



agenda

plus...

Jonathan Edwards
and **Mark Drakeford**
Future of the Red-Green alliance

Huw Lewis
A strategy for child poverty

Judy Hutchings
Effective parenting

Graham Meadows
Wales and Europe beyond 2013

Kevin Morgan
Power of purchase

David Hedges
The badger cull

Peter Ogden
Beauty and Blaenau Ffestiniog

John McGrath
Improvising a theatre tradition

Baby Brian

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A scar on our soul

In 1998 Gordon Brown, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, declared that "Child poverty is a scar on the nation's soul". He was announcing the UK Government's aim to halve child poverty by 2010 and eliminate it altogether by 2020. In this issue's special feature on child poverty the Welsh Government's Children's Minister Huw Lewis repeats the 2020 commitment. He is unable to do so in relation to 2010 because, as he acknowledges, the number of children living in poverty are currently increasing.

However, as we also report, the statistics for children living in poverty do not go to the root of the problem. Our first concern should be the relatively large proportion – at least 96,000, or 15 per cent of our children – living in severe poverty. These are children living in households with below 50 per cent of average incomes, the point where basic necessities cannot be afforded. The importance of focusing on this group is that it typically involves families with parents who are not working. As a result the UK Government's main instruments for tackling poverty – manipulating the tax and benefits system – are largely ineffective.

Up until about 2005 the UK Government was doing fairly well in terms of reducing children in poverty, defined as those living in households with 60 per cent of the average income. This was because it was reaching households just below the threshold and raising them just above it. In recent years, however, the proportion of people in poverty has become more residualised to those experiencing severe poverty, a group that by definition is harder to help through the tax and benefits system.

The most effective long-term way of improving the position of children caught in this poverty trap is through engaging them more effectively in the education process. This places a large burden of responsibility on the Welsh Government. As we report, there are a number examples of good practice in Welsh schools and communities across Wales that are achieving worthwhile outcomes in raising the educational engagement and attainment of disadvantaged children. The challenge is to spread these relatively isolated examples in a mainstream way to all Welsh local authorities and to all schools.

This message has been taken on board by the Government in Cardiff Bay, by the Minister for Education Leighton Andrews, and his deputy Huw Lewis. It is encouraging that as Minister for Children, Huw Lewis has been placed within the Department Education rather than, say, Social Justice. This is an acknowledgement that education is the key public policy lever in tackling child poverty and social disadvantage.

Another sign is the commitment of First Minister Carwyn Jones to increase education spending year-on-year by one per cent above whatever increase there is to the Welsh block grant. Against that we have to weigh the reality that public spending is facing a major squeeze in the coming few years. For example, next year's Welsh education budget is being cut by 3.4 per cent.

It is true that, due to nearly a decade of spending largesse, education spending in Wales has increased substantially. The Welsh Government says education spending has increased by around 70 per cent over the past decade. However, the reality is that spending in England has gone up even faster – so that by now there is around a £500 spending gap per year for every Welsh secondary school pupil compared with pupils in England. We spend £5,000 per head in Wales but in England they spend £5,500.

In Wales we have chosen over the last decade to divert spending away from education and put more in relative terms into health and economic development. Hopefully, this will be corrected in the coming years and any extra money we find will be focused on helping those children in severe poverty who are under-performing in our schools.

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Roaring Dragons Awards £30 (£25 IWA members)
Carmarthen Branch Dinner. Thursday 22 April, 7.00pm – 8.00pm
Halliwell Centre, Trinity St David's University College, Carmarthen

Guest speaker: Huw Lewis AM, Deputy Minister for Children.

Coffee Shop Debate Entry free
Thursday 11 May, 6.30pm – 7.30pm, Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff

Chris Corcoran, comedian and TV presenter is passionate about education.

Food in the City £65 (£50 IWA members)
Monday 24 May, 9.00 – 4.00pm, Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff

Keynote speakers: Professor Kevin Morgan, Cardiff University, Steve Garrett, Director, Riverside Community Market; Elin Jones AM, Minister for Rural Affairs; Barny Haughton, Chef and Owner, Bordeaux Quay, Bristol.

Evening at Ruthin Craft Centre
North Wales Branch event. Thursday 10 June, 6.00-8.00pm

Guided tour with Craft Centre Director Philip Hughes.
Buffet £20 (£17.50p IWA members).

IWA Inspire Wales Awards Dinner
Thursday 15 June, 7.30pm, City Hall Cardiff

£55 (£50 IWA members) Table of 10 £500 (£475 members).

New Life for Town Centres: Unique Places for Regeneration
£65 (£50 IWA members)
Thursday 24 June, 9.00-4.00pm, Gwent Branch Conference, Caerphilly County Borough Council, Ystrad Mynach

Keynote speakers: Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive, Design Commission for Wales; Jocelyn Davies, Minister for Housing and Regeneration, Alun Ffred Jones AM, Minister for Heritage; Simon Quinn, Chief Executive, Association of Town Management.

