staff of the cooperative to calculate, thoroughly, the total costs of collecting, processing and selling honey. This relatively simple task does not appear to have been done before: too often in other projects the cooperative closes when the funded project comes to an end.

The wider benefits of the project are plain to see. In addition to the benefits from the sale of honey the pollination services provided by bees also significantly increase farmers' crop yields. For instance the yields of coffee farmer Alice Tumwine have increased dramatically since she sited her apiary among her coffee plants. *Bee Health*, a paper by the National Assembly's Research Service in May estimated that the cost of replacing pollination services from bees with hand pollination in the UK would cost approximately £1.8 billion per year.

Alice uses the extra income to send her son Isaac to University, where he



Kamwenge coffee farmer Alice Tumwine's production is boosted by keeping bees.

is studying agronomy and hopes to return home to assist his parents once he graduates – complete with the added value training he has gained.

A key part of the co-operative is to have established a Collection Centre Network which coordinates honey collections in the Kamwenge District. The plan is for it to provide a robust and sustainable system for local beekeepers to sell their honey after our project concludes next year.

With just one year left for the project, we are working hard to ensure that the gains made in the first three years are reinforced during a gradual withdrawal of funding and consultancy support from the cooperative. The aim is for it to stand on its own feet independent of external actors. One thing is certain

– local subsistence farmers, young and old are now attuned to the massive economic benefits from beekeeping – not only from the obvious benefits of organic honey that flows from the hives but also from the pollination services that the bees provide.

Wales will never match the intensive, credit-card diplomacy of the likes of China which is constructing a massive new road through Kamwenge. However, we can promote ideas that work and are appropriate to the lives and lifestyles of the modern Ugandan small-holder.

Martin Jones is Project Officer with Bees for Development. www.beesfordevelopment.org



Local-style hives are quick, easy and inexpensive to make. They allow rural smallholders to easily increase their honey production with little effort and at low cost.



Expensive honey extractors designed for use with European-style 'frame hives' donated by the Government are incompatible with rural beekeeping practices in Africa. More often than not they are gutted of machinery and used as storage tanks.



Quilting for Africa

Maggie Cullinane explains how she became involved in a project to support mothers at risk from dying of complications in childbirth

Maggie Cullinane with children from Rummey Primary School, Cardiff, painting squares for the Quilt Project.

In March 2012 the Cardiff-based medical education charity Mothers of Africa organised a 33 mile sponsored walk. This is a distance equal to the average journey a woman in Africa would make on foot to get to medical help when pregnant.

I didn't take part in the walk, although I did provide a baton in the form of a couple of hoodies for the relay team entered by Cardiff School of Art and Design, where I work. At the time I barely knew anything about the charity, but throughout the day, regular emails updated us on the progress of the walkers. After about the fourth or fifth of these, I decided to see what this charity was all about and took a look at their website, where I read the following horrific statistics:

- Each day in Africa three Boeing 747s of mothers die in childbirth.
- A woman's risk of dying from treatable or preventable complications of pregnancy and childbirth over the course of her lifetime is 1 in 6 in Africa In developed parts of the world the risk is 1 in 7,300.
- Some African countries, like Benin,

have one anaesthetist per million people. In Cardiff alone there are 140.

Doing nothing more than lending a hoodie was no longer an option. I've only ever had the need for an anaesthetist once in my life, and when I did it was one of the Cardiff team who was there within minutes.

People often say that having children is the most natural thing in the world. All too often, however, Mother Nature needs a helping hand. We take it for granted in the developed world that we will have doctors and midwives available to make sure our babies are brought safely into the world. We forget so easily how lucky we are. The night my son was born was the luckiest of my life.

Complications from fairly early in my pregnancy had meant that by the time I reached eight months I had to be checked in hospital every two days. I managed to get within a week of my due date but by then it was decided that there was just no point in my staying pregnant. My baby was hardly growing and I was getting sicker. Labour was induced and although nothing much happened at first, when it did it happened fast. My son's

heart rate dropped dramatically and a call was made to alert theatre that we were on the way.

All of a sudden, the brake was taken off my bed and we were running down the corridor. I lost the next hour of my life, the hour in which I became a Mum. My son wasn't exactly born kicking and screaming. His first taste of oxygen came from a bag - the phrase "making no respiratory effort" on his notes still sends a chill through me. But he had a beating heart, and after a few minutes he was able to breathe on his own.

Had we had to wait for a theatre and an anaesthetist and surgical team to become available, it could have been a lot worse. The first month of his life wasn't easy, but today you would never know he came so close to not making it into the world at all. Even in the UK, not every woman needing a caesarean as desperately as I did is that lucky, and I've been acutely aware of that fact ever since. In Africa we wouldn't have stood a chance.

So when I read those figures about the dangers of bringing life into the world, just because you live on the wrong continent, straight away I wanted



Examples of designs of squares produced for the Quilt Project

to do something. I decided to resurrect a past fundraising project which had involved students and friends being sponsored to create fabric squares, which I then made up into a quilt. Having previously raised £700, I set myself a target of £1,000.

Over the summer of 2012, when every other woman in Britain seemed to be reading *Fifty Shades of Grey*, I was coordinating the Mothers of Africa Sponsored Quilt Project. It was difficult at first, but then the squares started to come in thick and fast, and eventually we got there, with contributions coming not just from the UK, but also from mainland Europe, USA, Kuwait and Japan. The finished quilt was exhibited at the Pierhead Building in Cardiff Bay, and the final total raised reached nearly £1,300. I felt totally elated at reaching the target and very proud of what we had achieved as a group. However, I also felt quite sad that it was all over.

Within a few weeks, I decided to start

all over again, but this time on a much bigger scale. I started thinking of all the other people out there who might want to help, people who love sewing, textile groups, the schools and colleges who might like to run a classroom project that could help to save the lives of the women of Africa and their babies. The original quilt was donated to the charity, for use in publicity, but with more quilts, we could send them out to Africa to be distributed in the communities there. Eventually, we would like to be able to send packs of squares out to Africa for the women to make up and sell themselves. That's a little way off yet, but one day we'll get there.

So what initially started as a one-off summer project is now a permanent initiative, open to all, irrespective of age, location or ability. Our first exhibition, in June 2013, featured quilts created by schoolchildren from Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. The youngest participants were three years old. Some of those quilts have now been taken

out to Zambia and are on display in the local hospital and in the education centre built by Mothers of Africa in Shiyala village. Our next exhibition, in Spring 2014, will be on the theme of hopes and aspirations for the future, and will be held in Cardiff School of Art and Design's brand new building in Llandaff, Cardiff. There will be quilts featuring squares produced by Zambian artists and children from the village, on one of the charity's recent visits. These will be shown alongside designs created by students from both Cardiff School of Art and Design and Bridgend College.

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Maggie Cullinane is a Technician Demonstrator at Cardiff Metropolitan University's School of Art and Design and organiser of the Mothers of Africa Sponsored Quilt Project. See <http://www.moaquilt.wordpress.com> for more details of next Spring's exhibition in Cardiff.

8

Heritage

Articles

Wales remembers the trenches

Ghostly imprints of an epicentre of the maritime age

Wales remembers the trenches

Deian Hopkin outlines the activities being planned to commemorate the centenary of the Great War

In France and Belgium the thousands of cemeteries and the monuments at Vimy, Thiepval and Tyne Cot are a constant reminder of the scale and intensity of the First World War that was fought on their soil, while the bugles of Menin are a daily reminder of its cost. Although the war was not physically fought in Britain, the human consequences were visited on every town, village, community and family. Even in those 52 communities in England and Wales - the 'Thankful Villages' like Herbrandston in Pembrokeshire - which were spared any deaths, there was a painful legacy of survival.

Determining how best to commemorate the Great War has been a difficult task because there is a balance to be struck between reflecting on the individual sacrifice and suffering on the one hand, and the dispassionate examination of the causes and, indeed, justification of the war on the other. Some groups and organisations want to commemorate specific military encounters while others want to remember the pacifists and conscientious objectors. There needs to be room for both.

It is generally accepted that this is not a moment for celebration and the Welsh programme is firmly founded on the theme of reconciliation. While acknowledging the importance of commemorating major events, such as the battles of the Somme or Paschendaele, we need to reflect on the wider issues, the impact of the war on society, politics, culture and on international relations.

There is a strong sense of European engagement in the Welsh preparations. Early events will include a celebration of the contribution of Belgian refugee artists and sculptors to Wales, while a joint exhibition is being developed between the Royal Welch

Fusiliers Museum in Caernarfon Castle, the Saxony Regiment Museum in Dresden and the community of Armentieres in France to recall the Christmas Truce of 1914.

Extending our knowledge and understanding of the war involves an ambitious programme of digitising materials relating to the period. *The Welsh Experience of the First World War*, led by the National Library of Wales and funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee, will provide 190,000 pages of text, 50 hours of audio and 20 hours of film dealing with all aspects of Welsh life during the War. The archives of major War poets will be made available as well as army records, diaries, letters and recordings from the collections held by the BBC and the South Wales Miners Library. A searchable archive of Welsh newspapers during the period will transform our ability to research communities. The Heritage Lottery Fund has also awarded a grant to Cardiff University to digitise the cartoons of Joseph Staniforth which appeared through the war in the *Western Mail*.

