

50th  
issue

# the welsh agenda



## He needs a critical friend



*Peter Stead*

**Six foot nation down under**

*Rosemary Butler*

**Anglo-centric media coverage**

*Kim Howells*

**The 1984-5 strike**

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**Welsh in a globalised world**

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Editor: John Osmond

**Editorial Board:**

Lee Waters, Geraint Talfan Davies,  
Kirsty Davies, Rhys David

**Literary Editor:** Peter Finch

**Administration:**

Helen Sims-Coomber

**Design:**

marc@theundercard.co.uk

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**Institute of Welsh Affairs**

4 Cathedral Road  
Cardiff CF11 9LJ

Tel: 029 2066 0820

Email: wales@iwa.org.uk

www.iwa.org.uk

The IWA is a non-aligned independent think-tank and research institute. Members (annual subscription £40) receive agenda three times a year, can purchase reports at a 25 per cent reduction, and receive discounts when attending IWA events.

**Branches**

**North Wales Secretariat**

c/o Huw Lewis  
6 Maes yr Haul, Mold,  
Flintshire CH7 1NS  
Tel: 01352 758311

**Gwent Secretariat**

c/o Rob Southall  
University of Wales, Newport,  
Caerleon Campus  
PO Box 179, Newport NP18 3YG  
Tel: 01633 432005

**West Wales Secretariat**

c/o Margaret Davies  
Principal's Office,  
Trinity University College,  
Carmarthen SA31 3EP  
Tel: 01267 237971

**Swansea Bay Secretariat**

c/o Delith Thorpe  
38 Southlands Drive,  
Swansea SA3 5RA  
Tel: 01792 404315

**IWA Women**

c/o Kirsty Davies  
kirstydavies@iwa.org.uk  
Tel: 07900 692898

# Why Welsh Government needs a critical friend

The paradox of Wales in the last 15 years is that our institutions have matured but our political culture has not.

When Wales said Yes to a law-making Parliament in 2011 the First Minister remarked, "Wales is an old country but a young democracy". It is remarkable to think that a mere decade and a half ago we were governed from Whitehall, with just three Ministers in the Welsh Office. In that short period we have made a great leap forward: a plural politics, a Welsh Government and a body of laws have all developed.

But though our civic institutions have grown, our political culture has not kept pace. Like any fast growing teenager there is often a lag between physical development and emotional maturity.

Though we have a law-making Parliament, as a democratic society we are immature. Far from becoming expansive and outward looking there are worrying signs of introspection and parochialism. The scars of generations of tribal politics run deep, and the ingrained learned behaviours of the old politics still contaminate the new.

It really shouldn't surprise us. Democratic societies take generations to form, and these are still early days. But unless we are self-aware there is a danger that the old habits will remain.

Of course, as has been much discussed in these pages, the weakness of Welsh civil society and the decline of an indigenous media, make the task harder. Without these shafts of light it is more difficult to lift the darkness. And so this places even greater responsibility on the civic institutions that we have to shape our still emerging political culture.

This will not be a comfortable experience. Devolution may have succeeded in bringing Government closer to the people, but closeness brings problems of its own. The growth, in powers and scope, of the Welsh Government inevitably means that its reach in our small country is considerable. There are few who do not rely on its goodwill. As a result we have developed an aversion to challenge. There is palpable fear of speaking truth unto power.

However, we're too small a country to

self-censor.

To become the smart country we all aspire to be we must relentlessly ask ourselves how we can improve. Yet too often we hold back for fear of causing offence and inviting recriminations. We share a collective responsibility to confront this. Individuals and institutions can contribute to the creation of a more mature political culture through the way we all respond to challenge and criticism. Indeed, it is the only way for it to develop.

The IWA has a particular responsibility to play a role: it is why we exist. The Institute occupies an almost unique space at the nexus of a web of relationships of people from across the spectrum. By bringing people together the IWA can be that 'safe' place where ideas can collide and solutions can be forged.

For our part we must develop confidence building measures to reassure those that we challenge that we are a constructive force, offering criticism from a desire to improve and not destroy. In the education profession this role is known as being a 'critical friend' - a trusted person who asks provocative questions, provides data to be examined through another lens, and offers critiques of a person's work as a friend.

That is what the IWA is for.

The first 25 years of the Institute's history can be fairly characterised as having helped create the conditions for legislative devolution for Wales – something hard to imagine in 1987. Having done so much to deliver devolution, the IWA now has a responsibility to ensure our National Assembly and its Government meets the expectations that have been created.

As one of the few bodies in Welsh public life not to receive funding from the Welsh Government (apart from £8,000 a year from the Welsh Books Council towards the cost of publishing literary material in *the welsh agenda*) we are truly independent of party or faction. As such are well placed to play the part of critical friend. But we can't do it alone, and we certainly can't do it without members and supporters. We need more of them. Together we can all help smarten things up.

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## Newsflash

**• Yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol, Dinbych, 2-10 Awst/ The National Eisteddfod, Denbigh, 2-10 August**

*Eleni, fel arfer, fe fydd Pabell gan y Sefydliad yn yr Eisteddfod. Estynnir croeso cynnes iawn i'r holl Aelodau, ein cyfeillion eraill ac i aelodau'r cyhoedd i alw draw am baned a sgwrs. Ganol yr wythnos bydd cyfle i gyfarfod gyda Lee Waters, ein Cyfarwyddwr newydd, felly dewch yn llw.*

*This year, as usual, the Institute will have a Stand at the National Eisteddfod. We extend a warm welcome to Members, to other friends and to members of the public to call and see us for refreshments and a chat. During midweek our new Director, Lee Waters will be present, so do come and meet him.*

**Dydd Mawrth Awst 6ed/Tuesday 6th August, 12.00 - 1.00 Pabell y Cymdeithasau/Societies' Pavilion**

*Sesiwn Drafod y Sefydliad - Y Cyfryngau Cyfrwng Cymraeg; rheoli dirywiad?*

*IWA Debate - The Welsh language media, managing decline? Gyda/With Betsan Powys (Radio Cymru), Angharad Mair (Tinopolis), Simon Brooks (Prifysgol Caerdydd/Cardiff University), Dafydd Rhys (S4C).*

**Dydd Iau, Awst 8ed/ Thursday 8th August, 12.00 - 1.00 Pabell y Cymdeithasau/Societies' Pavilion**

*Darlith y Sefydliad - Arian Ewrop - ai diwylliant dibyniaeth diweddaraf Cymru?*

*IWA Lecture - EU funding - Wales' latest dependency culture? Siaradwr Gwadd/Guest Speaker Guto Bebb AS/MP, Cadeirydd/Chaired by Vaughan Roderick (BBC Cymru/Wales).*

**• IWA Coffee Shop Debate @ Chapter**

*Tuesday 3rd September 6.30pm to 7.30pm (Entry free) Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff*

**There's an SNP for that**

*Exploring users' engagement in direct-to-consumer genetic testing with Dr Michael Arribas-Ayllon. Join us for some lively debate.*

**• IWA network**

*Wednesday 25th September 6pm - 8pm Cardiff Story Museum, City Lab*

*A chance to meet other IWA members in first in new series of social events. Guest speaker: the elected Mayor of Bristol George Ferguson.*

**• Conference: The role of Special Advisers**

*Friday 27th September*

**IWA Professional: first of a new series of specialist conferences.**

*Speakers: Jo Kiernan, Chief Special Adviser to the First Minister; Joanne Foster, Deputy Chief of Staff to the Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg. Further details at [www.iwa.org.uk](http://www.iwa.org.uk)*

**• IWA/ Western Mail Business Awards and Gala Dinner in association with PwC**

*Friday 8th November 7.00pm onwards, City Hall, Cardiff £65 +VAT per person or a table for ten at £600 +VAT*

**• IWA Coffee Shop Debate @ Chapter**

*Tuesday 12th November 6.30pm to 7.30pm (Entry free) Breaching the Male Bastion: Lady Rhondda and Big Business in the 1920s*

*with historian Angela V. John. Join us for some lively debate.*

## Just Published

**Practical steps towards making Wales a sustainable food nation** Editor: John Osmond

*Background papers for IWA conference held in Cardiff in June Digital download price £5 at [www.iwa.org.uk](http://www.iwa.org.uk) (Free to members)*

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

—Essay

# Lions that convert us into a six-foot nation

**Peter Stead** examines what happens when we take our national game on to the world stage

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Lions that convert us into a six-foot nation

### News

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Making Wales a sustainable food nation

Tom Andrews

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Kevin Morgan

Steve Garrett

Eryl Powell

The first weekend of June offered a full menu of major sporting events and courtesy of television I could choose to follow speedway, football, golf, cricket, horse racing or tennis. It was an attractive prospect but for me, as I suspect for most Welsh viewers, there was only one essential fixture. At 12.30 pm BST on Saturday 1 June the British and Irish Lions, en route to Australia, began their 2013 Tour with a match against the Baa Baas in Hong Kong. And from the outset the broadcast images were thrillingly satisfying, not least because of the magnificence and symbolic power of those brilliantly red Lions shirts.

There were some press sceptics who attempted to bring we over-excited fans down to earth. We were reminded that this tour-opener was essentially a ‘publicity exercise’, that the Baa Baas were fielding a scratch side, that the sauna-like weather would dehydrate the players and turn the ball into a bar of soap. The arch-sceptic, Simon Barnes of *The Times*, even tried to argue that in the modern age of elite sports there was something “anachronistic” about the whole Lions set up. But this was all water on a duck’s back. After four years the Lions were back in action. This was undeniably the pinnacle of our national game.

As a rugby nation we had been on a high since 16 March, one of those classic days when, in a phrase of Owen Sheers, “a stadium becomes a nation”. In recent years many older fans have come to resent the forced and phoney manner in which stadium officials and announcers have tried to whip up national enthusiasm at Cardiff international matches. However, on this day everybody on the pitch and in the stands naturally came together

to prevent an English Grand Slam. That major objective was very clear. But everyone knew the subtext was that this match was vital as far as Lions selection was concerned. A decisive Welsh victory could double the number of Welshmen on the Lions plane, severely reduce the number of Englishmen and ensure the rightful nationality of the captaincy. For all concerned the imperatives were blindingly obvious.

In the aftermath of the Cardiff victory the media, and in particular the *Western Mail*, speculated exhaustively on the composition and tactics of Warren Gatland’s Lions party. Almost every sporting conversation was about the Lions. In committee rooms and lecture halls throughout the land doodlers chose their XV for the first Test. As the Lions ran out in Hong Kong, wearing those wonderful shirts and cuddling their soft toy mascot, it was time to consider why we Welsh are so pre-occupied with the Lions selection process.

The truth is that whilst we know that rugby is our national game and that we play the game with a considerable degree of commitment, style and imagination, the odds are truly against us becoming world champions in our own right. One day a World XV may well be needed to play against Mars and we believe that team will undoubtedly include a Welsh element. In the meantime we have the Lions and we quite legitimately believe that any individual’s selection for the Test side essentially conveys world status.

If we are absolutely honest we know that there is an element of self-deception involved in this comforting perspective. In this 2013 tour a team representing four rugby nations with a population of 67



Selection for the Lions conveys world status – but are they running the show as “colonial subjects”?

million is merely playing a single national team representing only 18 million people. Players from the national sides ranked fourth, fifth, ninth and tenth in the world will play the nation ranked third.

What is more, the much-vaunted Lions only occasionally achieve success. The past three tours to the southern hemisphere have ended in defeat and the Lions have only won two of their last eight tours. Basically the Lions themselves are an ad hoc scratch team. It is the sheer lack of preparedness that puts the Lions at a disadvantage compared to their hosts and, in the judgement of Simon Barnes, reduces the tours to a hopelessly romantic throwback to the amateur era. Undeniably however, for most fans, and certainly the players, the magic survives. In Wales we are thrilled that so many of our players have been selected and that they will now be given the opportunity to shine on a world stage that transcends mere nationality. We are being reassured in the most deeply satisfying way.

One player described Lions selection as the equivalent of being knighted. Undoubtedly, there is something about the imperial red of those shirts that is reminiscent of all those Welsh troops who contributed so vitally to our imperial wars. Selection is a process that allows what Lloyd George famously called a five-foot nation to become a six-footer. During that Hong Kong match one purred with delight as the English commentators gloried in the brilliance of Welsh players now firmly accepted as being ‘theirs’ as

much as ‘ours’: we colonial subjects were running the show.

Inevitably one’s passion for rugby intensifies during Lions tours. The first Tests I followed were those against South Africa in 1955 when the standout image was of our outside outside-half Cliff Morgan scurrying across the veldt. It was a tour in which I felt personally involved. I had been in the gym at Barry Grammar School when the Cardiff wing Haydn Morris received the telegram announcing

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It is the sheer lack of preparedness that puts the Lions at a disadvantage compared to their hosts and, in the judgement of Simon Barnes, reduces the tours to a hopelessly romantic throwback to the amateur era.

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his selection and responded by leaping in the air: this was heady stuff for an eleven-year old trying to hang on to the wall bars. Hitherto I had watched most of my rugby at Maesteg whose (only twice-capped) scrum half Trevor Lloyd was also selected. And now, as the 2013 Lions notched up the points in Hong Kong it was of Trevor Lloyd and of matches at Maesteg that I was thinking. I doubted very much whether the Lions selectors of 2013 had bothered to attend an Old Parish fixture or whether in future any player would go straight from a domestic Welsh club side

into a Lions tour party.

In *Calon*, his thought-provoking portrait of the 2012 Welsh team, Owen Sheers talks of the national side having become in essence ‘a club team’. This was Sheers very much hitting the nail on the head and giving clear expression to a truth that we have ducked for some time. Over the years we have quite deliberately put all our eggs in the national basket. The coming of professionalism in the 1990s changed the whole nature of rugby. It became as never before a world sport. In terms of physical fitness and commitment its requirements were dictated by the three southern hemisphere powers, whilst the pattern of presentation and income were determined by television.

The only way in which Wales could survive in this high-pressure format was by sustaining a group of highly paid and super fit elite athletes who could be based in the Vale of Glamorgan, fine-tuned in Poland, and constantly supervised by an assorted international panel of coaches, physios, doctors, dieticians, statisticians and psychologists. Only six footers need apply.

uniquely Welsh vision. And yet during the moments of reflection and pride that follow a demanding and successful Six Nations we are troubled by two particular thoughts.

The sad truth is that the game of rugby is not as entertaining, aesthetically pleasing or varied as it was in the amateur years. It has become a sport of physical attrition and intimidation. It has more in common with championship boxing than the game we loved as recently as the 1970s. In the old days the sports masters would walk the line during games shouting, "Tackle low school!" Today's advice would more appropriately be "Knock the stuffing out of them!" It really is a game for physical super-heroes. The intensity of commitment is frightening. Often, contact borders on the criminal. Serious injuries are mercifully rare but in big matches I do find myself praying for the well-being and safety of Leigh Halfpenny.

Furthermore, there is now very little room for players on the playing pitch. The best rugby ever was played by the 1971 Lions in New Zealand (Clem Thomas entitled his account *Gloria in Excelsis*) and the film highlights are still dominated by the graceful parabola of Gerald Davies' running. Most rugby union fans continue to ignore and even despise the thirteen-man code of Rugby League. However, that is a sport that has moved into the television age with considerably more confidence than its rival, not least in its ability to serve up spectacular tries. There is far less elegance and fewer thrills in the Rugby Union of today as compared to the 1970s.

In 1971 we also witnessed the full majesty of Barry John. Would he have even been selected for the 2013 Lions? Rugby coaches have learnt to distrust too much imagination (amazingly and unforgivably this has been particularly true in Wales) and would not understand the notion of a player being 'ghostly'. Mercifully rugby has eventually sorted out the role of the lineout, but that leaves the urgent need to deconstruct the purpose of the scrum in what is supposed to be an exercise offering entertainment, and to find some rationale for the trend towards

aimless kicking. And surely it is a major flaw in any sport to allow referees quite so much freedom in interpreting what happens in what, to any lay person, can only be described as a pile-up. The game mystifies as much as it thrills.

Even more worrying in Wales is the question of whether any rugby below international level is worth watching at all. The majority of rugby fans think not. Most seem happy enough to follow it on television, although all the passion and explanations of the platoon of pundits cannot eclipse the sight of empty stands and overcome the general lack of atmosphere. There is a sad irony in the way that Welsh rugby has become a fixed part of the early Friday evening routine, a spot in the television schedules long notorious for being the low point of the week and traditionally handed to gardeners and do-it-yourself experts. Many fans carry on with the cooking, just listening to the pundits chatting away in the distance.

We all know that in Wales we have made a mess of club rugby and in so doing we have threatened, and quite possibly done for, the vital roots of the game. Any administrator with a feel for southern Wales would have known that regional sides would never work in a land where all the major teams played within a sixty mile strip and the fiercest antagonisms are with one's nearest neighbours. It was essential to have

preserved individual club identity, to have ensured attractive and competitive fixture lists, to have regular contests with English teams, to have kept alive a high standard of league rugby within Wales, and to have maintained the support of and cooperation of fans.

A model that didn't fit was imposed and none of these objectives were achieved. Of course, there were enormous problems in an age of economic difficulty, when soccer had embarked on a massive aggrandisement and when television dictated so many requirements. Wales is a small country and resources were scarce. However, the plain truth is that the restructuring of our rugby was extremely unimaginative and ensured a catastrophic decline in the level and support of club rugby. In stages it became a sport conducted for the benefit of élite athletes, corporate sponsors and television.

Ideally any reformer would not have 'to start from here'. The cricket model of central contracts is probably now inevitable given the need for success at the international level. Meanwhile, however, the four Welsh regions need to abandon their patronisingly childish names and become proper clubs with the same kind of relationship with their fans and communities as the successful football teams who have so decisively shunted them into the shade. They all need to be rebranded and to plan their fixtures

Celebrating the Grand Slam in 2011-12 – but have we put all our eggs in one national basket?



at the behest of fans not administrators and broadcasters. Those fixtures should involve far more matches with English and French sides.

Those of us who live in Ospreyia (the Lions should note that this term was splendidly invented to commemorate an Osprey victory over Australia) have spent years trying to work out why our star-spangled regional side has never achieved European success and become the Manchester United of British rugby. The Ospreys have had their moments and certainly have produced Lions aplenty. But from the outset I have never quite believed in them as an entity to which I could become deeply attached as had been the case with my beloved Swansea RFC (the All Whites).

In the early days the Ospreys seemed to miss out on what had been the attractive features of both Neath and Swansea. They all too often took on the look of being mercenaries brought together to fulfil a franchise rather than to achieve a style. The lack of a distinctive style reflected lack-lustre coaches who never projected any personality into the stadium or the community at large. And, above all, they were (and continue to be) coaches who failed catastrophically to handle the really creative players who emerged locally. On top of this the games were played at strange times and the players ran out in shirts that probably pleased designers but seemed strangely anonymous. Shane Williams apart, one left the Liberty with nothing lingering in the mind.

At a lower level (and how low do we have to go?) the much neglected Welsh club sides have to be brought back into the sun and a league structure developed that allows genuine promotions and a greater variety. One loves the passion at Ponty and the spirit at Llandovery, but most club matches in Wales are lacklustre and the attendance figures reflect that.

It is almost inconceivable to reflect that the great passion that characterised Welsh club rugby just a couple of decades ago at places like Llanelli, Neath, Bridgend, Pontypridd and Pontypool has been sacrificed. I still find it difficult to come to terms with the backwater that is now

Welsh club rugby. We shunted our regions into a lacklustre Celtic dimension but it is just as tragic that we isolated our club sides from a wider rugby world. Our administrators had to herd our clubs into something resembling soccer's Football League structure. Welsh rugby urgently needs a distinct hierarchy of clubs with a much publicised and eagerly followed escalator at work that would allow glory days to players and bring back the fans.

Of course, we have to move on

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### One loves the passion at Ponty and the spirit at Llandovery, but most club matches in Wales are lacklustre and the attendance figures reflect that.

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and all of us who get so misty-eyed at memories of tremendous matches in front of passionate crowds at St Helen's, the Gnoll, Maesteg, Pontypool Park and Abertillery just have to accept that an age when the best rugby was local and rooted in a deeply satisfying social routine has gone for ever. The Welsh soccer clubs are experiencing a purple patch and we are realising afresh that the round ball probably has more support in Wales than the oval ball - but that does not prevent Rugby Union from being our national game. That status was achieved precisely because individual rugby clubs had earned a place at the heart of so many villages that constitute the basic structure of Welsh life. Welsh players and fans alike (as the much lamented Bill McLaren always appreciated) have always come from one of those villages.

As I suppress my nostalgia, however, I can never forgive the lack of effort and imagination that went into preserving what was 'local' in Wales. We were seduced too readily by the need for a capital city, the celebrity culture and by non-stop television. Local schools should have been developed as full-time centres for youth culture including sport, the arts and information technology. The

passion that has characterised the now well-publicised Varsity matches between Swansea and Cardiff Universities has reminded me of the great days I have spent watching well-attended football and basketball matches on American campuses. We have much to learn from the phenomenon of American college sport. American college basketball is infinitely more exciting and attractive than the professional game and, you never know, that could well turn out to be the case with Welsh rugby. We should give it a chance. There is in all Welsh fans a kind of inbuilt élitism that takes its lead from television and does youngsters no favours.

Meanwhile, local rugby clubs needed to move beyond the drink culture that sustained the old sporting loyalties. Our rugby clubs needed to have become true athletic clubs with gyms, pools, restaurants and development sides. Local sponsors and entrepreneurs could have worked with the traditional and sainted committee men of Welsh folk lore to have developed these institutions and placed them back at the heart of Welsh communities.

In clamouring for status we Welsh have sacrificed the local. There was a time when we all used to boast about the villages that made us what we are but the recent story of our schools, hospitals, cinemas, public transport and rugby demonstrates that we no longer do 'local'. There was a time when on international days one rushed to buy the match programme so as to read the details of every player. One was to sure to be given his precise place of birth, the schools and colleges he had attended, the names of mentors, the youth and village sides he had first played for, as well, of course, as his day job. In the programmes of today we are told none of these things. All we learn now is that players are tall (we are not sure how tall as it's 'in metric'), play rugby all the time and seem to be based in the Vale of Glamorgan.

**Peter Stead** is a cultural historian and, with Huw Richards and Gareth Williams, editor of *Heart and Soul – the character of Welsh rugby* (1998).

# Plug in daily to the IWA network at [www.clickonwales.org](http://www.clickonwales.org)

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

— 4/4/13

*Malcolm Prowle wants contestability and choice in our schools*

“If we really want to improve the schools system in Wales we have to introduce some degree of provider competition in order to shake up the existing monopolistic arrangements.....Why not permit other organisations (private, voluntary or faith-based) to bid for local authority funding to establish and run their own schools....Such a move could improve the choices available to parents and provide the catalyst to breakdown monopolistic self-interest and raise standards....It is misleading to describe this as a Tory policy or an English policy, as is so often the case in Wales. It is a much-needed response to a calamitous situation.”

— 17/4/13

*Geraint Talfan Davies says Thatcher's certainties are still winning*

“The widespread ambivalence towards Margaret Thatcher's achievements is a recognition of three things: that the country could not have gone on as it had done until 1979; that the inequality that has arisen from the direction she charted is just as untenable in the long term; but, importantly, that we have not yet been able to describe a new framework – either in Wales or the UK – offering a different, coherent and convincing balance between a healthy individualism and a necessary and fulfilling social solidarity. Her certainty is still winning over our own uncertainties.”

— 18/4/13

*Dan Boucher makes a case for the 'big society' in a small country.*

“The bottom-up, localist tradition is still alive in Wales today. But its potential is not being fully harnessed because it is saddled with government policy that is in love with the big state. The sad fact is that so much energy and attention has been focused on statist solutions that now, according to some measures, the public sector represents a massive 70 per cent of GDP in Wales. Most economists start getting concerned when this figure rises about 40 per cent!”

— 20/4/13

*Peter Hurn spells out the benefits of a Welsh race track*

“Wales has a well-established reputation as a destination for sport. Look at the 2010 Ryder Cup, the 1999 Rugby World Cup, and premiership football, with both Swansea and Cardiff now promoted. The proposed Circuit of Wales in Blaenau Gwent, led by the Heads of the Valleys Development Company, offers the opportunity to take this to another level. Projected figures suggest annual visitors to the track in the region of 750,000. That's equivalent to four Ryder Cups a year.....”

— 24/4/13

*Lee Waters encourages Wales to speak truth to power*

“We're too small a country to self-censor, but we have developed an aversion to challenge. I've spent seven years as a political journalist coaxing people to say on the record what they were willing to say off the record, and have spent the last six years leading a charity that has had to balance its desire to push decision makers with its reliance on Ministerial goodwill to achieve

its aims. So I feel I have some insight into the uncomfortable line that people in Welsh civil society have to walk. There is palpable fear of speaking truth unto power.”

— 26/5/13

*Julian Tudor Hart defends the NHS against commercialisation*

“Since the 1990s, when they began to run out of customers who could afford their products, international healthcare and personal insurance companies, mostly from USA, have been competing aggressively in what they see as a world market. They have mainly targeted European care systems, hitherto organised as public service, with variable components of social insurance. If they can find any way to include our NHS in their negotiations, they will take it, and subordinate our public services to EU and international commercial law, making it answerable not to voters but to shareholders.”

— 28/4/13

*Calvin Jones argues for a different approach to growth*

“Worthy attempts to develop replacement technologies – in energy generation and storage, in weight saving, in bio-engineering and so on, ad infinitum – are born from a belief that technology and increased resource efficiency can 'solve' our ecological and climate problems. This is Walter Mitty land....On 'current trends' we can expect three billion more people in the global middle class by 2030, at the same time as the West gets richer, albeit perhaps more slowly. To enable this, we require a mere doubling of world electricity production. Let me say this slowly. This. Will. Not. Happen.”

— 30/4/13

*Ruth Dineen thinks co-production of public services is the way forward*

“Imagine a community whose members contribute over 30,000 hours of ‘official’ voluntary work each year – and many more hours in an unofficial capacity. Imagine a substance-misuse initiative where former service-users run a highly effective peer-mentoring scheme. Or imagine a local authority who co-commission children’s services with the help of the children themselves. This imaginary future already exists in Wales. It’s called co-production and it offers a sustainable, evidence-based response to the crisis in our public services.... Its use results in more effective and more relevant public services.”

— 6/5/13

*Ian Hargreaves says Wales needs to become a more open society*

“Given a choice between doing something in a way which is open, transparent and contestable or in a way which prioritises privacy, obscured authority or even secrecy, we should never be in any doubt: Choose open... So, what might setting the default to open mean for Welsh politics, the economy, health and education? It would mean that information about every area of Welsh public life is as open as is consistent with reasonable defences against breach of personal privacy... This is the only way to ensure that the evidence used to justify policy decisions and political thinking is of the best possible quality. It is also the only way to deploy the insight of those outside government, from the individual citizen to big business, in designing solutions to policy problems.”

— 17/5/13

*Jon Owen Jones assesses the impact of UKIP*

“Maybe UKIP isn’t only a right wing phenomenon or even a UK one. In many western countries there are political movements, which have similar messages

and they are probably reflections of the same causes. Italy’s Grillo Party, the Danish Peoples Party, the Golden Dawn in Greece, the True Finns and even the Tea Party in the US, are reactions to the same pressures. Globalisation brings benefits but it also has adverse effects on many people. Exporting employment to lower wage countries or importing workers prepared to work for lower wages is not a universally good thing. Few mainstream politicians acknowledge this as they fear where that argument leads. This leaves a political vacuum which Mr Farage and others will fill.”

— 18/5/13

*Martin Jones says Wales needs more not less European integration*

“The UK needs to step-up and lead from the front in the reform of Europe and its institutions to allow a Single Market in Services to become a reality, rather than sniping from the sidelines when we don’t get everything on our negotiating wish-list. Cameron and his government should recognise that our interests are best served by participating fully in the European decision-making process. We should not be contemplating throwing the baby out with the bathwater just because the institutions are not perfect... What we need is more Europe, not less.”

— 23/5/13

*Angela Graham argues for devolution in broadcasting*

“In the next few years the BBC’s Royal Charter will be up for renewal, and we may well see a new Communications Act. Wales needs to have a view. More fundamentally, there is a fact to be faced – an astounding, even shameful, fact. The fact is that we in Wales do not decide what kind of television services we want. The financial envelope for those services is decided for us by the BBC Trust, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and ITV plc. The Welsh Government and Welsh public have no input into their decisions.... Yet, the Welsh Government gave an inconsequential response to the silk Commission....”

— 25/5/13

*Dylan Jones-Evans wants more innovation in public services*

“There is more that can be done to ensure innovation does not remain within isolated areas across the nation but becomes a normal part of the delivery of public services in the future. There is also the opportunity to incentivise new partners in the private sector, such as technology providers, to turn Wales into a global test bed for those wishing to develop innovative solutions via digital technologies in areas such as health and education. This, of course, will require acceptance of greater risk within the public sector where innovation and accountability can go hand in hand, and failure is a chance to learn from mistakes rather than an opportunity to apportion blame when something goes wrong.”

— 31/5/13

*Mike Hedges AM says a local government shake-up will cost some more than others*

“Local Government reorganisation will inevitably lead to winners and losers.... but with gaps of over £200 in band D council tax charges in the former Mid Glamorgan, West Glamorgan and Dyfed but with an over £500 variation in the former Gwent County Council area some people could end up paying a lot more and others a lot less Council Tax.... Whilst most people are not taking an interest in the discussions relating to local government reorganisation I believe that unless they start to, the first they will know of what the changes mean to them is when their Council Tax bill comes through the letterbox and then it will be too late. This issue is too important to Council Tax payers for them to leave it just to the politicians.”

# Making Wales a sustainable food nation



## Sustainable food cities

Tom Andrews

While there is no doubt it has brought us bewildering choice, knock-down prices and ready convenience, the modern food system - and the 'fast' food culture it has fostered - costs more than people, places or the planet can afford. The facts are sobering.

A spiralling epidemic of obesity, diabetes and other diet-related ill-health means our children may become the first generation to live shorter lives than their parents. More than 50 traditional food stores - butchers, bakers, fishmongers, grocers and community stores - close every week, while one in 10 of our high street shops lie empty. From field to fork, our food system produces more than a fifth of all our greenhouse gas emissions and is contributing to a seemingly inexorable decline in the quality of our soils, our water and our biodiversity. And, perhaps most pernicious of all, as relentlessly rising food prices make food poverty a stark reality for millions of people, we continue to throw away more than half of all the food we produce.

Sustainable Food Cities is about recognising the pivotal role that food can play in driving positive change and working through food to begin to tackle the huge challenges that face us. It is about a wide range of public agencies and departments - including health, sustainability, planning, economic development and neighbourhood

renewal - working together with businesses, NGOs and communities to develop a joint vision of the food culture and food system they would like to see and then working together to turn that vision into reality. It is about completely re-imagining a city - or town or borough or district - through the lens of good food.

So, imagine a city where every nursery, school and college, every hospital and care setting, every restaurant and workplace canteen serves only healthy and sustainable meals; and where everyone has access to affordable, fresh, seasonal, local and organic produce within 500 metres of where they live, no matter where they live. Imagine a city where good food is visible and celebrated in every corner: in local markets and independent retailers, at food festivals and events, in gardens, parks and borders, on the radio and in the papers; or where people of all ages and backgrounds are developing skills in growing and cooking, are developing new food enterprises and are practically involved in creating a vibrant and diverse food culture in their own community.

The standard response to such apparently utopian musings is to begin to list all the reasons why it can never happen: the existing system is too pervasive and embedded; the food companies will never play ball; there isn't enough money or resource to get this kind of initiative going; the public simply aren't interested. It is an understandable reaction, particularly considering the mind-set engendered by our current financial woes, but it is wrong. In a number of places the system is changing; some of the more enlightened food companies are right at the forefront of this change; institutions are finding resources to make change happen or are

reconfiguring existing resources to the same end. Moreover, there is absolutely no doubt that a greater and greater proportion of the public not only care but are willing to put considerable effort into becoming the agents of change in their own communities. A few examples should suffice:

Ten years ago, the idea that huge multinational food service companies would be competing to provide meals made from fresh, seasonal, local and organic produce would have been laughable. And yet the number of meals served which have the Soil Association's Catering Mark for containing healthy, ethical, sustainable and local ingredients now tops 140 million each year, including a rapidly growing number of Welsh Universities.

Visit one of the 4,500 Food for Life schools in England or Appetite for Life Schools in Wales to see how a holistic approach to food education and engagement is not only helping children, parents and local communities understand and appreciate the importance of good food but is giving them the skills they need to feed themselves well throughout their lives and increasing educational attainment into the bargain. Or visit one of the 650 new local food enterprises created through the Making Local Food Work programme, where social entrepreneurs are creating thriving good food businesses, bringing jobs and prosperity to their local economies.

Go to Brighton, one of the earliest pioneers of the Sustainable Food City approach, where they have introduced a Planning Advisory Note to ensure that developers consider food as an integral part of the design planning process; or to one of the many local authorities that have managed to block the proliferation of fast food outlets near schools. Go to Plymouth, where the University and the Local Education Catering Service are in the vanguard of a revolution in sustainable food procurement; or to Bristol where a populist backlash against clone towns is leading to a revival in independent food retailing.

Look at the food charters developed in Cardiff and Gwynedd to see an ambitious vision of what the future landscape of food might become or visit one of the dozens of food growing initiatives that are part of the Tyfu Pobl programme. Then think about how we could multiply it all up across the country, to help Wales become the first truly Sustainable Food Nation.

**Tom Andrews**, Associate Director at the Soil Association, is co-ordinating the Sustainable Food Cities programme that is supporting towns and cities across the UK to develop transformational healthy and sustainable food programmes.

## How a food strategy connects with the welfare and poverty agenda



**Terry Marsden**

Since 2008 Western societies in particular have experienced something of a 'perfect-storm' of problems associated with the combined food, financial, fiscal and fuel crisis. These areas have been highly interconnected as food and carbon-based energy limits have been both realised but also denied. The corporate sector and 'corporate-interest' governments have reacted to these resource problems through further fiscal tightening.