Building the Welsh Health Economy £95 (£80 IWA members)
Monday 28 June, 9.45am – 3.45pm, Parc Hotel, Park Place, Cardiff

Keynote speakers: Professor Sir Mansel Aylward, Chair, Public Health Wales; Professor Ceri Phillips, Department of Health Economics, Swansea University; Gwyn Tudor, Forum Manager, Medi Wales; David Perry, Chief Executive, European Care Group; .

Coffee Shop Debate Entry free
Tuesday 6 July, 6.30pm – 7.30pm, Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff

Peter Finch, Director, Academi, asks how visible is Welsh writing in English.

The General Election and its consequences £30 (£25 IWA members)
North Wales Branch Dinner. Thursday 8 July, 7.30pm Meifod Country House Hotel, Bontnewydd

Guest Speaker: Professor Richard Wyn Jones, Director, Welsh Governance Centre, Cardiff University.

Just published

Against the Odds – the survival of Welsh identity
By Harold Carter £9.99

More information: www.iwa.org.uk

Wales and Europe beyond 2013

Graham Meadows has some ideas for Welsh policymakers on influencing the future direction of cohesion policy

For the past ten years the European Union's Cohesion Policy has delivered intense support, both political and financial, to West Wales and the Valleys. However, the relationship between Wales and EU Cohesion Policy will soon change, which raises a number of points.

- First, why is this change important? Is it the loss of EU finance which this will entail? Without denying that the loss of finance will pose difficulties, I want to argue that the real importance lies in its implication for Wales's overall policy for its economic development. The loss of finance will be an important element in the design of that policy. But, as important, perhaps, will be the loss of the medium-term planning framework which the policy provides. Therefore, the imminence of discussions on the future of EU Cohesion Policy should provoke a reflection on the future course of Wales's policy for its economic growth and development.
- Second, does the changing relationship between Wales and EU Cohesion Policy imply that Wales's economy no longer needs assistance? Or, to pose the question in a more limited way, is the economic recovery of West Wales and the Valleys complete? There are two answers to these questions: both negative. It is important to note that today's EU judgement of Wales's economic performance – and of West Wales and the valleys in particular – is being

made against a new, 'devalued' poverty yardstick. So, even within the legal framework of EU Cohesion Policy itself, there are reasons to doubt that West Wales and the Valleys is recovered.

- Third, what attitude should Wales take in discussions which will soon begin about the future form of EU Cohesion Policy? Using its awareness of its own position, can Wales make a case for modifications to the policy's structure so that it better responds to the needs of regions which are emerging from poverty? Here, the answer must be in the affirmative. Wales has valid arguments, supported by its own experience, for change in EU Cohesion Policy so that it better serves the needs of regions with fragile economies, which are still reconstructing and adapting economic structures. In alliance with other regions in the same position, notably Cornwall in south-west England, Wales should bring its arguments forward.
- The fourth question is, what if the case and arguments advanced by Wales don't match the views of England? Twenty years ago Wales had no separate identity in EU politics. Now it does. It should make its case.

We begin, then, by asking why the impending change in Wales's relationship with EU Cohesion Policy is important? First is timing. From the perspective of the first half of 2010, 2014 seems distant,

and 2020 even more so. Yet, positions are already being taken in the discussions which will shape Wales's relationship with EU Cohesion Policy from 2014 onwards. The stage is being set.

The new European Parliament was elected in the middle of last year and has taken its seat. The new European Commission – the second to be presided by José Manuel Barroso – has been appointed. Danuta Hübner, the European Commission member who has been in charge of EU Regional Policy for the past five years, is now the President of the European Parliament's Committee on Regional Policy. The new Commissioner is Austrian Johannes Hahn. A number of policy papers have already issued from the European Commission on the next seven-year perspective for the European Union budget and how the Commission wishes to shape policies until 2020.

There is, as yet, no explicit timetable but one can make an educated guess. The managers of EU business will be looking for a decision on the new budget perspective, which will include Cohesion Policy revisions by the end of 2012. This will require the Commission to table its firm proposals later this year, probably just after the summer, and there may be outline proposals before then. As I say, 2014 seems distant but we are already at the beginning of the debate which will have important political and budgetary consequences for Wales.

What exactly is the changing relationship between Wales and the European Union? For most of us, there is one Wales but for the European Union and its Cohesion Policy there are three. The policy looks at you through socio-economic eyes and measures you against EU GDP per head. It sees, or rather it saw, poor Wales, better-off Wales, and OK Wales – West Wales and the Valleys, a part of East Wales, and the rest of Wales. The critical benchmark in determining the intensity of financial support under EU Cohesion Policy is a level of income, measured in terms of



European Convergence funding worth £19 million is supporting construction of a 2.5km by-pass around Robeston Wathen from Penblewin to Slebech Park on the A40 east of Haverfordwest. The total cost of the three-lane project which entails a 2+1 overtaking layout, is £37 million. It will be completed in March 2011

GDP, equal to 75 per cent of the EU average. At two points in its recent history, West Wales and the Valleys has scored less than this threshold over a three-year reference period. As a consequence, since 2000 it has been classified amongst the poorest members of the Union, and therefore receiving a high intensity of financial support.