All of this will provide the basis for new curriculum activity in schools and colleges across Wales, though the primary focus will be on the local experience as revealed through the study of local resources. Indeed, the most visible legacy of the war in Wales are memorials in town centres and inside public buildings, many of which are in need of restoration or even rescue. It is hoped to encourage as many as possible to explore the 7,000 and more war graves in every part of Wales, 3,000 of which are in Glamorgan alone, which have been listed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and further research on which could enrich our local history.

This might form the basis for a wider exploration, following the trail, so to speak, to Europe and beyond. The Heritage Lottery Fund has launched small grant schemes for schools and communities to undertake local projects relating to the history of the War. The first grants have already been announced, in Brecon,



Powys and Flintshire and many more will follow. There will also be funding, from the War Memorials Trust and others for the restoration of memorials while the impressive memorial at Mametz Wood on the Somme is also being refurbished.

New physical spaces are being created as well. The Heritage Lottery Fund has supported the purchase of Yr Ysgwrn, the family home of Hedd Wyn, which will be developed as a visitor centre in which the War will feature strongly. And, thanks to the efforts of a campaign group, there will be a new memorial to the general Welsh sacrifice in the war on land donated by the local council at Langemark, near Pilkem Ridge, scene of the ferocious battle of 1917 and where there already exists a memorial to Hedd Wyn. There is even a plan to reconstruct trenches in north Wales, where practice trenches were used for training purposes.

Cultural aspects of the war will feature very strongly in the Welsh programme. Welsh National Opera have commissioned a work based on *In Parenthesis*, David Jones' remarkable autobiographical account of the Battle of the Somme. Welsh National Theatre is producing a play based on Owen Sheers' poem *Mametz*, while there will be major retrospective exhibitions on First World War soldiers at the National Library and the National Museum.

Next year the Gregynog Festival will be focusing on the generosity of Margaret and Gwendoline Davies, the Gregynog sisters, in supporting Belgian artists and composers in Wales during the war period. One of them Eugeen Vanfleteren, handcrafted the Eisteddfod Chair posthumously awarded to Hedd Wyn in 1917.

A more general, UK wide programme is underway to encourage contemporary artists, designers and musicians to create new works, reflecting their own reaction to the centenary. The BBC has announced its largest ever programme of activity relating to one centenary: 2,500 hours of television and radio drama and documentaries extending over the four year period and dealing with every aspect of the war and aimed at every



Soldiers in the trenches at the Battle of the Somme between July and November 1916 when more than a million men were either killed or wounded.

kind of audience, including children. A particularly valuable output, from the perspective of the historian, will be the release of the thousands of interviews with veterans conducted for the 1960s series *The Great War* but which were never broadcast.

There is an obvious danger of centenary exhaustion especially if the coverage focuses unduly on endless battles, frustrating trench warfare and continuous tragedy. However, every effort is being made to provide a richer context. This is why in Wales we want to make sure that all points of view are reflected in the organisation of the centenary. A dedicated website, *Cymru'n Cofio-Wales Remembers 1914-1918* (www.walesremembers.org) is a platform and a portal, providing a continuous stream of information and guidance with associated social media. A representative Programme Board has been meeting for over a year while sub-groups on historical interpretation, community activities, strategic communication and educational resources have been contributing valuable advice.

As for the cost, a subject which is often raised by observers, there will be no new money given the severe limitations on Government finance. Funding will be mainly found from existing departmental budgets to supplement the financial support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and others.

Above all, the programme has the active support of the First Minister and the Welsh Government and is also engaging politicians and civil leaders on all sides.

Centenaries can be difficult moments and in this case there are some additional complexities. What will happen in Ireland, especially in 2016 when another centenary approaches, reminding us of the role the British Army and its commanders played in suppressing the Easter Rising? What exactly will Russia commemorate - the Imperial War or the collapse of the Empire?

And how will Germany react? After all, they are our close allies in current conflicts. What good does it do to remind them of their own, less triumphant, experiences in 1918? There are some in the UK who do not flinch from triumphalism, as witnessed by the virulent comments in some parts of the media after a quiet appeal from Germany to leave judgements to historians. In commemorating this centenary it is vitally important that we find a balance between reflection and judgement. At the same time, it is an opportunity for each of us to ask what we would have done in the same circumstances?

Deian Hopkin is President of the National Library of Wales and, as the First Minister's Expert Adviser, chairs the Welsh Programme Board for the Centenary of the First World War.



Ghostly imprints of an epicentre of the maritime age

Coal ships tied up at Cardiff Docks in the early 20th Century.

Peter Finch looks back at a time when Cardiff was the coal capital of the world

Cities are not what they once were. The sense of unacceptable alienation Baudelaire felt when the landmarks of Paris around him were removed and his city changed through metropolitan renewal is no longer how the urban world is. By contrast alienation is now the norm. It's how we get through life, most of us, walking the city streets acknowledging no one simply because there are too many around for this to be done. In the countryside strangers are always spoken to. In the cities, if they can help it, no one speaks to you at all.

Alienation is a way of life. As cities have grown and regenerated themselves

they have become sanitized entities that seek to reflect each other the world over. Same stores, same street furniture, same landmark features, opera houses, State parliaments, corporate headquarters, street art, high rise apartment blocks, undercroft car parking, same branches of Tesco, or whatever the local equivalent might be, showing their gleaming teeth through their glass and aluminium doors.

Cardiff, which sold itself as Europe's newest capital, is no exception. We like to think that here in the nation's powerhouse we have created a unique metropolis. But in truth our revitalised, pedestrianised heart now looks much the same as the centres of Leicester, Nottingham, Manchester, or Newcastle.

There are students out there in the drunken two-bed houses of Cathays who are barely aware that this city is

on the coast. They know nothing of the great docks that once were, or that Cardiff in its industrial heyday was the world's leading coal exporter. The south of the place, everything from the main GWR rail line to the alluvial shoreline was filled with smoking industry: great dockyards, coal stays by the hundred, rail yards and steam and mountains of multi-racial sweat.

David Jenkins's *Shipowners of Cardiff – A History of the Cardiff and Bristol Channel Incorporated Shipowners' Association* may sound like a chore to read but it isn't. It is actually a fascinating reminder of what we once were and how the British industrial age had an epicentre in south Wales, big enough for the world to see, and one that left scars that we still haven't completely removed.

Until 1850 coal exports from Cardiff



Welsh steam coal at Cardiff Docks in 1927.

were carried in wooden Welsh sailing ships owned by Welsh shipowners. Trade was modest but about to explode. The native Welsh failed to see this. By the mid-1860s a new generation of immigrant entrepreneurs had arrived from the west Country, from Newcastle and elsewhere, to establish the now famous Cardiff shipping lines. These used steam ships, ships of iron, which could shift the black gold in quantity. John Cory, the Morel Brothers, Charles Stallybrass, Edward Hill.

Cardiff expanded its docks, added ship repair and extensive bunkering. It sent out its coal to the continent, to South America, to the far reaches of the empire. The Navy marked Welsh steam coal as the variety best for its ships. At its height, in the years immediately before the First World War, 22 million tons a year went out through Cardiff, Barry and Penarth. In return Cardiff imported grain, ore and pit props. The Shipowners' Association had 77 member companies and controlled almost 750,000 gross tons of shipping.

Not that the Association always controlled things for the best, as David Jenkins points out in this far from dull history. No mention appears anywhere in the Association's minutes of the practice, highly prevalent in Cardiff at the time, of over insuring vessels and then sinking them to claim the marine insurance. This

Cardiff expanded its docks, added ship repair and extensive bunkering. It sent out its coal to the continent, to South America, to the far reaches of the empire.

led underwriters to impose an additional premium for any vessel registered at Cardiff. Which led, naturally, to local fleets being shifted from the city to London, Bideford and the Bahamas in order to avoid additional costs. The Port of Cardiff's reputation as a ship owning giant was sullied for decades.

However, the Association did predict the future. In 1920 it suggested the joining together of the Taff and the Ely as feeders to a great new port facility. In 1929 it proposed the building of a dam between Penarth head and the Queen Alexandra Dock. It took until 1999 with the port now a pale shadow of its former self for this to happen.

The ships the Association operated have now all vanished. Contemporary trade is now container or dredger with virtually nothing owned by entrepreneurs based in the Welsh capital. Even Reardon-Smith, the largest of them all, went to the economic wall in 1985. All

that remains are photographs.

The best of these form the Hansen Collection now housed at the National Waterfront Museum in Swansea. Father and Son, Lars Peter and Leslie Hansen ran a Cardiff-based photographic business majoring in taking shots of every ship that sailed in and out of the port. Their superb collection amounts to more than 4,500 black and white images. Some of the best are reprinted in David Jenkins' second book, *Shipping at Cardiff – Photographs from the Hansen Collection*.

It's the sheer variety here that amazes - steamers, sailing ships, diesel-engined traders. There are ore carriers, motor tramps, tankers, liners, tugs, trawlers, dredgers, cutters, paddle-steamers, minesweepers, nuclear submarines, corvettes, destroyers and frigates. Of the port you don't see much. The shots show ships at sea although docksides do occasionally feature. There's a skyline of cranes and dock offices that now no longer exist. Cardiff has turned its waterfront into a freshwater leisure lake.