Historically, rising food and fuel prices lead eventually to recession and financial crisis in the economy. In this sense food is a key resource along with human labour, fuel, energy and minerals. We are facing severe limits in these globally. The financial and corporate sectors are responding by:

- Reducing state expenditure.
- Encouraging further intensive exploration of those carbon-based resources.
- Allowing exclusive 'hoarding' and the absorption of capital surplus in non-productive and privatised wealth funds.

This is making the 'transition' and adaptation to a 'post-carbon' economy much harder, even though the scientific evidence suggests the world is increasingly squeezed between the effects of global warming on the one hand, and growing resource constraints on the other.

Under these macro-economic and resource conditions it is of utmost importance that countries like Wales hold on to and reinforce the commitments they have made to progressing and delivering on sustainable development and the transition this requires to a lower-carbon-based economy. The Welsh Government's strategy *Food for Wales: Food from Wales* published in 2010, is an important starting point.

We are beginning to see the effects of price rises in food and fuel, as well as cuts in welfare and other public benefits affect a larger number of households. Food security is now no longer something that we can consider only affecting people overseas. It is on our doorsteps and in our backyards. As a result we need to link the sustainability agenda far more closely to the current austerity and food security agenda.

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This nexus means innovating in ways that attempt to solve these twin problems in tandem. Historically, governments have tended to separate food security from sustainability. For a time in the post-war years we seemed to have 'solved' both problems through direct

and comprehensive state intervention to boost production through guaranteeing farm gate prices and regulating household prices and costs. From the 1980s, the increasing significance of large supermarkets took on a major private sector role in expanding food choices and massively increasing imports of relatively cheap food goods.

At the same time much of the food system seemed not only secure, but also sustainable in that, up until 2008, the proportion of household incomes spent on food goods continued to decline. Things have now significantly changed in that we can no longer argue that our food supply or food consumption practices are either sustainable or secure. The fiscal crisis and reductions in welfare payments are bringing these tendencies into a new light. Yet again, as in the 1930s, food policy is a social and welfare issue, much in the same way as Rowntree and the early 20th Century reformers saw it. It's back to the future.

This is not the only 'bad news' story. For at this political juncture it does not seem practicable to even expect the state to recreate the welfare and public provisioning systems created in the post-war era. Rather, at the moment, we have a timid state, one that cannot envision a more proactive and infrastructural role to develop a more universalist food welfare policy alongside its sustainability aspirations.

So we will need some imagination in

which we can re-link food welfare and sustainability around a twin set of positive goals. This will increasingly rely upon an amalgam of private, civil and community actions, which a facilitative state could foster through judicious funding and procurement packages.

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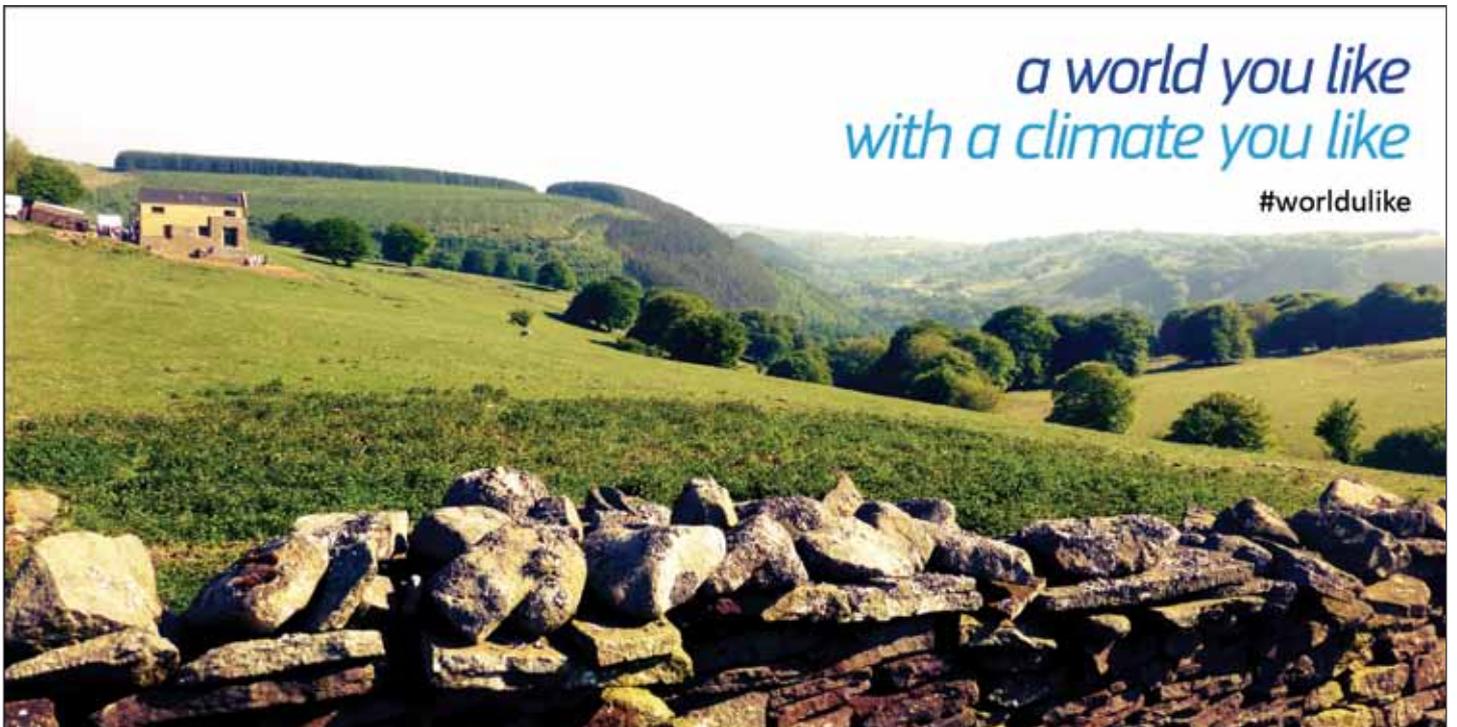
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Examples include charity and non-profit organisations such as FareShare Cymru which is supported by Welsh Government funding, and distributes quality surplus (formerly 'waste' and discarded foods) from the food industry - including local food companies and supermarkets - to a range of community organisations that support disadvantaged groups. Such initiatives create 'more from less', and counter the distorted logics of the conventional supermarket chains. FareShare Cymru, which has premises in Cardiff and Llandudno, has prevented almost 550 tonnes of perfectly nutritious food from being sent to landfill. This equates to 970,000 meals for those in Wales who need it most.

This is but one example of meeting and joining up the sustainability and security agendas, by reducing waste and feeding people in need at the same time. In addition it 'short-circuits' the conventional food supply chains by creating new and clearer interfaces between suppliers and consumers. In Wales we need more such organisations, and we desperately need to link these to the farming communities which still look to Brussels, rather than their local town or city, as the place for financial and market support. We need to connect the growing food welfare needs of the consumer to the rural producer.

In conditions where it is unlikely that we are going to see the re-emergence of 'big-government' either in the food sector or elsewhere, we need to find ways, through the creation of food councils and partnerships, cooperatives and food hubs, to increase the density of community and civic-based organisations in Wales around the food welfare and nutrition question. Government support is still crucial to these developments. Indeed, the Welsh Government now has a great opportunity to embrace civic-private sector collaboration to re-connect food security with sustainability.

**Terry Marsden** is Professor of Environmental Policy and Planning at Cardiff University's School of Planning and Geography where he is also Director of the Sustainable Places Institute.

## Tapping the potential of the public realm in procurement and planning



**Kevin Morgan**

It is well known that governments have been rendered powerless to act by the twin pressures of globalisation and austerity. Well known perhaps, but quite wrong. The notion that governments are powerless victims of circumstance is one of the most pernicious and disempowering notions around today. To counter this noxious idea we need to identify compelling narratives in which the public realm – by which I mean governments at all levels as well as their associated public sector bodies – is promoting sustainable development in its own estate and helping the private and third sectors to follow suit.

This is nowhere more important than in the agri-food sector because food, though it is invariably treated as a conventional part of the economy, has a unique status in our lives. Why? Because we literally ingest food and therefore it is vital to human health and wellbeing in a way that other products are not. We need to remember this simple but fundamental point because food must never be reduced to the status of a conventional industrial sector.

Food policy has been dominated for so long by national and international levels of policy-making that it is sometimes suggested that cities and regions have little or no capacity to shape the food system because they lack the powers or the appetite to do so. However, though they may lack 'the full toolkit' of policies, they are not without powers to reform the food system. As cities are in the forefront of the new food policy paradigm, let us briefly look at what some urban food pioneers

are doing to fashion more sustainable foodscapes.

Within the new food policy repertoire two powers merit special attention because, taken together, they can be deployed to fashion more sustainable food systems. The most powerful food policy that cities have at their disposal is their very own *procurement policy*. The power of purchase has been shown to be very effective when it is part of a healthy public food provisioning programme.

One of the most impressive examples of an urban procurement policy is Malmö, the third biggest city in Sweden, which plans to provide 100 per cent organic food in all its public catering services, which includes public nurseries, school canteens and residential care homes. Originally designed as a climate-friendly food experiment, the urban procurement policy in Malmö is also used to promote the city's public health agenda. Significantly, the extra cost of organic ingredients has been offset by reducing the amount of meat in the diet and by using more seasonal fruit and vegetables, making the organic transition a largely cost-neutral exercise. Although public canteens are an important part of the urban foodscape in many countries, they tend to be forgotten because they lack the visibility of the globally branded fast food industry. Malmö merits attention because it is using the power of purchase to convey two very important messages:

1. Public canteens are a vital part of the new urban foodscape.
2. City governments are far from powerless to shape these new foodscapes.

Another power that cities are deploying in more imaginative ways is *planning policy*, which is often used to frustrate development rather than foster it. Although planners have neglected the food system in the past, they are now beginning to address the urban foodscape to:

- Protect and increase the diversity of food retail outlets so that they are

- accessible by foot or public transport.
- Promote urban agriculture in and around the city by expanding access to allotments, community growing spaces and a range of other under-utilised public and private space.
  - Discourage food waste and promote more socially and ecologically benign ways of recycling it.
  - Create jobs and income for producers who need access to the 'footfall' of urban consumers.

Local planning powers are now being used to re-regulate all aspects of the urban foodscape. For example, Waltham Forest in east London is believed to be the first local authority in the UK to use its planning powers to prevent new hot food takeaways opening up

economic change. In Wales the public procurement budget is more than £4 billion per annum, of which £71.35 million was spent on food according to the 2010 Welsh Public Sector Food Purchasing Survey. The value of Welsh food within that total was estimated to be £16.4 million. This represented a growth in total public food purchases of 23 per cent in the period 2003-2009, compared with a growth of 39 per cent in the value of Welsh origin purchases over the same period. Clearly, progress is being made, albeit slowly, and we await the results of the 2012 survey to see if progress has been maintained.

Two factors have stymied the growth of local food procurement in Wales: (i) a highly fragmented public sector; and (ii) a chronic public sector skills deficit.

food procurement is possible even in conditions of public sector austerity, but it is not possible in the context of a public sector skills deficit.

If the history of public procurement in Wales is a story of untapped potential, much the same can be said of planning policy. The sustainable development duty in Wales is slowly making itself felt on all planning policies, though once again we must never confuse policy with practice. Although the planning community has only recently begun to address itself to food, growing concerns about food security, sustainability, and diet-related diseases will ensure that food planning moves from the margins to the mainstream in cities, regions and nations in the years ahead.

A good example of this mainstreaming of food planning can be seen in the case of Cardiff's Local Development Plan for 2006-2026. A health impact assessment found that the LDP had the potential to inflict some negative impacts on health because of inadequate protection of open spaces and the loss of high quality agricultural land because food security had not been viewed and valued in a sustainable fashion. This problem, reflecting the worldwide challenge of farmland conservation in peri-urban areas, needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Otherwise the unsustainable growth of the city-region in south east Wales will produce irreversible shifts in land use patterns.

When deployed in a creative and concerted fashion, public procurement and planning policy can furnish the compelling narratives that we need to demonstrate that the public realm can indeed help to fashion a more sustainable food nation in Wales.

**Kevin Morgan** is Professor of Governance and Development in the School of Planning and Geography at Cardiff University, where he is also the Dean of Engagement. He is actively involved in food policy debates as a member of the Food Ethics Council and Chair of the Bristol Food Policy Council.

## The fragmentation of the public sector in Wales stems from the fact that there are some 100 public sector bodies purchasing food in Wales, though the most significant sectors are local authorities, the NHS and higher education.

in close proximity to schools, fuelling a new urban planning trend across the UK. Meanwhile, Brighton and Hove is using supplementary planning guidance to incorporate food into the planning system and encourage more food growing spaces in the city. These examples have a powerful demonstration effect, enabling other urban areas to re-imagine themselves through their local foodscapes.

With the advent of democratic devolution, Wales has been in the forefront of the *debate* about sustainable food policy, though all too often the reality has lagged behind the rhetoric. Procurement and planning policy are two of the key instruments through which the public realm can help to fashion a sustainable food nation in Wales, so let us explore each of these in turn.

After taxation and regulation, public procurement is the third major policy instrument through which the public realm can effect major social and

The fragmentation of the public sector stems from the fact that there are some 100 public sector bodies purchasing food in Wales, though the most significant sectors are local authorities, the NHS and higher education. While collaborative procurement is becoming more common, there is still far too much variability between leaders and laggards in the Welsh public sector, especially in local government.

The chronic skills deficit is an even greater problem. A simple good practice rule in public procurement circles recommends that every £15 million of public spending should equate to one qualified Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply manager. When applied to Wales in 2012 it was found that the Welsh public sector was short of some 174 professionals. If a public body lacks competence it will also lack the confidence to innovate, with the result that good practice is likely to be the exception rather than the norm. Creative

## Practical steps in localising food



Steve Garrett

The number of farmers' markets in Wales has expanded rapidly in the past decade - from the first that was set up in Riverside, Cardiff in 1998, to the nearly fifty that exist today. During that time, public interest in purchasing fresh locally produced food, and in knowing more about the source and production methods of the food they buy, has soared. It has been underpinned by what seems to have been a constant stream of bad-news stories in the media about the problems and dangers associated with conventional industrial-scale food production and distribution methods – most recently the discovery of horse meat in several mainstream food products.

A key question is how the farmers' market model of food marketing can be expanded to meet this growing demand for local food. In particular, what contribution might it make to the development of a more sustainable food systems in our communities across Wales?

Even if farmers' markets continue to be a relatively small presence in food retailing, they enable some producers to survive economically using sustainable methods. However, for real change leading to a more sustainable food economy, we must devise radically different mechanisms of marketing and production than those currently employed by the industrial retailers. We need to examine whether urban food growing has the potential to play a more significant role in creating a Sustainable Food City and improving the health, wellbeing and local economic development of Wales.

Well known food researcher Tim Lang

described the high level of anxiety which emerged within central government during the lorry drivers' strike of 2007 when it was realised that within three days, the shelves of food retailers would start to empty and there was no way they could be restocked. This situation apparently brought home to Ministers the extent of our dependence on a globalised food economy, and the level of vulnerability inherent in that dependence, for example to changes in oil supplies.

Lang also cited some particularly stark anomalies in how we organise mainstream food production and distribution. For example, until recently the majority of the apples eaten in the UK were grown in this country. We now import nearly 95 per cent of our apples. Indeed, we are by far the highest importers of fruit in Europe, a situation that is replicated in a number of other food items. There are many more examples of food products which we could, or do, produce within our own borders, which are either exported or imported unnecessarily. How such a system would operate if oil supplies were threatened in terms of availability or price is a real concern, and another impetus for looking seriously at how more food could be produced much closer to home.

Taking the process of urban food provision to one of actual food production is now on the sustainability agendas of an increasing number of Western cities. Experience in the US has shown that although levels of actual food production at local food growing projects may be limited, at least in the early stages, there are a number of other immediate benefits to be had in allocating land to food growing. In their 2003 report on urban agriculture, the Community Food Security Coalition observed that:

“City revitalization efforts which include urban agriculture have a regenerative effect when vacant lots are transformed from eyesores – weedy, trash-ridden, dangerous gathering places – into bountiful, beautiful and safe gardens that feed peoples' bodies and souls”.

The idea of growing food within city limits is by no means a new one. In the 19th Century, market gardens in Paris produced a high proportion of the fresh produce consumed in the city, using all kinds of waste as a growing medium, and until the end of the First World War, they were famous for the abundance of their crops. 'Victory Gardens' were planted during World War II to reduce the pressure on the public food supply brought on by the war effort. They were also considered a civil 'morale booster' in that gardeners could feel empowered by their contribution of labour and rewarded by the produce grown.

In some parts of the UK, significant recent progress has been made in establishing local food initiatives (with varying degrees of support from the local authority) and in measuring the benefits which were experienced by participants. Such projects illustrate increasing public interest and enthusiasm for the idea of re-connecting with nature through the cultivation of food, and the important role of local government in ensuring the development and survival of such activities.

A shining example is Todmorden in Yorkshire, which is now growing food in empty spaces all over the town, including apparently in the graveyard. Its *Incredible Edible* project plans for the town to become self-sufficient in food within ten years.

The greatest difficulty facing an urban food growing initiative can be as simple as access to appropriate land. However, with sufficient political will and effective work in partnership with voluntary sector organisations, there is no reason why this cannot be overcome by local authorities which have sufficient vision and determination. As the capital city of Wales, Cardiff has a modest population of fewer than 400,000 people. It could become a 'test case' for a review on how the political will might be found to become more self-sufficient. Cardiff Council is currently undertaking a review of unused land in the city to see if there are areas which could be made available for food growing.

As a first step in supporting the

development of urban agriculture in the city, Cardiff Council needs to know how much spare land it has, and how much of this could be made more attractive, more productive, and more profitable in social, economic, and environmental terms through urban agriculture. Once there is a political and planning commitment to securing access to land,

Drawing on expertise that already exists within their own departments, alongside community organisations and engaged citizens, Cardiff Council could create planning strategies to address the multiple challenges to urban agriculture.

then the process can begin of determining which production systems and which organisational models would be best suited for particular land uses and particular sites and other operational details.

Drawing on expertise that already exists within their own departments, alongside community organisations and engaged citizens, Cardiff Council could create planning strategies to address the multiple challenges to urban agriculture. In addition, funding streams could be created or identified which would enable the necessary skills and equipment to be acquired by individuals, enterprises and community groups in order to set up sustainable local food growing projects. What is needed is a clear commitment to action to ensure that legal obstacles are removed and the necessary resources and support are easily available.

Supportive policies can create access to resources and skills, and address any legal obstacles preventing unused land being made available for urban agriculture activity. However, the drive and motivation for implementing urban agriculture activities will have to come from communities themselves, rather than as a political directive. Several residents' and voluntary sector groups

in the city have already started to look at the potential for establishing some food growing projects. Community organisations, such as the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens and the Cardiff Transition Project are championing food growing as a tool for health and community development.

Urban agriculture would not necessarily have to be considered as a permanent function for any vacant land within the city. Empty land could be made available for food growing until such time as it is needed by its owners or by the Council for other purposes. Access to such land could be offered at a peppercorn rent to interest groups or social enterprises which would undertake to manage and look after it productively for a fixed period of time. Through the use of raised beds or other intensive growing technologies, any risk of ground contamination or inadequate soil fertility would be avoided. To complement this approach, and to help create a permanent role for local food growing activity, urban agriculture could be included as a topic at all levels of the education system to help create a culture of agriculture among younger generations. Schools would be encouraged to establish small vegetable growing gardens, so that children would become familiar with the enjoyment, the skills and the benefits of growing and cooking their own food.

With the right support, especially in terms of access to vacant land and other mechanisms to help people get started in local food growing, urban agriculture could deliver similar levels of social and environmental benefits, economic activity, employment and food production that would make it a cost-effective, popular and 'sustainable' planning objective.

**Steve Garrett** founded the award-winning Riverside Farmers Market in Cardiff in 1998 which has since spawned three other successful farmers' markets in the city, together with a programme of local food outreach and education activities, including the Riverside Community Allotment.

## The Cardiff Food Council



Eryl Powell

The Cardiff Food Council was set up in September 2012. It built upon the some excellent foundations, including an existing Food and Health Strategy Steering Group, set up to oversee the implementation of the Cardiff Food and Health Strategy. This was one of the first Food Strategies in the UK that took a broad approach to food, including health, safety and the environment, and had as its overall aim to enable the residents of the city to access a sustainable, safe and healthy balanced diet.

The Cardiff Food Council's membership includes representatives from Welsh Government-health improvement division, several departments of Cardiff Council, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, Public Health Wales, Cardiff University, third sector organisations such as Cardiff Food Bank, Fare Share Cymru, Transition Towns, Riverside Community Market Association, the Soil Association, the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens, and many others. We acknowledge that we now need to focus our efforts on engaging the businesses sector with the Council.

With respect to governance arrangements, the Food Council will report to the Healthy Lifestyles Programme Board and the Environment work programme of the Cardiff Partnership Board. Being part of the Board's structure is important because it enables access to the senior-level decision makers of the main public sector bodies in the city.

Evidence from food policy councils elsewhere in the world suggests that at

least three factors that are crucial for success.

- A focus on policy and strategic influence.
- Connection with local governance structures.
- Effective community engagement.

The Cardiff Food Council is conscious that its effectiveness will depend upon the extent to which it combines 'top-down' support from the key institutions in the city with the 'bottom-up' energies of civil society. Too often in the UK local food projects suffer from short-term funding and hand-to-mouth existence. Food Policy Councils help to create a local institutional structure which enables excellent projects to become embedded into local governance arrangements.

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### Too often in the UK local food projects suffer from short-term funding and hand-to-mouth existence.

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Whilst we are keen to learn from what works elsewhere, it is also important to point out that the Cardiff Food Council will build upon the good food activity already taking place across the city. For example, during 2012-13:

- All primary and secondary schools in Cardiff met the Appetite for Life Food Standards for lunchtime provision.
- 9,666 people accessed fruit and vegetables from co-ops provided across Cardiff and Vale by the Rural Regeneration Unit and its volunteers.
- 5,775 people in Cardiff were fed from the Cardiff Foodbank, with 65 tonnes of food collected and 54 tonnes of food redistributed.
- FareShare Cymru collected 248.01 tonnes of food and redistributed 239.84 tonnes throughout Cardiff and Newport. This was enough to contribute to 479,680 meals.
- 58 businesses in Cardiff were supported by Cardiff Council Health Improvement Team to achieve the

Healthy Options Award.

- 52 'Get Cooking' sessions provided by Community Dietitians, and opportunities for people to access accredited community food and nutrition training courses.
- The Riverside Community Market Association provided weekly farmers markets in Riverside, Roath, Rhiwbina and outreach activities, such as community garden volunteering.
- Cardiff University continues to implement its Sustainable Food Policy and achieved the Soil Association Catering Mark.
- A 'green mapping' project carried out by Cardiff Transition (Sustainable Cardiff and Farm Cardiff) indicates that growing projects and allotments continue to sprout throughout the city.
- Work undertaken by Cardiff Council planners and the Public Health Team

on the Preferred Local Development Plan Strategy includes a health issues section, a health policy statement and a community food growing policy that will refer to access to land for food growing and the management of the location of hot food takeaways, particularly with respect to proximity to secondary schools.

The Food Hygiene Rating (Wales) Act legislation becomes effective in November 2013. This will require all relevant food businesses to display their food hygiene rating sticker and it will also require all local authorities in Wales to implement the Act. Currently this is a voluntary scheme but from November all premises will require a full inspection in order to be rated. We will work with Cardiff Council to implement this and in doing so increase access to safe food.

The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens are in the process of setting up the 'Community Land Advisory Service' (CLAS) for Wales.

Funded by the Big Lottery, the service will act as an intermediary and broker service between landowners and community groups. CLAS Cymru is designed to increase the amount of land available and accessible to communities in Wales that want to grow, farm or garden. The Cardiff Food Council will help facilitate links with Cardiff Council to explore putting more land into use for community food production. Working with the recently set up Cynefin programme (which is funded by Welsh Government and supported by Cardiff Council) we plan to pilot a community food network in Cardiff South East.

Of course, there is much more to be done. Throughout the development of the Food Council, we have been supported by the Soil Association and one of our ambitions is to continue to work with them as part of their UK-wide Sustainable Food Cities Programme. To support this, we are working on a Sustainable Food Action plan. The three 'P's of Procurement, Planning and Partnership will feature strongly in the plan. The forthcoming Sustainable Development and Public Health Bills will also offer us some significant levers for positive change.

Cardiff Food Council has plans to develop its own brand, web-site and communications plan to facilitate community engagement. As part of this we will be making a Community Food Map available for general use. The huge level of commitment and interest already invested in the Cardiff sustainable food scene gives a clear signal that citizens and agencies in Cardiff want a bigger role in shaping their local food system. The Cardiff Food Council, through its collective power, is determined to ensure sustainable, safe, nutritious, and tasty food is available for all.

**Eryl Powell** chairs the Cardiff Food Council and is Principal Public Health Specialist for Public Health Wales where her portfolio includes Food and Children's Public Health.

## Articles

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When it takes courage to compromise

# Carwyn Jones' government by instinct

Lee Waters says 'standing up for Wales is not a delivery strategy'

On his nine-month journey through the United States in 1831, Alexis de Tocqueville discerned the characteristics of a young nation with a clarity that few have matched. Surveying a society in the throes of rapid change, the young French aristocrat was planning a treatise to help his countrymen - who had just endured the trauma of a bloody revolution - to understand the dynamics of a new democracy.

The society he famously captured in *Democracy in America* - a work more quoted than read - was insulated from the intense ideological battles that shook Europe. Tocqueville admitted to some regret at the "low rhetorical temperature" of this young country gripped by materialism. As he weaved his way down the east coast of America he jotted the conversations he had, and the insights he gleaned. His notebook captures a conversation with a lawyer who told him, "In truth there are no parties now in the United States; everything is reduced to a question of men - those who have power and those who want it, the ins and the outs".

When I read this observation recently it struck a chord. Our own young democracy is struggling to define itself during a period of change that is less dramatic, but perhaps just as profound as the times captured by Tocqueville. But what strikes me about the current state of Welsh politics is the 'low temperature' of it all.

Apart from those most closely engaged in the struggles of governing, most observers of the current scene seem underwhelmed by it all. And yet circumstances would suggest things should be much livelier: a Welsh Government with the power to pass its own laws for the first time; a Westminster Government of a different ideological complexion pushing through the most radical austerity programme in living memory; and the not inconsiderable fact that our First Minister is running a Government without a majority. Surely, taken together, these trails of gunpowder should trace towards a powder keg ready to ignite at any moment?

But modern Welsh politics feels anything but combustible. An oft repeated reason

in the bars of Cardiff Bay is the weakness of the opposition in the National Assembly. Of course, it is seductively convenient for supporters of the Labour minority Government to point to the failings of others to excuse their own torpor. Their argument, however, is not entirely without force.

The unity of opposition party leaders in the last Assembly is noticeably absent, and the conditions which almost saw a non-Labour 'Rainbow coalition' take office have radically altered. The consensual instincts of Ieuan Wyn Jones and Nick Bourne, and their more united groups, have not been replicated by Leanne Wood and Andrew R.T. Davies. However, the coming together of opposition parties to demand pay restraint by Council Chief Executives saw the beginnings of a more collaborative approach in the Senedd. The follow up announcement by Plaid Cymru and the Liberal Democrats that they will join forces to negotiate with the Welsh Government on next year's budget settlement suggests they have finally decided to exercise their rights to collective bargaining. Nonetheless, the politics of Westminster make it politically impossible for Plaid Cymru to form a coalition with the parties in power in Whitehall. Moreover, Leanne Wood's own political strategy is clearly designed to play the long game. Her emphasis on community activism (an area in which she is perhaps most comfortable) and the decision to put the case for independence at the front and centre of her party's platform, makes the prospect of a repeat of the 'One Wales' coalition in this Assembly seem remote.

The cumulative impact is to give Carwyn Jones breathing space. Whereas Rhodri Morgan's Government had to be alert for Opposition attempts to trip it up - with Special Advisers at one stage packing up their desks in anticipation of defeat - his successor has had more luck. Even though he does not have an overall majority of AMs at his command, the First Minister isn't worried about being defeated.

To date Labour has been able to pick off opposition parties to agree ad hoc deals to get its annual budget through. Despite sizeable in-year spending cuts of an additional £32 Million this financial year, and increasingly tough overall budget settlements for the

forseeable future, the First Minister expects to be able to continue to agree annual deals with opposition parties. In exchange for the odd bit of pork barrel they seem content to let him carry on. If politics is about gaining and exercising power, they clearly have not read the memo. No wonder he seems so relaxed. For their disunity and the absence of hunger to seize control the opposition parties can be justifiably criticised. But there their culpability ends.

Conservative AM David Melding predicted in the run up to the last Assembly elections that if Labour won an outright majority, "Carwyn Jones is likely to resemble James Callaghan on a sleepy afternoon". In the event he didn't secure a majority and so can't afford to nap but it does feel as though he's coasting. There are grumblings of discontent on his own backbenches – echoed indignantly by opposition AMs – at his cavalier, and at times flippant, approach to the weekly First Minister's Questions.

In 2006, when Chief Political Correspondent for ITV Wales, I wrote a piece for *Agenda* on the potential successors to Rhodri Morgan. At the time Carwyn Jones was Environment Minister but had his sights quietly, but firmly, fixed on the top job. In my assessment of him I wrote:

"He has shown little initiative with issues like sustainable development and fair trade that fall within his brief. Carwyn's critics say all this is evidence of laziness. 'He doesn't put the work in', according to a well-placed source, a sentiment echoed by civil servants and politicians with alarming consistency."

The phrase which survived that piece was 'lazy'. However, on reflection, it is the lack of initiative or policy drive that is the more lasting concern. When challenged Carwyn Jones can show his innate ability. But he is not often challenged externally, and he doesn't encourage challenge from within: not from his Ministers, his advisers or from wider circles.

Instead, he relies heavily on his



"When challenged Carwyn Jones can show his innate ability ... but he is not often challenged..."

instincts, which to date have served him well enough. His early call for a Constitutional Convention to discuss the future shape of the UK is a good example of where he has gone with his instincts to good effect. It can go wrong, however. Notable examples were his off the cuff forays on the merits of welcoming the nuclear fleet from Scotland in the event of a referendum Yes vote; and the bizarre demand for S4C to pull a repeat of the Welsh language soap opera *Pob y Cwm* that criticised the Government's badger cull on the grounds that there was a council by-election being held on the day it was due to air.

But perhaps the biggest test of the value of his instinct will be the fate of Cardiff airport. The gamble of taking the declining facility into public ownership is in many ways a classic example of the First Minister's approach. It shows a keen understanding of popular feeling – shoppers at Tesco in Bridgend would readily agree that something must be done about the state of the airport. It fits into a patriotic narrative that every serious country has an airport, and in similar terms responds to the echo of the business community. But – and it's a big 'but' – there is no sense that it forms part of a wider strategy or plan.

Rhodri Morgan, who is known to have had his doubts about Carwyn Jones, wrote a typically coded assessment in his quirky *Western Mail* column when the intention to buy the

airport became clear. He said:

"If he can drive the purchase price down low enough to create a bit of headroom for improvements at the terminal; if he can find a savvy airport operator who can organise the turn round (and the catch up with Bristol), and finally if he can find the right low cost airline as a partner, it could turn out to be a master stroke. It will help to define his First Ministership."

Three big ifs - and he's right. It is risky ground. Whereas the First Minister's other missteps attracted little attention beyond the political village, his bold move on the airport has cut through. There will be a reward if it goes well, but if not the failure will be remembered and be quoted on the doorstep.

Good instincts are a great asset in a leader. But though necessary, they are not sufficient. They are by definition reactive reflexes. What is still not clear, more than three years into his leadership, is what Carwyn Jones' narrative or strategy is. "Standing up for Wales"? Fine. "Delivery"? Yes, but of what, when and to whom is unclear.

There is no clear articulation of what the Welsh Government is trying to achieve. As Tocqueville noted of 1830s America, "Everything is reduced to a question of men – those who have power and those who want it, the ins and the outs".

Commentators and analysts can quickly come up with a list of Ministers and sketch out their personal agenda or personality traits, but defining how their approaches come together is more difficult. As a consequence, policy shifts whenever there's a change in Minister. For example, Edwina Hart is currently reexamining all the road schemes approved by Carl Sargeant, who in turn had re-examined all the schemes approved by Ieuan Wyn Jones, who when he became Transport Minister examined all the schemes approved by Andrew Davies (Brian Gibbons didn't stay in post long enough to make any decisions). Add in the fact that the department has had five senior civil servants in charge over the last six years and it adds to the sense of incoherence. And with another reshuffle mooted before the next Assembly elections the muddle will continue.

The current cabinet is a collection of Ministers who have their own agendas, but it is not apparent that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

That Leighton Andrews was able to forge, and drive through, a distinctive approach to the education brief in part reflects his personality and abilities, but also says something about those around him that he stood out so much. His analysis of the failings of the Welsh education system was a far from subtle rebuke to his Labour predecessors, and all eyes will be on Huw Lewis to see if he reverts to the complacency Leighton Andrews railed against, or whether he sustains his predecessor's momentum.

However, for the lessons of the Rhondda AMs analysis to be fully absorbed, the war against mediocrity, both in the classroom and wider system leadership, must not be the sole responsibility of the Education Minister. Whilst fingers have justifiably been pointed towards Jane Davidson and Jane Hutt, little has been said of Rhodri Morgan's responsibility for the collapse in education performance whilst he was First Minister. Similarly, Huw Lewis must not be expected to shoulder the burden or blame of the much anticipated damnation of PISA coming in the autumn, Carwyn Jones must play his part too.



Resources Minister Alun Davies says tackling poverty, inequalities and sustainability underpins everything the Welsh Government does – “Well, it's a start...”

So far the First Minister has emphasised 'delivery' but has shown fitful concern with the ineffectiveness of the government – creating a little understood 'delivery unit', and sponsoring a new public policy research institute – but has not demonstrated a consistent drive to get a grip of the machinery of government or set a coherent framework for the diffuse agendas of his Ministers. The creation of a 'Treasury function' has been much trailed as a way of strengthening the centre, but that too is undefined.