We are just ending the three-year reference period for the next period of EU Cohesion Policy, from 2014. Final harmonised data are not yet available but we can see already that West Wales and the Valleys is no longer among the poorest regions and, therefore, is not believed to need intensive financial support from EU Cohesion Policy. This is something we should applaud. Or should we? Since 2000, when EU Cohesion Policy said that West Wales and the Valleys was poor enough to warrant intensive financial help, a big

change has taken place in the policy's link to economic reality. The yardstick of 'poverty' – to put it in blunt terms – has been changed. Twelve new Member States have joined the European Union, almost all of them with an income below the Union average. The average has thus fallen by several percentage points. So, when we say West Wales and the Valleys is no longer among the poorest parts of the Union, we really mean it is no longer among the poorest parts of EU27. We do not mean that West Wales and the Valleys has attained the target it, and the Union of EU15, set out to achieve in 2000. Measured against the poverty yardstick of 2000, West Wales and the Valleys is still among the poorest parts of the Union. But we are talking economic policy, not statistics. We need to understand whether the new statistics correctly indicate Wales's economic strength. In approaching this discussion

it is important to keep in perspective the changes which are about to take place. We must not exaggerate.

However, it is easy to exaggerate – to say 'Wales' when we mean West Wales and the Valleys; to argue as if the whole of Wales should be classified as a less well-off area of the EU; to forget why Wales receives EU resources under Cohesion Policy. It is tempting to dramatise things by focusing on the resources, to look at Wales's potential loss of EU funding rather than focus on Wales's essential gain in receiving these funds in the first place. So let us be as precise as possible in setting out the context.

What might the changed relationship mean in terms of EU funding?

- First, a high-intensity of EU Cohesion Policy funding will continue to flow into West Wales and the Valleys until

end-2015, the spending period of the current programme – in other words, for another six years.

- Secondly, what is likely to happen after end-2013, after which no new projects can be funded by the existing programme? We shall not know the answer to this question until the exact form of post-2013 policy is decided, probably in 2012. But, if previous experience is a guide, the answer is that the region will be eligible for higher-than-normal intensity of funding for six years more, the funding being delivered on a degressive basis.

So West Wales and the Valleys has an assurance, of one sort or another, until 2020. If 2013 is going to mark the end of a high intensity of EU funding, it is going to be a slow end. This is an important factor for Wales's policy-makers as they decide their political strategies for the next few years.

In mentioning EU funding in this way, there is a risk of reducing the relationship between Wales and European Cohesion Policy to one which is merely about money. EU funding is important to Wales, which is why I have emphasised it, but it comes as part of a policy. And the policy has its objectives and its instruments.

One of the instruments of EU Cohesion Policy, for example, is its insistence on medium-term planning. The finance which the policy is delivering to Wales is being used within medium-term programmes, designed and implemented in Wales. The finance may come from Brussels, but decisions on how it should be spent, are made here in Wales. This important element of the policy has had an impact on the way the Welsh Government plans its economic policy. It is one of the advantages which the policy has brought to Wales – perhaps almost as important as the funding.

The second question I posed at the outset was, “Does the change in Wales's relationship with EU Cohesion Policy

mean it no longer requires assistance?”

Put another way, “Is the recovery of West Wales and the Valleys complete?” “Is the reconstruction of the Welsh economy as a whole sufficiently strong to avoid falling back?” I have already begun to argue that, in terms of the policy's own construction, the answer may be in the negative.

What else can the policy tell us? The importance of Cohesion Policy in the EU construction becomes clear when we consider it in the context of the Lisbon Treaty. The Treaty calls for the harmonious development of the Union and for the elimination of economic disparities between regions. Cohesion Policy is the instrument for achieving this goal. It calls for the elimination of disparities between the poorest regions and a level fixed at three-quarters of the Union's average income. This gives rise to a number of considerations. First it shows the nature of Wales's challenge. Wales as a whole should be aiming to grow faster than the Union so that the gap between it and the Union average disappears – and, having eliminated the gap, Wales must continue to match the growth rate of the Union. For West Wales and the Valleys, the target is the same.

Clearly, the rate of growth of West Wales and the Valleys will be important to the performance of Wales as a whole – since Wales's growth rate is an average of those of the country's constituent parts. It is as if Wales is running for a bus which is pulling away from the bus stop. The bus is the Union average. To catch the bus, Wales must run faster than the bus is travelling.

What are the qualities of the gap which separates Wales from the EU's average performance? There are three: persistence, dynamism, and many-sidedness.

The less-well off areas of the United Kingdom – and the same goes for the EU as a whole – have not changed much over decades, in good times and bad. Orwell's Wigan was poor eighty

years ago and is still relatively so. The same goes for Jarrow in North East England. The same is also true of parts of Wales. In other words, it may be possible to organise economic policy in such a way that relatively poor areas grow at around the same speed as the average economy. But it is difficult to grow faster than the average and very difficult to sustain faster-than-average growth over a long period of time. Disparities are stubborn.