But the Port is still out there. South of the barrage and built on reclaimed land the Roath Dock and the Queen Alexandra are well beyond any kind of public access. These are times of heightened security after the ball. You can spot a ship, occasionally, its white superstructure moving slowly somewhere beyond the BBC's Porth Teigr studios and the hi-rise apartment blocks that dot the shore. Cardiff's seafaring teeth are still in place but unless you worked there you'd be forgiven for not realising.

Peter Finch is literary editor of the *welsh agenda*. His latest book *Edging the Estuary*, an exploration of the heritage of the Welsh coast from Chepstow to Worms's head, was published by Seren in September. *Shipowners of Cardiff: A Class By Themselves – A History of the Cardiff and Bristol Channel Incorporated Shipowners' Association and Shipping At Cardiff – Photographs from the Hansen Collection*, both by David Jenkins, are published by the University of Wales Press.

9

Comms

Articles

Magazines forced to grasp funding nettle

'Don't hate the media, be the media'

Magazines forced to grasp funding nettle

Malcolm Ballin reports on radical changes to the future support of Welsh writing in English

Welsh magazines in English are heading for a shake-up following a report proposing radical changes to their funding. The report was commissioned and accepted by the Welsh Books Council. In future its support for magazines will be geared to a maximum ratio of twice the grant funding compared with the income they generate from sales and advertising. This compares with a ratio of about 4:1 at present.

The three magazines that make up the core of the sector - *Poetry Wales*, *Planet* and *New Welsh Review* - have a collective history going back fifty years. They were originally funded by the Arts Council of Wales which set up a series of three-year franchises in the late 1980s. This funding system is now managed by the Welsh Books Council.

To qualify for Books Council support magazines need to be 'literary' to a significant extent, to be produced at a minimum of quarterly intervals and to present convincing three-year plans. In addition about half a dozen other magazines, including *the welsh agenda*, receive less generous financial support, sometimes restricted to their 'literary' or 'cultural' pages.

In 2012 the Books Council set up a review panel led by Tony Bianchi, a writer and former Literary Director at the Arts Council, supported by Tim Holmes, Senior Lecturer in Cardiff University's School of Journalism, and Alex Clark, formerly Editor of *Granta*. Their report, published in July 2013, declared that the magazines had:

"...entered a period of stagnation

with declining readerships, unsustainable funding levels and significant (although by no means universal) dissatisfaction with some aspects of content and range of material available".

Today the three leading 'franchised' magazines average sales of below 600 per issue, an amount that has fallen by almost 30 per cent since 2006-7. The Books Council subsidy now averages over £24 per copy and covers as much as 80 per cent of total costs. There are serious worries about prospective competition from digital media, though this has yet to have a substantial impact. Only one magazine, *New Welsh Review*, has as yet established a paid-for on-line presence, though others are planning to do so. The Bianchi panel calls for "a radical response".

As well as dealing with financial and commercial concerns, the panel reports readers' worries, touching on what is described as a lack of "personality" and "humour" and some perceived "cliquishness" in the magazines. They are seen as weak in their coverage of current affairs, politics and history, and need more engagement with specifically Welsh subjects.

However, the panel rejected the accusation of "cliquishness" among commissioned writers. The contributors were actually highly varied. On the other hand, the panel found that articles did tend to "a perceived sameness of tone and perspective".

The Anglophone public sphere in Wales has traditionally had a strong

sense of educational mission. In many respects this is a source of strength, but it can easily be interpreted as over selective and even condescending. In a hotly disputed observation the late Tony Conran once described literary culture in Wales as “a pedagocracy”.

The review panel’s main recommendations propose:

- Books Council support should be geared to a maximum ratio of 2:1 for grant and generated income compared with about 4:1 now.
- Much broader coverage of subject areas outside the ‘literary’ field, especially current affairs, politics, history, and the environment.
- Allocation of more resources to digital development.
- More sensitive responses to criticisms from readers.
- Better promotion and marketing.

The Books Council has substantially endorsed these findings and announced a new basis of funding on the 2:1 gearing concept from April 2015 when the current franchises run out. The next series of awards will last for a four-year period, as against the present three-year span. After the first four years the magazines will either become self-sustaining or will be free to apply for one of two new categories of grant: for ‘General Magazines’, that is to say not exclusively ‘literary’ or ‘cultural’ offerings; and the other for specifically ‘Literary Magazines’.

These grants will be based on similar criteria and limited to 50 per cent of total expenditure. In addition, ‘seed-funding’ will be available for innovative proposals; and there will be encouragement for digital initiatives, including a fund of £5,000 set aside for training in this area. This is not a large sum when related to the costs of many professional training activities. The discussion so far has been silent on payments for contributors and staff.

The Bianchi proposals aim at shaking up the present, long-established pattern by introducing more diversity.



Iconic August 1970 first cover of *Planet*, Wales’ longest-running English language magazine.

Before the review’s publication, Gwen Davies’s editorial in the 100th issue of *New Welsh Review* (Summer 2013) expresses apprehension about its possible outcomes. In a critique of my recent book *Welsh Periodicals in English 1882-2012*, she takes issue with magazines being judged mainly on their relatively low circulations:

“Ballin writes that “...there has always been a risk that the appeal of the magazines [seems] limited to a restricted, intimate part of the public sphere... dominated by intellectuals, educators and academics.” But surely this ‘intimate... public sphere’, which pioneers such as Owen Morgan Edwards and Keidrych Rhys created

in the wake of nineteenth-century nation building, should be today measured by depth not breadth, by influence, perception, judgement, by those economically valueless but participatory intangibles such as social media reach, author tours and festival presence? By its – dare to say it – educational importance, its filtering of ideas, taste; its filtering out the crass, the untrue, the ignorant and the lazy?

This determined defence emphasises the editor’s perception that the cultural impact of the magazine is already potent and challenging. Her celebration of the magazine’s 100th issue proclaims its active presence at the Hay Festival, in association with Aberystwyth

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University, its reach beyond “the intimate public sphere” to include work by the Argentinian ‘literary star’, Andrés Neumann (translated by Richard Gwyn), an extract from Francesca Rhydderch’s new ‘family biography’, *The Rice Paper Diaries*, and a photo-essay on ‘The Manufactured Coastscape of Wales’ by Roger Tiley.

Bianchi’s review acknowledges the exceptional work and dedication of magazine editors. It recognises that the franchised magazines “continue to publish the best writing in Wales” and observes that “their role in providing a platform for Welsh perspectives and voices is valued highly, if critically, by the great majority who come into contact with them.” But it still finds that, despite these virtues, the sector is in crisis, needs to embrace radical change and to be more responsive to its potential readership. As a first reaction, the supportive editorial (Summer 2013) in the Welsh-language satirical review *LOL* revels in Bianchi’s criticisms of the English-language magazines and (maybe tongue-in-cheek) quotes solely and enthusiastically from the critical comments in the report.

The first published response to the Books Council’s actual announcement of future changes comes in a short but highly positive piece on the end-page in the current issue of *Planet* (Autumn 2013). It welcomes the Council’s emphasis on the need for a wider range of subject matter, seeing this as giving *Planet* “the freedom to respond to developments in 21st Century Wales while maintaining our distinctive, radical and wide-ranging presence.” *Planet* also welcomes the “more flexible approach to multi-platform publishing” and announces that it is already developing a digital version of the magazine - to be published alongside the print version and *Planet*’s existing multimedia website. Indeed this issue of *Planet* itself deals trenchantly with many current political and social issues, such as shortcomings in children’s wellbeing in Wales, policies

on disability and the drive for widening access in the universities. It also has space for some of the areas that the review felt were neglected: sport (Rachel Trezise on a roller derby in the Valleys) and popular music (Rhian E. Jones on recent developments in the Welsh scene).

There has as yet been no published response from *Poetry Wales*; the decision of Zoë Skoulding to retire as editor (announced in the Summer 2013 issue) may have inhibited comment.

The timing of events from now on allows magazines some space to adjust to the new regime. Current franchises still have more than a year to run. Proposals under the new four-year funding system have to be prepared by the ‘early autumn’ of 2014. The increased period for new franchises is itself consciously intended to give extended support to allow magazines to become more sustainable. Nothing is planned to be precipitate.

However, more competition in the sector appears likely. Within a year from now existing magazines are expected to readjust their forward plans to meet more stringent funding rules from the first year of the new franchise and to compete with new contenders who may be attracted by the more relaxed requirements for content and timing. Well before the end of these franchises in 2019 it will be clear to what extent the radical changes called for by the Bianchi review have been achieved.

It is always difficult for long-established institutions to change gear quickly and it can be dangerous, alienating existing readers and supporters. The Books Council’s new funding arrangement stays faithful to its ‘hands-off’ tradition. It enlarges the potential scope for magazines and gives them more freedom but does not prescribe particular directions of change. However, the whole thrust of the Bianchi review suggests that the existing magazines need to grasp some aggressive nettles if they are to retain, let alone expand, their readerships, achieve

the desired higher levels of sustainability and meet competition from new contenders. ‘Business as usual’, with a few adjustments, will not be enough.