Perhaps the clearest attempt to articulate an over-arching vision came from one of the cabinet's newer entrants, the Natural Resources Minister Alun Davies. He told a recent breakfast seminar in Cardiff Bay: “Tackling poverty, equalities and sustainability are the three things that underpin everything”. Well, it's a start...

In the Welsh Government's defence it faces enormous external challenges. The early stages of the Westminster Government's austerity programme, and its accompanying suite of welfare reforms, present multiple problems. And they are problems which will get worse. An Institute for Fiscal Studies report for the Welsh Local Government Association suggested that local authorities face an overall cut of 18 per cent. Assuming that reductions are limited to 9 per cent in key areas – social services, environmental services and refuse, and education – will require cuts of 52 per cent in spending on all other services.

Given the political pain of achieving cuts in the order of 5 per cent in the NHS, the scale of cuts to local services

has the potential to provoke a considerable backlash.

To date Carwyn Jones has had a well defined, and successful, political strategy: to blame the UK coalition whilst wrapping himself in the red dragon. But even assuming he can continue to manage the politics, the implications for how he governs will be profound.

For example, in a very badly handled episode in the days before Christmas, AMs

were recalled from their break to approve changes to Council Tax benefits to mitigate the impact of cuts being made in England. After initially saying they couldn't afford to do so, the Welsh Government found £22 million to delay a cut in housing benefits. But that is only for one year. They now face a dilemma this autumn on what they will do next year – in the context of having to trim an additional a £80m from next year's spending plans – without the same ability to blame the knock-on consequences of Government policy in England. When pressed by a Labour backbencher in an Assembly committee on whether there was a “clearly thought out strategy” to respond to the welfare changes, the then Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty, Huw Lewis, floundered and plaintively replied “We cannot say what it will be”.

Instincts will only get the Government so far.

Having lived though the French Revolution Alexis de Tocqueville had a residual attachment to intense ideological battles. He wrote, “What I call great political parties are ones that attach themselves to principles and not just their consequences, to generalities and not just particular cases; on the whole they have nobler features, more generous passions, stronger convictions, and a franker bolder style than the others”. The America of 1831 did not meet that test, and it is unlikely that he would have been much impressed by Wales some 180 years later.

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Lee Waters is Director of the IWA.



How would Wales react in 1915 to a Westminster government led by Ed Miliband? He is seen here on board Cardiff University's research and teaching vessel *Guiding Light* examining the line a Barrage might take in the Severn estuary.

# Whatever London does we can do the opposite

**Jon Owen Jones** argues that the progress of the Assembly has been hampered by the absence of responsibility for taxation

Before devolution the Welsh Office was a mere Whitehall cypher following every policy directed by Westminster. That is now the popular view but the reality was somewhat different. Welsh Secretaries of State were surprisingly independent. During the Thatcher years the Cardiff Office policy was One Nation Conservatism under a succession of 'wet' Ministers, Peter Walker, David Hunt and to a lesser extent Nick Edwards. When John Major became Prime Minister and moved his party towards the centre ground the Welsh Office became an outpost of robust monetarism under John Redwood. It was almost as if the Welsh Office had

to justify its existence by conducting policies in contradiction to those in London. Of course all that changed in 1999... or did it?

New Labour gave birth to the Assembly but its conception owed more to John Smith than to his successor. Tony Blair was hardly an enthusiast. However, the fierce opposition to devolution within the Welsh Labour party came from Old Labour - their opposition is now largely forgotten as so many of its members later emulated the Vicar of Bray in their contortions of principled opposition and support.

The Assembly's first year could hardly have been more difficult. With

the narrowest of mandates the Assembly lost three of its four party leaders in its first year. Indeed, it lost its would be leader even before it assumed power. In these circumstances it is hardly surprising that the new institution didn't initiate a wide range of new policies. Instead, it would distinguish itself by not doing whatever London was doing. London was beginning to do New Labour and the new fragile institution had several reasons to dissociate itself from that.

The New Labour brand was tarnished in Wales by Tony Blair's attempt to impose his candidate as First Minister. Not only was this the antithesis of devolution but it also wasn't New Labour. Instead of basing his decision on evidence, the Prime Minister simply did what he wanted to do and his acolytes tried to make the evidence fit. He later made the brand really toxic by similar behaviour over Iraq.

After four successive electoral defeats New Labour's purpose was clear: to win back the trust and then the votes of a decisive section of the UK electorate. It succeeded by ditching ideological commitments, which it no longer, if it ever had, believed in. On my party card was written Clause 4 of our constitution which promised to bring the means of production distribution and exchange into common ownership. Before New Labour, we said that we intended to nationalise almost everything. Having slaughtered that shibboleth we began to question the role that ideology played in practical governance. In the provision of services shouldn't we be open minded in seeking solutions and not blinkered by preconceived ideas. What mattered is what worked!

Welsh Labour in the Assembly couldn't rewrite Clause 4 onto its party cards but it did its best to reject the philosophy behind New Labour. Public service reform may benefit the public but it often threatens the vested interests of some who produce those services. The Assembly could become a champion of producer interest and be praised in the

Guardian simply by doing nothing. Those producer interests that had once largely opposed devolution suddenly now became its champions. Not only did this policy have support in Wales but it also gained very favourable coverage in the parts of the London media that opposed public service reform.

Politics in the Assembly is different to Westminster for a number of reasons, but possibly the most important are that in Cardiff the great inherent conflict of politics is absent. Almost everywhere

the centre ground. Their mistake was a Conservative opportunity and under Nick Bourne their party moved towards the centre and became more Welsh. Unlike in Scotland the Tory party in Wales thrived under devolution.

However, historically the Tory Party have never been able to gain the support of much more than a third of the people of Wales. The popular mandate had been held by the old Liberal Party and then the Labour Party. Labour recognises Plaid as a potential

as being different and opposed to solutions not invented here. Economics has had more impact. With ten years of ever expanding budgets the public sector in Wales could avoid confronting producer interests, but with a long term contracting budget that is no longer possible. Education reform has already begun and health will soon follow and local government soon after. So far the main area of difference to England (apart from the delay) is that competition and consumer choice will

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With Welsh Labour defining itself as left of New Labour what would the other Welsh parties do? Plaid Cymru was then the main opposition and decided that if Welsh Labour wanted clear red water then they wanted even redder water.

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else, even at community council level, a balance must be struck between the desire of the public for goods or services and their willingness to pay for them. All governing parties have to address both arguments and to some extent New Labour showed a greater sensitivity to those worried about their taxes or the value for money that they bought. Since Cardiff couldn't raise any money, that side of the political equation became redundant. Raising the money was Westminster's problem and the route to popularity in Cardiff was not to be overly sympathetic to the difficulties involved.

With Welsh Labour defining itself as left of New Labour what would the other Welsh parties do? Plaid Cymru was then the main opposition and decided that if Welsh Labour wanted clear red water then they wanted even redder water. I think this was a huge strategic error which they have since compounded. Whereas in Scotland the SNP attracted votes from the right and left, here in Wales Plaid abandoned

threat to its hegemony but it does not fear the Conservatives in the same way. In the conduct of its government and in the defence of its policies the Welsh Government is politically safe if it has neutered Plaid Cymru's opposition. In general there are two ways of doing this: a policy that is seen as being more 'Welsh', which usually means being different to whatever is being done in England, or a policy which is perceived as more ideologically left wing.

Any new initiative which is seen as both more Welsh and more socialist is almost impossible for Plaid to criticise. In face of difficult questions on service delivery Welsh Ministers will often respond by explaining that their policy is ideologically better than that pursued in England. It is an answer that ticks both boxes. A UK Minister cannot evade the substance of the question in that way.

With the election of the UK Coalition Government the political climate has changed but that has had little influence on Wales. We can still define ourselves

have no role in Wales.

Lord Jay who served under Harold Wilson wrote in 1937 that, "the gentleman in Whitehall really does know better what is good for the people than the people know themselves." For Wales read the woman in Cathay's Park. Perhaps she does but if so the evidence will be in improved and efficient services. In either case it requires an open mind to distinguish the better result.

After 2015 the political context may change again. How would Wales react to a Milliband Government that acted in a far more statist fashion? Would we act in contradiction to the new Whitehall view? We might decide that it's the evidence that counts and what matters is what works.

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**Jon Owen Jones** is a former Welsh Office Minister and Labour MP for Cardiff Central.



# When it takes courage to compromise

Kim Howells looks back at 1984-5, a pivotal year in recent Welsh history

I recall vividly struggling to keep up with the debate at the Sardis Road headquarters of the South Wales National Union of Mineworkers. It was the Spring of 1982 and, for the first time, I'd been instructed to take the minutes of the Executive Council meeting.

Newly employed by the NUM, I wrote at a furious pace, trying to capture the detail, as well as the spirit of the discussion. I had no need to look up to identify the speakers. For years I'd worked with activists, young and old, to help strengthen what we called the *Left* in the NUM. I knew everyone sitting in the room, elected representatives from the pits and workshops, miners' agents, safety inspectors and full-time officials. They were intelligent, experienced men, all of them hardened by the tumultuous industrial conflicts of the previous ten years.

They knew that the industry they'd

grown up in was in acute danger of suffering the most serious reduction in employment and output since the mine closures of the 1960s. Everyone in the room, albeit with varying degrees of enthusiasm, expressed their determination to continue the fight against closures. As someone passionate about that fight and about ensuring that the history of Wales be recorded properly, I understood that there were likely to be few analyses and opinions on the state of coal-mining in south Wales more valuable than the testimony of these men.

At the end of that first meeting I gave my thick wad of notes to David Kennedy, the superb and unflappable Chief Administrative Officer. He stared at them for a moment, smiled a wry smile and told me he'd need to show them to the President, Emlyn Williams.

An hour later, I looked up from my desk to see Emlyn leaning against the

door, cigarette in one hand, my notes in the other. "Very interesting, these minutes," he said as he lobbed them over to me, "But they're a bit detailed. Have a read of the changes I've made and talk to Dai Kennedy. Dai's good at minutes."

A quick glance told me that Emlyn's changes had reduced paragraphs to single sentences, if they were lucky to survive at all. My careful accounts of controversies reported at Cynheidre, Merthyr Vale and Oakdale became, "A note was made of..." I sat there, aghast, convinced I was already complicit in denying future historians access to this vital source material. Dai Kennedy calmed me down. Ass he explained:

'Executive minutes shouldn't be burdened with too much detail. All sorts of things are said in the Executive Chamber. Some people love the sound of their own voice,

others can't resist making the same speech, week after week. We've got revolutionaries who say one thing in here and the complete opposite when they get back to the pit... Best to keep the notes brief. Summarise, don't quote... You'll find it's a hell of a lot safer."

I began to realise why so many of the minutes of meetings I'd read during the 1970s while researching my PhD on the politics of coalmining were so bland and uninformative, why events I felt were imbued with historic significance sometimes weren't even mentioned. It didn't matter whether they were minutes recorded by trade unions, government bodies or mine-owners. Much later, as a government Minister, I discovered that the minutes of Cabinet meetings at No 10 were little different.

Which is why gentle alarm bells tinkled when, in Ben Curtis's introduction to his *The South Wales Miners 1964-1985* I read, "This book is essentially union-based labour history. It's main source material is the official records of the South Wales NUM; no other evidence type can produce a comparable level of detail."

Curtis uses much of that source material judiciously. As he explains, he supplemented it with oral testimony and with a wide range of published sources. It reads pretty convincingly and he's made a good fist of adding to a swelling list of histories of an epic period of industrial relations in British coal-mining.

Like any account that depends significantly on the memories of men and women who were, or may have been, players in the events he describes, Curtis' account will sometimes appear to be at variance with the memories and testimonies of others who were active in the NUM through this period. His version drifts away, sometimes, from my own recollections of what happened. That's not to say that the recollections of his sources are any more or less accurate than are mine. They're just different, and for all kinds of reasons.

He does a solid job of describing

**NATIONAL UNION OF MINeworkERS (SOUTH WALES AREA)**

DEFEND SOUTH WALES MINERS



**The funds of the NUM in South Wales are being plundered. But the miners will not be intimidated or starved back to work.**

**We will stand firm in our fight to retain our pits, our jobs and our communities.**

WE CAN ONLY DO IT WITH YOUR HELP

NO SURRENDER

Poster distributed by the NUM during the 1984-85 strike. The man with the loudhailer is South Wales Area President Emlyn Williams.

what happened in the coalfield in the 1970s as a consequence of the huge revival in coal's fortunes after the great hikes in the price of internationally traded oil - the OPEC oil shocks. Looking back, this was British coal's last hurrah. It is the explanation for the crazed predictions by Arthur Scargill and many others among the NUM leadership that demand for our coal would continue to increase substantially into the 1980s and beyond.

I suspect they were hypnotised by the images of those huge coal-fired power stations, especially in the north of England. Built to hedge against

the might of OPEC's oil cartel, they generated little vision among the miners' leaders but lots of delusion that fed, mainly, off the assumption that governments would continue to consider it sensible to subsidise the production of British coal even when its major markets, like the steel industry, were disappearing before our eyes. They seemed impervious to news that the cost of imported coal was dropping and that plans to privatise state-owned industries were wafting through the corridors of Whitehall. And the idea that we should begin arguing vehemently for the development of coal-burning

technology that would reduce its impact on the environment was still regarded by most in the NUM as an unhelpful irrelevance.

There's little evidence that, in the early 1980s, Prime Minister Thatcher and her advisers cared a fig about coal's impact on the environment. However, there's plenty of evidence that she recognised a good opportunity to take-on the NUM, cut government subsidies to state-owned industries, and win revenge for the Tories' humiliation at the hands of the miners in the 1970s. She sensed that there were important battalions within the ranks of the miners who had no stomach for the uncompromising militancy preached by Arthur Scargill.

Ben Curtis describes succinctly the alarm signals that we detected during our efforts to keep open threatened south Wales collieries from 1979 until the 1984/85 strike began. Time and again, we sent our most articulate young miners to other coalfields, with the object of building support for united action. I remember one of our envoys returning from Nottingham in 1983, informing us during a debriefing that miners in that coalfield had given them everything, *other than their vote*.

We were bitterly disappointed with the response in Yorkshire and stories circulated throughout the coalfield that union solidarity wasn't all it was cracked up to be. That is one of the reasons why South Wales NUM lodges voted 18 to 13 against taking the strike action called-for by the national and area leaderships, despite some of those same lodges having led the fight against closures over the previous four years.

Curtis describes how, "following instructions from Emlyn Williams", I organised a meeting of activists on the Sunday morning, the day before the strike was to begin. The plan we came up with required pickets the following morning at each south Wales pit and workshop. If we could persuade all of our members to stop work, we hoped we might escape the opprobrium of being confronted by pickets from other

coalfields. In fact, on that fateful Sunday, I organised two meetings. The second took place in the evening and was a report-back on the results of the actions decided at the first. Both of them were in Hirwaun but neither took place under the instructions of Emlyn Williams or anyone else.

I was able to organise them because we'd succeeded, through the struggles since 1979, in building a network of influential miners across the coalfield, men who were determined and ready to oppose pit closures. Invaluable work had been done by Hywel Francis in helping, through the NUM education courses at Swansea University, to identify and encourage some of the brightest and best activists. Almost without exception, they were the people who performed miracles in sustaining morale and fighting-spirit in their branches through the momentous year that followed.

Ben Curtis records that the south Wales coalfield remained by far the most loyal of the big coalfields - indeed, of *any* coalfield - until the strike ended in the late winter of 1985. However, the same miners who sustained the strike harboured few illusions through its final months that we could win. There was a very small minority who declared their willingness to go to the wall if President Scargill commanded it. There were even some who believed the strike should continue until the British state capitulated or collapsed. But most regarded such views as nonsense and likely to result only in the prolonged suffering of miners and their families.

Not long before he died in the winter of 1984, one of the bravest and most insightful of miners' leaders, Will Paynter, shared with me and others on this coalfield his desperate concerns that, despite the determined heroism of the 21,000 mining families in south Wales and of the tens of thousands more across Britain, the national officials of the NUM had neither the brains nor the courage to recognise that trade unionism, by its very nature, has to deal in compromise.

He reminded us that the NUM was never a revolutionary organization. Nor

should its leaders be deluded enough to believe that a workforce, torn by brutal internecine conflict, had the means and legitimacy to defeat a democratically-elected government that was itself determined to use all of the machinery of the state to win the day.

I'm glad that Ben Curtis has given a voice to that minority of Scargill-worshippers who continue, to this day, to argue that their hero was undermined by a conspiracy led by (among others) me, "a prominent advocate of moderation", as he puts it.

I can't remember ever being moderate. However, I can remember understanding vividly the madness of continuing, day after day, to try persuading thousands of men and women that they should continue suffering because the NUM president didn't have the guts to admit that the strike was lost and the humility to accept, as so many of his predecessors had accepted, that he had a duty to negotiate a compromise on behalf of some of the bravest trade unionists that ever paid their dues.

Once again, it fell to south Wales to show the required courage. Despite fierce internal divisions in the coalfield, the leadership had remained solid through that terrible year. They argued and fought to the end of the strike and beyond but, always, they presented a united front because they had only to glance at the other coalfields to see the consequences of divided leaders and fractured memberships. Emlyn Williams, George Rees, Terry Thomas, Des Duffield and their Executive Council were brave, intelligent men who understood the significance of Will Paynter's concerns about Scargill's deficiencies as a leader.

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**Kim Howells** was Research Officer with the South Wales NUM during the 1980s and MP for Pontypridd from 1989 to 2010. *The South Wales Miners 1964-1985* by Ben Curtis is published by the University of Wales Press.

# 2

Wales & Europe

## Articles

Between a rock and a hard place

Consequences of fragmentation within the British Isles

How Europe can be a catalyst for economic recovery

Marching side by side

# Between a rock and a hard place

Richard Wyn Jones asks whether Euro pragmatic Wales can continue to exist alongside Euro sceptic England

It's now forty years since Wales became part of what was then known as the Common Market. European membership has had an enormous impact in the intervening period. The Common Agricultural Policy – in both its stunning generosity and mind-numbing complexity – has become part of the very fabric of life in rural Wales. With successive UK governments – of whatever political stripe – having essentially given up on what used to be known as a regional economic policy, our post-industrial communities have also come to rely heavily on European funding in trying to address the deep structural problems that they face.

Wales and the Welsh have also left their mark on the European Union. Two of the thirteen European Commissioners nominated by the UK since 1973 have been Welsh. Another was born in Abersychan, though given Roy Jenkins' strenuous attempts to distance himself from his background it is perhaps kinder to his memory not to count him as a third. But it is perhaps another Welshman who has made the most striking individual contribution to the development of the Union. As the father of the spectacularly successful Erasmus programme to encourage educational exchanges across Europe, Hywel Ceri Jones's legacy at the Commission is a programme that has had a transformed literally hundreds of thousands of lives.

Forty years on, how do the Welsh people view the European Union? In a word, pragmatically. There is certainly no evidence that they have become ardent integrationists let alone admirers of European institutions. Nor have we adopted a confident 'Welsh European'

identity as proposed by nationalist intellectuals from Saunders Lewis to Raymond Williams. But neither have the Welsh succumbed to the vitulent Euroscepticism that is becoming such a central feature in the political life of our English neighbours. By contrast it appears as if 'middle Wales', to coin a phrase, views Europe as a layer of government that can make a useful contribution to improving our lot. To the extent that it does so, we are willing to support the continuation of its influence. Such Euro pragmatism puts Wales in the mainstream of northern European public (if not political) opinion.

However, Welsh Euro pragmatism is now under threat from two very different directions.

One has already been alluded to, namely the Euro scepticism that has taken root to the east of Offa's Dyke. It is now clearly the case that a substantial proportion of the English population blame the Brussels bogeyman for every mis-step – real or imagined – in public policy. Or to be more precise, it appears that one in three of the English population fall into this category. As can be seen in the accompanying Table, 31 percent of people in England believe that the European Union has most influence over the way their country is run (a figure that rises to 69 percent of UKIP supporters!). The overwhelming majority of them view this influence in wholly baleful terms. This is the Eurosceptic hardcore that now exert such a grip on Westminster level politics. To their number can be added a wider circle who are less – to coin a phrase – 'swivel eyed' in their hostility, but who are nonetheless negative.

Attitudes in Wales and England towards the EU (%)

Voting intention in an EU Referendum	WALES	ENGLAND
Remain	42	33
Leave	35	50
Wouldn't vote/Don't know	22	17
Number surveyed	1007	3600

Source: All the data was collected by YouGov. The English data comes from the Future of England Survey conducted in November 2012. The Welsh data comes from two separate surveys, the first from February 2013 and the second from April 2011.

Has most influence over how Wales/England is run?

	WALES	ENGLAND
Local Authorities	7	3
Welsh Government	19	--
UK Government	56	55
European Union	8	31
Other	--	2
Don't know	10	8
Number surveyed	2544	3599

When a referendum on UK membership of the European Union is finally held – and can anyone seriously doubt that such a vote is now inevitable – it's currently hard to imagine that there will not be a comfortable majority in England in favour of departure. That's certainly what the polls suggest. And with England home to the overwhelming majority of the UK's population, the very different views of the Welsh and Scottish electorates are likely to be utterly irrelevant to the final result. The Table shows the extent of the differences in attitudes in Wales and England.

Yet this is not the only threat to our position in Europe. Another emanates from Brussels itself.

The European Union is facing the

deepest crisis in its history following the debacle that is the Euro. It is no exaggeration to say that a generation of young people in southern Europe and Ireland are being sacrificed on the altar of the disastrous attempt to create a single, Europe-wide currency. But having ventured so far down that road, the Union's leaders seem unable to even conceive of the possibility of turning back. Instead they seem determined to plough ahead with fiscal union in order to secure sounder foundations for the currency.

Even if we were to concede that it is theoretically possible to create such a union across such widely varying socio-cultural, economic and party political contexts – and I for one am not remotely

convinced – the fact of the matter is that there is no evidence whatsoever to suggest that Europe's citizens are willing to support the very far-reaching changes that would be required in order to bring such a union to fruition. However, proponents of fiscal union seem entirely unperturbed by this absence of public support or legitimacy. They are determined to press on regardless. It is nothing less than a tragedy that supporters of the Euro project have become so careless of the democratic values that the European Union once defended so successfully.

Wales is caught between a rock and a hard place. We live in a polity whose dominant constituent unit is increasingly prey to a Euro scepticism that views Brussels as a malign, even sinister influence, and where rational debate on the costs and benefits of European membership seems almost impossible. Meanwhile, at the European level, an inability to admit to the failure of the Euro project is apparently leading to a position whereby fundamental transformations of state and society are being envisaged without any concern about the lack of public support for such developments. There seems to be little future for Welsh Euro pragmatism in such a conjuncture.

**Professor Richard Wyn Jones** is Director of the Wales Governance Centre at Cardiff University.



Students participating in the Erasmus European programme at Cardiff Metropolitan University. They are involved in the EU's METALIC project which promotes academic cooperation between European, Moroccan, Egyptian, Tunisian, Algerian and Libyan universities. Exchange scholarships cover travel, insurance, participation costs and a subsistence allowance.

# Consequences of fragmentation within the British Isles

Paul Gillespie explores the dilemmas the Irish Republic faces with the prospect of the UK leaving the EU



UKIP supporters campaign for an in/out referendum on Britain's membership of the EU – a vote that would challenge the Republic's diplomatic priorities.

Ireland is watching the UK's intensifying debate on membership of the European Union with growing fascination and alarm. The two states, economies and peoples have never been closer yet would face new borders and tensions should the UK withdraw from the EU. Ireland's fundamental interest is to remain close to both, but how can this be done if they draw so much apart?

David Cameron's commitment to a referendum on a renegotiated deal with Brussels when European treaties change to accommodate a deeper euro zone is seen as legitimate. But referendums are risky, as Irish governments know too well. They can have unintended consequences, including whether the question posed is the one actually addressed by voters.

The rapid growth of Euroscepticism, intimately associated with English nationalism by UKIP, is forcing just such a transformation. On current voting trends the logic seems to herald a UK withdrawal from the EU in 2017, rather than accept a

weak deal. The prospect is alarming for Irish policy-makers because it would jeopardise many of the conditions that have brought Britain and Ireland closer together over the last generation.

That the British state and peoples are facing a dual constitutional problem is highlighted by the second referendum preoccupying British politics – on Scottish independence. This prospect is equally fascinating - and alarming - for Irish observers. The twin processes of devolving power downwards within the UK and sharing it with other states in the EU radically challenge British unitary conceptions of sovereignty constructed in empire, and now made more necessary and difficult for the central British state after it. It is a crisis of political identity for all concerned, in which resolution of the EU issue depends on finding a solution to that of the UK itself.

Of course, Ireland has been through this internal process of disentangling from imperial unionism. In the first instance it happened peaceably through the home

rule movement from the 1870s to the 1900s. Later it developed into a violent anti-colonial revolution, which gave 26 of its 32 counties independence in 1921-2. Many of the dynamics now on view in the British debate – notably devolution as “a process not an event” – resonate with the earlier period. One recalls Charles Stewart Parnell's celebrated speech on home rule in Cork during the general election campaign of 1885:

“But no man has the right to fix the boundary to the march of a nation. No man has a right to say to his country: ‘Thus far shalt thou go, and no further’; we have never attempted to fix the *ne plus ultra* to the progress of Ireland's nationhood, and we never shall.”

The violent campaign against the British presence in Northern Ireland by the Provisional IRA in the 1970s and 1980s, pitched against a reformist SDLP on the nationalist side and intransigent unionists, culminated in the 1998 Belfast Agreement which reinstated power-sharing based on the principle of democratic consent to Irish unity. That also reintroduces a dynamic relating devolution to independence, even though most British political actors and commentators regard Northern Ireland as quite distinct from the Scottish and Welsh experience because of its violence and sectarian divisions.

Ironically, the successful bedding down of the Northern Ireland settlement, at least in terms of power sharing, now gives it a political stability sharply at variance with Britain's instability brought on by the Scottish and EU referendums. Scots who want to stay in the EU may vote to leave the UK next year. Meanwhile, those who vote No to independence may find the question is reopened in 2017 if a Scottish majority in favour of the EU is trumped by a UK (read English) majority against.

The UK and the Republic of Ireland have had quite different experiences of European integration. It has been felt as a constraining force by a British state inheriting the mantle of an oceanic

empire constructed against European Others. The UK has also found it difficult to accommodate EU power sharing because of its centralised political system and tradition of absolute parliamentary sovereignty.

In Ireland, by contrast, the continuing dependence on Britain economically and preoccupation with it politically and culturally in the 40 years following independence was transformed after EEC accession in the 1970s. The wider political setting and partnerships opened up by membership was experienced as a liberation from a continuing unequal and disrespectful relationship with the former ruling power.

Opportunities opened up for Irish Ministers to meet their British counterparts more equally in a new multilateral setting. This contributed in no small way to peace making in Northern Ireland during the worst periods of violent conflict there, culminating in the Belfast Agreement. Political leaders like Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern and senior officials were brought more closely together than ever. Relations that were strained and distant have been normalised, even transformed, in the last decade, as was symbolised by Queen Elizabeth's highly symbolic and moving visit to the Republic in May 2011. Significantly, she was accompanied by David Cameron and William Hague at the state dinner in Dublin. In March 2012 Enda Kenny and Cameron agreed a framework of annual consultations between the two states which is now being actively pursued.

However, the two states are currently going in different directions in the EU as the Euro zone is deepened, drawing out distinctions between 'ins', 'outs' and 'pre-ins'. These boundaries must be drawn fairly; but it is crucial that a member-state like the UK should be seen to act multilaterally in pursuit of that goal rather than unilaterally by withdrawing or bilaterally by seeking an *a la carte* solution to its problems, if it to gain the goodwill of its EU partners and forge alliances.

Such considerations play into scenarios developed by policy analysts examining the implications of the dual

UK constitutional process for Ireland. A recent paper prepared by the UK group in the Dublin-based Institute for International and European Affairs, *Untying the Knot, Ireland, the UK and the EU* ([www.iiea.com](http://www.iiea.com)) elaborates three of them so as to help create a more coherent Irish foreign policy towards Britain in these changed circumstances:

- An *accommodation* scenario, the most benign for Ireland, would see EU member-states agreeing to give the UK minor concessions that do not alter the fundamentals of the union and do not require treaty change. This would be more likely under a Labour government.
- *Repatriation* would be a more substantial renegotiation, probably involving treaty change and preferably conducted multilaterally not bilaterally. It would reform the rules governing relations between the euro zone and other EU member-states, protect the single market and preserve the EU's overall integrity. But if exercised bilaterally it could fundamentally change the competitiveness equation between the two states to Britain's advantage.
- *Withdrawal*, the third scenario, would arise from an unsatisfactory repatriation negotiation rejected in a referendum, or from an accident of miscalculation and domestic political dynamics drawing on the forces already mentioned. A new deal would have to be negotiated then between the UK and the EU – and between Ireland and the UK to avoid a disastrous reimposition of (EU) border controls between North and South and a much more ruthless competitive space between them.

Ireland's options in managing these changes are also threefold. A *reactive* response would see Ireland avoid taking any steps that would damage the closer relationship with the UK, including by stepping back from closer EU integration. This is most unlikely since positive

engagement with the EU remains a cornerstone of official policy – and of popular preferences despite falling trust in existing EU leaders and institutions. A *proactive* response would combine Ireland's commitment to the developing core of the EU with keeping good relations with the UK as a priority, since the two states share a commitment to liberal policies and have a joint interest in the single market. A third *interpretive* option would see Ireland use its privileged knowledge and engagement with the UK as an interpreter and mediator of British views for other EU partners, acting as a bridge between them but being careful to avoid being perceived as a UK agent.

All this makes for a difficult and wary period to come, even though many influential Irish people believe the most desirable – and likely – outcome is a more devolved UK still in the EU. But structural change in the UK's internal and external relations, if it goes in the direction of fragmentation, could dramatically reconfigure Ireland North and South by putting unification on the agenda in quite unexpected and at presently officially undesired ways. This would not respect the current public preferences in both parts of the country for the status quo of a highly porous border and a non-violent political setting.

A 'rest of the UK' minus Scotland and out of the EU would be much less likely to stay together because there would be less willingness to sustain transfers to Northern Ireland and Wales. All the more reason why a self-interested official Ireland still recovering from financial crisis might want the UK to stay in the EU, London continue to subsidise Northern Ireland and see an independent Scotland as a potential competitor for investment more than a Celtic soul-sister.

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**Paul Gillespie** is a journalist with *The Irish Times* and an adjunct senior research fellow in the School of Politics and International Relations in University College Dublin. He is secretary of the UK group in the Institute of International and European Affairs.

Harbour Way is the largest transport project to be supported by the European Regional Development Fund Convergence programme in Wales. Worth a total of £107 million it is providing a 4.8 kilometre link to the M4 at junction 38 into Port Talbot and the docks. The photo shows Port Talbot from the west, looking east. In the foreground the new road can be seen passing a new £6.3 million Research and Development Centre. This high quality office and laboratory space is expected to accommodate up to 170 high-tech jobs when completed this summer. There is also a proposal to develop a £28m campus for Neath Port Talbot College on the site.

# How Europe can be a catalyst for economic recovery

**Hywel Ceri Jones says the Welsh Government should drive forward a development plan that is fully integrated with EU convergence funding**

Wales must seize with both hands the opportunity presented by the agreement of the Council of Ministers in February to retain its commitment to economic and social cohesion as a central priority. The further agreement to West Wales and the Valleys continuing as 'a less developed region' for the next seven years of the 2014 to 2020 EU funding period is welcome but not really good news. It is now the only area within the UK so designated.

We all need to have a more thorough understanding of why we continue to be low down in the pecking order and levels of GDP, despite the considerable additional EU financial resources given to Wales over the past decade. This will

require an honest, open, and critical examination of what works and what does not work. Business as usual will not do.

The Welsh Government has the challenge to project a long-term strategy for Wales through 2020, integrating it fully with the policy and targeting measures which are set out in the EU's 2020 comprehensive strategy. Over the coming months the people of Wales need to see a convincing, transparent presentation of a Welsh plan of action to address the underperformance of the Welsh economy. The stability of the EU funding arrangements should enable the Welsh Government to promote growth initiatives rich in the creation of jobs and measures to promote social inclusion.

An all-Wales strategy, and leadership at the national level, is a necessary but not sufficient condition of success. Just as important will be an even more determined effort by the local authorities to mobilise a wide range of stakeholders in all parts of Wales, both public and private, to share the same vision and

commitment to driving the strategy forward through creative partnerships. The Welsh public needs to understand precisely how the domestic Welsh and European resources will be harnessed together – not on two separate tracks – as a joined-up and concerted policy attack on the problems we face.

We should remind ourselves of the reasons, not so long ago, for the successful period experienced by the Celtic Tiger, now sadly dissipated as a result of the greed of the banking sector in Ireland. The Celtic Tiger had four powerful 'claws':

- Strong inward investment.
- Partnership agreements between government and the employers and trade unions.
- A high premium placed on the transformation of the quality of education and training.
- The decision to combine domestic and EU funding in an explicitly concerted drive of policy development.

Ireland received a large amount of EU funding over a long period through the 1990s. However, analysts are agreed that the EU funding gave such added value and impetus because of the joined-up policy thinking led by the Irish Government at that time. Wales can learn a great deal from this experience.

Two parts of the EU's current Cohesion package should be given close attention. First, it is much more sharply focussed on a push for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. This requires us to draw up an all-Wales innovation strategy for smart specialisation. It should set out clear pathways to leverage private research and innovation spending, and promote a number of special centres of competence in Wales.

Investment in research, innovation and entrepreneurship will require the unleashing of bottom-up initiatives with businesses, research centres and universities working together. It cannot be business as usual. A central overriding commitment of the Welsh Government should be to kick-start the economy and to promote a much more dynamic culture of entrepreneurship in Wales.

In future, a requirement in the new EU regulations is for us to set out at the outset a Wales innovation strategy, including public and private investments. This should be seen as strengthening the hands of the Welsh authorities and their partner stakeholders to ensure the necessary quality control, monitoring and evaluation. In turn this will provide concrete evidence of success stories and recommend ways to eliminate blockages to progress.