But disparities are also dynamic. Growth churns an economy. Some parts grow more quickly than others; because their incomes are rising more quickly, demand is stronger; the faster growers attract capital and labour from the slower; the slower suffer from their loss of resources. Britain used to bemoan the ‘brain drain’ to the United States. The effect of this churning is that disparities are constantly recreating themselves. If we look at West Wales and the Valleys, we see that the region's income has risen in the past decade, that it has eliminated at least a part of the disparity which existed in 2000, when it began to receive a high intensity of support from the EU. We can see, in other words, that Wales's growth policies are working.

But we can also see that the churning of the Welsh and the wider EU economy has inflicted a fresh disparity on the region. The gap we observe today is not the gap of 2000, it is more recent. In many quarters – even in the European Commission in Brussels – the persistence of disparities is held to be a sign of policy failure. After all, if policy is a success, gaps will disappear. But this is unjust. The programmes which Wales's policy-makers put in place in 2000 were aimed to combat the gaps which existed then by tackling their causes. It seems unreasonable to expect Wales's policy-makers in 2000 to know that further gaps will emerge in 2005, let alone to know and treat their causes.

The third characteristic of disparities is their many-sided nature. EU Cohesion Policy measures them in terms of income

but the disparities have other aspects which are just as serious. If we look at regions in the EU which are similar to West Wales and the Valleys and the other poorer areas of Wales, we see that the income gap reflects poorer educational attainment; poorer health and, even, shorter life expectancy; poorer quality housing; a lower quality environment in



Credit where credit's due – "Europe & Wales: Investing in Your Future". Photo: Paul Sambrook

general; and so on. The problem which Wales's policy-makers are treating as they seek to promote the economic growth rates of the poorer parts of the country has many dimensions.

And this is sometimes reflected in the present implementation of EU Cohesion Policy. In the present programming period, authorities in the Netherlands allocated a bigger part of their EU funding to each person in the west than to the poorer people in the north. They argued that the allocation was necessary because all-round conditions were worse in the urbanised west than in the rural north – and their argument was accepted.

These considerations on the qualities of income disparities offer indications of the questions which Wales's policy-makers might consider as they prepare their arguments for the imminent discussions on the future shape of EU Cohesion Policy:

- How long have the income disparities existed between Wales and its regions and the EU average?
- Are there grounds for considering the persistence of disparities as harmful as their size?
- What is the age of the disparities? What is their vintage, if you prefer?
- What does this tell us about the success of the actions which economic programme managers have pursued over the last ten years?
- What are the other signs of socio-economic deprivation in Wales?
- Are they well-mapped by using an income measure to decide on the eligibility for funding?

Questions like these may open arguments which would make it possible for Wales's policy-makers to argue for a continuing relationship with EU Cohesion Policy, which might secure for Wales the advantages of future financing at above basic levels and, just as important, the continuation of the medium-term planning method.

We come, then, finally, and briefly, to the third question I asked at the outset. What line can Wales take in the discussions which have already started on the future shape of EU Cohesion Policy? And let us again underline that Wales's financial relationship with the policy is not going to change tomorrow. There is an assurance of high intensity funding until 2015 and of continued higher-than-normal funding for five or six years thereafter. Let us also remember, however, that the amount of funding after 2015 will depend on the details of the new-look, post 2013 policy. The following are some arguments that Wales can deploy:

- The poverty yardstick has changed. The task which Wales and the European Union agreed was necessary in 2000 has still not been completed.
- The Lisbon Treaty speaks of the requirement of harmonious development, reducing the disparities

between less-favoured regions and the rest of the Union. If we consider the properties of these disparities, we discover that the policy needs a more sophisticated way of evaluating them than a simple income measure.

- Common sense and simple economic observation teaches us, that a simple binary approach to economic development is not sufficient. To believe that a regional or national economy, like West Wales and the Valleys or Wales, has recovered because it passes 75 per cent of the EU average is simplistic.

This suggests that one way to develop EU Cohesion Policy would be to create new regional categories. Instead of a binary approach, below 75 per cent/above 75 per cent, the policy could create a four-speed growth gearbox – say below 75 per cent, 75-85 per cent, 85-100 per cent, above 100 per cent. As a region's economy strengthened and income improved, it would climb through the gearbox, with the intensity of funding being diminished as it does so. If policy were adapted in this way, it would better reflect the economic reality and continuous nature of economic development and make an even more substantial contribution to the achievement of a sustainable knowledge-based economy. This is only one possible idea. Something similar bounces around in Brussels, sometimes getting traction, sometimes not. We have a new Commission, we have a new Commissioner for Regional Policy, and we have a new European Parliament. Proposals will be made in a few months. The debate is getting serious. Now is the time for Wales to deploy its arguments. If it wants to make an impact, it has no time to lose.

Graham Meadows is former Director General of the European Commission's Regional Directorate. This article is based on a presentation he gave at Cardiff University's Regeneration Institute last December.

News

clickonwales.org a website to remember

Clickonwales.org is a brand new service launched by the Institute of Welsh Affairs - an online news analysis magazine for Wales - and the most important development for the IWA since we launched this journal, *Agenda*, in the mid 1990s.