The Review’s recommendation to add more entrepreneurial experience to the membership of the Grants Panel of the Books Council is not addressed in the Council’s public response. However, this could lead to a reduction in the historic emphasis on literary values. The Books Council does seek significant changes in the present configuration. This would favour joint ventures or mergers or entirely new formats. The proposed drive to compensate for the lack of broadsheet newspapers in Wales will encourage exponents of campaigning journalism in magazine format.

A more active presence in cultural events such as the Hay International Festival, the Cheltenham Literary Festival or the Edinburgh Festival could be anticipated. Hosting live debates with readers, either through sponsored conferences or on-line would appeal to a younger demographic and also to private sponsors.

The announced changes do not entail any descent into popularization, although the proposed change to the funding ratio will be profoundly challenging for the existing magazines. In my book I show that finding a substantial audience for excellent writing on a wide range of topics, extending beyond national boundaries, underpins the success stories of self-sustaining magazines outside Wales. The new scenario for Welsh magazines in English demands a similar response.

Malcolm Ballin is an independent researcher, based at Cardiff University. He specialises in periodical literature in Wales, Ireland and Scotland. His book *Irish Periodical Culture* appeared in 1998 and his *Welsh Periodicals in English: 1882-2012* was published by the University of Wales Press in June 2013.

‘Don’t hate the media, be the media’

Simon Gwyn Roberts asks whether the internet can plug the democratic deficit in mainstream Welsh press and broadcasting

Can the growth in the scope and ambition of politically motivated websites provide an answer to the democratic deficit in the mainstream media in Wales? In the last issue of *the welsh agenda* the Assembly’s Presiding Officer Rosemary Butler noted that the Welsh readership of London-based newspapers is around 600,000 while the combined readership of Wales’s six home-based daily newspapers is only 350,000. At 307,000 the Welsh viewing figures for the BBC network six o’clock news is greater than the 285,000 who tune into to BBC Wales Today.

As Rosemary Butler put it, “We have a UK media, both broadcasters and print, which fail to relay the huge differences in approach to public policy in devolved fields such as health and education, to their substantial Welsh audiences.” Could the internet provide a platform for addressing this information gap?

In answering the question it is instructive to examine the experience of other places where the mainstream media are in various ways deficient. It is unsurprising to learn that the role of online journalism is considerably more politically significant in places that lack a long-established tradition of independent print journalism.

Of course, hopes and predictions that the internet will reinvigorate the public sphere are far from new, with entrenched perspectives and polarising opinions characterising the debate for years. For example, as early as 2001 in their book *Realising Democracy Online* Jay Blumler and Stephen Coleman called for a “civic

commons in cyberspace”, a new kind of web-enabled public sphere.

Today there are examples around the world where cooperation and collaboration between social media, blogs, and professional journalists offer an exciting future. For instance, I visited post-revolution Tunisia one year after the revolution which deposed the Ben Ali regime to meet journalists active on the *Nawaat* website - strapline *don’t hate the media, be the media*.

It echoes similar websites established in parts of the former Soviet Union - notably, the post-Colour Revolution nations of Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan. Both were lent impact by earlier revolutions which located a vibrant and informative news media at the heart of debates about democracy. Indeed, *Nawaat* provided a neat encapsulation of the role of hub websites in relation to the more widely publicised role of social media when it published a detailed story debunking what it called the myth of the Twitter revolution in Tunisia. It concluded that social networks were neither the catalyst nor the organizational framework of the protest movement. *Nawaat* journalist Afef

College, Oxford, argues that the influence of online news should not be predicated purely on the number of readers.

In many smaller scale but deficient media environments, the increasing influence of one or two dominant websites, portals or hubs, becomes apparent. Indeed, they frequently sidestep the mainstream press entirely. Sites like *Ukrayanska Pravda* (Ukraine) and *Liberali* (Georgia) generate significant amounts of political attention and illustrate a tendency towards hybrid forms of journalism. Professionals mobilise a wide variety of social media and local blogs to form politicised news websites with enough non-aligned sources to allow readers to encounter a range of alternative perspectives. The problem of how to ‘use’ fragmented yet informative and important forms of social media is therefore addressed.

The now defunct *WalesHome* site attempted to do something similar here, and that baton has now passed to the IWA’s *clickonwales*. The quality of debate is immediately apparent, as is the range and significance of the subject matter, although many would suggest the extra key is increasing the size of the audience and the amount of interactivity generated. But, to restate Abiye Megenta’s argument in a different context, an influential site like *Ukrayanska Pravda* is certainly not accessed by the majority of the Ukrainians, but by a significant

It is unsurprising to learn that the role of online journalism is considerably more politically significant in places that lack a long-established tradition of independent print journalism.

Abrougui argued that the site’s impact as a collated source of semi-professional, determinedly independent journalism far outweighed that of individual blogs and social media.

For us in Wales, web access, even now, continues to be cited as a barrier to engagement. But writing in the context of sub-Saharan Africa, Ethiopian journalist Abiye Megenta, a Fellow at Nuffield

percentage of politically engaged people – not just political anoraks. And this is a direct result of a dysfunctional (indeed, almost non-existent) mainstream press that fails to provide the voting public with a range of political perspectives on Ukrainian politics. But its influence is also partly because of resources: the site receives external funding which allows it to employ professional journalists



Post revolution street scene in Tunisia.



News stand in Georgia.

full-time, who work on distilling and conveying the mass of information deriving from social media.

This funding model is further complicated by the fact that sites like these often find it difficult to attract advertisers, who may shy away from controversial content – hence the need for that funding to come from external sources. In the case of the former Soviet Union it often comes from foreign NGOs like the Soros Foundation, and some would argue this inevitably compromises neutrality. However, there are also signs of independent and robust funding models emerging in other parts of the world. For instance, *Malaysiakini*, another portal website that deliberately seeks to provide an alternative to the mainstream press in Malaysia (a country in which racial and religious issues are highly politicised) is a subscription-based website that makes a profit, derived from relatively small numbers of committed readers who recognise its value in providing alternative journalistic perspectives. In essence it is a public service model, supported not by a universal license fee but by a certain percentage of the voting public.

Might a version of this model work in Wales? A small amount of any future tax-raising powers for the Welsh government could be used to fund a modest investment which hosts a small number of journalists and academics tasked with gatekeeping and mobilising the vast amount of comment, information and opinion emanating from social media and the wider blogosphere across the country. By breaking the BBC's monopoly it might also resonate with the new Welsh Government Commission on Public Service Government, tasked as it is with suggesting innovative alternatives to service delivery without altering the overarching commitment to public sector cooperation.

Simon Gwyn Roberts is a senior lecturer in journalism at the University of Chester


Fishlock's File

When a corkscrew and honey saved a royal line

Trevor Fishlock describes how a former Prince of Wales survived an arrow through his head

Articles

Fishlock's File:

When a corkscrew and honey saved a royal line

Live wire act

Book reviews

An oblique glance at a cloud of artists

A problematic Zionist role model

Portrait of an elusive bohemian

Wells we should know

As a writer by trade I spend some of my time gathering stories. The one I'm about to relate comes with a guarantee: Amusement or your Money Back. You will know some parts of it but I bet you won't know the astonishments. I hope you are not in any way qualmish.

To begin at the end, it was a cold February morning in 1461 and it was clear that Owen Tudor had not expected to get the chop.

He had just fought in a War of the Roses battle at Mortimer's Cross and as a Lancastrian was on the losing side. Still, he trusted he would get a pardon. It was only when he arrived at Hereford market and saw the block and axe that he realized they were for him.

He mentioned to the executioner that his head had once lain in the lap of a queen. This was strange but true. Forty years before, Owen Tudor was a presentable Anglesey boy in his twenties who found a job in the household of Henry V, the forever glorious hero of Agincourt. In 1420, five years after that battle, Henry married Catherine of Valois, daughter of the king of France.

Henry died two years later and in time his widowed queen warmed to Owen's Anglesey charm. A priest married them in 1429 and they had

four children, most importantly Edmund and Jasper Tudor, respectively the Earls of Richmond and Pembroke. Edmund married Margaret Beaufort and three months after his death, when she was not yet fourteen, she gave birth to Henry Tudor at Pembroke Castle. Jasper devoted his energies to making the boy King Henry VII. Ahead lay the march through Wales, Bosworth and Henry's battlefield crowning in 1485.

Here we rewind to the year 1403, another time of war in Wales, the revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr against the rule of Henry IV. The struggle was going badly for the king; he was short of money and losing his grip. He commissioned his son Henry, Prince of Wales, to fight as a garrison commander. Henry was only fifteen, but like all sons of the nobility was trained for war.

The king's crisis deepened as the powerful Percy family of northern England moved to overthrow him. Their eldest son, Harry Hotspur, sided with Glyn Dŵr. But impatient Hotspur rashly showed his hand too soon. Without waiting for his father's forces or Glyn Dŵr he raised his banner against the king in July 1403. The armies clashed at Shrewsbury and the sky was dark with arrows. Hotspur was killed.



American actor Guy Roberts playing Henry V in a new production staged in Houston and Prague this year by the Prague Shakespeare Company he founded in 2008.

An arrow penetrated the left side of Prince Henry's face just below the eye and lodged in the base of his skull. It looked like a mortal wound. He was carried sixty miles to Kenilworth Castle and treated with potions. These were useless. The only way to save his life was to extract the iron arrowhead which lay dangerously close to vital blood vessels. John Bradmore, a surgeon, was called from London to perform the operation. He found that the arrowhead was embedded in bone at the back of Henry's head, six inches from the entry wound beside his nose. One can only imagine the pain.