This requirement is not a piece of meddling European bureaucracy. It provides the best possible guarantee that EU public funds will be used effectively to hit the policy objectives and targets which are set out in the EU's 2020 strategy. The resistance of some Member States within the Council of Ministers is a clear signal of their unwillingness to be open about the real impact of the EU financing and of the added value to be gained from coherent European and Member State policies and combined funding.

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## Investment in social policy should be conceived as a vital factor in building competitiveness and contributing to improved growth, as well as attacking unemployment.

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My second point concerns future use in Wales of the European Social Fund. We desperately need to break new ground here with new thinking. Investment in social action through the Fund is a necessary contribution to improved economic performance. It shouldn't be seen as a plaster-sticking exercise.

Investment in social policy should be conceived as a vital factor in building competitiveness and contributing to improved growth, as well as attacking unemployment. The social investment package proposed earlier this year by the Commission provides clear guidelines. I recommend they should be the subject of a major conference in Wales, actively engaging civil society – public, private and voluntary – to explore new initiatives to secure a more inclusive society throughout Wales.

The Commission's original proposal was that at least 25 per cent of cohesion policy funding for the period 2014-2020 should be allocated to human capital and social policies, which was a big change of emphasis from the previous period. Negotiations on this proposal continue to be the subject of difficult discussions between the Council and the European Parliament. Whatever the outcome, the Welsh Government should seize the opportunity to rethink its strategic use of the European Social Fund to drive both its programmes on skills reform and to get people into work. Again, more of the same will not do. We need more visible evidence of progress.

Whatever the final negotiations decide, the Welsh Government should be urged to decide for itself to establish such preconditions as

absolutely necessary if it is to be able to demonstrate to the Welsh public that by 2020 we have substantially improved the situation in Wales.

Much will depend on decisive leadership. What is required is a strong joint signal from the First Minister and the Finance Minister that they are absolutely determined to give this strategic effort top priority. They should give a lead by establishing an inter-ministerial team to drive an Action Plan forward across the range of policy portfolios. Of course, inter-ministerial cooperation of this kind will not work effectively without a parallel inter-departmental team effort within the Welsh civil service, visible and open to collaboration with Welsh civil society.

We have a worrying communications gap in Wales. Such a public signal would help give the Welsh public a greater sense of confidence in the Government's commitment to effective delivery of well-coordinated measures which can make the difference.

In the recent past the Assembly decided to dismantle its European Affairs Committee. This is certainly a disappointing decision at precisely the point when the Assembly needs to show that it is mastering the EU 2020 political obligations and targets as part and parcel of a combined Welsh strategy. The Welsh Government and Assembly as a whole need to put in place machinery, which is dedicated to a joined-up delivery of the strategy and also to coordinate and encourage the mobilisation and engagement of the private and public sectors.

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**Hywel Ceri Jones** is Chair of the External Advisory Board of the Wales Governance Centre at Cardiff University and former Director General for Employment, Social Policy and Industrial Relations at the European Commission. This article is an edited version of an address he gave to a European Parliament Conference on EU Funding for Wales in Cardiff Bay in April.

# Marching side by side

**Kenneth O. Morgan examines how Wales' relationship with Europe has been articulated by four political leaders across two centuries**

Twenty years ago, when I was Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wales, I was very aware how much Europe mattered. Wales appeared to be overwhelmingly pro-European. The Euroscepticism widespread in much of England was almost unknown. There were opportunities for pursuing the EU relationship that I had not encountered in England, for academic and cultural resources and especially through the Motor Scheme linking Wales with the thriving regions of Baden-Württemberg, Catalonia, Rhône-Alpes and Lombardy.

Conversely, the response of the Welsh Office in Gwydr House was very erratic, from warmly pro-European Secretaries of State like Peter Walker and David Hunt to the Euroscepticism, if not plain Europhobia, of John Redwood. I was told in Brussels by the late Bruce Millan, then an European Commissioner, that he had in effect to act as Secretary of State to ensure that Wales took up its rightful share of Objective One Funding.

But the reality is more complex than a simple picture of a strongly pro-European Wales and an inconsistent Welsh Office in London. In 2013, even though support for UKIP in Wales is put at only 6 per cent (23 per cent in England), it has one MEP. More importantly, for Wales the idea of 'Europe' has conveyed a variety of meanings over the decades and centuries. I want to explore this briefly by looking at four historical case studies: the Europe of David Williams, Tom Ellis,

Saunders Lewis and Rhodri Morgan. What legacies have they left?

David Williams (1738 – 1816) was a remarkable man. He was a Presbyterian who developed a Deist religious creed and wrote extensively on philosophical themes. He responded passionately to the revolutions in America and, even more, in France in 1789. His was a revolutionary, radical Europe, at least at first, a Europe of reason, of nature and enlightened thought. He became friendly with the French political philosopher Condorcet and corresponded with Voltaire who admired his writings. Like his compatriot and colleague Richard Price, he strongly attacked the anti-revolutionary views of Edmund Burke in his *Reflections*.

His closest friendships with the revolutionaries in France were with the Girondins and especially the republican journalist, Pierre Brissot. He attended the revolutionary convention in Paris in 1791, worked on the scheme for the new French constitution and actually received honorary French citizenship. Later he became alienated by the violence of events in France, especially the execution of Girondins like Madame Roland and his friend Brissot, and also

**It has left us one important legacy, the National Eisteddfod, its traditions and rituals invented by that maverick free-thinker, 'Iolo Morgannwg', of which I myself have the honour of being a Druid!**

the trial and execution of Louis XVI. In later life, his political outlook became far more conventional. For all that, he was the pioneer of a new generation of free-thinking, dissenting radicals (wrongly called 'Jacobins') who so influenced Welsh political life down to the 1830s. It has left us one important legacy, the National Eisteddfod, its traditions and rituals invented by that maverick free-

thinker, 'Iolo Morgannwg', of which I myself have the honour of being a Druid!

Tom Ellis (1859 – 1899) was far more political. He became Liberal MP for Merioneth and in 1894 the party's Chief Whip. Yet he was above all a new kind of Welsh politician, a cultural nationalist and a visionary prophet of national destiny. His was above all a Europe of nations. Like William Rees, 'Gwilym Hiraethog', the preacher/politician before him, Ellis's outlook was strongly influenced by continental nationalism, Louis Kossuth in Hungary and especially Guiseppe Mazzini, the inspirational ideologue of the Risorgimento in Italy.

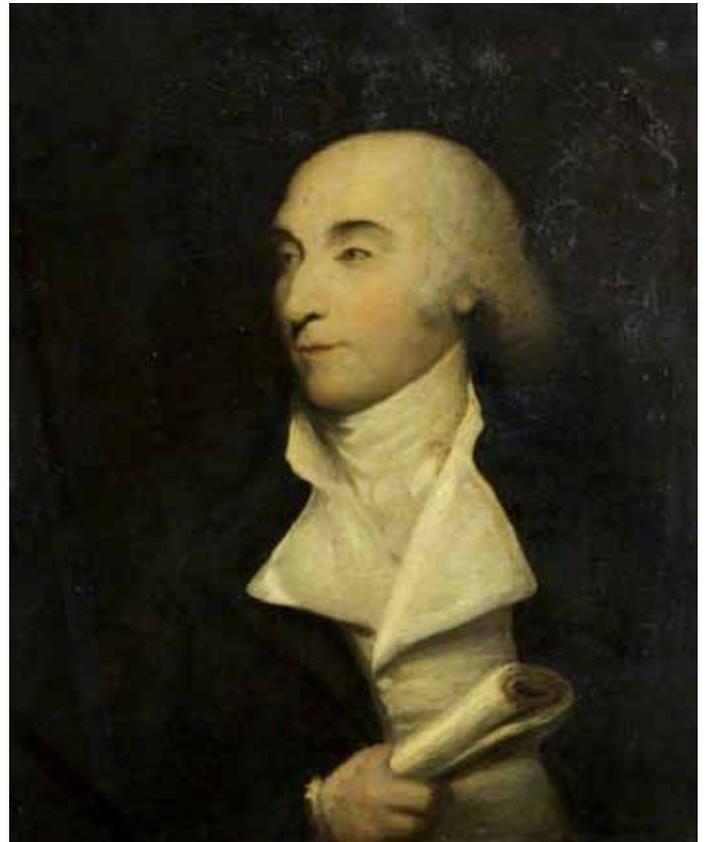
From Mazzini he derived the idea of a romantic secular religion of communally-focussed citizenship, a nationhood based on association and faith. He claimed that this was especially appropriate for Wales where its key concepts – indeed the very name 'Cymru' – implied a social, collective vision. He cherished the cult of youth – hence Cymru Fydd, the Wales that is to be, on the model of Young Italy. "Consecrate [the young] with the new religion", he wrote. Ellis admired small communities, especially mountainous ones. An important visit for him was with an English friend A.H.D. Acland to the

Austrian Tyrol in 1888: "We blessed again and again the work of Guiseppe Mazzini."

He stressed the idea of national unity, even more than freedom, an almost metaphysical faith of nationhood, and a lofty sense of mission. There were other ingredients in the ideas of this complicated man – Fabianism, Idealism, even the imperialism of Cecil Rhodes. His was a gentler, more culturally focussed



Portrait of Tom Ellis by J.F.R. Wood (1902), in the ownership of Aberystwyth University – Wales' 'lost leader'.



Portrait of David Williams by John Hoppner (late 18th Century), in the ownership of National Museum Wales – he attended the revolutionary convention in Paris in 1791.

nationalism than that of his younger colleague David Lloyd George. But Ellis was also a practical politician who saw the obstacles standing in the way of a self-governing Wales. He has left behind the beguiling legend of Wales's 'lost leader', even 'the Parnell of Wales'.

Saunders Lewis (1893 – 1985) was a nationalist of a very different era (embarking on his role in the years after 1918) and of a very different stripe from Tom Ellis. Ellis was above all a democrat. Lewis had total contempt for the nonconformist Liberal democracy in Wales prior to the First World War. He celebrated Wales before the Reformation, certainly before the Industrial Revolution. His ideas were based on his intense Roman Catholicism and his reverence for the Middle Ages, and he became first president of Plaid Cymru in 1925 to propagate these views.

He was strongly European in outlook but, unlike nearly all his countrymen,

he passionately admired the right-wing ideology of the French author Maurice Barrès and the writings of Charles Maurras of *Action Française*, both of them hostile to the Republic, anti-Dreyfus and strongly anti-semitic. Lewis moved steadily right during the thirties. He wrote sympathetically on Mussolini's corporatism in Italy as did his Plaid colleague Ambrose Bebb, and maintained an attitude of ideological neutrality during the Second World War. He sympathised with Vichy and Pétain's regime in opposition to the Resistance which he saw as dominated by Marxist Communists whom he abominated.

Whether Lewis was himself a fascist has occasioned much debate. On balance, I do not believe that he was, but he gave many hostages to fortune by his warm embrace of Europeans in France and Italy who were effectively fascists, anti-semites and totalitarian sympathizers. For long, Plaid Cymru had to struggle

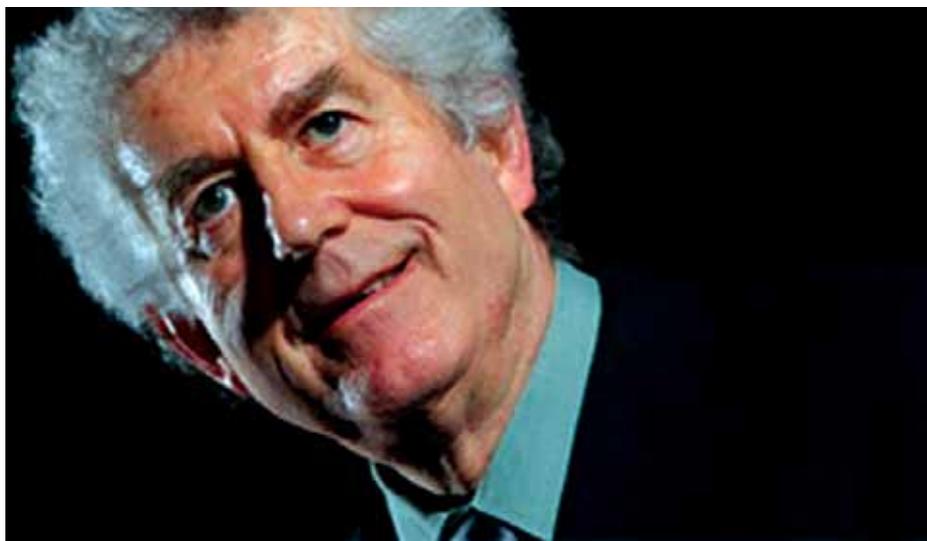
with charges, resulting from Lewis' writings, that it was a pro-fascist party. But Lewis certainly bequeathed a passionate European linguistic nationalism which, under the passionately pacifist Gwynfor Evans in the 1960s evolved into more democratic forms.

Rhodri Morgan (born 1939), First Minister of devolved Wales from 2000 to 2009, was strongly pro-European in outlook from the 1970s on. His was a Social Democratic Europe, the Europe of Jacques Delors, the TUC's 'frère Jacques'. He headed the European Commission office in Cardiff from 1980 to 1987, and was part of a powerful wing of the Welsh Labour Party, along with three musketeers, the Welsh-speaking Aberystwyth graduates, Hywel Ceri Jones, Aneurin Rhys Hughes and Gwyn Morgan, which tilted Labour in Wales in a strongly pro-European direction.

Hywel Ceri Jones, author of the Social Chapter in Delors' office and



Saunders Lewis – bequeathed a passionate European linguistic nationalism.



Rhodri Morgan – in his era greater devolution and European involvement marched side by side.

inventor of the Erasmus and Socrates student exchange schemes, was a particularly important colleague. They operated at a time when the reborn Plaid Cymru was strongly pro-European and when ideas of a devolved Europe of regions/nations were being debated by some of us in seminars in Freudenstadt in Baden-Württemberg.

A Wales European centre was being set up in Brussels. Debate was spurred on by a volume by John Osmond and Sir John Gray, *Wales in Europe* (1997). Des Clifford was made Wales's first representative in Europe, as BBC Wales reported it, for 600 years. Rhodri Morgan's becoming First Minister in 2000 was highly important for Wales's

European dimension. Wales now saw itself, not just as a recipient of European largesse for its deprived valleys, but more pro-actively. It participated in pan-European environmental policies for sustainable development, while both Maastricht and the Lisbon treaty were commended for their policies for Europe's regions and minority languages. In the era of Rhodri Morgan's leadership, therefore, greater devolution and European involvement marched side by side. Europe will undoubtedly be a factor in the push towards further devolution, as in the growing fields of Welsh law and human rights policy.

All four strains of Europeanism have left their mark on modern Wales

– the republican rationalism of David Williams, the romantic gospel of nationhood of Tom Ellis, the militant organic nationalism of Saunders Lewis, and the social democracy of Rhodri Morgan. With this varied background behind us, we now face a critical new phase for the relationship of the United Kingdom and Europe, one that goes far beyond the narrow implications of rising support for UKIP.

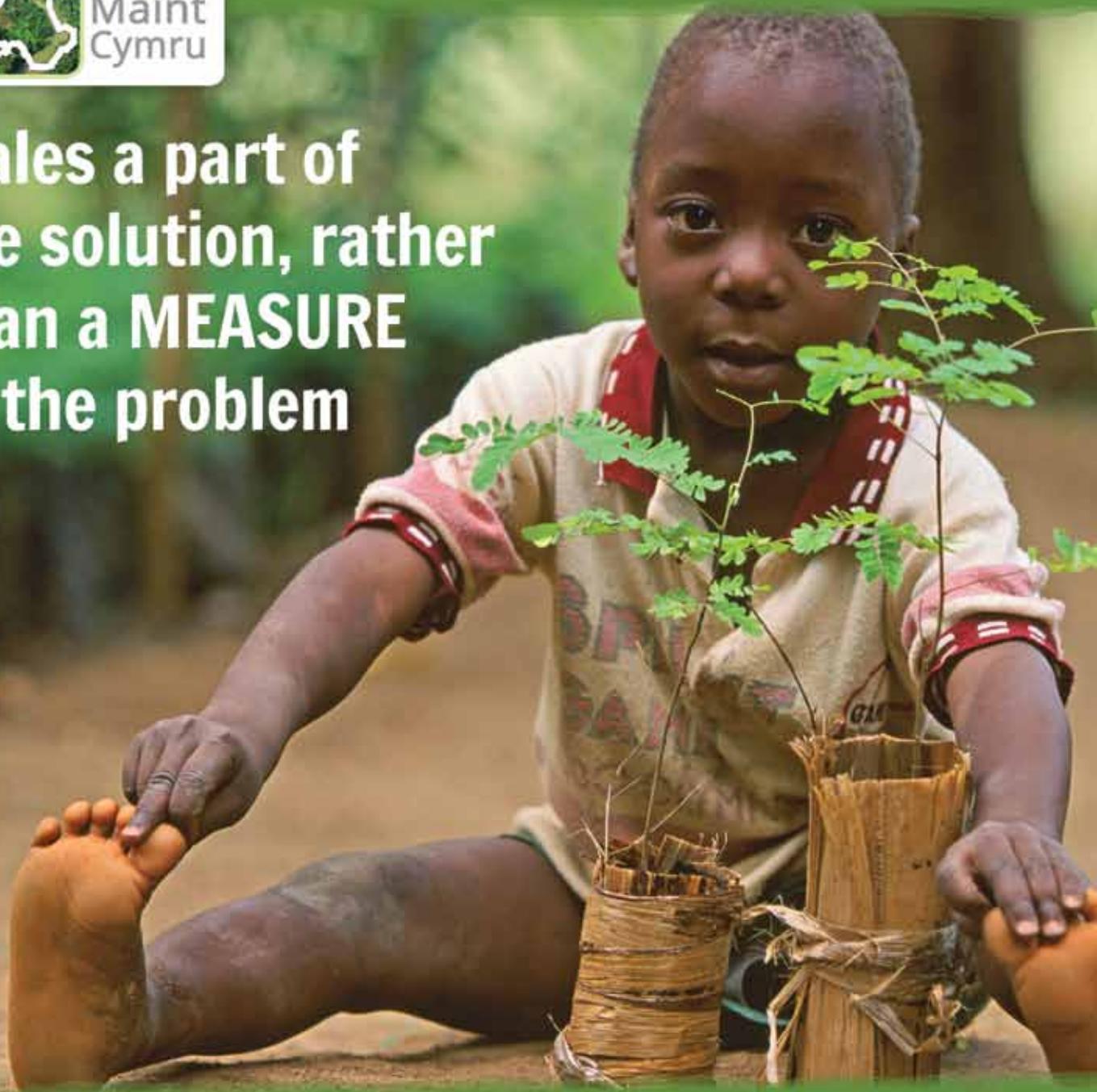
For Wales, there may be new openings and opportunities in a pluralist Europe where smaller nations, some of them 'unhistoric' in Marx's sense, like the Catalans, the Flemings and, of course, the Scots, may be more assertive. The impact of the Scottish referendum on Wales in September 2014 will be important, whatever the result. The reconfiguration of the United Kingdom, whether federal, confederal or whatever, will profoundly shape the relations of its component nations with Europe. The union of the United Kingdom and the union with Europe are closely bound up with one another, including for Wales. The stresses that result are most evident in Scotland, whose political nationalism has always been sharper than that in Wales. Pro-union Scots would not want an England-dominated Britain which might cut adrift from Europe. But there could be a crisis in Wales, too, if England resolves to leave the EU in the future referendum, whatever form it takes, against the declared will of the Welsh. The relations of Wales, England and Europe, which have witnessed so many complexities since 1789, are entering a critical, but fascinating new phase.

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**Professor Lord Kenneth O. Morgan** is a Welsh historian and author and was Vice Chancellor in the University of Wales from 1989 to 1995. This article is an edited version of an address he gave to a British Academy and Learned Society of Wales conference on devolution in May.



# Wales a part of the solution, rather than a **MEASURE** of the problem



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# 3

## Changing Union

### Articles

Our legal personality

Why police and criminal justice should be devolved

Welsh Government scrutiny by-pass

Captions

The 'Boston' manuscript of the Laws of Hywel Dda, bought by the National Library for £541,250 at auction in Sotheby's in July 2012. The pocket-sized book, written in medieval Welsh and featuring coloured decoration, is one of the earliest manuscripts of its kind ever offered in a public sale and was auctioned by the Massachusetts Historical Society. It is thought it obtained the manuscript as a gift from Welsh emigrants in the early 19th Century. Unlike most other Welsh medieval documents of its kind, the Boston Manuscript has handwritten additions demonstrating that it was used as a working law text.

# Our legal personality

**Thomas Glyn Watkin** explains that law has now joined language as a focus for national assertion

Cultural institutions have played a major part in the formation and the preservation of Wales' national identity. The last century or so saw the creation of a number of national institutions reflecting the scholarly and cultural interests of the Welsh people. Not least among these was the University of Wales which nurtured as constituent colleges the now independent universities of Aberystwyth, Cardiff, Bangor and Swansea – the order was chronological if not quite alphabetical. The National Library

and National Museum have also played their parts, as well as the politically, legally and constitutionally significant disestablished Church in Wales.

Alongside these are other cultural bastions of Welshness, the National Eisteddfod and the Urdd, and if one chooses to cast one's cultural net more widely, to encompass agriculture, the Royal Welsh Show, and in terms of 'popular' culture, the Welsh Rugby Union, the Welsh FA and last – but certainly not least – S4C. Indeed, it was common not so long ago to hear it said that Welsh national identity was primarily if not essentially a cultural rather than a political phenomenon – more to do with poetry than politics, the front row rather

than the front bench.

Yet, historically, there would be considerable agreement that the two most important elements in the national identity of the Welsh people in the millennium separating the arrival of the English from the union of the two lands under the Tudors were language and law. Once the Christian faith ceased to differentiate the native Welsh from their eastern neighbours, it was their language and their laws which made them distinct.

For the men and women of the later Middle Ages to be Welsh was to speak Welsh and to live according to the laws of Hywel. Henry VIII's union removed law as an identifying factor as surely as Elizabeth I's provision of a Welsh Bible and Prayer Book preserved the language into the modern era. However, Henry had provided a new kind of legal identity for Wales, in the form of the country's own law courts – the Great Sessions – but those were lost amid the centralising enthusiasm of the 19th Century.

Within a generation of that loss, and in the wake of the extension of the franchise, the demand for recognition of Wales' individual identity begins to be heard. It is a demand which sounds in harmony with the outcry across Europe against uniformity in legal and constitutional arrangements and support for institutions reflecting national traditions and perspectives. Thus began the first slow trickle of laws which were to be operative in Wales alone, culminating in the disestablishment of the Church, and the creation of many of the national cultural institutions referred to at the outset.

However, it is only in the last two decades that political and legal developments have caught up with, and perhaps, overtaken, the cultural. The creation of the National Assembly and the Welsh Government have ushered in a new period in Wales' political and legal history. This is one in which it not only has a constitutional identity but also, for the first time ever, legal institutions which can act as a focus of that identity. The National Assembly



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](http://www.changingunion.org.uk)

and the Welsh Ministers both now make laws for Wales which apply only in Wales, made by the representatives of the Welsh people alone, and which are made in the two languages of the nation. Law has again joined language as a focus for national identity.

Identity in this context refers to those characteristics which determine who or what a thing is and which distinguish it from others. It is worth reflecting on what those characteristics currently are in the legal life of Wales, and whether they are sufficient to constitute a national identity in legal matters. The National Assembly and Welsh Ministers are both sources of law for Wales, but they are not the only sources of legislation.

Law continues to be made for Wales by the UK Parliament and by UK Ministers, as well as by the institutions of the European Union. Indeed, the UK Parliament, as the legally sovereign body, continues to enjoy the power to legislate for Wales – as for other parts of the UK where legislative devolution has occurred – even in devolved areas. The fact that the Assembly's legislative powers are limited and, as a consequence, open to challenge before the courts, aligns it more closely with the legislatures

of mainland Europe and elsewhere, which operate within the confines of a written constitution. The fact that the Assembly shares its legislative power with Westminster may make it and Wales more comfortable with the concept of sharing legislative power than is the case with Westminster.

The Assembly is also elected in a manner which differentiates it from the House of Commons but provides similarities with the legislatures of mainland Europe. While 40 of its 60 members are elected according to the first-past-the-post electoral system used in UK parliamentary elections, the remaining 20 regional members are chosen by a method of proportional representation. This has resulted in no one political party having so far achieved an overall majority in the Assembly. Welsh governments are regularly either coalitions or minority administrations, something until recently more redolent of the European mainland than of the United Kingdom.

This has of necessity affected the manner in which both government and the Assembly's legislative functions are conducted. Welsh governments are rarely in a position to force through their legislative proposals against the wishes of the broader Assembly membership. Nor can they routinely vote down legislative proposals emanating from non-government members. This has made for a more inclusive, consensual style of political debate within the Assembly and its committees, and made those institutions more receptive to proposals and interventions from outside of government and the Assembly chamber.

Within the Chamber there are also some differentiating characteristics, and I do not mean merely its shape which is nevertheless more 'continent of Europe' than Palace of Westminster. Also more European is the possibility of appointing a member of the Welsh Government from outside the Assembly membership – the officer in question being the Counsel General who, although not one of the Welsh Ministers, is a member of the

government. The Welsh law officer is not only allowed to speak in the Chamber and to be questioned in it, but may also introduce legislative proposals. This is a privilege not conceded to the Secretary of State of Wales, even though that UK Minister is another non-member entitled to participate in Assembly proceedings from time to time.

Without doubt, however, to a spectator at a plenary or committee

made by the Assembly and by Welsh Ministers are not to be found in the English text nor in the Welsh text, but in the two texts together. Indeed, it is questionable whether they can be safely interpreted without reference to both versions.

In this, they are like the laws of the European Union. However, in that legal system, questions of interpretation are resolved by reference to the European Court of Justice, which is also the final

equally in both nations.

- One of those bodies of law differs from the other two in being bilingual.
- The courts which sit in Wales differ from those which sit in England in being legally obliged to receive evidence in both languages.

Taking these into account it is not difficult to understand that some regard the concept of England and Wales as a single jurisdiction to be little more than the most recent in the long line of legal fictions. Ironically, Wales now lacks the one piece of legal identity which it has enjoyed for the greater part of its post-Union history – a measure of judicial devolution.

There are signs that there is a reluctance to take that step, and that the request will meet with the same kind of resistance which attended the campaigns for the creation of executive and legislative institutions. There may well be a fear that national identity is fuelled by the existence of national institutions. Reluctance to allow Wales the institutions to embody its legal identity may well be the reverse side of the coin which bears on its face a Britannia fearful that the existence of European institutions are serving to create a European identity. Neither development I would suggest raises the same level of fear in Wales, for Wales is long familiar with preserving and sharing its identity within larger political units.

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Virtually all subordinate legislation made by Welsh Ministers is made in both languages. Bills have to be introduced into the Assembly in both languages, undergo scrutiny and amendment in both, and are passed into law in both.

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session, the most obvious difference between the Assembly as a legislature and the UK Parliament would be the fact that proceedings in the Assembly are bilingual, routinely conducted in both the English and Welsh languages. Members, and those appearing before committees, speak in the language of their choice, with proceedings switching effortlessly from one language to the other, with simultaneous translation available when required.

Virtually all subordinate legislation made by Welsh Ministers is made in both languages. Bills have to be introduced into the Assembly in both languages, undergo scrutiny and amendment in both, and are passed into law in both. As both language versions are by law of equal standing, the law that applies in Wales is manifestly different from that which applies in other parts of the United Kingdom.

I am far from convinced that the ramifications of this linguistic difference have yet to be fully appreciated. The laws

court of appeal on points of EU law. That court is a collegiate body, composed of judges from across the member states, each one of whom is required to have a knowledge of more than one official language in order to be qualified to sit. It is, by its very constitution, a multilingual tribunal, capable of dealing with the interpretation and application of laws made multilingually.

The same is not true of the courts of England and Wales charged with the interpretation of the bilingual laws which apply only in relation to Wales. Not surprisingly, it is being questioned whether Wales now needs its own judicial institutions to set alongside the devolved legislature and executive it has acquired. There are at least three major distinguishing factors.

- The law of England and Wales now comprises in truth three distinct bodies of law – one of which applies only in England, one of which applies only in Wales, and one of which applies

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**Thomas Glyn Watkin** is an Honorary Professor of Law at both Cardiff University, where he taught from 1975 until 2004, and at Bangor University, where he was foundation Professor of Law from 2004 to 2007. He was the first Welsh Legislative Counsel, responsible for drafting the legislative programme of the Welsh Government. This article is an edited version of an address he gave to a British Academy and Learned Society of Wales conference on devolution in May.

# Why police and criminal justice should be devolved

**Alun Michael** argues that we need these powers to enable a joined-up approach to tackling crime

The suggestion that policing should be devolved to the National Assembly has hardly raised a ripple of interest on the streets of south Wales. Nor has it aroused passionate opposition within the police service. Why? Because almost everything that is relevant to the work of the police has already been devolved.

While political power over the criminal justice system, including policing, still sits in Whitehall, the fact is that decision-making about most police activity has now been devolved. Whitehall has handed over the leadership to Police and Crime Commissioners. And the four Welsh Commissioners, despite their political range (two Independents, one Conservative, one Labour and Co-operative) have immediately started to work together on Wales-wide issues, with some excellent and fruitful meetings with Welsh Government. So common sense, pragmatism and purpose have brought about *de facto* devolution and it's only a question of when the machinery of government will catch up.

This is only a surprise to those who don't understand the essential nature and purpose of the police service. I use the word 'service' deliberately, because the continental concept of a police *force* is not very British at all. When he set up first police service, Sir Robert Peel set out nine principles on which policing should be organised. Two of those principles are as central to policing today as they were in Victorian times:

- The main purpose of the police is to cut crime - which can only be done if you reduce both offending and re-offending.

- The police are the public and the public are the police - which is a slightly Delphic way of saying that the police can only succeed if they have common purpose with the communities in which they seek to uphold the law.

So how can we fulfil those two purposes? The Justice Select Committee of the House of Commons addressed that question in a major landmark report, of which I was one of the authors.

The first strategic question was whether - if you had the choice - you would continue to pour all the money and resources that go into the criminal justice system into the same things. The unanimous answer from this cross-party committee was 'No!'

The second question was to ask what makes a difference to levels of crime. Again, after intensive work examining our own systems and looking at other countries, particularly in the USA, the answer was clear. The criminal justice system, including the courts and the police, has comparatively little impact on crime levels. What matters is a whole range of other factors and public services, including education, training, jobs, how we deal with mental health, alcohol, drugs, housing, nurturing healthy communities and many other social factors.

So if the police are to be effective they have to work collaboratively with organisations, which tackle each of those economic and societal issues. That's why the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act ushered in the Youth Offending Teams and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships - renamed Community Safety Partnerships in Wales - which have quietly and effectively beavered away at making the public safer in our communities.

It's worked across England and Wales, but I suggest that it has worked

particularly well in south Wales because it fits with the nature of strong local communities and the style of police leadership in recent times. We've also seen strong collaboration between the four Welsh chief constables and their teams, providing a healthy precursor for the arrival of commissioners with the same combination of being both independent in spirit and collaborative in practical matters. And that's been helped by the style of Government in Wales, with the emphasis on protecting services and collaborative working.

So I agree that it makes sense to devolve responsibility for policing. It will bring together the responsibilities that fit together and enable a joined up approach to be taken to crime reduction and the building of healthy communities - two key purposes of democratic governments which ought to sit together.

And that's the problem in Whitehall where they don't sit together any longer. When I became Deputy Home Secretary in 1997, my portfolio included policing, criminal justice, crime prevention and youth justice. And when he gave me that appointment, Tony Blair added "and the voluntary and community sector goes with you". Reducing crime and creating stronger communities were part of the same strategic task.

That coherence disappeared when John Reid condemned the Home Office as "dysfunctional" and the responsibilities were split between two departments. As the Police and Justice Minister, Damien Green straddles the two departments - as did David Hanson in the past. In England Community development lies with the Department for Local Government, but responsibility for the voluntary and community sector sits in the Cabinet Office. Responsibilities that should sit together are now in separate silos in the Westminster village.

The proposition that devolution of the rest of the criminal justice

## The Welsh Police and Crime Commissioners



The four Welsh Police and Crime Commissioners, elected last November, have already brought about de facto devolution of police powers to Wales. Clockwise from top left: former Labour Home Office Minister Alun Michael, for South Wales; Conservative Christopher Salmon for Mid and West Wales who formerly served in the army in Northern Ireland, Kosovo, and Iraq; Independent Winston Roddick QC for North Wales, a former Counsel General in the National Assembly; and Independent Ian Johnston for Gwent, a former police officer.

system should follow was greeted with somewhat greater scepticism, but I believe that it's right. A barrister once told me that policing is an essential subsidiary of the court system, but I retorted that the reverse is true. The courts are an essential subsidiary of our system of policing and crime reduction

- essential to deal with those who break the law and for the protection of the public, but in truth the means of dealing with the failures of society and its institutions as well as protecting society from some really bad people.

So the criminal justice system is necessary but it's not the key service for

creating safe, healthy communities. It's the remedial and repair service.

Over recent years the level of crime has come down. That's not just reflected in the offences that are reported to the police but in the experience of the public reflected in what used to be called the British Crime Survey. It's based on what people say about their experience and that's important because we know that many crimes do not get reported to the police for a variety of reasons.

It's not happened by accident. It happened because of the strength of partnership working led jointly by the police and the local authority in each area, with other organisations required to be a part of that work. Some key examples show the enormous potential of such an intelligent approach. In particular the work of Professor Jonathan Shepherd, at Cardiff Royal Infirmary and then at University Hospital in Cardiff, shows that a scientific approach to asking why violent incidents happened can enable the police and a variety of partners to significantly cut the number of violent incidents.

That's why Cardiff is the safest city of its cohort. Our streets may be rowdy and sometimes unpleasant late at night when some of those on our streets have had too much to drink - but that's not the same as being unsafe. Falling over drunk doesn't threaten other members of the public in the same way as falling over fighting.