We know from researching the reaction of our individual and corporate members that *Agenda* is the most valued benefit of IWA membership, but we have been conscious for some time that publishing three times a year does not give us the capacity to respond more quickly to the daily rush of events. There is often something to be said for standing back from events and taking a longer view. However, there is also a need in Wales for a more constant stream of reportage, analysis and comment on public policy issues.

For the past two years we have provided a limited service through iwa.org.uk/blog - a feature within a website that was itself showing signs of age. Last year we decided that radical change was necessary, not only to upgrade and develop our website, but also to bring about a new level of engagement with and participation by the membership and other contributors.

Although *Agenda* will continue to be published as

now, web users will find two newly designed and seamlessly integrated sites: clickonwales.org - the news analysis magazine - and iwa.org.uk - our new corporate site which gives details of all the IWA's events and research activities. Large parts of these sites will be freely accessible to all, but both parts will also facilitate online purchase of IWA publications, with large discounts available to IWA members.

clickonwales.org - a new address to remember and to tap into daily to keep up with public affairs in Wales - will contain

- Daily news analysis of important developments in Wales, often by experts in their fields, with sections on politics, local government, the economy and business, education, health, science, the environment, social policy, culture and media.
- A platform for extended essays and debates
- National Assembly monitoring reports, prepared in partnership with Grayling Political Strategy.
- The Director's blog, by the IWA Director, John Osmond
- The Wales Lecture Library - a place for posting the texts of relevant



public lectures from a variety of sources..

- The Wales Factfile - a one-stop-shop for factual information about Wales. Despite the glories of the web, one of our frustrations as researchers has been the difficulty of finding in one convenient place succinct information about many aspects of Wales - such as its people, its geography, its economy, its culture and, most importantly, its democracy. The Wales Factfile is an attempt to remedy this deficiency. We intend to build this into an unrivalled resource that will be of help not only to researchers in schools, colleges, public and private organizations, but also to Welsh citizens and to visitors, in short - to anyone with an interest in Wales.
- Access to the extensive IWA archive of articles, discussion papers, research reports, and other publications.
- Links to the golwg360.com site, where you will be able to find Welsh translations of

much of our daily commentary, under an collaboration agreement between the IWA and the publishers of the Welsh language magazine *Golwg*.

iwa.org.uk will remain as the IWA's corporate site with full details of all our events - conferences seminars and branch events throughout Wales - as well as the ability to book places online for many of these events, as well as to join or donate online. At the same time we are launching a new category of membership for bona fide students at only £10 per annum.

iwa.org.uk will also contain details of all current IWA research projects with a facility to input to these projects and to suggest new projects.

clickonwales has been built by **Core**, a Cardiff based web design and development agency.

Where the future meets the past

Geraint Talfan Davies says that the IWA's new website has more in common with older media than we think

At first site the launch of a new website is hardly news. Somewhere in the world new sites are being launched every minute of the day. But for Wales we hope that the launch of clickonWales.org will prove an important development.

The Welsh blogosphere is already busy, with sites run by individuals and by all kinds of organisations including cooperatives. We do not pretend to be the first in the field, we have many good and respected competitors. But we dare to hope that this may be the most ambitious independent effort so far, in that it will combine analysis and debate, a National Assembly monitoring service, a source for public lectures and factual information about Wales, as well as access to the IWA's extensive archive of work.

Initially, we have archived the last four years of our work, but over the next 12 months we hope to archive all the work we have published over the last 23 years.

But there is also a significance for the IWA as an organisation. Launched in 1987, long before the commercialisation of the internet, the IWA had its roots in the age of print. While we launched our first website 10 years ago in a dial-up

environment, we have not yet made full use of the web's most recent capabilities, to engage with our extensive membership right across Wales and with a wider public. In short, our new website provides an opportunity for us to add a more substantial bottom-up dimension to our work.

Our hope is that these twinned and interlinked sites – clickonwales.org and iwa.org.uk – will allow us to do just that, over time changing fundamentally our mode of operation, and contributing more richly to our aim of developing an active civil society in Wales.

There is much emphasis these days on the discontinuities created by technological development, but there are hidden continuities too. The way in which commentators are now using the web carries a myriad echoes of the development of journalism and the press in Wales in the nineteenth century. A re-reading of Aled Gruffydd Jones' seminal work, *Press Politics and Society, A history of journalism in Wales*, published in 1993, conjures some features that would be very familiar in today's broadband world.

He records the mid-century growth of telegraph companies as they followed the extension of the railway system (cf. the broadband

network), and the complaints of newspaper owners that the public were expecting news for nothing. He describes the phenomenon of the printer/journalist – a fusion of creation and production that is now the hallmark of the web. And he notes the way in which Welsh periodicals were largely the work of amateur or voluntary effort. Of course, this is a characteristic of many of the most active Welsh websites, with public subsidy currently confined to Welsh language sites. Jones also details the way in which local newspapers routinely culled articles from the metropolitan or foreign press – a primitive form of aggregation, exploited so successfully by modern search engines.