There was no room for error.

Bradmore kept the wound open by filling it with a packing sewn into clean linen soaked in honey. Then he went to Kenilworth's blacksmith's workshop. He was not only a surgeon, he was a goldsmith and knew how to fashion metal.

Time was short and he was thinking on his feet. At the blacksmith's forge he fashioned an ingenious instrument, part corkscrew, part tongs. He inserted this into the hole in the prince's face and probed. When he made contact with the arrowhead he opened the tongs with the screw and then tightened them so that they gripped it. Moving the instrument gently

from side to side he dislodged the arrowhead from the bone and pulled it out through the entry wound. He kept the cavity filled with wine and honey for three weeks to prevent infection and complete the healing.

John Bradmore left an account of the operation and the making of the extractor. Henry Cole, a Cotswold's blacksmith who specializes in fashioning historical ironwork, followed Bradmore's notes to make a replica of the device and demonstrated to me how it worked. I showed the extractor to Michael Fardy, a maxillofacial surgeon in Cardiff who greatly admired Bradmore's skill.

Henry recovered and returned to the war in Wales, experience which served him well in France. His head wound in 1403 was a very close-run thing. Had he died of it there would have been no Henry V, no Agincourt, no widowed queen for Owen Tudor, no Tudor dynasty, no Henry VIII, no Elizabeth. A lot of history was balanced on a corkscrew and honey.

He had just fought in a War of the Roses battle at Mortimer's Cross and as a Lancastrian was on the losing side. Still, he trusted he would get a pardon. It was only when he arrived at Hereford market and saw the block and axe that he realized they were for him.



Rhian Edwards pictured at Kenfig Farm, Bridgend. Photo: Peter Morgan

Live wire act

Alice Entwistle profiles a poet who says the Welsh want to suck the marrow out of life

It's a great tale. Young law graduate from LSE, heading for a bright future in tax consultancy, arrives for the kind of exam on which that future depends. Decides at the door that she can face neither. Spends the rest of the day in an Islington café with her cigarettes, writing a short story.

It makes me smile every time. As does the sequel. Some months later the same gabby, clear-eyed thing encounters a *tableful of poets* – for heaven's sake - in a Soho bar one evening, fresh from Covent Garden and the Poetry Café's weekly open mic spot. At their urging, she is intrigued enough to drop in the following Tuesday. "I expected to feel completely out of place and rather over-awed," she said. "Instead I came away thinking 'I could do this'."

So she tried; a single poem delivered at the Poetry Café in Covent Garden led to a 20-minute spot at a 'New Blood' night the following month. "A couple of months after that I won the very first Poetry Idol at what was Shortfuse at the Camden Head". She was hooked.

A decade later, with an award-winning full-length collection and some 300 hundred gigs under her belt, Rhian Edwards deserves to be enjoying the fruits of an eventful eighteen months. Her return from London to her hometown of Bridgend coincided with a wave of literary distinctions: a shortlisting for the Forward Prize for Best First Collection followed the 2011 (biennial) John Tripp Award for Spoken Poetry. A three-month residency at Aberystwyth Arts Centre in the summer preceded her success at the Wales Book of the Year Award in July, with *Clueless Dogs* (Seren).

Born in 1977, Edwards recalls her childhood years roaming in and beyond a still-genteel Bridgend bordered by river, wobbly bridges and sand dunes. However, these came to an end when, at eight years old, she moved with her divorced mother to Derbyshire. A precociously early reader, she developed into something of a solitary, her taste for an audience developing alongside a lively line in what can only be called

dollhouse noir. But she returned to her father's home in Wales regularly, firstly for the school holidays, later from her studies at LSE and the Bohemian years which followed. "Wales was always home, no matter where I was," she says.

readings have little in common with the extremes encompassed by 'live literature' - the poetry slam, hip-hop, and their now rather elderly-seeming forerunner, performance-poetry. Which might be why I can think of very few

Although readings play a vibrant part in literary culture across the UK, especially in the spreading phenomenon of the literary/arts festival, most conventional poetry readings have little in common with the extremes encompassed by 'live literature' - the poetry slam, hip-hop, and their now rather elderly-seeming forerunner, performance-poetry.

Edwards' success at the Book of the Year was hailed as a surprise - new young left-fielder suddenly propelled centre-stage. Never mind that an exceptionally strong shortlist also happened to be an all-women one, and that neither of the other contenders - Samantha Wynne Rhydderch (*Banjo*) and Deryn Rees-Jones (*Burying the Wren*) - though both distinctive and powerful poets, could yet be called a 'major' presence. Never mind, either, the ten long years of endeavour which went into the making of *Clueless Dogs*, debut or not, as Edwards reminds one interviewer. Which is not to say that there isn't a story worth telling about a feisty collection, still less its ingenious writer-performer.

In our multi-platformed technoculture, artists can reach all kinds of audiences in all kinds of places, and in all kinds of ways. Of course, different artforms depend on different kinds and degrees of witness. Whereas most literary texts simply need a reader and a source of light, the performing arts trade on live collective experience, when every iteration prompts fresh energy between performer(s) and audience(s).

Although readings play a vibrant part in literary culture across the UK, especially in the spreading phenomenon of the literary/arts festival, most conventional poetry

writers (of prose or poetry) whose practice *comfortably* crosses the page/stage rubicon in either direction, let alone both.

Having balanced the demands of 'page' and 'stage' from the outset, Edwards seems to find in their conjunction something very like an aesthetic, an oxygen-rich creative *raison d'être*. Presumably she dislikes the 'performance poet' tag for its (often unjust) association with winging-it, and shock-tactics. As she says, "Poetry doesn't have to be a performance laden with gimmicks in order to win the audience's attention". Instead, she describes herself, "as a page poet who reads well". This is partly for ethical reasons. "It's the responsibility of the poet to give a good and clear reading," she said. "The audience wants to be challenged but they also want to 'get' the poem and appreciate it. A throwaway reading that is unclear, rushed and wilfully obscure, just isn't fair to the audience or the poem."

The result is a wonderfully performable idiom ripe with sonic drama. "The sounds of the words are very important to me. I often edit by walking and talking to myself." And she adds, "Remembering my poems enables me to communicate them better."

An accomplished singer-songwriter, Edwards was strangely slow to sense

music's importance to her writing. "For a long time I didn't realise or appreciate that the two were very much intertwined in my work." Likewise she did not immediately embrace the riches of the speech-patterns she deliberately shrugged off in London. "I used to keep my Welsh accent very disguised. I'd impersonate Dorothy Parker and all these other people" until "I found I was much Welsher when I read my poems aloud. I want the clarity of the language to come across and somehow it just eggs the accent a bit."

Although it has been written - and rewritten - for the page (Edwards acknowledges the sternly elegant hand of Hugo Williams in teaching her to 'make every line count'), a spirited idiom is largely "dictated by what sounds right, even if it means inventing phrases and language." Poems like 'Going Back for Light' home in on the comforting pulse of dialect:

*Pair of chocolates, those eyes.
Daft over him, women were. His dark
looks that was,
Mind...*

Frequently, a jaunty disregard for conventional expression pumps through more enigmatic locutions, as when "She wears her head on the bone of his shoulder" ('Crossed'), or "I sigh the train South" ('Marital Visit'). Elsewhere, nouns and adjectives turn adroitly verbal. In the vengefully surreal 'Girl Meats Boy', which won the John Tripp award, knife and fork transform into

*soldiering guards
west and easting a world of plate
of petticoat white...*

There are perilous moments of over-orchestration in 'Back To Bed', largely indebted to Dylan Thomas:

*What a waste of good fawning
when the flattered is sleep-swooned!*

However, Edwards' idiom is mostly more

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Meistroli gwleidyddiaeth a datganoli

Hoffech chi gael lefel uwch o ddealltwriaeth o lywodraeth ddatganoledig yng Nghymru?

Mae Gradd Feistr Prifysgol Caerdydd mewn **Gwleidyddiaeth a Llywodraeth Cymru** yn astudio llywodraeth ddatganolig yng Nghymru er 1999; cyfundrefn sydd wedi'i seilio ar ffactorau hanesyddol a diwylliannol neilltuol, trefniant cyfansoddiadol sy'n esblygu'n gyflym, prosesau newydd o lunio polisiau, a chyfraniad cymdeithas sifil sydd wedi datblygu'n anwastad.

Gyda goblygiadau cyd-sofraniaeth a llywodraethiant aml-lefel yn ganolog i drafodaethau gwleidyddol cyfoes, mae'r rhaglen hon yn agor ffenestr ddiddorol ar dueddiadau ehangach mewn llywodraethiant Ewropeaidd a byd-eang.

Caiff y cwrs ei gynnig ar sail amser llawn neu ran amser drwy Ysgol Ieithoedd Ewropeaidd, Cyfieithu a Gwleidyddiaeth, Prifysgol Caerdydd.

I gael mwy o wybodaeth am y rhaglen, cysylltwch â:

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"Maer Radd Meistr mewn Llywodraeth a Gwleidyddiaeth Cymru yn gwrn 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.