The quality of partnership working by police and medics, street pastors, council workers and community payback workers in the late-night economy is absolutely stunning. It's not just efficient working, it's a vibrant partnership of working people who are determined to safeguard their fellow citizens and make the city safer.

There is similar determination in Swansea. It's just one of the many ways in which a partnership approach to cutting crime creates the headroom to allow the police to do the really tough stuff of tackling crooks, exploiters, people traffickers and terrorists instead of being distracted by needless time in court and time spent picking up the pieces.

Don't get me wrong. Our police officers are picking up the pieces in every community right across south Wales on a daily basis. It's just that the volume has gone down and that's why despite the draconian cuts imposed by the Treasury, crime figures are still going down.

And it's a two-way process. A violent incident often leads to an extra customer for A&E, and can lead to lengthy and expensive surgery. It can be devastating to the victim and destroy the health and happiness of a family. Every councillor knows the damage done by anti-social behaviour locally and that a reputation for being a safe, crime-free town enhances the chance of attracting inward investment. When he said that "we're all in this together", David Cameron was lying - but it's the truth about community safety and economic development and social inclusion in Wales.

So let's embrace the concept of devolving policing, and devolving the criminal justice system too.

Since writing that sentence I have thought long and hard about the question of whether it is necessary to devolve policing and criminal justice at the same time. I conclude that it is not necessary. Whereas local operation of the Criminal Justice system – probation, local prisons, offender management – is inextricably linked to operational issues of policing and crime reduction, the actual work of the higher courts, judicial oversight and legislation are not. Just as policing isn't devolved – except in the sense that it is devolved to Police and Crime Commissioners – and yet local operational activity links directly to services that fall directly under the aegis of Welsh Government. So, too, local court, prison and criminal justice systems can integrate well with local policing.

In my view the courts have a duty to serve that clear policing objective set down by Sir Robert Peel that the first duty of the police is to prevent crime and disorder. You don't need legislative or ministerial devolution in order for close collaborative working to give the best possible service to the local public.

I have agreed for some years that

we should be much clearer about our expectations of the Criminal Justice System. I argued that the Sentencing Council should be given as its key purpose the responsibility of informing and advising the judiciary and magistrates about the effectiveness of different sentences in protecting the public through reducing the likelihood of the offender to reoffend.

Recently I asked the chairman of the Sentencing Council, Lord Leveson, to put more emphasis on informing the courts about 'what works' in making offenders less likely to offend again. He responded rather bizarrely by saying that we needed to ask that question of community sentences but not of prison sentences.

As Police and Crime Commissioner I have a legal responsibility under the 2011 Police Reform Act to challenge the criminal justice system in south Wales to be efficient and effective. It's encouraging that services like probation and the prisons are keen to work with us and very positive about the help they get from services like education, training and health that come under Welsh Government.

So there's real potential for a successful Welsh model which builds on the strengths of devolution without cutting adrift from the strengths of being part of the United Kingdom. Devolved success depends on recognising that there will always be things that are better done together, drawing on common strengths, mutual support and well-informed challenge. Accordingly, we should:

- Maintain a joint international presence – the Serious and Organised Crime Agency, soon to be part of the new Serious Crime Agency, has a tremendous international reputation.
- Maintain a single system for the higher and appeal courts so that we retain the expertise that comes from scale
- Maintain a single Independent Police Complaints Commission (why not extend that to Scotland as well, to get the benefits of experience and scale)

and a single Police Inspectorate.

Thinking further about the issue, it seems to me that we would all benefit by expanding the scope of both the Inspectorate of Constabulary and the Independent Police Complaints Commission so that they cover not just Scotland and Northern Ireland as well as England and Wales, but also include the Republic of Ireland. Delivery needs to be local, but the maintenance of integrity, high performance and efficiency is a complex concept that crosses all borders. It would not be impossible to develop a collaborative oversight of these institutions and perhaps some others in order to square the circle of local autonomy and consistent high standards.

And above all, we should avoid the mistake that is being made in Scotland where they are nationalising the police. One Chief Constable reporting to one Minister is very risky – and it abandons locality. It's my view that you need the Chief Constable to be able to have a sense of all the communities policed by the service. South Wales Police is big but not too big. That's why I opposed the idea of Gwent being absorbed into South Wales in the 1990s. Four forces – even though two of them are very small – give us the right relationship between police and Ministers in Welsh Government, whether formal responsibility for the police is devolved or not.

Welsh Government has shown the capacity for leadership as well as common sense by investing in an extra 500 Community Support Officers across Wales. This has strengthened the bond between devolved and non-devolved institutions and built on our greatest strength in Wales – an understanding that co-operation works.

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**Alun Michael** was elected Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales in November 2012. Prior to this election, he had been the Labour and Co-operative Member of Parliament for Cardiff South and Penarth for 25 years.

# Assembly should stop Welsh Government by-passing scrutiny

Marie Navarro and David Lambert explore a bureaucratic grey area where guidance notes are used in place of legislation

Each year the Welsh Government issues a large number of documents that have uncertain legal effects. Often they lay down procedures local authorities should follow in carrying out some activity. They might be issued in the form of Guidance Notes, Voluntary Codes, or more dictatorially, as Instructions to Officials.

However, such documents have an uncertain administrative or legal status. To what extent can failure to comply with their provisions be used in legal proceedings, such as judicial review? Could they be used in a complaint to an Ombudsman?

Of greater constitutional import is the temptation such documents offer government to by-pass the need for making legislation, and so avoid democratic scrutiny. A case in point occurred in May last year when the Welsh Government issued its *Practice Guide to Support and Encourage Pre-planning Application Discussions*.

This Guide illustrates the dangers of using non-legislative documents to create apparently binding legal requirements. The fact that the document does not have any statutory basis in law poses a number

of problems for anyone wishing to make a planning application for work to be carried out in Wales.

Firstly, the Guide is not issued under any legal power so there is doubt as to its legal standing. It is not apparent either that there have been any discussions or approval of its contents by the Assembly. Its covering note states that it is the Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development who has approved its publication.

Secondly, the Guide does not form part of any official document numbering system. It can only be found within a list of general documents issued by the relevant Welsh Government Department and published on their website. There is no separate category or index drawing attention to the document as there would be if a legal power had been used as the basis of its contents.

Thirdly, half way through the introduction section of the Guide, it transpires that it is intended to apply to matters other than planning applications. These include listed building and advertisement applications. This extended application of the Guide is not

apparent from its title and may therefore be overlooked.

Finally, the Guide is contradictory in its effect. Its introductory provisions note that a planning authority has discretion under planning legislation as to whether it operates a system of pre application discussions. Consequently the Guide is declared to be only of assistance. However, as with so many other such documents, the guidance then becomes directive in tone. So, for instance, it states its aim is to “secure” clear, consistent and accurate pre application advice. It also states that the Welsh Government “expects” the planning authorities to offer such an advice service “for all types of development proposals regardless of complexity”. It then sets out principles that should be followed, preceded by the word “should”.

It states, for example, that planning authorities *should* make “every effort... to provide advice on... a proposal in principle” and that “in all cases” planning applicants *should* be able to make an appointment with a planning officer. Therefore it is not only intended to guide, it is also intending to compel.

It is difficult to define a document such as this. It is not primary legislation as would be the case if it were contained in an Assembly Measure or Act. Neither is it secondary legislation, as would be the case if it were embodied in a Welsh Government Statutory Instrument.

In short the Welsh Government's *Practice Guide to Support and Encourage Pre-planning Application Discussions* is unsatisfactory because its legal status is so uncertain. This problem is highlighted by the Cabinet Office in its Guide to Making Legislation, updated annually, where it points out:

"Codes of Practice's prescriptions are not hard and fast rules but guidelines which may allow considerable latitude in their practical application and may be departed from in appropriate circumstances. The provisions of a code are not directly enforceable by legal proceedings, which is not to say that they may not have significant legal effects."

This would be the situation with the Welsh Government's planning guidance. Its status is unclear. While it

was issued as a non statutory 'Guide', its terminology suggests that it is to be treated as more than an advisory document. The Welsh Government has oversight of many matters relating to planning in Wales and its use of words such as "expects", "should", "secure in all cases", might be considered as seeking to create a code of instructions to officials with the consequence that failure to conform with the code may result in some sort of legal consequences.

On this basis, a Court might take into account the contents of the Guide on a challenge based on an alleged failure of a planning authority to follow its provisions. However, it would be difficult to advise as to what would be the Court's perception of the document. When faced with the problem of deciding to what extent, if at all, a Court should take into account a non statutory document, different decisions have been made depending on the Court's perception of the particular purpose and nature of the document under consideration.

Failure by a planning authority to comply with the Guide's provisions may have more chance of success as a case of maladministration considered by

the Local Government Ombudsman. However, the Ombudsman could not demand that the matter be reconsidered.

The Assembly has powers to scrutinise whether a balance has been achieved between the provisions set out on the face of a Bill and those proposed to be left to subordinate legislation. However, if administrative rules set out in Guidance Notes are used as a substitute for legislation, the Assembly has no control over their contents or the procedures for their making.

It is suggested that the Assembly should therefore review the Welsh Government's non legislative documents in all their various guises with a view to making recommendations on their use, taking account of the Cabinet Office's own guidance.

The Assembly could then regularly assess whether, based on its recommendations, an appropriate balance is achieved between provisions set out in legislation and those which can properly be set out in non statutory guidance. The Assembly would be able to specify more accurately which matters should be subject to their control, with clear principles for their publication. If all guidance issued by governmental departments were only of an explanatory nature, there would be no need to consider such additional controls. However, the practice continues and the yearly republication of the Cabinet Office's Guide shows that the temptation for the executive to use such means to impose administrative requirements continues, with uncertain and potentially undemocratic repercussions.

**Marie Navarro** is Managing Director of YourLegalEyes and **David Lambert** is a retired public law lawyer.

The Welsh Government has oversight of many matters relating to planning in Wales and its use of words such as "expects", "should", "secure in all cases", might be considered as seeking to create a code of instructions to officials with the consequence that failure to conform with the code may result in some sort of legal consequences.

**Articles**

Key policies for Welsh economic success

New economic thinking needed for north Wales

Universities drive knowledge economy

# Key policies for Welsh economic success

**Chris Sutton** says Wales has put itself on a road toward creating a more attractive business environment

There is no mystery about the Welsh Government's economic objectives. It wants to create a smart economy at the cutting edge of new renewable energy and digital industries; to be the first choice for regional investment in the UK; and to maintain a platform for Cardiff to continue to punch above its weight.

However, the contemporary reality is that Wales continues to bounce along the bottom of the UK's economic regions in terms of GDP. We are strangled by the lack of communications, with the M4 bottleneck especially severe, West Wales and the Valleys have retained top tier EU convergence funding. Cardiff is sometimes uncompetitive compared with Bristol or Birmingham.

Wales accounts for four per cent of the UK economy with a level of output ahead of only the North East and Northern Ireland. In terms of output per person, Wales trails other regions of the UK. Growth in Wales, as shown in the graph on page 45, has been slow in recent years with only the North West and West Midlands growing less quickly in real terms.

Indeed, adjusting for inflation, the Welsh economy is now only just above 2003 levels. Welsh productivity, measured in terms of output per hour worked, is well below the UK average. It also varies substantially within the country. Assuming a UK average of 100, it ranges from 66.8 in Powys to 95.3 in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

The economy of Cardiff is the strong point of the Welsh economy, with growth of 1.8 per cent in 2012 and a rise of 12.4 per cent forecast in its GDP from 2013-17 (Source Oxford Economics 2013).

Cardiff has developed a cluster of private sector firms, but would benefit further from the creation of more jobs and investment in higher value sectors, such as ICT and professional and business services.

Wales provides a small but important contribution to the UK economy. We are large enough to matter but are we too small to make a difference?

## The Property Market in Wales

The Welsh property market has undergone a period of consolidation with reduced occupier demand and more stringent funding requirements leading to a drop in rental and capital values. We have seen a two-tier market emerge with a preference from businesses for prime stock, whilst secondary stock has struggled and drifted downwards in value.

However, when we do sort ourselves out in Wales, we can deliver to a high standard. The development of the St David's £675 million shopping development in Cardiff, with the first Welsh John Lewis store at its heart, has been well rewarded. It is virtually fully let and has brought about a major shift in the prime pitch of the capital's retail offer.

We can also deliver an environment to grow FTSE 100 companies. A prime example is Admiral Insurance, for whom a new 200,000 sq ft office block in Cardiff city centre is being developed by Stoford. This £58 million investment has been sold to Union Investments, a deal at 5.85 per cent net initial yield, notable for bringing one of the major German open-ended funds to Wales for the first time.

## Forecast growth for 2013... and beyond

Cardiff amongst the strongest regional centres

City	GDP growth 2013	GDP growth 2013-2017
London	1.3%	13.8%
Nottingham	1.8%	13.0%
<b>Cardiff</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>12.4%</b>
Edinburgh	1.1%	11.5%
Bristol	0.8%	11.4%
Greater Manchester	1.3%	11.4%
Leeds	0.7%	11.2%
Birmingham	1.4%	11.2%
UK	1.0%	10.9%
Glasgow	0.7%	10.2%
Tyneside	1.0%	9.2%
Sheffield	0.7%	9.0%
Liverpool	0.9%	8.7%
Southampton	0.6%	8.6%

But these are two schemes from just one square mile in the centre of Cardiff. What about the rest of Wales? In our secondary markets there is little or no speculative development and, indeed, there are properties that nobody can afford to buy or afford to hold. The changes to empty property rates by the UK Government in 2008 increased holding costs and encouraged large scale demolition programmes, for example, 650,000 sq ft of Visteon factory in Swansea.

### Corporate Investment

Who is going to save the economy? The public sector is in an age of austerity while the general public are tightening their belts. However, the corporate world is in good health and sitting on significant balance sheets.

In 2012, RBS suggested that Corporate UK was sitting on £754 billion and that investment timing will be determined by macro-economic factors such as global recovery or the Euro-zone. There is little that Wales can do to speed up this process except ensuring that we have an investment friendly business environment which incentivises

investment. In this way, Wales will be the natural choice when the corporate coffers are unlocked. Key actions include:

- Stable and consistency policy from Government.
- An attractive property and labour offer.
- Investment in infrastructure and energy.
- A responsive planning system which favours quality development.

Certainly, we have a strong backbone of multi-national investors in Wales, in part reflecting past successes. The challenge is to retain these and build upon them. In professional services, it is suggested that it is six times harder to win a new client than retain an existing one. I suspect that the odds are similar for Wales in terms of attracting or retaining a corporate occupier. There is a clear challenge for Wales to retain multi-nationals for their next investment life cycle and this requires dialogue, technical assistance and incentives for refurbishment or new investment.

For over a decade, Wales has had to fight against the tide of 'off-shoring' in the manufacturing sector. However, my

impression is that this has levelled off in the past three years. Increased costs in emerging economies together with the weak pound and increased transport costs are all working in our favour. It is up to us to capitalise on this trend.

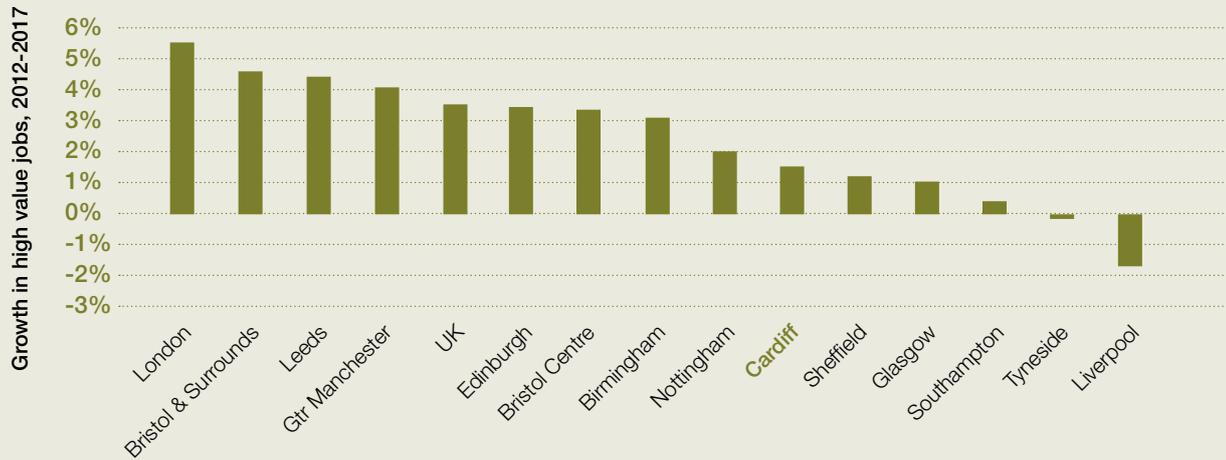
### Energy and Infrastructure

Energy is a sector in which Wales can be at the forefront of in terms of attracting new investment. The First Minister suggested last year that the energy investment prize was anywhere up to £50 billion. That may be optimistic but, for example, my firm is currently dealing with 26 separate energy enquiries including gas fired power stations, 'waste to energy' projects, embedded peak power plants and even an enquiry for algae processing. In May we agreed terms for the sale of 20 acres of land in Hirwaun for a 299 Mw gas fired power station. Whilst subject to planning and generating licence, this offers a realistic opportunity for a £200 million investment in the Heads of the Valleys.

Wales has also had good news on transport infrastructure, with the 'blue team' in Westminster delivering on electrification of the Great Western main

## High Value Job Growth, 2012-2017

Cardiff lags behind the main regional centres



line to Swansea and northwards into the Valleys. Finally, there are renewed and positive noises on the M4 Relief Road around Newport.

Such extra investment will be sorely needed. According to CBI, Wales' share of planned infrastructure spending represents just over half of its share of the UK population. Wales' spend in 2012 equated to £765 of infrastructure spend per head compared with just over £4,000 in London – five times the amount. Even this is a result compared to some other regions.

It was encouraging to see the publication of the second Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan. The plan sets a clear pipeline for public funded projects and a route to unlock private sector investment. There are seven high level priorities and a central, co-ordinated whole Government approach to provide certainty to business and investors alike.

### Planning Reform and Sustainable Development

The banking crisis started on 9 August 2007, six years ago. Planning consents are valid for five years, so all existing

planning consents should reflect the new economic reality. However, not until the past 18 months have planners seen reason to change their approach to viability, including the requirement for sustainability and planning gain such as affordable housing.

To my mind, the most important package to be delivered are 25 up-to-date Local Development Plans, the business plans produced by our local authorities. We are less than half way through their delivery but bearing in mind the deadline was 2008 it is not a sign of nimble local government. That is why we need to incentivise their delivery, and maybe penalise non-delivery.

To put the glacial delivery of Local Development Plans into perspective, the current Cardiff Plan was written in 1996. That was the year the Lucky Goldstar project had just been announced for Newport and we had just agreed to build the Barrage across Cardiff Bay. The new draft LDP has been published with a timeline of October 2015 for adoption.

Planning reform is one of the very few 'nil-cost' growth strategies the UK has left and, overall, I am encouraged by Welsh Government's recent action

in this area. The studies and actions that have taken place in Wales have indicated a core theme of a positive approach to economic development, subject always to common sense safeguards. Wales has, potentially, put itself on a road toward creating a distinctly more attractive planning environment than our English neighbours ... where Localism often means no!

However we are still living with the consequences of some policy actions taken at the height of the market. If we look back five years ago, we had a Welsh Government crusade on Sustainable Development. We pursued a highly aggressive, low carbon, agenda in advance of England. It was easy to prescribe cost on property development in a rising market but the chickens came home to roost as soon as the market turns.

Steve Morgan, Chairman of Redrow, outlined this point in the spring referring to "increased build cost in the Principality due to the more onerous planning and regulatory burdens".

Pursuing this theme of being 'different for difference sake' we have looked to introduce a higher standard of Building

Regulations in Wales. It is not credible to say that English Building Regulations are not 'fit for purpose' and this should be reviewed.

**Industrial Strategy**

In a UK context, the concept of an 'industrial strategy' is back in fashion having been out of favour since the 1970s and the heyday of Leyland. Michael Heseltine's report, *No Stone Unturned*, advocated a regional approach to exploit pockets of growth and to lock in private sector expertise.

The Welsh Government is ahead of the game. I am encouraged by its level of engagement with the private sector over the past two years with Enterprise Zones, Task and Finish groups and Sector Panels. There will always be areas where we hope for policy improvement. However, the message is that Wales is open to ideas from the business community. The key will be whether these can be put into practice.

Can we deliver these fresh ideas?

For example, the Business Rates panel, chaired by Professor Brian Morgan, came up with 19 recommendations - with the devolution of business rates to Wales being the main headline. There was also a recommendation to establish a Welsh Renewable Energy Relief Scheme similar to the Scottish model and to agree local retention of rates arising from renewable energy projects - similar to the English model.

**Conclusion**

If the mantra is to 'cut red tape and boost investment' then it is up to the public sector to cut red tape and then business will boost investment. In a large part, I think it is also about the perception of Wales as projected by the Welsh Government. The message from business is not to prescribe cost on development but to offer incentives toward investment. Reform of planning

policy and delivery mechanisms can form a vital part of that platform.

Our challenge is work together to make Wales a more attractive investment proposition. If we can make Wales 10 per cent more attractive than our neighbour England then we can soak up mobile investment across the long porous border. That is not necessarily about being 10 per cent cheaper, it is about creating a competitive advantage through speed of delivery, joined up thinking and a clear-minded approach to economic development.

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



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# New economic thinking needed for north Wales

**Steffan Lewis explains how we can make an alienated Welsh region a participant in devolution rather than a spectator**

The city regions the Welsh Government is actively considering for the southeast and Swansea Bay risks the north of Wales becoming little more than a glorified housing estate for the northwest of England. As a result, not only are we missing opportunities for growth and job-creation, we are making it more likely that Wales will fragment even further along north-south lines.

If this process is allowed to proceed it will hasten one of the greatest failures of the present Welsh Government – its inability, or even its lack of inclination, to strengthen Wales as a cohesive economic and political unit. As it is, the north of our country feels marginalised, a spectator in devolution rather than a full participant.

Regional approaches take many forms, some based around cities, others improving infrastructure and cognitive proximity within a wider region so that competitive advantage can be sought by bringing businesses and community leaders closer together, establishing institutional frameworks that are big enough for the exchange of ideas to be maximised.

An analysis of regional policy by the OECD found that top-down regional approaches often fail because they lack 'buy-in' and enthusiasm within the region. Success is achieved by building on existing cultural, economic and social ties. In the North, we already have the

embryo of a successful region.

The recent intervention by economist Jim O'Neill, former chairman of Goldman Sachs Asset Management whose parents live in Rhos-on-Sea, was a timely contribution to the debate on the economic future of the North. He articulated the case for the region to find its niche in a global context. He said the North must pull together and organise regionally in order to compete globally.

O'Neill touched on another important consideration - how the North as a whole can exploit its proximity to northwest England. That means the Mersey-Dee Alliance emerging as a true cross-border partnership, more akin to

be a polycentric economic region, comprising four niche areas that build on existing expertise:

- Energy, exploiting the potential of Ynys Môn.
- Advanced manufacturing based around the northeast.
- Marine sciences, connected with Bangor University.
- Tourism, centring on Conwy as an events destination.

The North already has firm foundations in these areas. Research and development led by Bangor and Glyndŵr universities could advance

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**Although it does not possess a single major city with the critical mass that brings, the North as a whole comfortably exceeds the estimated 500,000 population required for a sustainable regional economic entity.**

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the Copenhagen-Malmö relationship, than simply facilitating the northeast of Wales becoming an overspill commuter belt for growing Merseyside.

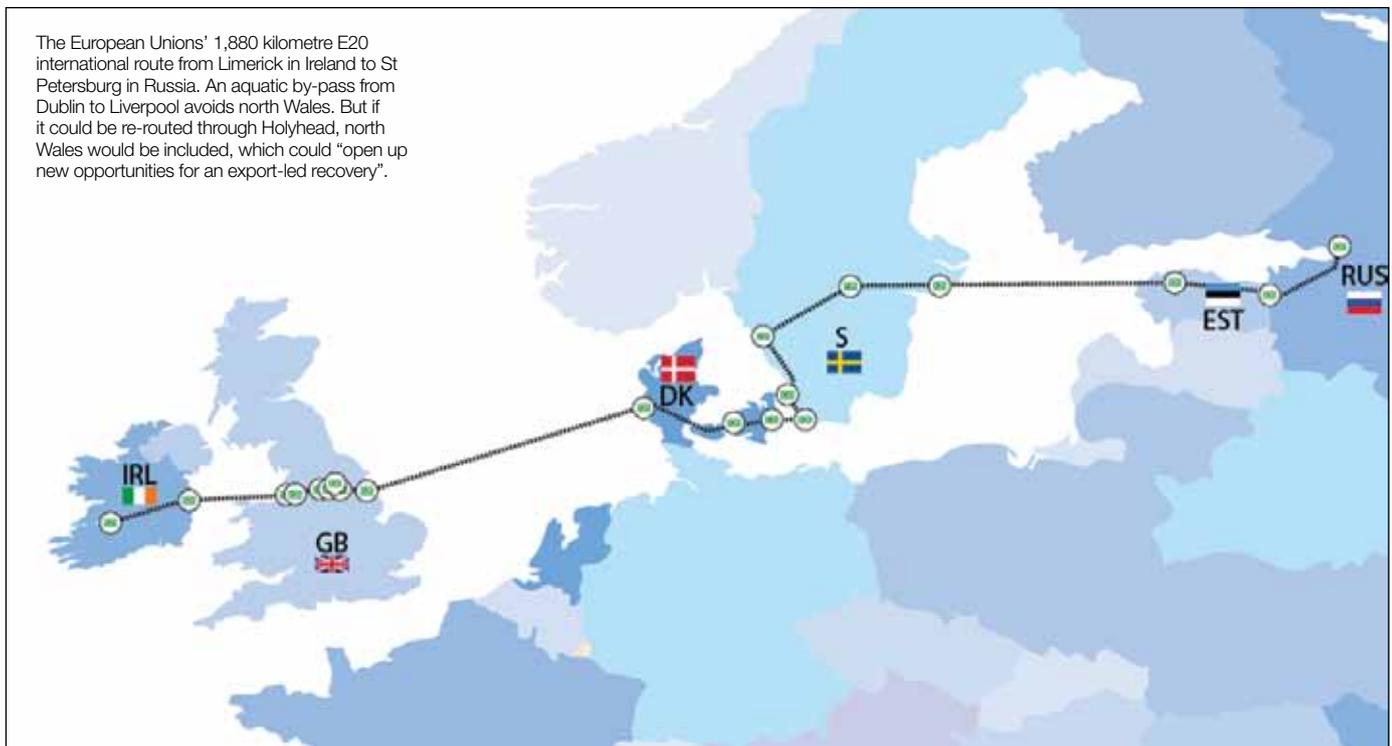
A Northern Renewal Area should be created to oversee regional economic policy across north Wales, spanning the local authority areas of Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Wrexham and Ynys Mon. Although it does not possess a single major city with the critical mass that brings, the North as a whole comfortably exceeds the estimated 500,000 population required for a sustainable regional economic entity.

The Northern Renewal Area could

further the efforts of private enterprise to drive growth.

The North can emulate and learn from other non-city region models. The Appalachian Regional Commission established by the United States Congress, works across state and community lines to provide regional action to reverse the fortunes of often remote, rural and post-industrial areas. There are obvious parallels here with our nation's northern region.

It is vital that regional policy develops concurrently across the country. A Wales-wide Regional Renewal Bill should be introduced to



provide the framework for regional economic planning. At this juncture, we must consider as a nation the distribution of competencies between national, regional and local bodies. For example, should social services and health be merged to form a National Wellbeing Service rather than being administered by local authorities? Should powers over skills and training be devolved to a new regional level?

At the Bill's heart should be outcomes. Here, we could combine and adapt the principles of both the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Center for Regional Competitiveness:

1. Encourage critical mass - think regionally to compete globally.
2. Prioritise investment in public goods and services that unlock a region's competitive advantage.
3. Spur innovation that can transform a region's economy.
4. Increase job opportunities and per capita income in the region to reach at least parity with the European Union.
5. Strengthen the capacity of people to compete in the global economy.

6. Develop and improve the regional infrastructure to enhance economic competitiveness.

In the North an immediate regional goal should be to seek the re-routing of the European Union's 1,880km E-20 International link. This internationally recognised trade link starts at Limerick and ends in St Petersburg passing through England, Denmark, Sweden and Estonia. It has an aquatic by-pass, avoiding north Wales as it progresses via ferry link from Dublin to Liverpool. If the North could be included on this route it would open up new opportunities for an export-led recovery.

We are fond of thinking of Wales as a "community of communities" and certainly our country's communities are central to our national identity. Yet often the paradigm neglects the fact that communities are fluid, that what is now local was once distant. Advances in technology and improved transport links have blurred the boundaries of 'community' as have other social factors.

Above all, if we are serious about reversing our country's economic decline, we must pull together. A new

approach is essential if we are to create the £64 billion needed in the Welsh economy to close our GVA gap with the UK average, to create the 120,000 jobs needed to create full employment, and to eliminate Wales' fiscal deficit of nearly £20 billion a year.

Harry M. Caudill's 1962 book *Night Comes to the Cumberlands: A Biography of a Depressed Area* propelled the plight of the Appalachian Region on to the American political agenda. It expressed precisely the nature of the attitudinal transformation needed in Wales today:

"In some parts of the plateau a new climate is crystallizing slowly. Bit by bit a realisation is being manifested that the new must be tried because the old has permanently failed. Perhaps this beneficent change will accelerate, clearing the way for a genuine revolution in attitudes."

**Steffan Lewis** is a former Plaid Cymru Parliamentary Candidate for Islwyn.

# Universities drive knowledge economy

**John Hughes** examines the impact made by higher education across Wales

Welsh universities have an impact of almost £2.6 billion on the nation's economy, a figure that reaches £3.6 billion once total off-campus spending by students is taken into account. These were the headline figures released by an independent report commissioned by Higher Education Wales about the crucial role higher education plays in Wales.

The contribution is made through the talent of the 16,421 full-time workforce which last year generated a total revenue of £1.3 billion. This is a pretty big number but in addition to the staff directly employed, Welsh universities generate an additional 22,381 jobs, bringing the total number to 38,802 across Wales, and 43,294 in the UK as a whole.

We are not very good at celebrating and highlighting such impacts. For instance, did you know that the Welsh higher education sector is part of a world-leading UK science base which is second only to the US for its share of global citations? No other country's higher education system has shown the ability to deliver more for its level of investment in research and development over the past ten years.

The overall quality and international standing of Welsh research has increased at a faster rate than the rest of the UK. Not only that, 91 per cent of graduates from full-time first degree courses in Wales are employed six months after leaving higher education, a percentage higher than the UK average.

No other country's higher education system has shown the ability to deliver more for its level of investment in research and development over the past ten years.

The social, economic and cultural impacts of higher education on communities across Wales are immense. Welsh universities attract around 25,000 students a year from outside the UK. Their personal off-campus expenditure amounts to an estimated £195 million. These students bring to 'Brand Wales' far more than export revenue. They raise the country's profile abroad, attracting further investment, along with adding to the richness and diversity of the student body across all our campuses and communities, be it Bangor, Carmarthen or the nation's capital.

All this provides a platform for further growth, further diversity, and further innovation. Which is why Higher Education Wales, in collaboration with the Welsh Government and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, have just launched the National Centre for Universities and Business in Wales (NCUB Wales). Over the coming



Sir Emyr Jones Parry, President of Aberystwyth University, in the Senedd in June, in conversation with Deputy Presiding Officer David Melding at the launch of the report on the economic impact of Welsh universities.

In 2011 the EU Commission published proposals for Horizon2020, intended to support delivering Europe2020 goals of sustainable growth, with a particular focus on meeting a target spend of three per cent of EU GDP on research and development by 2020.

months this new body will focus on strengthening further the strategic partnership between universities and business with a view to driving Welsh economic growth even further. This is all

the more pressing if we are to meet the waves of global competition.

In 2011 the EU Commission published proposals for Horizon2020, intended to support delivering Europe2020 goals of sustainable growth, with a particular focus on meeting a target spend of three per cent of EU GDP on research and development by 2020. Following the budget agreement in February 2013 the likely budget for Horizon2020 is around £70 billion.

Our universities can deliver further return on investment and long-term transformational change in this European arena. Having demonstrated our ability to deliver major, transformational projects in the past round of funding, Welsh universities are well placed to replicate such European Union success stories as Saxony where large scale delivery by universities of strategic projects have led to tangible economic growth.

Such activity will increase further

the three per cent of Welsh GDP that we are responsible for in Wales, rising to four per cent when the contribution of our students is factored in. It will also support other big GDP contributors such as TATA steel, helping to further anchor such companies in Wales.

As Robert Louis Stevenson declared, "Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant." This is the reason why Welsh universities are planning for the long-term, not only by the daily work of ensuring a highly educated and skilled workforce but also through research and innovation which provide valuable support for business at home and internationally.

**Professor John Hughes** is Vice-Chancellor of Bangor University and Chair of Higher Education Wales. Further information on the role of Welsh universities in the economy can be accessed at [www.thinkwales.ac.uk](http://www.thinkwales.ac.uk)

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# 5

## Education

### Articles

Leighton's legacy on school standards

Bigger is better for education results

# Leighton's legacy on school standards

David Reynolds says it should be seen as the need to teach teachers to teach well

A veritable outpouring of comments, Tweets, opinions and arguments followed the unexpected resignation of Leighton Andrews as Education and Skills Minister in June. We are still no clearer about exactly why he went. What is clear is that his departure leaves Welsh education in a more parlous state than before. He will be a hard act to follow.

Our difficulties are multiple. Andrews' '20 Point' Improvement Programme has had widespread buy-in from the teaching profession and its leaders. In fact, it is achieving international attention as the most ambitious attempt of any country anywhere to improve its schools.

There was a palpable sense of national shame among educationists following the publication of the last PISA survey in December 2010. The wounded silence, before the applause, that followed Leighton Andrews' presentation of his Programme in Cardiff in February 2011 indicated that the message of change had struck home. A problem was recognised – but has it been solved?