Describing the network of local agents that were crucial to distribution in the 19th Century, especially of Welsh language material, Jones describes something that has parallels with web-based interest groups or social networks: "The newspaper distribution networks comprised what Raymond Williams termed 'cultural formations', loose but complex organisations of interlinking groups of like-minded individuals from different areas and occupations which could also be mobilised for more aggressively political and religious purposes." Over to you, Mr Obama.

Jones mentions, too, some features that would be familiar in the television age: public houses attracting business by providing newspapers (cf. Sky in pubs) and the ubiquity of the preacher /journalist. Where would 20th Century Welsh

broadcasting have been without them?

There is no doubt that the web has given a fresh impetus to communication, at both global and local levels, although organisations large and small are still searching for the holy grail of a sustainable business model. The IWA is not sustained by government, or by business or trade unions. It is sustained only by a broad-based membership, both individual and corporate, by grants from trusts and foundations and by income from an increasing programme of conferences. The development of these new websites, therefore, represents a considerable investment by the IWA in the hope that, while adding a significant new strand of work, it will also assist our long-term sustainability.

But it also represents a new vitality and diversity thrown into the face of the homogenising trends in media ownership and production. Consolidation of ownership is not necessarily a recent process. In 1993, as one wave of consolidation began to roll, Jones described a wave that began in 1890 and continued until 1939, reminding us that "regional, class, religious and linguistic inequalities with regard to resources certainly existed, but the structure of the press was far less hierarchical in the 19th Century than it was to become in the twentieth."

Perhaps today's developments are a return to our past. If they also presage a return to the social activism of the Victorian era, they may also be a beacon of hope.

Geraint Talfan Davies is Chair of the IWA.

Inspiring Welsh citizenship

Ever since the IWA was established in 1987 we have been fired by the vision of a Wales in which all its citizens play a full and engaged part in creating a progressive society. From the outset, too, we were convinced that encouraging enterprise of all forms was important – not just in private enterprise, but an enterprising spirit in the public and voluntary sectors as well, enterprise that is about energy and creativity, about ideas, innovation and action.

This is why, along with our media partner the *Western Mail* we have launched the IWA Inspire Wales Awards to recognise and reward excellence, to underline the importance of innovation,

and to encourage active involvement in Welsh civil society.

In this first year of the scheme we have designated ten categories, though this may change in future years as we see the need to highlight particular fields of activity. The ten categories for 2010 are:

- **Business Leader of the Year** – sponsored by *Leadership and Management Wales*.
- **Educator of the Year**.

- **Science and Technology** – sponsored by *ISG Pearce Limited*.
- **Environmentalist of the Year** – sponsored by *South Wales Shredding Ltd and WRAP Cymru*.
- **Welsh at Work** – sponsored by *The CADCentre (UK) Ltd*. to recognise innovative ways in which the language has been used in the workplace and business.
- **Arts, Media and Creative Industries** – sponsored by *Active Music Services*.

- **Active Citizen of the Year**.
- **Global Wales** – to recognise people who have carried the banner for Wales beyond our borders.
- **Young Achiever of the Year** – sponsored by *Wales and West Utilities*.
- **Sporting leadership** – to recognise people who inspire others to participate and achieve at local, regional or national level.

We will be celebrating the achievements of the 30 finalists and announcing our category winners at an awards dinner at the City Hall, Cardiff, on Tuesday 15th June.

For information about entering the awards, about nominating others or about sponsorship, please contact the event organiser Emma Brennan at emmabrennan@iwa.org.uk or 029 2066 0820

iwa

INSPIRE WALES AWARDS 2010



Professor Merfyn Jones, Vice-Chancellor of Bangor University, is the new Chair of the IWA's North Wales Branch. He is replacing Nonna Woodward, Vice-Chair of North Wales Newspapers, who has stepped down after more than five years in post. Since taking over in the New Year Professor Jones has already hosted two major IWA events at Bangor University, a consultation seminar for the Welsh Government's Independent Commission on

New IWA Chair for North Wales

Funding and Finance, and a conference on Climate Change and Welsh Habitats organised in association with the Countryside Council for Wales.

"I'm delighted to be taking the helm for the IWA in north Wales at a critical time for developing policy in Wales, especially for education with two Welsh Government reviews underway, and also for the economy with a need for us to input into the Government's Economic Renewal consultation," said Professor Jones. "It is important that the north Wales perspective is well understood and I believe the IWA is the ideal forum to

ensure that this happens."

Professor Jones was an undergraduate at Sussex University and a postgraduate at Warwick before being appointed to his first research post at Swansea in 1971. In 1975 he moved to Liverpool where he taught at the University for fifteen years and served as Director of Continuing Education and Dean. He transferred to Bangor and became Head of the School of History and Welsh History, Professor of Welsh History, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and Pro-Vice-Chancellor. He became the University's sixth Vice-Chancellor in August 2004.