“Wales was always a sanctuary for me... In England, people tended to be rather sparse with language and I knew that I didn’t belong there because I was always a juggernaut of words. It must have done their heads in, but by Welsh standards I wasn’t too bad. There is a *joie de vivre* I think, that is very particular to Wales – a kind of ... wanting to suck the marrow out of life.”

fleet-of-foot. Thus, the near-monstrously physical ‘Unmentionable’ which side-steps slapstick:

*He rusts my blood
cadavers my skin
sweating a smile
a jaundice-licked grin*

Likewise the gluttonous ‘Coldsore’ (*pulsing avid / as a stripped heart on display*), while a mosquito-swatting ‘Skeeter Syndrome’ segues delicately into philosophy:

*I opened my hand to a mangle of limbs,
a patch of my own blood – the stigma
of killing something full of me.*

Together image and wordplay weave from love and loss, faith and betrayal, cruelty and compassion a familiar narrative of human experience, darkly reminiscent of the lurid stories Edwards wove around her toys as a child (‘Broken Lifeboat’).

The accessibility commended by the Book of the Year judges is rarely decorous, as in ‘The Unkindness’:

*What of this cauliflowering arse?
Where are the buttocks that snake-
charmed?*

By way of explanation, the poet herself points to the cultural background she has gaily recovered, insisting that “the humour is very Welsh... not taking one’s self very seriously... That’s what I embrace really about being Welsh. More than anything, it’s the complete candour. Nothing is off bounds.”

Perhaps this is why a collection mostly written in London can feel decidedly partisan, as if the very process of surviving away from Wales somehow sharpened its value as cultural bedrock. “Wales was always a sanctuary for me... In England, people tended to be rather sparse with language and I knew that I didn’t belong there because I was always a juggernaut of words. It must have done their heads in, but by Welsh standards I wasn’t too bad. There is a *joie de vivre* I think, that is very particular to Wales – a kind of ... wanting to suck the marrow out of life.”

Edwards’ funny, earthy, moreish poetry hints at a literary-poetic wheel come full circle. The cultural punch of *Clueless Dogs* has much to do with what we might call its poetic stagecraft, its unself-conscious dusting-off of the ancient links between bard and audience. What else binds together Edwards’ unsentimental reflections on the unlovely socio-economic realities of her own

Bridgend, a “market town without a market”, her sidelong glances at a punishing social history (‘Going Back for Light’ and ‘The Welshman Who Couldn’t Sing’) and the unnerving tomfoolery of ‘Girl Meats Boy’?

“The Welsh love a good story,” she says. “I think that’s what I missed so much when I was in England.” Edwards’ homecoming concludes one chapter of an unusual literary tale. May the next find her crackling creative energy turned to more highly-charged, or subversive, ends. Live wires should be dangerous things.”

Alice Entwistle is a lecturer in English literature at the University of South Wales, where she co-directs the Centre for the Study of Media and Culture in Small Nations. Her *Poetry, Geography, Gender: Contemporary Women Rewriting Wales* has just been published by the University of Wales Press and a critical study of the poet Gwyneth Lewis is forthcoming. Thanks are due to Jenna Gaughan, whose 2013 unpublished interview with the poet supplied some of the materials used in this profile.

Reviews

An oblique glance at a cloud of artists

Osi Rhys Osmond



Relationships with Pictures – an Oblique Autobiography
Peter Lord
Parthian Press, 2013, £15

Over the last quarter of a century Peter Lord's contribution to our understanding and appreciation of our native art has been immense. His has been a vital study of the unrecognised, forgotten and hidden art of Wales. Now his autobiography, obliquely different from the usual format as he says in his title, illuminates his enthusiasms, highlights his methodology and reveals something of his early life and ancestry.

This book is well produced, full of fresh insights and thankfully not simply a reprise of the author's extensive previous writing.

Peter Lord is a singular individual and has trodden a somewhat lonely path through the corridors of our national institutions and museums. With the exception of the National Library, he has generally received little support and, on occasions what seems like obstruction to

his main theories and proposals. These have been an implacable desire to put unrecognised Welsh art in its rightful place in our institutions, and to give naïve or folk art or, as the author prefers to call it, artisan art, the same status that similar art enjoys in other countries, most notably in the United States.

At the same time there is much more to the book than the story of one writer's interest in the art of Wales. Although trained as an artist at Reading University Lord's interest in the art of Wales seems to have coincided with his Welsh cultural epiphany. Moving in the early 1970s to live in the Ceredigion uplands – housing was cheap due to agricultural change and economic decline - he was struck by the beauty of the language and the nature of the rural community in which he found himself. He quickly realised that a rapid erosion was taking place. He was witnessing a historic turning point that meant Welsh would be extinct in its heartland if nothing was done. Moreover, since they had settled in one of the most linguistically precarious parts of Wales, he and other non-Welsh speaking neighbours

learned the language and embraced the struggle for language rights, speaking publicly. In a number of critical books he combined revelations and reflections on our unrecognised native painters with the larger struggle for cultural and political autonomy. From his writing it appears he felt a sense of trespass in this challenged terrain. He admits to feeling an outsider wherever he is and confesses that part of the appeal of the art of his passions is that the artists themselves were in their time "outside the established order of things".

His zealous approach to his subject and his single mindedness has of necessity made him a somewhat intransigent character, not afraid to upset the experts, many of whom elicit little sympathy. He acknowledges his shortcomings, as far as he can see them and freely admits past errors. "Great artists do not interest me much," he concedes. "I mostly write about artisans and about trained painters marginalised by the mainstream of art historians." This says a great deal about his predilections and prejudices.

Lord investigates the lives and work of artists long since dead, largely 20th

His zealous approach to his subject and his single mindedness has of necessity made him a somewhat intransigent character, not afraid to upset the experts, many of whom elicit little sympathy.

were a major part of the problem. His sensitivity and consequent response to cultural calamity is to his credit. Unfortunately it is something that few are aware of, incomers or disappointingly many of the Welsh themselves. Lord soon

Century artists who generally left Wales, permanently, periodically or briefly to develop their training and careers. He ranges across the diaspora of those who left their working class roots to find or lose their way in London, Paris or in the case

of Evan Walters, even further afield. He pursues the patrons of artists who interest him, their families and their descendants. In John Cyrlas Williams he has discovered and brought to our attention the least known and perhaps the most gifted of them. Evan Walters and Archie Rhys Griffiths studied at Swansea School of Art before they graduated from the Royal College of Art and began to make their mark in the art world. Both enjoyed the patronage of Winifred Tennant Coombe early in their careers.

Cyrlas Williams was from a family made newly wealthy by the coal industry. He studied in Newlyn and Paris and painted extensively in France, experiences which seem to have imbued his work with a continental light, dexterity and a subtlety of touch missing from the likes of Archie Rhys Griffiths, one of the author's personal favourites. The lives of both Cyrlas Williams and Archie Griffiths are tragic tales, bedevilled by drink and depression. Neither fulfilled their potential. Their talents were dissipated by exile and isolation.

Among Lord's revelations is the work of the London artist Maurice Sochachewsky, who in the thirties painted mining life at Talywain, near Pontypool. Although examples of his work had been in the National Museum - several drawings were purchased at a London exhibition in 1938 - Lord had missed them on an earlier search. Coming from such a community I don't share the author's enthusiasm for this work. Nonetheless, Sochachewsky's letters, describing the life of the miners, particularly his journey underground to the coalface, are extraordinarily moving.

Essentially an art historian, Lord relishes the research, enjoys the chase and the acquisition and has now come to own many of the paintings he writes about, a seemingly large if not vast collection. His espousal of the merits of his artists could be - as in the famous case of Bernard Berenson - compromised by his partly commercial interest. Yet we are reassured that he is at pains to point out that his collection was not amassed as investment in the pecuniary sense. Rather, it has been

undertaken as responsible custodianship and Lord will pass them on to the nation on his demise. Meanwhile, he obviously very much enjoys living with the paintings.

The final chapter of the book reveals much about Lord himself, his personal beliefs or lack of them, his philosophy of life and his thoughts on what if anything, comes afterwards. Here he quotes and discusses the philosopher J.R. Jones, who invokes St Paul and examines Waldo William's use of the line from Paul "Within a cloud of witnesses" which had been quoted by the philosopher in his essay *Y Syniad o Genedl* ('The idea of a nation').

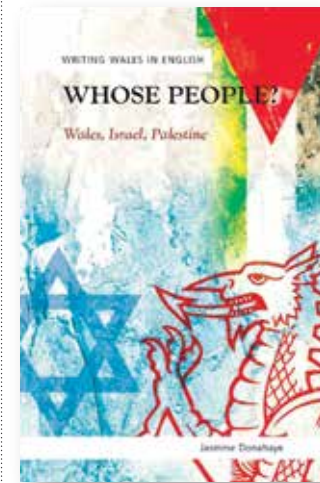
That Peter Lord's idea of a nation includes a national collection fully representative of its culture and history, is a given. Needless to say, like many of us, he is still waiting. *Relationships with Pictures* is a lively book, not exclusively about paintings, illustrated in black and white and colour, and full of well-told and interesting stories, many of them 'detective' stories.