Firstly, the totality of policies involve pretty much every strategy that has been used anywhere. However, it may be that they are less appropriate to Wales than to the countries they come from.

Take the 'demand side' policies in which the publication of school data through 'banding' could be expected to drive up performance by parents putting pressure on schools. But will this work in Wales where we have an historic tendency to choose the local school however good it is precisely because it is local? And parental choice already exists in Wales in the form of parental rights to choose Welsh medium schools. Can the 'demand side' lever really show much leverage?

Secondly, there is the 'supply side', the provision of education services and advice about education generally by the Local Authorities and the consortia through which they work. The quality of Local Authority provision has been widely criticised following the poor Estyn ratings. Leighton Andrews himself has frequently, and rightly, come close to deriding local government over its performance. The report by Robert Hill, which recommended that education school improvement services should be delivered by the 22 local authorities working through 14 consortia, has evoked wide agreement.

Yet all the academic evidence that exists on this topic suggests that the quality of Local Authorities (or what they call School Districts in the United States) is not the major determinant of how well children do, explaining only a fraction of their achievement. Maybe in Wales the variation in Local Authority quality is more because they are smaller and are more involved in the provision of education than in other countries. Even so, is Local Authority variation bigger than the effect of variation in school quality?

Welsh schools vary by up to 40 per cent in the proportion of pupils getting five or more GCSEs at Grade C or better, including English and Mathematics, even if we look at schools taking their pupils from similar catchment areas. There is also a wide variation between departments within these schools, and between teachers within these departments.

Put simply, Local Authorities do not educate directly one single child in Wales; teachers do so. While Local Authorities have some influence, it is teachers themselves and their schools that are the main problem. It is not, to use the phrase, that our teachers do not

know how to educate children in Wales. Our problem is that not all teachers do what our best teachers do. Moreover, our teachers don't know what the best teachers do in Wales and elsewhere because no one has ever bothered to tell them. Local Authorities are an indirect influence on them. We need to get to teachers directly and quickly. This remains to be done.

In this area of the 'supply side', we have not had conspicuous success. The Learning Wales website was to represent the cavalry that brought the world's great knowledge bases about teaching to the teachers of Wales - yet it is only now filling with content. The in-service days that were used with such power and effect in the English Numeracy and Literacy strategies, to give a basic grounding both in teaching methods and in how to learn from other teachers, have been unavailable for use in Wales because we do not have power over professional pay and conditions. The latter include the five in-service days. This was left as an 'England and Wales policy' because of trade union concern that if we set our own pay scales it would result in lower scales for teachers in Wales. But staying locked in the English embrace in this last remaining area of education policy has meant that we have surrendered control of our own in-service needs. Can this be what the trade unions and others intended?

For these reasons, the capacity of teachers in Wales remains less developed than that of professionals in other countries. Countries around the world have skilled up their professionals while we have sat around and preached the reinvention of the wheel. Our 'supply side' of poor Local Authorities is being dealt with while our teaching profession is being left behind.

In the absence of those five in-service days each year as a means to teach our teachers, there are only three things that we can do.

1. We should introduce programmes for teachers to learn from best practice *within* schools across Wales. This



Former Education Minister Leighton Andrews who resigned from the Cabinet in June. Did his focus on the role of local authorities in driving standards divert attention from the importance teachers?

will be difficult, but less hard than trying to learn from best practice between schools. School-to-school transfer of best practice has been tried internationally and often failed. Which school that is bursting at the seams with pupils is going to give away its trade secrets to a less good school? And which self-respecting school will allow itself to be patronised by another school down the road? However, we possess programmes—in the jargon the *Within School Variation Project* - to help schools internally benchmark against their own best people, in an effort to standardise best practice. They were developed in England but never used there because the educational setting was never sufficiently poor to necessitate using them, given that the strategy is slightly risky. It is rather difficult, sometimes toxic and always threatening to have to learn from a colleague in the same school. In England, the New Labour government chose not to use the programme because of this reason. However, our dire situation in Wales means we have no choice but to do so.

2. We should build close links between our schools and the homes of their students. We retain an historic commitment to community comprehensive schooling yet in reality for most schools this goes no further than a sound bite. We know our

Valleys are desecrated by poverty and social disadvantage. However, we do not use our schools to take on the problems of their communities to help parents make our young people 'more school worthy'. If we were able to link school and home together better, in the way that some of the great American black schools and some of the English Academy schools in areas like London have done, we would get a double dose of effects.

3. We should focus on IT. Whilst England has closed its national organisation designed to encourage take up of IT, the Welsh Government is rightly enthusiastic about its potential. In the case of some of our primary schools we are close to being world leading. Precisely because we didn't pay the same attention to IT as other countries did, we can learn from their mistakes. Passionate IT-enabled schools, setting up communities of learning and relating to the planet, could help push us up those PISA league tables. But in this, as in everything else we are running out of time.

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**David Reynolds** is Professor of Educational Effectiveness at the University of Southampton and advises the Welsh Government on education and skills.

# Bigger is better for education results

David Ellis reveals the findings from research he carried out into the performance of primary schools across Wales

Bigger is better in the performance of primary schools across Wales. This is a major finding of a study I undertook that examined the inspection grades and teaching percentages in every primary school inspection report published by Estyn in the six years between 2004-10.

In almost all cases the larger the primary school the better the grades and teaching percentages. Similarly, the larger the primary school the greater was the proportion of Grade 1s awarded for every key question. On the other hand the smaller the primary school the greater was the proportion of schools generally placed in a category of Significant Improvement or Special Measures. All three primary schools awarded a Grade 5 for a key question were small schools with less than 51 pupils, although Grade 5s for teaching were more evenly spread. None of the largest schools received a Grade 5 for teaching.

In relation to the size of a school, categories vary between different research reports and government statistics. For this study, all the schools were placed in one of five categories, namely 0 to 50, 51 to 100, 101 to 200, 201 to 300 and over 300. The main findings indicated that the overall grades awarded across all key questions and the overall teaching percentage awarded for Grades 1 and 2 combined were consistently proportionate to the size of a school.

The research analysed inspection outcomes according to the geographical

location (local authority) of schools and their phase, size, religious character and language medium. The research indicated that a school's incidence of free school meals and special educational needs did not have any discernible impact on the key question grades or percentages of teaching awarded in any of the types of schools investigated.

In line with the conclusions of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in her 2011 Annual Report, the study found that the major areas requiring improvement were: standards in key skills and subjects, particularly Welsh, assessment, self-evaluation, attendance, management and teaching and learning. Overall, across Wales, primary schools were awarded the best grades for key question 4 (Care, support and

areas, both in terms of their inspection grades and the percentages they gain for teaching. The six local authorities with the best overall grades were all located in south Wales with Newport receiving the best grades in every key question, as well as the best percentages for Grade 1 teaching. Grade 1 in all seven key questions was awarded to at least one primary school in every local authority except Monmouthshire.

In relation to the quality of teaching, two rural local authorities in north Wales, Gwynedd and Anglesey, did particularly well. On the other hand some of the Valleys and rural areas of south Wales were weakest. The number and percentage of schools placed in Significant Improvement or Special Measures were fairly evenly spread

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The six local authorities with the best overall grades were all located in south Wales with Newport receiving the best grades in every key question, as well as the best percentages for Grade 1 teaching.

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guidance) and the worst grades for key question 6 (Self-evaluation).

Primary schools in mainly urban and geographically smaller local authorities fare better than those in large rural

geographically, although the figures were noticeably higher for the former in Rhondda Cynon Taf and for the latter in Powys. In Cardiff, Newport, Ceredigion and Wrexham no primary schools were



Parents campaigning to save Pentre Primary School in the Rhondda, the one supported by former Education Minister Leighton Andrews and which led to his resignation in June. The school can hold 202 pupils but only has 73 on its roll, the highest number of surplus places in the Rhondda. Closing it would save £171,000, but the local authority intends to spend £1.5 million on improving Treorchy primary school which is only 0.9 miles away and where the Pentre pupils would go.

placed in these categories.

There are three main types of language medium primary schools in Wales, namely English, Welsh and bilingual. The main findings of the research indicated that the quality of teaching was best in Welsh-medium schools, which received the highest percentage of Grade 1 teaching and Grade 1 and 2 teaching combined, whereas bilingual primary schools were awarded the worst percentages and grades in these categories, as well as having the largest average of Grade 3 teaching. Proportionately fewer Welsh-medium primary schools required Significant Improvement or Special Measures than English-medium or bilingual schools.

However, Welsh-medium and bilingual schools were awarded worse grades overall than English-medium schools and below the national average. In addition, proportionately fewer Welsh-medium primary schools than English-medium and no bilingual primary schools received Grade 1 for every key question.

The main findings of the research in relation to the phase of school indicated that separate infant schools

were awarded better grades in all seven key questions and the best percentage of Grade 1 teaching, compared to separate junior schools. Both were awarded better key question grades and percentages for teaching than all-through primary schools.

However, all-through primary schools fared marginally better when Grade 1 and Grade 2 for teaching were combined and they had less Grade 3 teaching, although they contained nearly all the Grade 5 teaching identified. Proportionately fewer separate infant schools were placed in the categories of Significant Improvement and Special Measures, but no separate junior schools were considered to require the latter.

Primary schools with a religious character in Wales are all either of a Church-in-Wales or Roman Catholic denomination. The main findings of the study indicated that schools with a religious character were awarded grades and percentages very similar to the national averages, with Roman Catholic schools receiving the best grades overall, as well as the largest percentage of Grade 1s for every key question and for teaching. However, Church-in-Wales

Voluntary Controlled schools fared best when Grade 1 and Grade 2 teaching were combined.

No primary schools with a religious character were awarded a Grade 5 for teaching. In comparison to the national average, a slightly larger percentage of primary schools with a religious character were placed in Significant Improvement, but marginally less were considered to require Special Measures. It was noteworthy that the percentage of pupils claiming free school meals in Church-in-Wales primary schools, especially those that were smaller in size, and in Welsh-medium and bilingual primary schools was significantly below the national average.

In summary, across the types of schools examined, the results indicated a strong link between inspection outcomes and the location and size of a school. Larger urban primary schools tended to fare better than smaller rural primary schools, but clearly there are many exceptions to this generalisation. A primary school's phase, religious character and language medium appeared to be less significant, but there were important differences between schools in these categories. For example, separate infant schools and Roman Catholic schools fared better overall, whereas bilingual schools in general did less well.

These relationships are worthy of further study, particularly in relation to the inspection criteria, which may well be disadvantageous to certain types of schools. It would be interesting to discover if similar outcomes arise from the current fourth cycle of inspection in Wales with its considerably revised Framework.

**David Ellis** is an independent registered school inspector and former Dean of Education at Cardiff Metropolitan University. His report, completed in 2012, is titled *Different types of primary schools: outcomes from the third cycle of inspection in Wales*.

# 6

## Health

### Articles

The dead end road of health care as a business

Home based palliative medicine

# The dead end road of health care as a business

**Julian Tudor Hart** says the Welsh NHS alternative can become a model for the rest of the UK

In 1983, Margaret Thatcher was fed up with the NHS as an anomalous gift economy in a country she wished would be dedicated to profit. However, open attack was not possible because the NHS was loved by the people. So who better than the chairman of Sainsbury's to put his foot in the door?

Sir Roy Griffiths soon reached his conclusion. As he put it, "If Florence Nightingale were carrying her lamp through NHS hospitals today she would be searching for anyone in charge." Though the NHS seemed to him to have customers in much the same way as his supermarkets, its staffing structures, relationships with patients, and measures of output all defied what his common commercial sense expected to find.

Since then, UK governments have tried to reshape the NHS toward Sir Roy's perception of common sense. Driven by growing competition, a new generation of managers has tried to define and standardise NHS products, to deliver them faster and more efficiently to consumers, knowing that their own jobs and earnings, and the solvency of their hospitals, would depend on success. This has been going on for 30 years. Yet hardly a day now passes without some newly discovered disgrace at every level of the service. It is surely time to question the simplistic assumption that thoughtful, efficient and compassionate healthcare must follow

the provider-consumer model of trade, or that no other model is possible.

The foundation of this reform programme was the NHS and Community Care Act of 1990 which created a purchaser-provider split. The NHS, the largest single workforce in Europe after the Red Army, was planned through central strategies, and implemented through locally devised tactics, to meet perceived population needs. Competitive trade requires clearly defined products available for consumer choice, so providers must be separated from consumers. But in a free public service funded from taxes, the state pays, not the patient. So the NHS should become the purchaser on the patients' behalf, and patients should get their free care from whomsoever they prefer. The likely effect of the purchaser-provider split was predicted by Andrew Wall in 1993:

"Organisations need to have the capacity to learn if they are to be flexible and adapt to circumstances. At a very fundamental level of work, anyone at any level of the hierarchy will have ideas about how their job could be done differently and better. The purchaser-provider split introduces something inherently unnatural because there is a forced division between those who do the job and those who plan the



David Low's view of the Health Service controversy at its most critical moment during the passage of Aneurin Bevan's nationalisation legislation, on 15 January 1948. Image taken from the second volume of Michael Foot's biography *Aneurin Bevan 1945-1960* (1973).

job... People and organisations are motivated by the prospect of being able to have a significant say in their futures. Rob them of that, and they become lacklustre, unimaginative, and in the end obstructive, if only to attempt to recover some sense of power."

After almost ten years' experience, Wall added a corollary:

"Behaviourally, [the split] is unsound in that people (if they are to learn from experience) need to live with the consequences of their own actions."

To see consequences, there must be continuity. That means knowing and respecting patient's personal stories and circumstances, so that medical and surgical decisions are not taken in isolation from each other, or from their personal and social contexts. But that is not how providers or consumers

operate in the marketplace.

I think most experienced health workers would recognise Wall's forecasts as central to all the problems facing the NHS today. There never was any golden age, but the pre-reform NHS was at least open to progress. Doctors were paid by the public, so they should be accountable to the public, or at least to its elected representatives. That was the path which most of us, staff and patients, expected to follow. Because of compromises Aneurin Bevan was compelled to make simply to get the NHS born, power was still concentrated in the hands of senior consultants and self-employed GPs. Both groups were able to define what they actually did pretty much at their own discretion and in their own interest, but slowly – too slowly – progress in medical science was compelling them to cede that power.

The medical profession has always suffered an internal struggle between interests in personal trade, and interests in humane science. Aneurin Bevan

believed that interest in science was already gaining ground over interest in trade. History proved him right. Science grew as practice came increasingly to depend on teamwork including many more skills, and as patients became required to participate intelligently in their own care rather than simply endure as passive consumers.

Successive NHS reforms, each forcing public service further down the path to care as a business, slammed the door on progress of this kind. The results have been summed up by the disgraceful events at Mid-Staffordshire Foundation Trust, resulting in excess deaths estimated between 400 and 1,200 compared with average rates for all

hospitals, taking differences in case-mix into account. The independent inquiry by Robert Francis QC into this scandal fully confirmed its immediate cause: reduction of an already depleted nursing establishment to build up a financial war chest in preparation for its application for foundation trust status.

Whatever their initial intentions, anyone can learn to work badly if staff/patient ratios make it impossible to work well. Francis recommended that evidence-based norms be established for staff/patient ratios and staff skills, so that in future managements would be unable to reduce staff time or staff skills to levels known to reduce the quality of care. Government has refused to accept that key recommendation.

The Mid-Staffs scandal was not caused by moral collapse of staff, but by pursuit of efficiency in commercial rather than healthcare terms. Production of material commodities can be measured by dividing items produced by hours of labour required



"Because of the compromises Aneurin Bevan was compelled to make simply to get the NHS born, power is still concentrated in the hands of senior consultants and self-employed GPs."

to produce them. That is not a rational way to measure efficiency in healthcare, which unlike commodity production becomes more labour-intensive as medical science advances, not less.

Rational healthcare is a new mode of production of value, fundamentally different from commodity production. Health gain cannot be produced optimally as a commodity. It requires that patients to learn to become active co-producers rather than passive consumers. Equally, staff have to learn to regard patients as potentially productive colleagues in shared pursuit of health gain.

The Foundation Trust status to which Mid-Staffordshire hospital aspired was driven through parliament in 2003 by New Labour Health Secretary Alan Milburn. Such status freed hospitals from virtually all central regulation. They were encouraged to raise money like any other business in a new situation where hospitals had to compete just to survive. This meant borrowing in the commercial market, selling off surplus land, expanding or reducing their own fields of work, or delegating it to subcontractors, and managing, increasing or reducing their workforce in whatever ways might offer them advantage over other

competing providers.

They could spend what they liked on advertising, even including celebrity sponsorship. By 2011 they were allowed to derive up to half their income from sales of care to private patients. The aim of both New Labour and the present coalition governments was to encourage

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Rational healthcare is a new mode of production of value, fundamentally different from commodity production. Health gain cannot be produced optimally as a commodity.

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competition within public service, which all major parties saw as the fundamental solution to declining NHS productivity. This was measured not in terms of health gain, happiness, or extended lives, but as in business, by cash balance and solvency. Accountability to elected government was replaced by consumer choice between rival providers. Promises of NHS transparency were strangled at birth by commercial secrecy.

Only once have voters been offered

a choice in a general election between the NHS either as co-operative public service (as it began in 1948), or as competitive business. Approaching the general election in 1997, the New Labour Manifesto, contained the following promise:

"Our fundamental purpose is simple but hugely important: to restore the NHS as a public service working cooperatively for patients not a commercial business driven by competition."

The largest majority since 1945 voted for that. But within its first year Blair's government was pursuing commercial business driven by competition even harder than its Conservative predecessors. First it imposed the Private Finance Initiative rather than Treasury funding for all new NHS building, imposing unsustainable costs through a Conservative device which Labour had rejected in opposition. Then it imposed Foundation Trusts, against 45 courageous MPs from its own party and with Conservative support.

Then Alan Milburn negotiated his concordat with private sector providers for contracts to undertake NHS care for profit. And finally, in 2008, in an attempt to divide the NHS workforce, Alan Johnson opened regional pay talks for all NHS staff behind the backs of the three devolved governments. Their cup brimming over, Health Ministers from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, hosted by Scottish Minister Nicola Sturgeon, issued a joint

Of all social institutions in our post-industrial society, health care remains least subordinated to business ethics, most open to imaginative advance towards participative and egalitarian democracy, and most loved by the immense majority of people, whichever party they vote for.

communiqué declaring their support for an NHS entirely in the public sector, opposing the purchaser-provider split, and insisting that they be involved in any future negotiations on regional staff pay.

In the same year, Wales Health Minister Edwina Hart formally ended the purchaser-provider split, rejected private sector involvement in Wales NHS, and confirmed forward planning of healthcare as an integrated whole, rather than leaving market demand to determine priorities.

This time the doctors were on board, unlike in 1948. All these steps were welcomed by 86 per cent of 5,000 doctors surveyed by BMA Cymru.

In the Assembly Welsh Labour has steadily moved toward a principled position fundamentally opposed to the commercialising policies of New Labour. Of all members of the present Welsh Cabinet, the new Health Minister Mark Drakeford has shown greatest clarity on this. By developing NHS Wales as a visible model for what could and should be done in England, he could make it extremely difficult for the still powerful residue of New Labour at Westminster to resist demands for a renationalised NHS throughout the UK after the next general election.

This won't be easy, and many will say it's impossible. At the very least, NHS Wales will get less funding per head of population than any other part of the UK. The Barnett Formula that determines spending in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland is derived from net public spending in England. If this falls because of patient charges, or rising NHS income from private patients, or more NHS functions ceded to commercial

contractors, then NHS income will fall correspondingly in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, though they may do none of those things.

If Labour wins the next election, renationalisation of the NHS in England will face huge compensation costs to all the commercial providers with contracts for work gained through the open competition guaranteed by Lansley's Health and Social Services Act. All the material needed for New Labour advocates to accept commercialised service will be there. On 17 November 2011 this report appeared on the *Guardian* website:

“Labour pledges to repeal the NHS bill: all provisions that turn health and social care services into a market-based system will be removed, says Andy Burnham”

Burnham had made the following pledge, speaking as Shadow Minister for Health to the annual conference of the Royal College of Midwives in Brighton:

“...let me make it clear – if the [Health and Social Care] bill in parliament goes through, we will repeal it. We will return the NHS to a national system based on the principle of collaboration on which it was founded in 1948.”

This report was never printed in the *Guardian*, nor was it ever carried in any BBC news radio or TV broadcasts. There were 104 comments from readers in its first 24 hours, overwhelmingly in enthusiastic support, but further responses were refused. Not only the

Shadow Cabinet, but the entire UK Establishment had apparently rallied to a common cause. Don't rock the boat, we're all in it together. If we let them, that's how many powerful people in all the major parties will pretend to fight the next general election.

Of all social institutions in our post-industrial society, health care remains least subordinated to business ethics, most open to imaginative advance towards participative and egalitarian democracy, and most loved by the immense majority of people, whichever party they vote for. Its roots lie in Welsh coal, steel, copper and tinplate communities, which developed the mutual aid societies that shared risks and shared costs. The Welsh NHS still provides a space in which we can all learn to live and think differently, to produce value for needs in a real economy rather than profit from wants in an imaginary economy, to develop the idea of democratic socialism in practice.

If we look only at increasing concentration of wealth and power in society, pessimism will continue to paralyse rational action, and even this last space will be lost. But with concentration of power and wealth comes concentration of ignorance and stupidity, albeit of most sophisticated kinds. The proportion of people who live from what they own and control is diminishing, ever further detached from global reality. The proportion of people who must live from what they themselves make, imagine and do is expanding, and they have fewer illusions than ever before. Is this a new century with no big ideas? You must be joking.

**Dr Julian Tudor Hart** is a research fellow at Swansea University Medical School. He was a GP and researcher for the Medical Research Council at Glyncoerrwg for 30 years. The second edition of his book *Political Economy of Healthcare* was published by Policy Press in 2010.

# Home based palliative medicine

**Simon Jones** argues that end of life care should be taken out of the hospital and placed in the community

The publication of the Welsh Government's policy *Together for Health – Delivering End of Life Care*, published in April, emphasised that people should be enabled to die where they wish, which overwhelmingly is at home. This should be seen alongside Health Minister Mark Drakeford's focus on treating people at the end of their lives as people not patients. Both views have wide implications for the delivery of health care and other social services.

Clinical palliative care is critical for people at the end of life. Controlling pain with the correct drug regimes, medical interventions to assist with breathing, and managing nourishment and hydration are very much part of the care needed. But there is so much more support, both for the person at the end of their life and those around them, that needs to be in place. We need to make what is a traumatic and emotional time become one that is positive for the person dying and one that leaves a positive legacy for the bereaved - one they can look back on with fondness and, yes, with a smile and good memories.

As things are, however, for most people dying is something that happens in a hospital which is remote from the community and geared up for entirely different models of care.

A clinical team cannot of itself deliver care in the community. It can be

part of it and support it, but ultimately it is the social networks around the individual which will secure it. It is in this context that the concept of a public health approach to palliative care has been gaining ground in recent years. It is also described as health promoting palliative care and is very much at the heart of an approach that is rooted in community development and building social capital. A leading exponent is Australian social policy professor, Allan Kellehear, who in his 2005 book *Compassionate Cities: Public Health and End-of-Life Care* argues:

“Dying, death and loss are defined as personal problems rather than targets of social change in community attitudes, values and behaviour. This reinforces the view that clinical rather than community skills should take priority in palliative care education and training.”

This holistic view of palliative care and rooting it in community goes to the heart of the Welsh Government's delivery plan, one that Marie Curie and the wider hospice sector goes some way to delivering. However, fully delivering the plan's vision will require us to think more radically. At the same time the constraints on resources could well pull in the opposite direction, as they make service providers concentrate on what are conventionally seen as 'core' clinical services. This must not be allowed to happen.

In Kerala in India huge strides have been made in palliative care through a system described as the neighbourhood network in palliative care. Volunteers

who can commit two or more hours a week are trained to identify problems faced by people at the end of their lives in their communities and to actively intervene with the support of clinical teams. By 2007 this approach was providing an estimated 70 per cent coverage of a population of 12 million where the norm across the rest of India was just 1 per cent.

Another example is a more developed healthcare system in Sydney, Australia. There, Home Hospice (now LifeCircle) has developed a programme which trains people who have experience of caring for someone at the end of their life to become mentors who can be 'mobilised' within the community to provide support. This focuses on building a network of family, friends and neighbours.

Marie Curie's Helper programme has characteristics of both of these. Many other hospices will provide support through similar approaches, invariably using volunteers.

These approaches build social capital through developing new relationships and networks within communities. Research on the Home Hospice programme shows clearly how existing community based social networks are strengthened and widened through this type of community focused response to end of life care. Contrast this with the assertion that care is a drain on both economic and social capital.

It also brings people closer to those dying who might not otherwise experience this inevitable aspect of life. For instance, part of a support network might be a teenage who walks the dog for the person who is dying and by doing so has a 'normal' social

interaction. It also, of course, creates the environment within which conversations about death and dying, though always difficult, can be had in a caring and supportive community environment.

This model of support for a person at the end of their life is a good example of how community networks rather than more formal public services are perfectly capable of supporting carers. Of course, they need to be nurtured and supported. More fundamentally, our thinking and policy instincts need to be more attuned to the possibilities of voluntary care in the community.

This idea of the compassionate community where the power within the professional/community relationship is rebalanced or, to put it more bluntly, reversed, raises interesting chicken and egg questions. Do you approach things from the perspective of developing a compassionate community within which people at the end of their life can secure the support of networks? Or do you support people to build and access local networks which in turn helps to create a compassionate community?

The answers will be a mix of both, determined by the characteristics of the local community. It is something that by now, after decades of community development initiatives and programmes in Wales, we ought to be quite good at identifying and addressing.

A public health approach to end of life care is nothing new and was a key part of the thinking of Dame Cicely Saunders, the architect of modern hospice based palliative care. Her view was that having open conversations about death and dying contributes significantly to health at the end of life. It also accords with the World Health Organisation's Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion which sets out five ways of achieving healthy communities: building healthy public policy, creating supportive environments, strengthening community actions, developing personal skills, and re-orienting health services.

That last point has implications for the delivery of health and social services



"Welsh Government policy emphasises that people should be enabled to die where they wish, which overwhelmingly is at home."



more generally. As the NHS in Wales re-orientates its health services to a community focus it could do worse than look at this developing health promoting, community focussed approach to end of life care. Led in no small part by the third sector, it re-balances the relationship between clinical specialists, wider support networks and the person at the end of their life. It focuses on the person dying but also looks beyond their immediate circle of family and close friends to the wider

community. In so doing it takes the radical step of letting communities take the lead. This builds social capital which in turn strengthens those very communities.

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**Simon Jones** is Marie Curie's Head of Policy and Public Affairs in Wales and was previously the Chair of Bro Taf Health Authority and Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust.

**Article**

Cars come before people in business

Swansea Bay can take lead in tidal energy

## Cars come before people in urban Wales

**Jane Lorimer** asks where the sounds of children playing on our streets have gone

A lot of things have changed in a generation – the impact of technology on our lives and businesses, the increase in supermarkets and chain stores, but also the sounds of laughter and play on our streets.

Many people will, like me, have fond memories of playing out on the streets in their community when they were young. You knew all the children in the street, and everyone had their favourite games. They were basic, yes, but great fun – and they kept us all healthy and active.

Children playing in the street brought the whole community together. Parents stood out in their front garden chatting to their neighbours. Street play helped our communities bond. It brought people together and helped foster community spirit.

All that has changed. How often do you hear the sound of children laughing and playing in residential streets? These days young people are more likely to be cooped up inside playing video games or watching the television. It means our children are exercising less, but it also has a negative impact on their mental wellbeing. Being out and about and making friends, interacting with other children is a crucial part of growing up. Organisations such as Play Wales have regularly highlighted the issues that are associated with a lack of play in childhood.

What's changed? The pictures accompanying this article really do speak a thousand words. Our communities have become places for cars first, rather than spaces for people. Not just cars parked, but cars which move ever more quickly. Who can blame a parent for wanting to keep their children inside when our residential streets seem so dangerous?

The knock-on effects of this lack of play are serious. The NHS in Wales now spends over £1million a week treating diseases that are linked to obesity, which is increasing. We already have the highest levels in the UK and some of the highest levels of Europe.

This is costing all taxpayers' in Wales – and is set to cost us even more unless we start tackling this problem. Our streets may never return to how they once were but there is action we can take to once again make our communities places where people – and our children – come first, rather than cars.

The single biggest change we could make in Wales would change the speed limit in our communities from 30mph to 20mph, a speed which is common across Continental Europe. The Welsh Government doesn't yet have the power to change the default limit, though it could be recommended by the Silk Commission. However, local authorities do have the discretion to implement schemes and we are beginning to see an increase in 20mph limits across Wales. A child hit by a car at 20mph has over a 90 per cent chance of surviving. At 35mph that falls to just a 50 per cent chance – a drastic difference.

The Welsh Government is taking some other positive steps, most notably by introducing the Active Travel (Wales) Bill that will become law later this year. This legislation – a world first - will place a legal duty on Welsh local authorities to plan a comprehensive network of routes suitable for active travel, and then work towards delivering it. Building exercise into our daily routine is the easiest way to get the physical activity we need. For our children that should mean be able to walk or cycle to school or to see their friends. The more safe spaces there are the more likely parents will feel confident in allowing them to do so.

These pictures provide a glimpse of how our streets have changed within living memory. When I look at them I don't see progress. Our streetscape has changed, quickly, and for the worse. We can change it again, for the better.

**Jane Lorimer** is the National Director of Sustrans Cymru.



What a difference a generation makes ...these photographs graphically illustrate how our streetscapes have radically altered across Wales over the decades:

**Above (left)**  
Dolgellau as seen in 1956 and the same street today (Photo: Alwyn Jones).

**Alongside (above)**  
Trecynon pictured in about 1945 and (below) the same street today (Photo: Kate Stuart Photography).

Artist impression of the proposed Swansea Bay tidal lagoon - a world first, capable of generating predictable, renewable electricity for 100,000 homes for more than 100 years.

# Swansea Bay can take lead in tidal energy



## Mark Shorrock says lagoons can contribute to Welsh target of doubling renewable energy generation by 2025

The world's first purpose-built tidal energy lagoon being proposed for Swansea Bay would make a significant contribution to Wales' objective of doubling renewable electricity generation to 4GW by 2025.

The project is recognised in the industry as a potential "game-changer" due to low development costs, rapid connection potential and predictable power generation. Tidal Lagoon Power Ltd is the developer behind the Swansea project, with ambitions to build a 10GW network of lagoons along the Welsh and English coast, driving a critical change in low carbon electricity sources that are sustainable long-term.

The UK's total tidal range resource is estimated at between 25 and 30GW. It is close to major cities, including Liverpool, Manchester, Bristol, Cardiff, Swansea and London, and could supply around 12 per cent of our electricity. Yet we are only just beginning the journey into tidal energy.

Tidal lagoons can operate wherever there is a large difference between high and low tides (the tidal range), and

relatively shallow water. The Severn estuary, which has the second largest tidal range in the world, scores on both counts. The key components of a lagoon – a seawall, turbines and the housing to contain them – have been used in other projects for many years. Electricity is generated by creating a 'head' of water

generate electricity. Generation on both the incoming flood tides, and outgoing ebb tides maximises the energy extraction.

Such schemes differ from 'tidal stream' projects which depend on fast-moving currents – such as the 10MW Skerries Tidal Stream Array off the Anglesey coast, recently consented as Wales' first and one the UK's largest commercial tidal energy farms.

The objective is to build the Swansea

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**Tidal lagoons can operate wherever there is a large difference between high and low tides (the tidal range), and relatively shallow water. The Severn estuary, which has the second largest tidal range in the world, scores on both counts.**

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– a difference in water level between the inside and outside of the lagoon – and channelling the resulting flow through the turbines. Once there is a sufficient difference in water level, the lagoon gates are opened and the turbines begin to

generate electricity. Generation on both the incoming flood tides, and outgoing ebb tides maximises the energy extraction. Such schemes differ from 'tidal stream' projects which depend on fast-moving currents – such as the 10MW Skerries Tidal Stream Array off the Anglesey coast, recently consented as Wales' first and one the UK's largest commercial tidal energy farms. The objective is to build the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon by 2017. Informal consultation has been in progress since autumn 2011. Detailed plans are now being finalised, and a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment is underway. Applications for development

consent from the Planning Inspectorate together with a marine license from the Welsh Government will be submitted by the end of the year.

The proposed 250MW power plant will produce 400GWhrs of predictable, base load electricity – equivalent to Swansea’s entire domestic electricity consumption. It will generate for 16 hours each day, saving over 200,000 tonnes of CO2 per year for its design life of over 100 years.

The £650 million investment provides an opportunity for Wales to take the lead in the tidal industry for the UK. It offers:

- Low cost, low carbon produced electricity.
- Potential ‘store-and-release’ to produce four-hour response electricity.
- Lower costs of peak generation.
- Enhanced energy security for the UK.

Involving major coastal regeneration, the project will be much more than a renewable energy plant. It will generate employment and training. The lagoon walls will be open to the public, with a visitor centre becoming an important tourist attraction. This will also support Swansea’s vibrant waterfront and

boost the local economy, creating cycle paths and promenades, a venue for recreational water sports and international sporting events, education programmes and compelling art. We also expect to offer local ownership via a community share offer.

The geopolitics of energy insecurity is a priority for both UK and Welsh governments. They are committed to generating of 15 per cent of all energy from renewables by 2020. Not long ago Britain was self-sufficient in energy. Today, however, we are net importers of over 25 per cent of our annual demand, and by 2020 this proportion is expected to be considerably higher.

We need to enhance energy efficiency programmes to help to balance homegrown energy and imports. Equally, providing additional generating capacity such as the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon is also vital. Up to 16 power plants, 2,000GW of existing energy infrastructure, will be decommissioned by 2021, while energy demand is forecast to increase substantially.

The Electricity Market Reform Bill, due this summer, represents the biggest shake-up of the UK’s energy sector for decades, and could act as a springboard for the growth of wave and tidal energy at a crucial stage of the industry’s development. Wales is well-placed to take advantage of this.