His volume on the *North Wales Quarrymen* won the Welsh Arts Council Prize for Literature and he has been awarded a BAFTA (Cymru) award for his contribution to history on television. He has served as a member of the Broadcasting Standards Commission and the Board of Governors of the BBC, and as Chair of the Broadcasting Council of Wales. He recently served as Chair of Higher Education Wales and a Vice-President of Universities UK, which represents the higher education sector in the UK.

Merfyn Jones writes on the future of higher education in Wales, page 62.



Gareth Jones

1933-2009

Gareth Jones was a Welshman of unbounded optimism in a country which specialises in pessimism, especially in the years leading up to the creation of the National Assembly. His ideas, often promoted by the IWA of which he was a trustee, radiated into the wider community in ways that were rarely traced back to their source but will reverberate for decades to come. Gareth, who has died in Cyprus aged 76, was a major influence on the early years of the National Assembly, and in particular the first coalition government between Welsh Labour and the Welsh Liberal Democrats.

It was his chairmanship of the Welsh Liberal Democrat policy committee in the late 1990s that ensured the party's manifesto for the first Assembly elections was widely hailed as being the most imaginative of all the parties. Many of its proposals found their way into the coalition agreement that was negotiated between Labour's Rhodri Morgan and Mike German, leader of the Welsh Liberal Democrats, across the summer months of 2000. As Mike German recalled, "His contribution was inestimable. We would sit around his vast dining table with everyone bringing their policy proposals forward on a single sheet of A4. Following discussion, the proposals fell into one of three categories – acceptable, required further work and crap. Avoiding 'crap' and being dumped in the waste bin became the challenge for us all. Meanwhile his wife Helen would prepare vast meals to feed

the thoughtful Lib Dems. The end result was a manifesto with hundreds of tightly drawn clear proposals, which became the backbone of the Welsh government between 2000 and 2003."

Gareth was most proud of the inclusion of a scheme to pilot a Welsh Baccalaureate to replace the A Levels in Wales. This had been first proposed in his influential report *Wales 2010: Creating our Future* that he produced for the IWA in 1993. Typically for Gareth this was a panoramic survey of all aspects of Welsh life that addressed the question he himself posed: "What should we, the people of Wales, do to enable Wales to be one of the most prosperous regions in Europe by the year 2010?" With that year almost upon us he was recommending that the question should be asked anew, but perhaps with the year 2030 being substituted. By then he hoped, and it is likely, that his treasured Baccalaureate, based on the International Baccalaureate qualification that was pioneered in Wales in the 1970s, will have become the Welsh 'gold standard'.

Gareth Jones was born and brought up in the Valleys town of Blaina. His mother was a teacher and his father a mine surveyor who died when he was four. As a child Gareth played the piano and cello to a high standard, winning many awards in Eisteddfodau, and becoming a cellist in the National Youth Orchestra of Wales at 17. He was an Exhibitioner at Christ's College, Cambridge where he read Chemistry and Anthropology and also continued to pursue his interest in music.

Following two years National Service with the RAF he became a chemistry teacher, first at Stationers School and later in Dulwich College, London. In the early sixties he worked for Shell and rose rapidly through its management at the same time as studying for his PhD in Psychology at the London Business School. Later he joined the American consulting group, Booz Allen Hamilton, where he became head of the London office and the first European to be appointed to the New York Board of Directors. In the 1980s he joined the UK

accounting firm then known as Ernst & Whinney as head of their consulting group which he expanded and developed.

Returning to Wales at the end of the 1980s Gareth became Chairman of the Neville Hall Hospital Trust, responsible for the main hospital at Abergavenny and numerous small hospitals in the surrounding mining valleys, including his home town of Blaina. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the NHS he wrote *The Aneurin Bevan Inheritance*, the story of the growth of the health services in the mining valleys from 1700s onwards. On his return to Wales he also immediately learned Welsh and later wrote *Welsh Roots & Branches*, a study of the derivation of Welsh words to assist learners.

He became involved in an extraordinary range of organisations involved in Welsh life and culture, including as a member of the Board of Welsh National Opera, a Governor of the University of Glamorgan, and chairman of the Welsh composer Mansel Thomas Trust. He also founded and chaired the Beacons Trust which he established to develop the commercial potential of small businesses in Powys. This is where he settled on his return to Wales, in a magnificent hill-side home at Bwlch near Brecon with historic links to the nearby medieval Tretower Court.

However, it was in his role as chairman of the IWA's Research Panel that Gareth Jones wielded most influence in these years. He brought to it not only his acute acumen and depth of experience, but also a boundless energy and optimism that infected all around him. Over two decades the Panel's work fed into the manifestos of all the parties in Wales, but especially the Liberal Democrats in whose interest he was a Powys county councillor and on the Board of the Brecon Beacons National Park.

Latterly Gareth had settled in Cyprus, where he had forged links over 25 years, and worked tirelessly on a book on the French language which he had just completed at the time of his death in December last year.



Paul Jeremy

Roadmap of our souls

One of the most neglected issues in Welsh politics during the last decade has been the state of civil liberties arising from Government policies for guarding public safety and use of new database technology to improve the quality of public services.