There is little romance, apart from the author's love affair with the art in question. It is not strong on humour either and this may be the result of his spending his domestic days surrounded by the rather admonitory portraits of 19th Century preachers and dignitaries. However, it will be equally enjoyed by those with an interest in Wales, Welsh art and the non-art expert as the fascinating revelations of a complex and tenacious individual who has done more than anyone to ask the pertinent questions about the previously perceived history of the visual art of Wales.

Osi Rhys Osmond is a painter who lectures in Drawing, Painting and Art History at University of Wales Trinity St David.

A problematic Zionist role model

Naomi Jones



Whose People? Wales, Israel, Palestine
Jasmine Donahaye
University of Wales Press, 2012, £24.99

Jasmine Donahaye's upbringing bears similarities to my own. She learned Hebrew as a teenager on a kibbutz *ulpan* in Israel, and later started learning Welsh at UC Berkeley, before making her home and career in Wales. As she studied she noted that:

"Many connections and comparisons had been made between Wales and Israel, between Welsh and Hebrew, and between Welsh political and cultural nationalism and Zionism, all of which were understood by commentators in the 1990s and early 2000s to constitute elements of a widespread, remarkable tradition of 'Welsh identification with the Jews', a tradition of identification that had its roots in the deep past."

But then she goes on to say, "Only, of course, it didn't - or not quite in the ways that were claimed."

My own experience of the Welsh-Israel relationship is as the daughter of the Israeli writer, the late Judith Maro, and of the artist, the late Jonah Jones. They came to

live in Wales over sixty years ago, having met and married in the Palestine of the British Mandate following the Second World War. I was brought up with a child's working vocabulary of Hebrew alongside the English of our household and the Welsh we spoke in the village school.

As children we visited grandparents in Israel regularly, and from an early age were aware of the shadow of the Holocaust. My mother had grown up on Mount Carmel alongside Jews who had lost their whole families in the concentration camps. My father was among the first Allied troops to enter Bergen-Belsen in 1945, an experience which left what he described as "an ineradicable mental scar". And so the title alone of Donahaye's book about my ancestors through Welsh eyes, and her previous work of poetry, *Self-Portrait as Ruth*, were enough to claim my immediate attention.

Some manifestations of the Welsh-Jewish identification that Donahaye examines seem today part of a simplistic, almost fantastical commentary, positing "mythical biblical and Brythonic (ancient Celtic) ethnic origins for the Welsh people, and Hebrew roots for the Welsh language". The examples given include the sixth-century writing of the monk Gildas in *De Excidio Britanniae*, and in the 18th Century work, *Drych y Prif Oesoedd*, by Theophilus Evans. A map printed in 1900 and distributed to chapel Sunday schools all over Wales shows the names of the tribes of Israel and of areas in biblical Israel superimposed onto a map of the Welsh counties. Villages across Wales bear biblical names such as Golan, Horeb, Carmel, and Sion. Similarities were perceived between the grammatical structure of Hebrew and Welsh. According to generations of Welsh historiographers, all this amounted to evidence that the Welsh may be some lost eastern tribe!

On a deeper level, as Dorian Llywelyn wrote in 1999, examining *Y Ffydd Dai-ffuant* by Charles Edwards (1677), "Edwards's linguistic fantasy is part of his attempt to strengthen the grafting of Welsh national identity on to the trunk of Israel". Donahaye writes:

"While there are innumerable instances in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries of an invocation of Jewish biblical suffering as a metaphor for Welsh suffering, this is informed by a spiritual and theological tradition in which the Welsh become the children of Israel...".

She goes on to examine what she describes as the "significant degree of confusion between... notional representative or metaphorical Jews and ...historical post-biblical contemporary... of a particular present moment Jews", explaining that:

"In accounts of Welsh interest in Jews, evidence of interest in notional Jews is frequently and seemingly unconsciously conflated with evidence of interest in historical Jews, and this has led to a quite skewed impression of the imprint that these various forms of interest (and putative support) have left on the culture."

This "conflation of putative Welsh attitudes to notional and historical Jews" has its source in the early 20th Century, the time of the Celtic Revival, when cultural nationalism was growing alongside Welsh patriotism within the framework of the British Empire, in the work of writers such as the Reverend D. Wynne Evans. What makes this all the more complex is that Evans, just like the Rev John Mills before him, is a recognised conversionist and millenarianist, for whom the bottom line is to observe: "...the Jews, as a people, are not converted to Christ".

This is all evidence in Donahaye's monograph of a confused and ambivalent set of attitudes in the historiography that she examines.

The frequently confused imaging of Jews in the work of Welsh writers including David Lloyd George, Geraint Goodwin, Saunders Lewis, Caradoc Evans and Harri Webb is also examined by Donahaye, as she seeks to set aside the limitations posed by "an antisemitism/philosemitism opposition".

As a new wave of Welsh identification with Israel comes about during the rise of the Welsh nationalist movement, and on into the 1960s and 1970s, Donahaye perceives a more sophisticated process of Welsh identification with the Jews. By the end of the 20th Century in Wales - "a time of national narrative reinvented on a grand scale for a new national status and identity" - Donahaye believes that the proliferation of writing on this subject has "a strongly politically-motivated argument about Welsh particularity, and about a notional 'true' Welshness".

In the final chapter Donahaye concludes:

"The Jews' in some way, notional and historical, are embedded in Welsh consciousness in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and in less historical and more notional ways for a great deal longer than that... The example that Israel and the revival of Hebrew offered to Wales was based on a fantasy rooted deep in the Welsh imagination - it was rooted in the Welsh-Israelite biblical tradition, and its precursor in traditional Welsh historiography, and was given sustenance also by what had been a strong Welsh conversionist desire."

But perhaps the most important conclusion drawn by Jasmin Donahaye - using Derec Llwyd Morgan's classification, from his lecture *Canyys Bechan Yw*, of 'small' nations yet to achieve success versus 'successful' nations - is this:

"But the Israel that existed in the hopes of Zionists, and in the imaginative comparisons of the Welsh, ceased to be one of the 'small' nations whose success is yet to come, and became one of the 'successful' nations... and not just 'successful', and believing its own success to be signal of divine favour, but expansionist, militant and colonising."

Naomi Jones is managing director of the animation production company *Cartwn Cymru*.

Portrait of an elusive bohemian

Huw Osborne



Rhys Davies: A Writer's Life

Meic Stephens

Parthian, 2013, £20

Meic Stephens's biography of Rhys Davies (1901-78) offers the most complete picture yet of the writer's life. There is much that is new and revealing in this study of this elusive writer. It explicitly avoids any thematic or theoretical frame and is based on Davies's writings, the archival record, and interviews that suggest many new insights into Davies's professional and personal development.

The organisation of the book is strictly chronological, returning to themes and figures as they recur in Davies's life. It begins with Davies's youth in Blaenclwydach in the Rhondda and usefully situates Davies's family history within the larger context of industrial Welsh history. It explains Davies's troubled relationships with class, religion, language, gender, and sexuality. It then moves to Davies's career in the professional bohemianism of London, providing a complete and nuanced picture of the milieu of literary life in which Davies established himself and began to define himself as a writer of Wales. The 'London Legs' chapter dealing with this milieu is the most unified and pleasing of the book.

Subsequent chapters describe Davies's

friendship with D. H. Lawrence at the end of Lawrence's life and outline the important publications and personalities in Davies's life and career (the two indexes, one for 'persons' and another for 'publications' echo these interests). Throughout the book, Davies is well-situated within the wider literary context in which he was read and against which he was judged. Stephens does an admirable job of discussing Davies in terms of Welsh writing in English more generally.

One recurring topic that I appreciated was the useful discussions of Davies's frustrated efforts in drama, radio, and film, areas in which he strove to make an impact though never succeeded. These discussions go beyond the more common critical interest in Davies's fiction and draw attention to his search for wider appeal and fame through alternative genres and media. This attention is certainly warranted, for, as early as 1935, Davies had film-making on his mind when he wrote to Raymond Marriott asking if he could see one of his stories being turned into a film and wondered "what black magic...one exercise[d] to get film companies to read print?"

One recurring topic that I appreciated was the useful discussions of Davies's frustrated efforts in drama, radio, and film, areas in which he strove to make an impact though never succeeded.

As Stephens notes, Davies never achieved the fame of A. J. Cronin and Richard Llewellyn, but his interest in film makes one wonder how much he may have begun to write for a potential popular film audience. For instance, one reviewer

of Davies' 1947 novel *The Dark Daughters* paused in her description to assert, "What a film all this would make!" On another occasion, "a lone lady 'fan' " wrote to Davies to praise his 1940 novel *Under the Rose*, exclaiming, "What a film your beautiful book would make!"

Stephens highlights this professional and creative interest on several occasions, which invites further inquiry along these lines. For instance, more could be said of Davies's interest in Ivor Novello. This could have just as much to do with questions of professional identity, performance, and celebrity as it does with depicting what Stephens terms a "fantasy projection" of Davies's "narcissistic Welsh homosexuality".

It's also fair to say that Stephens provides the most complete picture to date of Davies's frustrated romantic life, supported by hitherto unpublished material from extensive interviews with those who knew Davies most intimately. Perhaps the critical engagement of Davies's sexuality would benefit from more theoretical attention - or perhaps less than the reduction to a narcissistic obsession. However, again, such questions are outside the author's stated goals, and the portraits

of Davies's sexual and romantic friendships are very enlightening.