By harnessing the power of Swansea Bay, Tidal Lagoon Power shares the Welsh Government’s vision for energy as set out in *Energy Wales: a low carbon transition* and multiple local development plans. Tidal Lagoon Power aims to maximise the benefits of energy development by positioning Wales at the forefront of marine energy, fully engaging with local communities so they enjoy the long-term benefits.

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**Mark Shorrocks** is Chief Executive of Tidal Lagoon Power Ltd, and Tidal Lagoon (Swansea Bay) Plc.



Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon is a man-made seawall impounding a 12 square kilometre area of water. Power is generated by creating a ‘head’ of water – the difference in water level between the inside and outside of the lagoon – and channelling the resulting flow through low-head hydro turbines.



Part of the turbine that will be installed.

## Articles

Debating Wales  
in an Anglo-  
centric media  
landscape

Living Welsh in a  
globalised world

Giving policy  
impact to  
research

Rosemary Butler, photographed in the Senedd with the Pierhead building behind, asks how can democracy function “if many people in Wales are unaware of the very real policy differences discussed by the Assembly and implemented by the Welsh Government.”

# Debating Wales in an Anglo-centric media landscape

**Rosemary Butler** says inadequate coverage of the National Assembly is creating a democratic deficit

In May I held a conference at the National Assembly entitled ‘Addressing the Welsh Democratic Deficit’. It would be perfectly legitimate to ask why I thought we should host this event at all, given that the whole point of the Assembly, when it was established in 1999, was to address this very issue.

Now armed with primary law-making powers, the Assembly is able to pursue different policy agendas in our schools and hospitals than those that are being pursued elsewhere in the UK, thus reflecting the different priorities and desires of Welsh voters.

That is all very well in principle. But the question I have been posing since I gave a Royal Television Society lecture in October last year, is how can the Assembly genuinely reflect those hopes and aspirations if many people in Wales are unaware of the very real policy differences discussed by the Assembly and implemented by the Welsh Government? 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.

Research by Professor Anthony King and Cardiff University’s School of Journalism highlighted the fact that some of our leading UK broadcasters and news outlets often default to an Anglo-centric position – a position which promotes policy issues affecting only England as though they apply to the whole of the UK. Professor King’s original report was published in 2008, and at the Television Society lecture last year he noted that despite efforts by broadcasters, the problem persists.

The problem is compounded by financial pressures faced by our indigenous Welsh national and regional press, which leaves many unable to resource comprehensive coverage of Assembly news.

The conference at the National Assembly was addressed by a number of key figures from the UK media including Peter Knowles, Controller of BBC Parliament, Kevin Maguire, Associate Editor of The Mirror, and Peter

Riddell, former deputy editor of The Times.

Peter Knowles suggested that the problem is being over-egged. He said there were a large number of programmes across BBC Wales with healthy viewing figures that cover Welsh politics. I have no argument with that view. Along with their colleagues at ITV Wales, BBC Wales do a magnificent job in reporting the work of the Assembly. Indeed, the audience figures of their programmes demonstrate that there is a higher than average take up of local television news than the regions of England.

However, in a population of three million, more people watch the BBC network's six o'clock news, on average 307,000, than the 285,000 who tune in BBC Wales Today.

Whilst Kevin Maguire put the readership of UK newspapers in Wales at around 600,000, other sources, such as the UK newspaper industry's marketing body Newsworks, suggest it's closer to one million. The readership of Wales's six daily newspapers put together is around the 350,000 mark, and only two of those have a full-time reporter based at the Senedd.

The broadcasting and the print media are competitive and commercially minded businesses. But if the BBC network or a UK broadsheet presents a policy change as a UK wide issue when the policy is actually different in Wales, then Welsh people will get the wrong rather than the right information.

That, surely, can only be described as a democratic deficit.

Some say that UK news organisations fail to cover Welsh political news because debate in the Assembly is boring. How on earth could anyone suggest that the robust debates currently taking place in the Senedd about presumed consent for organ donation or health reorganisation are boring, particularly when both could throw up huge policy differences with England?

They may not be of direct interest to the English audience but they are



The Senedd in action, but who is listening?

interesting topics. Just because the Assembly doesn't have the same 'schoolyard' knockabout approach to debate as Westminster, which poll after poll has suggested turns many people off politics, it does not mean what we do is boring.

But it also misses the fundamental problem. I don't expect the BBC News at Ten or the Daily Mirror to cover an Assembly debate about ambulance waiting times. However, I do expect them to properly point out the significant policy differences in health care delivery for example, when their lead story is about NHS reforms that only apply to England. I also think their English audiences may be interested in these policy differences.

Ultimately all the panellists at our conference agreed that there is a democratic deficit, although there were differences of opinion as to how big a role the media, and UK media in particular, have played in creating it.

Welsh newspaper editors also took part in the session and painted a more positive picture of the local newspaper model in Wales, insisting that the situation isn't as bleak as many have thought. They are also dedicated to covering politics with a small 'p'.

Of course, politicians themselves have a role to play in ensuring their

work is more relevant to peoples' lives. Since being elected as Presiding Officer I have introduced more topicality and backbench involvement into the Assembly's business in order to better reflect the issues that people are discussing in communities across Wales.

We also need to be more innovative about the way we engage through new media platforms. That was the subject of a further session at the Pieherad in June, providing an opportunity for bloggers and representatives from hyperlocal websites and newspapers to consider the role they have to play in addressing the problems I have outlined.

There were wide and varied views shared at both conferences and it is clear we still have some way to go in persuading the UK media that they need to start covering the differences thrown up by devolution, rather than defaulting to the comfort zone of Anglo-centricity. The Assembly's research department will produce a report on the outcomes of both conferences which I hope will form the basis of a wider debate, that will in turn lead to real solutions to this growing problem.

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**Rosemary Butler** is AM for Newport West and the National Assembly's Presiding Officer.

# Living Welsh in a globalised world

**Rhys David** urges more radical thinking on how to make the language fit for the modern era

There will be a significant number of individuals with a knowledge of Welsh at the start of the next century. We know that much from the encouraging evidence in the latest census of more three-year-olds speaking Welsh – and the likelihood that, with improving health care, further advances in longevity will occur. But just how much Welsh will the then 90-year-olds of the next century and those who have come after them be using in the early 2100s and what sort of ‘Welsh communities’ will then exist?

The hour glass profile of Welsh speaking - with the middle aged the least likely to be proficient out of Wales’s 3.1 million population – is one of the few bright spots in an otherwise

Welsh Language Commissioner Meri Huws – wants priority given to ensure that young people educated through the medium Welsh are able to continue using the language once they leave formal education.

chastening 2011 census report. The bubble of optimism generated by the 2001 report, which showed the first rise in numbers for nearly a century, has been pricked by a fall of some 20,000, and by the sobering loss of majorities in two heartlands – Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire. Within a generation there might be no single area of Wales where most people can speak Welsh. The growth of numbers in areas such as Cardiff and Monmouthshire, where opportunities to speak Welsh are limited, can be seen as only limited consolation. The evidence is piling up, too, that while large numbers of Welsh children are being taught through the medium of Welsh, fluency is being lost once they

enter the worlds of higher education and work, whether they stay in Wales or, all too frequently, move away.

Meri Huws, in post for a year as Welsh Language Commissioner, the successor body to the Welsh Language Board, recognises the challenges and believes they can be overcome. The elephant in the room is, of course, English.

In May nine language commissioners, representing Kosovo, Ireland, South Africa, Catalonia and Wales among others, met to compare notes. "Whatever our languages we all agreed the dominant issue was how to work within an increasingly Anglicised world," Meri Huws observes.

In its role of encouraging the use of Welsh, as well as ensuring Welsh speakers receive equal and fair treatment, Meri Huws' Commission wants to see priority given to ensuring young people educated through Welsh go on to use their language skills. That means working with a whole range of organisations to see that Welsh is available in fields as diverse as sports coaching and the arts, in apprenticeships and workplaces, and in higher education. Just as importantly, Welsh has to be a language young people will want to use to communicate with each other in social situations and on social networks, Meri Huws argues.

Some progress is being made as a wealth of entries to the IWA's Welsh at Work category in the Inspire Wales Awards makes clear. Individual businesses have made the use of Welsh their calling card in literature and signage and in their greetings and dealings with customers. In bigger organisations and, in particular, the public sector, where a requirement to give Welsh equal status exists, a real culture change is in some cases being achieved. Some of the best work is being done by fire and police authorities, further education colleges and local government. This is helping to create a 'water-cooler Welsh' atmosphere where individuals are happy to use their Welsh for casual conversations, as well as in discussions in meetings, in letters

and minutes, and on demand with clients and customers. Banks, too, have a good record in this field.

Yet, the challenge of normalising Welsh and getting it off the back foot outside domains such as the home and school, remains vast. It is hard not to conclude that there is a failure to address some of the bigger questions surrounding the future of the language. Difficulty is one of these. Welsh is a hard language to learn, as the legions of people throughout the past century who have learnt it in school but who emerged barely able to put a sentence together, and the equally large number of drop-outs from adult education and home learning also testify.

Nor is it just learners who have had problems. Indeed, a consistent theme running through the entries for Welsh at Work every year is the lack of confidence people have in using Welsh, even individuals brought up in the language. "My Welsh is not good enough," must be the commonest refrain in Wales. Many proficient

as in software, we only have the beta version at present and it needs some reworking to make it fit for purpose. Perhaps, too, we should acknowledge that the idea that more efforts along present lines will ultimately lead to a bilingual Wales where large numbers of people will be able to switch effortlessly between languages as a matter of choice is an unrealistic target. The reality will always be different because not everyone will see the merit of being able to communicate in two two languages.

These observations will inevitably raise hackles but consider the first point, the difficulty of Welsh. The grammar is highly complex with particularly awkward ways of making all forms of subordinate clauses, complex negatives, archaic declensions, and unique formulations such as *sydd*, a combined relative pronoun and verb (who is, that is). Moreover, there are multiple plural forms, masculine and feminine nouns and adjectives, and a not very satisfactory method of expressing negative commands involving the

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Yet, the challenge of normalising Welsh and getting it off the back foot outside domains such as the home and school, remains vast. It is hard not to conclude that there is a failure to address some of the bigger questions surrounding the future of the language.

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*speakers* will not *write* in Welsh. Writing in the language is now a craft increasingly confined to a cadre of super-literate Welsh.

What are the problems and can they be resolved? Although it has been around in these isles for 2,500 years or more, perhaps we should think that,

verb-noun 'stop' (*peidio*). This is before even mentioning mutations which will have entered the language to ease its spoken flow but which, because of their irregularity, now make writing accurately very hard.

It's not hard to see why a young person would choose to use English,



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Alcohol a byd gwaith: Agweddau ac atebion rhyngwladol

Alcohol and the world of work: International perspectives and solutions



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**Canolfan Catrin Finch, Prifysgol Glyndŵr, Wrexham, Dydd Mercher 18 Medi 2013**

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Welsh suffers, too, from the way the spoken, heavily elided forms have invaded the written as well as the spoken language, obscuring for readers full words and hence their meaning, and adding to the difficulty for listeners not completely familiar with the language.

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a stripped down language that is consistently simplifying itself, on Facebook. Welsh suffers, too, from the way the spoken, heavily elided forms have invaded the written as well as the spoken language, obscuring for readers full words and hence their meaning, and adding to the difficulty for listeners not completely familiar with the language. It is as if Cilla Black had been put in charge of English and we had all been taught that “worra lorra” or “you’ve gorra lorra” were the new correct forms of speech.

As a language with a relatively small number of speakers Welsh is always going to be dependent on dominant languages and, in particular, English for the creation of words for new concepts and ideas. Yet, as any visit to a supermarket will demonstrate, little thought seems to have been given to the best way to generate neologisms and how best to get back to roots that fit in with Welsh orthography. Welsh lacks letters for sh, j, and ch (as in church), yet many English words that are adopted contain these, leading to some very ugly words, such as *siwrnai* and *coetsys*, which detract from the dignity of the language. A Welsh equivalent of the Academie Francaise, the body that preserves the purity of French is urgently needed. In principle, languages should always evolve dynamically but Welsh is not currently strong enough to allow this to happen

and some guidance is required.

Much more serious and not yet being properly addressed is the atomisation of the speaking population and the loss of communities where most people one might meet in the street would be able to return conversation in Welsh. Valuable as it is to have Welsh speakers in Newport their opportunities outside some very specific domains to converse with other Welsh speakers will be limited. Both fluency and grammar will suffer if Welsh remains only a second or occasional language in such places.

There is the final problem that the small number of creative Welsh individuals writing books, or making films and television programmes, cannot hope to compete for variety and cultural depth with the huge universe of English speakers. Very little of this wider world culture from outside Wales is accessible to Welsh speakers through translation or dubbing. Even the most dedicated Welsh speaker will by default absorb much of his or her culture through English language television channels, newspapers, magazines and books, and will find little similar material on offer in Welsh. If the French are willing to translate Tom Clancy and John Grisham, should Welsh be too proud?

This may sound like a counsel of despair but it is really a plea for greater honesty about the future of Welsh and for more radical thinking on how best to make the language fit for the

modern world. It is a valid point, as Meri Huws points out, that Welsh has not been considered a factor in policy consideration to date in a way that for example environmental and energy sustainability has. Indeed, though there are hopes this might change, planning guidelines have not made the impact on development decisions on Welsh language communities a consideration in a way they should have.

Encouraging Welsh language speakers to stay in strong Welsh-speaking areas should also be examined. Can we secure their greater participation in sectors such as tourism that now provide the bulk of income and opportunities in those areas? After all, there is little point in Welsh speakers filling posts as translators in Cardiff while English speakers from outside Wales take the opportunities that undoubtedly exist in Welsh speaking heartlands. The mechanism employed over the past 25 years to support the Welsh language has been to legislate (to ensure fair treatment), to provide (to ensure children can be educated in Welsh) and to facilitate (to encourage use of Welsh in the outside world). This is no longer going to work. If the 90-year-olds of the next century are going to be talking to their grandchildren and posting on whatever takes the place of Facebook in Welsh, the issues facing the language need to be looked at honestly and professionally, and in a much broader context. This work needs to start well before the next census, in 2021, offers us further reason for discomfort.

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**Rhys David** is a Trustee of the IWA.

# Giving policy impact to research

Stevie Upton unveils the Arts and Humanities Research Council's scheme for improving researcher engagement with the real world

Life as the IWA's Research Officer is something of a tightrope walk. On the one hand committing to rigorous research, on the other ensuring that findings see the light of day sooner rather than later. As a think tank, engaging others with our research is our very *raison d'être*. Yet, when it comes to policy engagement, even we can do better.

Acknowledgement of this was a driving force behind my recent secondment to the Arts and Humanities Research Council, one of seven higher education research councils. For six months at the start of this year, I became the Council's Public Policy Portfolio Manager, responsible for driving forward key elements of a new, more strategic approach to encouraging policy engagement by academics in the arts and humanities.

A key element has been my development of a Framework for Effective Public Policy Engagement. This is designed to assist researchers who are engaged in research with a potential policy relevance. The good news for the IWA – and potentially for any policy-engaged researcher seeking guidance – is that it is not only aimed at academic researchers. And it is as readily applied to research conducted specifically for the purpose of policy influence as to research where policy relevance only

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later emerges.

The Framework starts from a fundamentally common sense position. Start early, it counsels, and plan ahead. It then recommends eschewing passive dissemination techniques wherever possible, in favour of more active engagement of policy-makers and practitioners. Finally it argues that, for maximum effect, research outputs should be tailored to the specific policy or practitioner audience.

Underlying this approach are three premises:

- Engaging policy-makers, practitioners and the public in research, rather than simply disseminating to them, tends to enrich the findings.
- Where policy engagement is a clear goal, early contact with policy-makers or with media outlets will increase the likelihood that they will be receptive to engagement as the research progresses.
- Incorporating suitable activities throughout the course of the research can serve to make policy-makers more engaged with the work, and hence more likely to take findings and recommendations on board.

What the Framework doesn't require of the researcher is proof that the research has had an impact on the policy realm. In this respect, the AHRC's approach to policy engagement (which is only one part of its overall stance on academics' knowledge sharing activities) is in contrast to the higher education funding councils' approach to distribution of our universities' block grants.

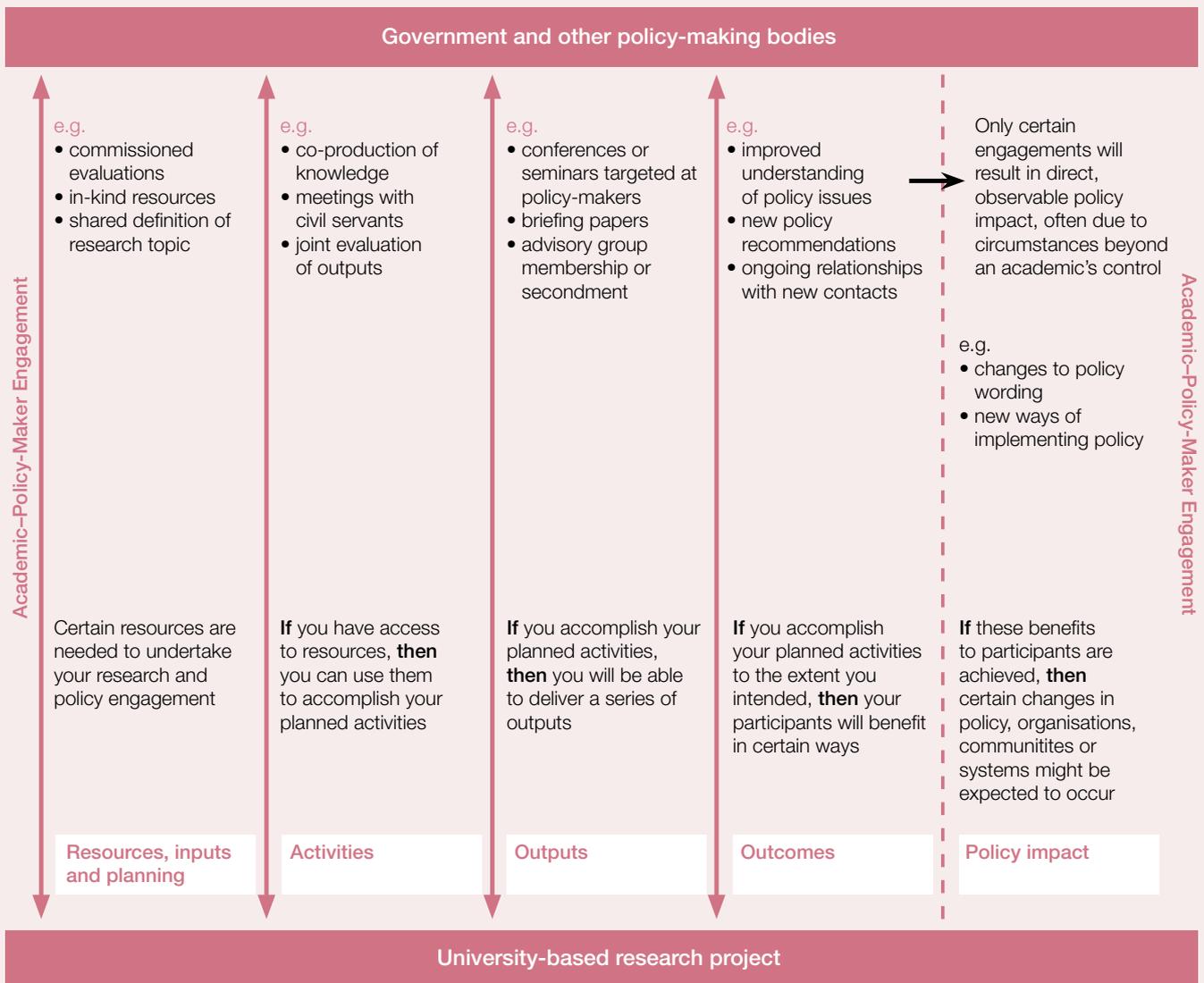
Block grant distribution is determined by the outcomes of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) assessments. This year, for the first time,

the REF will include a measure of the actual 'impact' of selected examples of research. But for researchers seeking to influence the policymaking process, the concept of research impact can be an unhelpful one. After all, the policy levers, and hence the mechanism for achieving impact, are not in their hands. Moreover, even where a noticeable change to policy or practice does occur, it is virtually impossible to provide evidence of direct causality, not least because multiple, often un-cited sources contribute to a policy decision.

Instead, at the core of the AHRC Framework is a structured approach to developing more, and more effective, *engagement* with policy-makers. The testimony of both academic researchers and policy-makers tells us that such systematic engagement lays the groundwork for future policy impact, even if it cannot guarantee it. Demonstrating this engagement is what the Council now asks of the researchers it funds.

By focusing in turn on each of the stages involved in a research project

with potential policy relevance, it is possible to identify multiple opportunities for policy engagement. The diagram presented below, which sits at the heart of the Framework, demonstrates how opportunities to engage are inherent in all stages of a policy-relevant research project. The lower half of the diagram describes the sequence of events involved in conducting a research project. Read from left to right, it underscores the relationship between the resources required for, activities undertaken





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## The evidence is that arts and humanities researchers are engaging in all manner of interesting and exciting policy-relevant research activities. But the question is, will policy-makers and practitioners be receptive to them?

during, and the outcomes desired from a research project. At the top of the diagram are examples of the types of interaction with policy-makers and practitioners that are possible at each stage.

The emphasis placed by this visualisation of the research process on the relationship, and logical progression, between the different stages in a research project aims to encourage a more comprehensive approach to policy-maker engagement. For researchers undertaking policy-relevant research, engagement need not (indeed should not) be an add-on. It is not an end-of-research 'event' for which additional time and money need to be found. Rather, at its best, it is an integral part of the research process. The Framework provides a structure for achieving this ideal.

A further core part of the Framework is the guidance on eliciting the extent of engagement after the fact. This focuses the researcher's attention on four questions:

1. When did these engagements take place?
2. Who were the audiences addressed in the course of the research and its dissemination?
3. How were these audiences engaged?
4. What evidence is available of active engagement with, rather than simply passive receipt of, the research?

These questions are a guide for academics when demonstrating to research funders the engagement that has taken place. They also have value to the research team as a planning tool. Insights gained through analysis of past engagement can be used to plan more effective future activities.

The full Framework is due to be published by the AHRC this summer. The Council is now embarking on a programme of awareness raising among academics. Armed with the Framework, a forthcoming good

practice guide to partnership working, and improved online resources, we hope that academics in the arts and humanities will find themselves enthused to think more about the policy-relevance of their work.

Of course this is only one side of the coin. The evidence is that arts and humanities researchers are engaging in all manner of interesting and exciting policy-relevant research activities. But the question is, will policy-makers and practitioners be receptive to them? In particular, will the policy community be open to receiving the distinctive outputs of the arts and humanities – which often differ in type from those produced by social scientists or scientists? There is work still to be done on that front. I feel another secondment coming on.

**Dr Stevie Upton** was, until May 2013, Research Officer with the IWA.

*Fishlock's File*

## Senghenydd remembers

**Trevor Fishlock** reports on the opening of a mining memorial at the old Universal Colliery where disaster struck a century ago

### Articles

*Fishlock's File:*  
Senghenydd  
remembers

Ambivalence in  
the art of Emyln  
Williams

### Book reviews

*A great (south)*  
Welsh novel  
at last

*Spiritual irony of*  
an internal exile

*As many*  
questions as  
answers

*Pike in a*  
small pond

*Memoirs that*  
shine in lacklustre  
stream

Here's a good example of people in a community in Wales getting together to make a reality of an idea. They've created something for themselves, for their children and for any visitor with an interest in history. In October they will gather for the opening of the Welsh National Mining Memorial commemorating more than 6,000 people killed in the coal era in Wales from the 1840s to the 1970s.

Its inauguration will be a fitting aspect of the centenary of the Senghenydd disaster of 1913. The name of Senghenydd has resonated in the memory of Wales. At ten past eight in the morning of 14 October a colliery hooter will wail in poignant tribute. It was at that moment 100 years ago that gas exploded with a roar deep in the pit and killed 439 men and boys, the worst disaster in British mining history.

The shudder of the earth shook plates from dressers and dislodged clocks from the walls. The rumble called the women from their homes. More than 200 of them would soon find themselves widowed. More than 540 children were made fatherless. The miners killed by blast and fire were one eighth of the local men.

The national mining memorial is on the site of the old Universal Colliery

at Senghenydd. It takes the form of a garden designed by Stephanie Wilkins. Its stone walling has brick quoins and flagged pavement to mimic the terraced housing of the Valleys; and in the traditional way the mortar is mixed with coal to make it harden: it's called pozzolana.

The memorial garden is arranged in two elements. One part is the Senghenydd monument. The wall here has tiles, produced in community and school workshops, bearing the names, ages and addresses of the men and boys lost in the two Universal Colliery Senghenydd disasters. Twelve years before the horror of 1913 an explosion killed 81 night shift miners; and only one man got out alive.

In the other part of the garden is a path whose stones list scores of disasters. In forty years from 1874 to 1914 more than a third of British colliery deaths occurred in south Wales. In 12 disasters there was a death toll of more than 100. Catastrophes made headlines but there was also a steady tick tock of death in twos and threes.

There was no doubt that news photography brought home to everyone the scale and reality of the disaster. A skilled photographer, William Benson, hurried to



Rescue party at Senghenydd in 1913 coming up from the burning mine.



Anxious relatives gather on the hillside above the mine to await news.

The disaster struck every street in the town. In one street alone 45 men were killed. In the usual way of mining communities many men in a house were miners: fathers, sons, brothers and lodgers. It made sense if they all worked the same shift.

Senghenydd and took pictures of remarkable clarity and impact. A poignant and painful portrayal of a community's grief and loss, they are unforgettable. Coffins came up from Cardiff. Wives and mothers identified bodies by a tobacco box or by a patch they themselves had sewn on a boy's clothing. Only 18 men emerged alive.

The hillsides overlooking the town were thick with spectators.

The disaster struck every street in the town. In one street alone 45 men were killed. In the usual way of mining communities many men in a house were miners: fathers, sons, brothers and lodgers. It made sense if they all worked the same shift. It meant that there would

be only one upheaval in a day, the men coming home in their dirty clothes for a bath and meal. That was why so many homes lost several men.

Gill Jones, who was born in Senghenydd, is part of the Aber Valley Heritage Group, which has developed the memorial idea. She has researched the disaster fund which was run entirely by male trustees. "They paid benefits to women provided they remained chaste," she said. "How dare they? That still makes me angry."

Senghenydd, ten miles from Cardiff, between Pontypridd and Caerphilly, mushroomed when the pit opened in 1896. The colliery closed in 1928. A school occupies part of the old colliery site and the children learn the story. The people have built up their small museum with its disaster artefacts and memorabilia. It is one of the fascinating little museums of Wales. The people have an impressive interest in their story. Senghenydd remembers.



## Ambivalence at the heart of the art of Emlyn Williams

**Colin Thomas** discovers a new way to read one of Wales leading playwrights

*"It is wicked, isn't it, the Welsh children not bein' born knowing English, isn't it? (In a crescendo of ironic mimicry) Good heavens, God bless my soul, by Jove...."*

John Goronwy Jones in Emlyn Williams's play *The Corn is Green*.

I was already aware that Emlyn Williams's play *The Corn is Green* and its subsequent film versions were an important part of the story of American perceptions of Wales. But reading Daniel Williams's illuminating book *Black Skin, Blue Books – African Americans and Wales 1845-1945* has enabled me to realize that there is a deeper story. After being sceptical about the premise of the book, I came to see that it could lead on to other insights.

For this is not a simplistic equating of the experience of African Americans in the United States and the Welsh in the United Kingdom. Indeed, Daniel Williams

stresses in his introduction "in the bluntest terms that the experiences of racism and subjugation do not cross from the African American to the Welsh context." What he goes on to say is far more subtle than the title may suggest and through an impressive range of references – to sport, to music and to sociology as well as to both Welsh and American literature – provides a fascinating insight into the construction of ethnic identity on both sides of the Atlantic.

So much so that that it led me to read Emlyn Williams's biography and autobiography and to view both film versions of his play *The Corn is Green* and

Bette Davies who starred in Irving Rapper's 1945 movie of *The Corn is Green*. According to the *Picture Post* her performance as Miss Moffatt was "Consumed by inward fire, by the sheer joy of imparting knowledge."

to see them in a completely different way. If the reader finds any of what follows illuminating, then it is because of Daniel Williams's remarkable book.

In his *George – An Early Autobiography* in 1961 Emlyn Williams wrote of his schooldays, "I realized then, before I knew life, that here was a woman larger than it..." His life was changed utterly when Sarah Cooke became his schoolteacher. And the play that he wrote about her - *The Corn is Green*, later the basis for two feature films - had a transforming effect on many other lives as well.

The eminent actor, dramatist and screenplay writer began life in 1905 as George Emlyn Williams, the eldest son of a Welsh speaking home in Pen-y-Ffordd, Mostyn, Flintshire. His father Richard described himself as a 'general labourer' on the birth certificate, but later became a pub landlord - until his heavy drinking dragged the family into poverty and Richard back into working class jobs.

Winning a scholarship to Holywell Grammar School brought George Emlyn into contact with the formidable Miss Cooke and a further step in his move away from his linguistic and class origins. "The English language" he wrote in his early biography, "was becoming the symbol of escape." When he was twelve, the family moved to 314a High Street, Connah's Quay where, he says, "our language was a joke."

Miss Cooke, the school's French teacher, soon spotted his talent and eventually paid for him to stay with a French friend of hers, Mademoiselle Tardy in Haute Savoie, another important influence. By the time he came back to school in Holywell, he was on the road to a totally different way of life, one that ended up with a place at Christchurch College, Oxford. So different that, when the Trades Union Congress called a General Strike in 1926, he did not hesitate to join his fellow students in blacklegging at London docks.

He claimed that "however metropolitan my ambitions were, I was proud of my peninsularity". Nonetheless, the tension between those two seem to have contributed to his breakdown in his last year in Oxford. Gradually he picked himself up and by the time his play *Night Must Fall* - in which he played the psychopathic lead - was produced in the West End, he had become a star. *The Corn is Green*, described as 'A Comedy in Three Acts', had its premier in 1938 and, although Emlyn Williams was by then 33, he took the part of Morgan Evans, the young miner taken in hand by the imperious Miss Moffat.

The parallels with his own experience are obvious. The moment he is talented spotted for example - "Excellent, phenomenal progress" wrote Miss Cooke on his school report. "It shows exceptional talent for a boy in your circumstances..." says Miss Moffatt.

But he also writes of his resentment of the star pupil role that his teacher had imposed on him. "Brisk requests became barrack-yard orders," says the autobiography, going on to describe his brief rebellion - "I am not a servant..." Morgan also rebels, telling Miss Moffatt "...do you know what they call me in the village? Ci bach yr ysgol! The school mistress's little dog." But later Morgan eloquently expresses his yearning to step beyond 'peninsularity':

"Since the day I was born, I have been a prisoner behind a stone wall, and now somebody has given me a leg-up to have a look at the other side... they cannot drag me back again, they cannot, they *must* give me a push and send me over."

Nevertheless, Emlyn Williams did not intend his play to be directly autobiographical and there is a certain vagueness about when it is set. "The latter part of the last century," says Williams in his introduction to the play.

In her autobiography in 1992 *Me – Stories of my life* Katherine Hepburn, who played Miss Moffatt in one film version, opts for 1890. Soon after she arrives, Miss Moffatt is told that in the village of Glansarno "next to none" of the children can read or write. This was despite the 1870 Elementary Education Act which by 1880 had made school compulsory up to the age of twelve.

The dramatist was less concerned with historical accuracy than with paying tribute to the teacher to whom he wrote several times a week and to whom he nervously sent the first draft of his play. When she gave her approval, it went into production in London in 1938 with Williams both directing and playing the part of Morgan Evans.

The play was a huge success, with a run of 400 performances. Even after the outbreak of the Second World War, it continued for another 200 performances. In 1940 it was taken up in Broadway where it ran for 477 performances, with Miss Moffatt played by Ethel Barrymore.

One part of its appeal was the play's implicit belief in the possibilities opened up by education, even though that seemed to run against the temper of the time. It had been turned down by Cardiff born Hugh 'Binkie' Beaumont, the West End leading theatrical impresario, on the grounds that the public weren't interested in education. Writing in 1934, Aldous Huxley articulated the attitude of many English intellectuals of the time - "Universal education has created an immense class of what I may call the New Stupid."

Some black intellectuals in the States approached the play from a very different perspective. In *Black Skin, Blue Books*, Daniel Williams provides insights into its impact on the writers Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin. Ellison mentions it in his account of his visit to Swansea during the Second World War, while Baldwin refers to it in his novel *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone*, where a central

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character argues for a production in which the Welsh characters are black. "One of the things that's most impressed me in this country is the struggle of black people to get an education" Baldwin has his Ray Fisher character say about the USA, adding "very few of the elements in the play are really alien to American life."

It is possible that both Ellison and Baldwin saw the stage version of the play. Of course, when the first film version of the play was made in 1945, it could reach a far wider audience. Bette Davies, of Welsh descent and a leading star of the day, subtly shifted the focus from pupil to teacher. One of the most powerful moments in the film is when, demoralised and near to admitting defeat, she starts to read Morgan's essay:

"The mine is dark... If a light comes in the mine, the rivers in the mine will run fast with the voice of many women, the walls will fall in, and it will be the end of the world."

Half way through the sentence, director Irving Rapper has her switch on a light on her desk and so catches vividly that moment that every teacher dreams of - and a few actually experience - that moment when the potential of an outstanding pupil is thrillingly revealed.

"Consumed by inward fire, by the sheer joy of imparting knowledge," wrote *Picture Post* of Bette Davies's performance and it overwhelms that of John Dall as Morgan with his feeble attempt at a Welsh accent. But, even in the more evenly balanced later film version directed by George Cukor in 1979, with a genuine Welsh actor, Ian Saynor, playing Morgan and Katherine Hepburn cast as Miss Moffat, it would be an optical illusion to see *The Corn is Green* as having a feminist agenda. Although the Cukor film version drops the line "I always think men know best..." and Miss Moffat's concurrence with it, by the end it proves to be the all-too-familiar story of a good woman sacrificing her life for a man, left literally holding the baby that Morgan has fathered as he heads off to Oxford.