As indicated, the book does not provide any thematic frameworks, but some greater focus would have been welcome, and several of the chapters lack unity.

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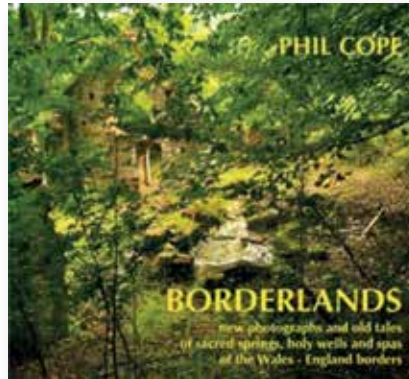
The author has chosen to favour strict chronology and biographical detail over a single theme or limited set of themes, which he felt would unfairly reduce the diversity and complexity of Davies as a writer. Consequently, the fiction discussed in the book tends toward description in support of the biographical narrative rather than analysis in support of literary argument.

Stephens's more general interest in Davies's fiction is primarily concerned with its "timeless and universal" quality. He avoids "academic theoretical discourse" and what he refers to as "the methodology of fashionable exegesis" of much recent criticism on Davies. For instance, he dismisses more recent and insightful critical analysis of *The Black Venus* in favour of Gwyn Jones's saccharine 1944 review of the novel. Finally, readers looking for a complete scholarly apparatus will be disappointed, and many quotations from Davies's letters and writing are unreferenced, though archival and other sources are more generally identified in the acknowledgements.

On the whole, the book is comprehensive, but one should not expect much critical attention to Davies's work. That said, the benefit of Stephens's approach is that it provides a broad and detailed picture of the complexity of Davies's life and career. There are many valuable insights into Davies's professional anxieties, his literary goals, his sexuality, and his personal relationships. The book makes a strong case for Davies's continued relevance and contributes to the foundation of scholarship which will support further work on this complicated writer.

Huw Osborne is Associate Professor in the Department of English at the Royal Military College of Canada, Kingston, Ontario. His monograph on Rhys Davies appeared in the *Writers of Wales* series, University of Wales Press, 2009.

Wells we should know Barry Morgan



Borderlands
Phil Cope
Seren, 2013, £19.99.

In this book, the author describes and photographs the 94 wells and springs on the borderlands between Wales and England, stretching from Cheshire to Monmouthshire. Phil Cope has written extensively before on such diverse subjects as the Tynnewydd Mining Disaster of 1877, John Charles the footballer and the Welsh communities in Liverpool. This is his third book on wells

By his own admission, his aim was not just to provide an historical overview of all aspects of the sites on the borders, but to capture their spirit, mystery and beauty.

since he has produced volumes on both the wells of Cornwall and of Wales itself. Such is his prowess as a photographer, that the National Library bought his collection of photographs of the Holy Wells of Wales. As he points out in his introduction, we are familiar with the story of conflict on the borders of England and Wales from Celtic to Norman times and beyond which he outlines. However, we are not so knowledgeable about the ideas which unite England and Wales and those which define and distinguish our two separate nations.

By his own admission, his aim was not just to provide an historical overview of all aspects of the sites on the borders, but to capture their spirit, mystery and beauty. He does this by recounting the myths and

legends associated with them and so gives us an insight into how people have viewed them over the centuries. He shows how some of the sites which existed before the Romans, became places which they used for bathing. These were then used as places for Christian worship by the church and then as spas by the Victorians. He also shows the fascination water holds in different ways for every generation.

The volume is lavishly illustrated by his exquisite photography and alongside his narrative are quotations from all kinds of sources, as well as poems by such diverse authors as T. S. Eliot, Mary Webb, R. S. Thomas and Wilfred Owen, to name but a few. There is no doubt that sacred wells have played a crucial part in the culture and landscape of this long border.

Without this book, many of these wells would remain unexplored, except to those who happen to live in their vicinity. Who, except the locals, would know about Fynnon Degla near Llandegla Ruthin? Famous for curing leprosy, this well is on the north bank of the river Alyn, its waters emerging into a small chamber from beneath two shading trees. Who has heard of Fynnon Beuno at Gwyddelwern near Corwen, crudely fenced beside the main

A494 Corwen to Ruthin Road?

As someone who travels along the border between England and Wales fairly regularly, I shall in future take this book with me to make detours en route to see the wonders it has to offer. At times one will have to make a fairly extensive detour since the definition of borderlands is stretched a bit to include places such as Trefriw in north Wales, Llanwrtyd in south Wales and St Chad's Well in Lichfield. Nonetheless, this is a beautifully produced volume and a bargain at £19.99.

Barry Jones is Archbishop of Wales and Bishop of Llandaff.



Random supernumeraries in a Commons of lost souls

Peter Stead

Jeffrey Bernard, that great chronicler of drinking-days in Soho, memorably began one of his pieces by noting that, "Last week *Songs of Praise* came from Reading Gaol and in the congregation I recognised a man who owed me fifty quid". That story invariably comes to mind at 11.30 on those Wednesday evenings when I watch the late transmission of *PMQ*.

I must confess that, George Osborne apart, I have yet to spot anyone on the show that actually owes me money, although there are several people there on the benches who should buy me a drink when they next run into me. Initially one took to watching this 30 minute outburst of political passion just to see who would win the main Cameron/Miliband bout, but soon one's fascination shifts to that strange audience that gathers each week in what appears to be the conditions of extreme discomfort on those ringside benches.

They certainly are a rum crowd. Those elected members sitting on the two opposing front benches look for all the world like passengers on an overcrowded Northern line tube (of course, Ed Balls would certainly be led away by men in white coats if he actually performed his routines on a tube). I used to think that the backbenchers, dressed conservatively and in a slightly crumpled way, generally resembled patients waiting in a posh doctor's clinic nervously getting to their feet hoping that their name has been called. More recently I have come to see them as the congregation waiting in a suburban crematorium for the coffin of a business associate whom they had only known slightly. Certainly, the Speaker looks as if he is there to play the organ.

Their nervousness is the most obvious characteristic of those assembled. I soon spotted that each week they opt for the same seat and, indeed, for the same neighbours to whom they will turn to or even hang on

to for reassurance. Yes, their clothes are dull but poignantly one can spot the carefully chosen tie, scarf or short skirt that is meant to attract the attention of voters. And there they are: certainly former students, one or two of whom might well owe me essays, a former colleague with whom I used to play poker, a front-bencher who when young would invite me to tell him and his brothers bedtime stories, a few stalwarts who once generously worked for my own doomed campaign, several men whom I long thought dead and not a few faces that I had identified on the tube or in bars as belonging to well-known television actors.

Each week I find myself asking why all these people are there. The prevailing sense I have is that of randomness. When I first went to the gallery of the Commons in 1960 one looked down on a chamber peopled by a rational and identifiable cross-section of the population at that time. But who are these so-called legislators of today? Who do they represent and what expertise do they bring to bear on the issues of the day? One appreciates that the more conscientious members will do sterling work in their constituencies and on the increasingly important standing committees. But on that one day of the week when the house is full why is it that they sit there looking and behaving like embarrassed supernumeraries?

Surely they are not there to experience any political enlightenment. The Prime Minister's replies to backbenchers are increasingly an offence to our intelligence. His supporters have invariably "raised important issues" whilst members opposite are insulted and swept aside. And all too often the top-of-the-bill-bout with Miliband comes down to the killer one-liner which makes one side or the other feel good for a day but which contributes little to our understanding. Increasingly, Miliband, sharply dressed, exuding political testosterone and firing on all cylinders, is outsmarting an increasingly red-faced, bad tempered and confused Cameron.

The *PMQ* of 23 October, the day of 'the con-man' jibe may well go down as the day

that the bareness of Cameron's cupboard was fully exposed. The door of opportunity is certainly opening for Labour but outsmarting a rather dim PM is only the first small step in coming to terms with a grim outlook.

On my first visit to Parliament in 1960 I travelled down in the small Commons lift with Winston Churchill. Perhaps that moment clinched my life-long passion for both politics and history. Now, half-a-century later, I am still amazed to realise the extent to which one lives through history. My first memories are of 1940s austerity, of outside toilets and no bathrooms in my grandparents' homes, of rationing and the poor light provided by gas and candles. I first chanted political slogans in the Election of 1950. Gaitskell and Macmillan clashed on my first Commons visit but I was not able to vote until 1966 when I was 23.

Looking back I am still surprised by how the issues were different in every decade as were the fashions, the music, the economy, the global issues and the state of technology. The job of historians and politicians was to read those times, to understand the wider issues and to plan accordingly. The facts, the figures and even the crystal-ball needed our full attention.

After that appalling *PMQ* of October 23 I was left wondering about which of the assembled is now doing the best job in looking at the crystal ball. The historian in me believes that our times are as challenging as any in the modern era. We are yet to determine the role of public spending in a post-industrial society, private business and finance has never been so remote from political influence, and in terms of investment, research, education, and employment, not to mention energy production we have lost our way. These are serious times and my advice to all of those crowded on the Labour benches is give up on one-liners, cheap-shots and slogans. At *PMQ* the PM has to be questioned remorselessly. And for all those on the benches the time has come for sustained analysis, honesty and imagination.



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www.tinyrebel.co.uk/blog/

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