It is perhaps significant that attempts

Half way through the sentence, director Irving Rapper has her switch on a light on her desk and so catches vividly that moment that every teacher dreams of - and a few actually experience - that moment when the potential of an outstanding pupil is thrillingly revealed.

to revive the stage play in other forms, after the emergence of the women's movement in the 1970s, were unsuccessful. Despite a fading singing voice, Bette Davis attempted a musical version with a black Morgan in 1974. The Elizabeth Taylor Theatre Group tried again with a black Miss Moffat, played by Cicely Tyson, in 1983.

Both productions had short runs, though it is easy to see how the idea of a musical version came about. Both the play and the films tap into Welsh musical traditions – "they burst into song on the slightest provocation" says the prissy Miss Ronberry – though little credence is given to the breadth and richness of the Welsh miners culture at the end of the 19th Century. Williams's character Old Tom has never heard of Shakespeare and Morgan is only "lighted up – like a magic lantern" to the world of books by Miss Moffat.

Yet, as Jonathan Rose points out in his book *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Class*, "Welsh miners did not have to consult Matthew Arnold to recognize the liberating power of culture. They experienced it first-hand and saw it in their workmates." Miners Institutes and Libraries were thriving at the end of the 19th Century.

Nevertheless, Daniel Williams is surely right to argue that "to dismiss *The Corn is Green* as a simplistic reflection of a colonial mindset is to ignore the tensions embodied within the play." It is precisely because Emlyn Williams felt those tensions within himself – perhaps intensified by his bisexuality - and expressed them through characters within the play and the films that they

resonated so powerfully for audiences.

Not for him the assumption of many intellectuals of his time "according to which the mass is, in art and literature, always wrong". To them, writes John Carey, "What is truly meritorious in art is seen as the prerogative of a minority, the intellectuals, and the significance of this minority is reckoned to be directly proportionate to its ability to outrage and puzzle the mass." Despite his Oxford education, Emlyn Williams's approach couldn't have been more different – "I aim to tell a story that interests the audience, arouses, fascinates, and if possible moves them."

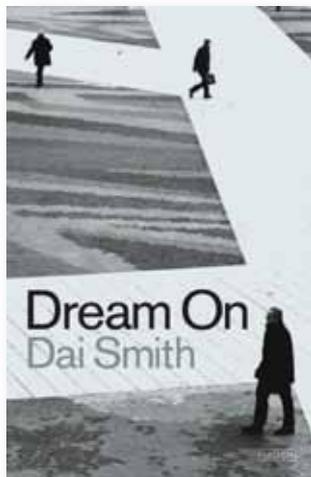
Bizarrely, in *The Last Days of Dolwyn* the only film that Emlyn Williams directed as well as wrote, he plays himself as an embittered Welshman who, on returning to his home village, spurns his roots and pretends to be unable to speak Welsh. That role caricatured one aspect of the man. Another, more touchingly occurs in his autobiography, when he describes how he felt when he arrived in Oxford: "I stood overwhelmed with a wave of emotion as unexpected as it was violent. It was a longing, with every atavistic bone in my body, for the kitchen of 314a, for the eternity of the fire and my family at my elbow."

**Colin Thomas** is a television producer and director currently completing *The Dragon and the Eagle* / *Y Ddraig a'r Eryr*, a bi-lingual enhanced ebook on Wales and America. An enhanced ebook combines text, video and interactive graphics and is downloadable through the internet.

# Reviews

## A great (south) Welsh novel at last

Jon Gower



*Dream On*  
Dai Smith  
Parthian, 2013, £15

Anyone who has read Dai Smith's considerable and engaging output over the years will be well aware of his wide regard and eager appreciation of fiction. He's a fan of both Norman Mailer and Raymond Williams and so many writers in between, especially perhaps such Valleys' fictioneers as Gwyn Thomas and Rhys Davies. Indeed, his most recent book of essays, *In The Frame: Memory and Society, Wales 1910-2010* weaves and melds extracts from epistolary exchanges between him and writers such as Alun Richards with historical accounts and essays which have much of the apparatus of fiction.

*Dream On* is confluent with Smith's previous work, and particularly, perhaps his work as the biographer of Raymond Williams. This new novel seems to aim to do for south Wales what Williams did for the Black Mountains, registering, in Smith's

case, the collective life and lives of the country's industrial cauldron, summoning up its terraced people with tenderness, insight and an assured deftness of writing.

Yet for all his love of fiction and its ability to both present and analyse our common experience Smith has made it perfectly clear that novelists have yet to tackle the big, sweeping panorama of south Wales history. So he's undertaken to do so himself. Many years after penning his first stories as a student at Columbia University he's hymned the place into being, a place of Roy Orbison style dreams and crippled aspirations. It's a book about Wales and America, about new cities and broken communities. If there's a braver book in terms of its construction published this year in Wales I'll eat my grandfather's pit helmet.

Just as *In the Frame* spliced an uncommon array of material together, so too does *Dream On*, with its parts – its various and variegated novellas and short stories – adding up to much more than a satisfying whole. If this novel holds up a mirror to life in south Wales then it is a fractured, fairground mirror, refracting

have done the author of this serious, and seriously entertaining book a disservice, not to mention confusing any wannabe reader who picks it up in a bookshop. Try Googling 'Flashlight noir'. Even the mighty Google can't help.

The book opens with a politician surveying his life's achievements from the vantage of his sick bed, as he reads the proofs of his own obituary, sent him to check for any errors before he shuffles off this mortal coil. In an account of one of his own books, the obituary writer tells how "The Terraces", as he calls them, echoing the writer Gwyn Thomas, are laid out before us as a landscape, one humanly fabricated and artfully framed by and for a people who had, he claims, once created a past fit for whatever future they might inhabit. How does he do this? By a set of interlocking cameos... Which might not be a bad way to summarize *Dream On*, which parades all manner of cameos and vignettes in just such a landscape, starting with a death and ending with a birth, in a neat reversion of the structure of so many novels.

There are larger than life characters

**It's a book about Wales and America, about new cities and broken communities. If there's a braver book in terms of its construction published this year in Wales I'll eat my grandfather's pit helmet.**

as much as reflecting, with the reader having to help piece the shards together, to make the joins. And while I'm on about distortions I should mention the specious, nonsensical blurb on the cover, which promises "a flashlight noir thriller" and "stories that connect up the frayed wires in the business of living." In writing such arrant nonsense the publishers

conjured into being, such as Richard 'Digger' Davies, who won a single Welsh cap and has been feted ever since. This is Dai Smith's homage to Alun Richards, who was not only a friend of his, but on the evidence of the trio of interlocking tales about 'Digger' had a very definite stylistic influence on him too, as the scabrous humour and pithy sentences

attest. The idea of adding a third section about 'Digger' seen through the eyes of his mistress was a brilliant one.

In the most substantial section, 'No Photographs of Crazy Horse' a Welsh photographer returns home from America to see a capital city transformed and the Valleys in a process of grant-driven regeneration, with smooth talking cabals of well-connected Taffia members carving up the spoils. This is also the part of the book which dovetails the most overtly historical writing into the narrative, with digressions about the Lusitania and the life and times of D.A. Thomas, Viscount Rhondda. It's a beautifully wrought novella, sitting at the heart of the book and giving it a quickening pulse.

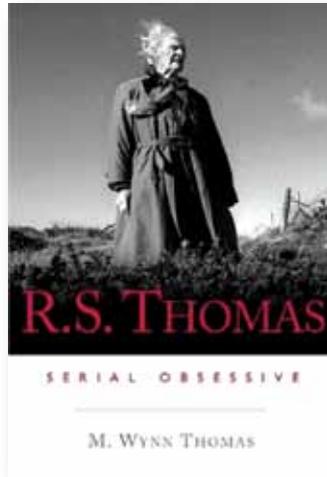
Finishing the book gave me the very definite sense that this is a work-in-progress, that there are other volumes waiting to be written, a trilogy maybe. Unlike, say Lewis Jones, Dai Smith isn't going for the big, grand narrative. This isn't *history*, but *histories*, snapshots, insights, a sort of rattle bag or fictional scrap album if you like. If *Dream On* is, indeed, the beginning of a larger work, Smith has already given us a dislocated, fractured but nevertheless cogent portrait of a place of human tumult, where the populace had enough energy to empty the earth of its coal.

But it's a changed place, too, holding on to its tatters of dignity. In accounting for those transformations, and those in the civic and political structures of Wales, Dai Smith has marshalled his formidable intelligence with a zest for story telling. God dammit, he may actually be writing the great south Walian novel. I salute him sincerely for the sheer breadth of his unwavering, resourceful and single-minded ambition.

**Jon Gower's** *Y Storiwr* won the Wales Book of the Year award in 2012 while his book about the coast *Wales: At Water's Edge* is shortlisted for this year's prize.

## Spiritual irony of an internal exile

Gavin Goodwin



*R. S. Thomas: Serial Obsessive*  
M. Wynn Thomas  
University of Wales Press, 2013,  
£75.00 HB / £19.99 PB

R.S. Thomas was a man notoriously riven with contradictions. He was a fierce Welsh nationalist who berated the Welsh for acquiescing in the destruction of their own culture. He spoke with a cut-glass English accent, and chose to send his son to an English boarding school.

He was also a man of serial obsessions. M. Wynn Thomas's book of twelve essays marks the centenary of R.S.'s birth, and it makes the case that these obsessions were not narrow fixations but rather "fruitfully multiple". And as such the image of Thomas "as the ogre of Wales and the pest of God is greatly complicated", Wynn Thomas argues, "by a glimpse of him as a poet of war, of family, of painting, of loneliness and of searing self-examination". The book does not put forward an overarching thesis of Thomas's work; rather it interrogates its subject from a variety of different angles, each essay overlapping productively with the last. As a result, the reader is persistently adjusting the prism through which even the most familiar of poems are viewed.

For instance, in the first essay Wynn

Thomas reads the early Iago Prytherch poems as poems of war. He reminds us that it was partly the Nazi bombing of Merseyside (when Thomas was curate at nearby Hanmer) that prompted his return to Wales, as this excerpt from *Neb* (his autobiography, written in the third-person) attests to:

"The curate so hated to think about the damage that was occurring almost every night, and so longed for the hills in the distance (Moel Famau could be seen clearly enough towards the north-west) that he decided to learn Welsh, in order to come back to Wales."

R.S.'s attraction to some of Iago Prytherch uncouth qualities is usually read as a reaction to his bourgeois upbringing. But instead Wynn Thomas positions Iago as the ancient, rooted elemental opposite of modern airborne warfare (the 'Murmuration of engines' described in *Homo Sapiens*, 1941). Of course, the two readings are not mutually exclusive, and this layering of critical lenses is one of the strengths of the book.

Wynn Thomas goes on to suggest that R.S.'s early poems also function as a rejection of the colonial vision of Wales inherited from the English Romantic tradition: that is, the reduction of Wales to landscape, largely emptied of people and culture. The second essay compares R.S.'s early poems with the paintings his English wife, Mildred Eldridge, contributed to the wartime 'Record the Changing Face of Britain' project. Wynn Thomas contrasts Eldridge's light touch pencil work and "commitment to 'beauty' with her husband's approach and 'the poem's / Harsher conditions". Thomas sought to compose a poetry distinct from English poetry, a verse that reflected Wales's "stern surroundings". Yet Thomas's early poetry is not populated by complex human figures but rather by mythpoetic peasantry. The texts are intended to be acts of colonial rebellion, but Wynn Thomas posits that these poems cannot help but seem exotic, "a variant on [rather than a repudiation of] the colonisers' exoticising

images of Wild Wales”.

Thomas’s relationship with Wales and the Welsh was always an uneasy one. Like his great nationalist hero, Saunders Lewis, who grew up in the north of England (and who also loathed the Anglophone industrial working class of south Wales), Thomas never felt quite at home in Wales. Despite being born in Cardiff, R.S. was never able to rid himself of his “Liverpool complex” and a sense of “internal exile”. This exile was also linguistic. A Welsh-learner rather than a native speaker, Thomas wrote poetry in English – the language that, in Lewis’s view, was extinguishing the Welsh language and with it the Welsh nation. Thomas, too, reviled the English language (and wrote his autobiography, *Neb* (English: Nobody), in Welsh). But he was also acutely appreciative of the versatility of English as a literary tool.

Thomas aimed plenty of invective at the English for their colonial incursions, but he frequently had the Welsh themselves in his sights. And his criticisms of the latter often reveal both misogynist and classist undertones. In *Border Blues*, for instance, it is “the ladies from council houses” with their “Blue eyes and Birmingham yellow / Hair and the ritual murder of vowels” who are singled out “to represent the degeneracy of Wales”.

Despite the flooding of Capel Celyn politicising a generation, and the gains achieved by Plaid Cymru (Gwynfor Evans became the first Plaid MP in 1966), by the end of the 1960s Thomas’s hopes for Wales were receding. His (always problematic) attachment to locality was replaced “by feelings of disillusion and displacement”. Subsequently, in his poetry national concerns were superseded by spiritual ones. The poems of *H’m* from 1972, for instance, present a Buddhist-like conception of the fall as related to self-fashioning and narcissism. And this concern with the self resurfaces in Thomas’s late autobiographical work, *The Echoes Return Slow*. In this collection, the multi-dimensionality of the self is explored formally through an alternation between prose and verse, and Wynn Thomas argues that this often neglected work is one of

R.S.’s most impressive.

In his Kierkegaardian reading of the religious poems more generally, Wynn Thomas makes a case for considering R.S. the “Socrates of Wales” whose poems are essentially “exercises in spiritual irony”. The kind of irony in question here is what Kierkegaard calls ‘maieutic’ irony: “the Socratic process of helping a person to bring into full consciousness conceptions previously latent in the mind”. R.S. Thomas was a master of this process, Wynn Thomas claims: “indeed, I am tempted to say that that is not only how he writes poetry but why he writes it”.

The essays also relate (though not reductively) Thomas’s serial obsessions with his upbringing. Wynn Thomas argues that R.S.’s fierce nationalism (and perhaps his misogyny?) can in part be attributed “to his hatred of his snobbishly anti-Welsh mother”. And Thomas’s “invincible determination to be a lifelong mental traveller”, often expressed in his nautical imagery, can be understood to a degree as a reaction to how his sailor captain father was, in his son’s view, tied to the land and emasculated by marriage. Wynn Thomas also discusses the often overlooked poems R.S. wrote about his own marriage (recently collected in *Poems to Elsi*) – the love poems of a man who confessed to a “lack of love for human beings”.

The collection ends with two essays drawing attention to the importance of Thomas’s ekphrastic poems – those poems that act as ‘spiritual X-rays’ of the paintings they respond to, and that are often marginalised in discussions of his work. The final essay discusses some of the thirty-nine unpublished painting-poems that were found tucked into art books after Thomas died. And the book ends with an examination of *Ysbrydoliaeth/ Inspiration*, an exhibition of work by Welsh-resident artists responding to Thomas’s poems. Although not enamoured by all the paintings, Wynn Thomas argues that many of them offer “thoughtful, imaginative and perceptive interpretive commentaries” on R.S.’s work.

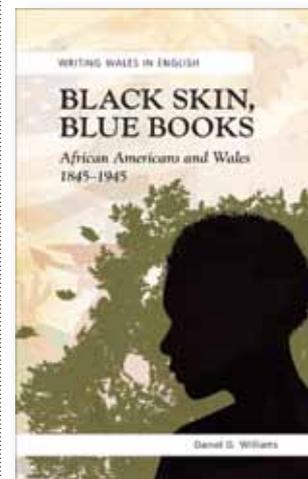
And perhaps much the same could be said of the criticism here. By offering overlapping analyses of poems that have

previously received little attention or by coming at familiar material from fresh angles, Wynn Thomas offers a learned and intelligent interrogation of Thomas’s obsessions – of “Iago, Wales, the self, his mother, and, of course, God”. Anyone interested in Thomas’s poetry, or Welsh poetry in the 20th Century more generally, will find much of value in this substantial collection.

**Gavin Goodwin** is a poet and critic who teaches literature at Cardiff Metropolitan University.

## As many questions as answers

Rhodri Holtham



*Black Skin, Blue Books*  
Daniel G. Williams  
University of Wales Press, 2012, £24.99

The title of this comparative study of Afro-American and Welsh cultural identities between 1845 and 1945 echoes Frantz Fanon’s seminal work *Black Skin, White Masks*. However, the author avoids simplistic comparisons, instead highlighting often subtle points of similarity and difference between Afro-American and Welsh identity.

Each chapter focuses on moments of cultural contact between African

Americans and Wales before broadening into a more general discussion. The points of contact are very different in character and each chapter is consequently distinctive. One problem with this format is that at times the chapters feel like academic journal articles in their own right rather than sub-sections of an overall narrative.

The *Blue Books* of the title refers to the 1846 Commissions into Education in Wales whose publication reflected the view that while English was the language of knowledge and reason, the persistence of the Welsh language was retarding Welsh development. The issue of language is a recurrent theme throughout the book. The perceived need to be literate in English was even more pertinent for Afro-Americans as education was beyond the reach of the vast majority of blacks in ante-bellum United States.

The Afro-American abolitionist leader Fredrick Douglass visited Wales shortly after the publication of the *Blue Books* to raise support for abolition outside the US. The abolitionist movement commanded its strongest support amongst non-conformist Welsh speaking congregations and accounts of Douglass' speeches as well as the anti-slavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* were translated into Welsh. Douglass' beliefs in assimilation rather than political nationalism, Afro-American self-improvement through education, and his descriptions of the horrors of slavery struck a chord with the religious and cultural sensibilities of the Welsh and made for a powerful first point of contact.

Using the heavyweight bout between Joe Louis and Tommy Farr as the next point of physical contact, the book broaches the Afro American and Welsh journey into modernity. Williams identifies three competing representations of modernism: bourgeois, proletarian and folk. Each had their Afro-American and Welsh literary proponents. W.E.B. Du Bois, who advocated the development of the 'talented tenth' – a black bourgeoisie who would be the cultural leaders of their people - is compared with the work of Saunders Lewis who believed in the importance of a nationalist, socially conservative Welsh middle class. That is contrasted with the poets Langston Hughes

## Using the heavyweight bout between Joe Louis and Tommy Farr as the next point of physical contact, the book broaches the Afro American and Welsh journey into modernity.

.....  
and Idris Davies who placed importance on local vernacular and mass culture in music and sport. Both men saw working class communities as the real forgers of cultural identity in the modern age.

Zora Neal Hurston and Margiad Evans are then analysed. Their literary modernism focused on the folk - the rural pre-industrial culture of Afro Americans and Welsh respectively - which they saw as a purer representation of cultural identity. The comparisons are interesting but how far do the similarities and differences, between the Afro-American and Welsh modernist literary figures throw fresh light on either?

The next point of contact is through Paul Robeson and his celebrated association with Wales. The chapter attempts to de-bunk some of the myths that have grown up around not only Robeson, but 1930s Welsh society more widely. The mutual affinity of Robeson and the Welsh has traditionally been regarded as evidence of the internationalist and socialist character of both parties. Whilst not rejecting this entirely, Williams demonstrates convincingly the importance of ethnicity in Robeson's thought and in the south Wales mining communities of the 1930s.

Williams argues that the Robeson film *The Proud Valley* recycles 19th Century perceptions of Afro-Americans as servile, since Robeson's character, David Goliath sacrifices his life for the family and the mining community. Yet, considering the film was made in 1940 and the type of roles Afro-Americans invariably played in that era, as servants or musicians – side shows to the main plot –Robeson's character is as much a prototype for Afro-Americans being cast in major roles, as it is a recycling of racial stereotypes.

Williams further argues that Robeson's

character creates the "...enabling image of otherness" for the Welsh mind, just like minstrel shows which were massively popular in Wales at the time. This sense of otherness was key for a coherent "working class movement to emerge from the ethnic diversity that characterised the 19th Century south Wales". But whether Robeson's character was performing such a role is contentious. One could argue the character was doing the opposite, revealing the similarities between different peoples and showing an Afro-American man as capable of empathy and feeling, rather than a hideous caricature.

The final point of contact is through the Afro American author Ralph Ellison being stationed as a GI in south Wales during World War II. During this period Ellison wrote *In a Strange Country*, which is discussed alongside the play *The Corn is Green* by Emlyn Williams, focusing on the issue of identity once an individual is removed from their cultural context. The paradox of black GIs fighting fascism in Europe when Jim Crow laws of segregation still existed not only in their own country, but in the US army itself, is highlighted. Under the pressure of war, black identity and Welsh identity were somewhat consumed by the more heterogeneous American and British national identities. Being black and American and Welsh and British can create tensions which make for interesting reading. That, perhaps, could have been explored further.

*Black Skin, Blue Books* is an original and thoughtful piece of work. It may well provoke more transatlantic studies. Certain sections will be of more interest to the specialist, although the writing is lucid and insightful enough to engage a wider readership. Yet the reader may be left pondering the comparison itself. Why this, rather than a comparison of Afro-Americans and the Irish, for example? Is there something in this comparison that marks it out for special analysis, and if so what is it and what can we learn from it? These questions are left unanswered.

**Rhodri Holtham** is a freelance writer with a special interest in Latin America.

## Pike in a small pond

Derek Jones



*Edward Pugh of Ruthin 1763-1813, A Native Artist*  
John Barrell  
University of Wales Press, 2013, £25.

For more than a decade now, histories of the visual culture of Wales have been in full flow, most extensively in the monumental three volumes edited by Peter Lord, *Medieval Vision, Imaging the Nation*, and *Industrial Society*. The name of Edward Pugh, the subject of John Barrell's latest study, is by no means absent from Lord's survey. Elsewhere, however, he gets few mentions. In Ruthin, his hometown, it is a fair bet that virtually nobody had heard of Pugh until Professor Barrell began his research.

He hopes to redress the neglect and with good reason, even if Edward Pugh is not quite in the same league as his near-contemporary, Richard Wilson, a great inspiration to him. John Barrell is far from insensitive to the artistic quality of his subject's work, but values him primarily as a *native artist*, who "knew and understood so well the landscapes he represents". He was Edward Pugh of *Ruthin*, and would, Barrell speculates, have greeted with enthusiasm, a prospective purchaser, who could say of one his prints, "I know that place".

Local knowledge can also, needless to say, be only that, and can then quickly degenerate into sentimentality. Not in the case of Edward Pugh or John Barrell. It is of the greatest significance that this is the first of a series of books to be published by the

University of Wales Press entitled 'Wales and the French Revolution'. Professor Barrell, as one might have expected from the author of *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting, 1730-1840*, tracks down the many references in Pugh's work to wider social and political changes and their human consequences in, or just beyond, the Vale of Clwyd.

John Barrell does not discuss the sources of Pugh's understanding of these issues. Much of his working life was spent painting miniatures for the gentry in London and Chester, and, of more long lasting importance, contributing to Richard Phillips' account of *Modern London* (1802), well represented in this volume. Barrell warns us, "In London, Pugh was a minnow in a lake; in Chester, he would become a pike in a small pond". On the other hand, even if he had been born in a little-known town in northeast Wales, Pugh had more opportunities than most to develop a good ear for wider questions. When, in between times, the 'native' returned it was quite clear that he had not lost his commitment to the Vale of Clwyd.

Pugh demonstrates his local knowledge best in the landscape prints, engraved in aquatint by William Ellis, named *Six Views*

**He hopes to redress the neglect and with good reason, even if Edward Pugh is not quite in the same league as his near-contemporary, Richard Wilson, a great inspiration to him.**

in *Denbighshire*, whose publication was announced in the Chester newspapers in 1794. The central section of *Edward Pugh of Ruthin* is devoted to extended discussions of each of these prints.

A superficial glance at the most striking of them, *Llanfuvrog, Ruthin and Llanbedr*, would note its 'picturesque' qualities – village street, pub, water splash, two church towers, against the background of Bwlch Penbarras, distinctive and dominant in the Clwydian hills, which overlook Ruthin. None of these aspects of the prints are, of course, without interest, but Professor Barrell directs our attention to the foreground, where a "nearly black, almost spectral figure" appears to be clutching a

baby. A farmer and his wife look on with genuine sympathy. It is far from fanciful, to suggest, as Barrell does, that the woman is an impoverished war widow. The war with France during the 1790s would have resulted in many such local tragedies.

In *Bathafarn Hills from Coedmarchan Rocks*, by contrast, the reference is to the local economy. Barrell suggests that Pugh may be alluding to the then current controversy between "modernisers in favour of exploiting the supposed subterranean resources of the common and to those... who recommend the commoners to scratch the surface for a living". Three such 'commoners' are shown in the foreground of the print.

In his later work, *Cambria Depicta*, Pugh deplores the local gentry's propensity to rely for their income on securities available from the government during the war. Barrell's earlier revelations about "the dark side of the landscape" are confirmed by his study of such a socially conscious artist as Pugh.

*Cambria Depicta* (1815) reveals further layers of Pugh's interest in his home territory, including now the whole of north Wales, which, he believed, had been misrepresented by the mostly English-speaking travellers and tourists, who were

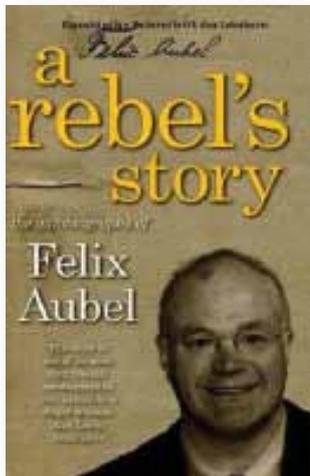
flocking into Wales in the early 1800s. John Barrell and Peter Lord agree that this is primarily a literary work, designed to dispel English ignorance and prejudice about "my native country and its inhabitants, their economy, customs and character".

Then, as now, we need to see ourselves as others see us, but Pugh's determination to describe the *real* Wales still has resonance. We are greatly indebted to John Barrell – who is English – for uncovering the many sides – intellectual, socially observant, committed – of this native artist.

**Derek Jones is a freelance writer.**

## Memoirs that shine in lacklustre stream

David Melding



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### *A Rebel's Story*

Felix Aubel

Carreg Gwalch, 2013, £8.25.

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Generally speaking political memoirs are a miserable genre, full of lengthy justifications for actions long past and of little contemporary interest. Occasionally, just occasionally, a little jewel shines out of the lacklustre stream. *A Rebel's Story* is one such jewel.

The merit of Felix Aubel's memoirs is to be found in the candid, compelling and utterly unself-regarding account he gives of his place in the parade of Welsh political life. Spared the straight-jacket of elected office, he offers the valuable insights of an acute observer of the political spectacle. These observations are sharpened by the remarkably varied topography of his own life as a scholar, teacher, minister and would-be politician.

Such is the effulgence of this amazing life that it dazzles, disturbs and enchants with equal measure and makes him that rare bird: a public figure who has not held public office. He came close to winning Brecon and Radnor in the 2001 General Election, of course. And had that fickle mistress Fortuna flicked her wheel a little in his favour in 1999 he would have been one of the big beasts of the National Assembly.

But these memoirs have none of the flavour of an obscure blog churning out strident opinions to compensate for



electoral disappointment. Rather they are the rollicking recollections of a man who enjoys life and realises that it is life itself which is the Great Fortune.

Although no one event, characteristic or even calling can ever define the richness of any individual, the principal influences that have animated this extraordinary life are strong and pungent. Those terrors of the polite dining room – religion and politics – are abundant throughout these pages and they are often given extra relish by Felix's passionate but particular commitment to the Welsh language.

When politics and language combine in Wales the results can be alarming. During the count that concluded the general election campaign at Caernarfon in 1987, one wonders whether Felix's 'shocked female election agent' was reassured to hear that he was wearing a bullet proof vest! But

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it is typical of Felix to record that his Plaid Cymru opponent that night, Dafydd Wigley, is "one of the finest Welsh politicians of the post Second World War era".

Religion and politics combined to mark Felix's life in a distinctly gothic way in the Ogmere by election campaign. While 'minding' Guto Bebb, the Conservative candidate, Felix was the guest of Owain Williams the squire of Llanharan House, which is one of the finest gentry houses in Glamorgan. But haunted: at least according to Felix who suffered what can only be called a physical attack by a metaphysical

apparition while taking a bath. As Felix writes, he eventually escaped "from this very deep enamel bath and I ran into the corridor naked". He does not say if this escape was witnessed.

Those of us who have also laboured in the stony vineyard that is the Welsh Conservative Party will know that Felix has been an innovative thinker. He believes that the Conservative cause has to be constantly adapted to remain relevant in an ever changing world. This accounts for Felix's support for a robust form of devolution to preserve the Union. As he put it to the Conservatives of Brecon and Radnor in 2004, "Why should we in Wales continue to be treated as second-class citizens in comparison with the Scottish people who have a proper parliament?" No less striking – and again discomforting to many traditional Conservatives – he has made plain his view

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that there needs to be a "re-alignment on the moderate centre-right of Welsh politics".

Both Wales and the Welsh Conservative Party would have been enriched if Felix had succeeded in attaining elected office. He might succeed yet. But even if he does, his extraordinary life could hardly be more astonishing in its scope, impact and generosity.

**David Melding** is AM for South Wales Central and Deputy Presiding Officer in the National Assembly.



# Presidente of my own banana republic

Peter Stead

I still have warm feelings about the 21,928 people who wanted me to represent them in Parliament in 1979. Meanwhile I wonder how many of the 38,000 who voted for the other four candidates have long regretted their failure to send me to the heart of British politics. I would like to reassure them that my personal disappointment melted away as I subsequently came to realise that day-to-day politics was not for me. I could never have survived in a world of committees, working parties, small print, sub-clauses, party-shibboleths and social-scientific jargon.

I would have fared better in the politics of the 19th Century when things were more simple and dramatic. A study of Karl Marx's brilliant prose is fundamental to any understanding of how in that period capitalism and its agent the middle-class transformed the nature of wealth and society. However, for any understanding of the 20th Century resolution of these forces the writings of Max Weber are far more relevant. It was bureaucracy and administration that won out and across the globe democratic politics was reduced to the matter of how administrations, characterised by a powerful logic of their own, could be both galvanised and controlled in the public interest.

It is only now in the early 21st Century that the people of Britain are realising how urgently this question needs to be tackled. In the years after 1945 the country invested all its hope in a state managed bureaucracy that was fired by a sense of national unity and purpose forged in a time of war. Now a couple of generations later we are confronted on almost a weekly basis with stories and scandals that suggest we have neither the public code of honour nor the necessary safeguards to control the selfishness, greed, inefficiency, dishonesty and contempt that seems to characterise the administration of the country.

In those decades when we prided ourselves on the tone, quality and sheer

decency of public life in Britain we would smugly point to those countries that failed to measure up to our standards and refer to them as 'banana republics'. Sadly I find myself frequently needing to apply that term to the actions of MPs, journalists, police officers, bankers and NHS officials here in the UK. One often sits through news bulletins squirming with shame. The spirit of 1945 has long evaporated as has the religious, community, workplace and educational values that prompted public service. The code of honour is wearing thin as the need for a new kind of democratic accountability becomes ever more apparent.

All of this confirms that I did well to stay out of politics. Yet like so many people I remain a politician manqué drafting speeches for all occasions. Of course, the beauty of living one's own Walter Mitty political life is that one can effortlessly cut out all the unwanted baggage of committees and the dreaded process of consultation involving interest groups, party policy and, worst of all, independent consultants. In this kind of personal politics 'process' becomes a campaign and solutions readily leap to mind. In this daydreaming mode I find that the position and title of President is best suited to my achieving results, a democratic president, of course, not a banana presidente.

And so at various times in recent years I have found myself running Scotland Yard, the WRU, Chelsea Football Club, the USA and the NHS. Presently I find that I have been made 'the Tsar of Welsh Tourism', just as we are being told of the need to improve the number and quality of visitors to Wales. This should be a 'no-brainer' for we all know in our hearts that it is the sheer singularity and green beauty of these Western Hills that defines our Welsh identity and has stimulated our culture. And yet we have long taken it for granted and failed to sustain a politics and an aesthetic that would highlight the environment and the landscape as our defining asset and invited others to share (and pay for) it.

During a long train journey I closed my eyes and found myself ordering Cardiff to improve the quality of its waterfront and to provide some significant commemoration of

its historic importance. Meanwhile, Swansea was commanded to sort out its traffic problems and to provide quality facilities around its stunning and yet undeveloped bay. Cruise ships and ferries should become more regular callers at Welsh ports and the Mid Wales and Valley rail services would re-commission steam locos. Pony trekking and equestrian activities should become a mainstay and major cycling and motoring rallies and races common. There needs to be a fully publicised calendar of scientific, musical, theatrical and literary events and a major Festival of the Arts (far outshining Edinburgh) held in and around Cardiff in May or June.

A key text should be the annually updated Book of Wales which lists the best fifty or hundred peaks, beaches, churches, galleries, pubs, restaurants golf courses, walks, castles panoramas, hotels, guest houses and books in Wales, a publication that all natives and visitors would insist on owning, annotating and contributing to. This indispensable volume would highlight the way in which at long last public authorities, entrepreneurs, artists and scholars had come together to dynamically preserve, sustain and enhance a lovely land. A bibliography would highlight exciting new works tracing the literature, music and works of art that have defined Wales and thrilling histories that convey the remarkable story of a culture that preserved its identity in the very shadow of a world power.

Twenty years ago there were many references to the potential of the Welsh film industry and how at any minute a film of Owain Glyndŵr would do for Wales what films of Robin Hood and William Wallace had done for our neighbours. However, the writers, directors and actors of Wales have let us down badly. The time has come for action. By the time the Book of Wales is published the thousands who will flock to see the sublime castles of what they will now realise is a real country will have been excited by some of the world's great actors bringing alive the way in which Wales helped mould a Britain whilst remaining distinct. We must never settle for a process: on all our parts it has to be a vision thing.

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### GWESTY CYMRU

Huw and Beth Roberts established luxury Aberystwyth hotel Gwesty Cymru

in 2007 where they say the use of the Welsh language creates a "unique cultural experience" for their guests.

Category sponsored by *the CADCentre*

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Sponsored by *Orchard Media & Events Group*

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Melissa's is head coach of the Valleys Gymnastics Academy

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