As a reaction to the menace of terrorist attack, the suspension of habeas corpus has been extended from 14 days in 1997 to 28 days for anyone arrested under anti-terrorism legislation. Far-reaching steps have been taken to monitor movement within the country and across UK borders. Britain has the largest number of CCTV cameras in the world.

Your journeys by road can be monitored through the new national network of automatic number plate cameras. You will not be able to renew a passport without providing new biometric and other personal data. You cannot leave Britain without providing an unprecedented amount of travel information; in effect an exit visa system is now being introduced for the first time for all UK passport holders.

An insidious process has developed whereby measures to curb terrorist suspects and serious criminals, such as paedophiles and fraudsters, has led to an atmosphere where the whole population has become the object of official distrust in the cause of safety. Anyone arrested for an indictable offence has their DNA taken and retained, regardless of innocence. Those in regular contact with children and vulnerable adults must be checked by the Criminal Records Bureau and the

new Independent Safeguarding Authority. Peaceful protesters are being pinpointed as ‘domestic extremists’, with their photographs and other details being entered onto databases.

The most drastic intrusion is yet to come. If Labour wins the next general election, a law will be brought in which allows the authorities to intercept, without specific warrants, the email and mobile phone contacts, internet use and Skype links of everyone in Britain. The Conservative Party, for all its fulsome rhetoric about the protection of privacy against the intrusive state, remains ambiguous on this matter. Sir Ken MacDonald, the former Director of Public Prosecutions, warned of the consequences of such a step: “It would be a complete readout of every citizen’s life in the most intimate and demeaning detail. No government of any colour is to be trusted with such a roadmap of our souls.”

The scale of intrusion into people’s lives is leading to a growing belief that British liberty, especially the right to privacy, has been undermined to an unprecedented extent, despite the existence of the Human Rights Act of 1998. The growth of the surveillance database state is seen as remorseless and unmatched in any other democracy. We are moving from the nanny state to a mistrust state in which everyone is suspect until validated; and validation will be all-encompassing once separate government databases are linked. In short, New Labour has pioneered world class standards in database snooping.

These criticisms cannot be shrugged off as the predictable complaints from the usual civil liberties suspects who they perceive to be lax on the need for public safety measures and hysterical about the risks of database technologies which can greatly improve the quality of public services. A number of eminent figures who have been at the heart of dealing with threats to society from terrorists and other serious criminals have been outspoken about the trend.

Dame Stella Rimington, the former head of MI5, has accused the Government of exploiting people’s fear of terrorism to restrict their civil liberties. Sir Ken MacDonald warned that “we need to take very great care not to fall into a way of life in which freedom’s back is broken by the relentless pressure of the security state.” Lord Bingham, former Lord Chief Justice, wondered sceptically whether “the British are content to be the most spied upon people in the democratic world?”

Thus there is a significant body of opinion warning that the UK has sleepwalked into a surveillance state. Wales, for its part, hasn’t even stirred. Of all the UK nations, it has contributed very little to this debate. Is it not strange that in a country which prides itself on its radical politics and its past struggles for justice, we are so reticent about continued government impingement on our public and private freedoms?

One crucial reason has to be the Labour Party’s dominance. Labour does not enjoy a global reputation for defending liberty within the UK. The Welsh Labour Parliamentary group is a dutiful citadel of New Labour loyalty: its 29 MPs, many of whom are or have been on the Government payroll, have voted overwhelmingly for 90 days pre-charge detention and for ID cards.

When the Convention of Modern Liberty, the largest civil liberties event in the UK for decades, was held in February 2009, the Wales Labour Party declined to send a speaker to the Wales conference in Cardiff. This gesture marked the descent of a party which once had a vigorous tradition of defending civil liberties, from the inter-war struggles – Aneurin Bevan was a Vice-President of the National Council of Civil Liberties – right through to the era of Neil Kinnock and John Smith.

Another reason is that members of the National Assembly seem to think that issues about liberty in Wales are essentially for the UK Parliament to consider. This is patently unsatisfactory

as the Welsh Government does have responsibility for some aspects of policing, and for transport, local government, health and social services, and education – all of which have major privacy issues affecting people in Wales. AMs are sleeping on the job when it comes to opposing the intrusive database state.

Formed in 2007 as a cross-party initiative and with a wide range of civil society institutions as members, it has two broad aims: to get MSPs looking at and understanding human rights issues; and secondly to encourage dialogue on such issues between MSPs and wider Scottish society.

Secondly we should commission a

to look into aspects of civil liberties in Wales. It could also initiate an Assembly debate on the broad state of liberty in Wales, following the ‘contours’ of the liberty map, and thereby adopt a more critical approach to the Welsh Government’s own record.

Albeit modest, such steps would serve to bring Wales into the mainstream of debate on the weakening of liberty within the UK. We are at a turning point. Sir David Omand, formerly Whitehall Intelligence and Security Coordinator, has warned that “finding out other people’s secrets is going to involve breaking everyday moral rules” as a result of the surveillance state trawling through our personal information on linked databases and in cyberspace. If that happens we will have pioneered a first in the history of public ownership: the nationalisation of privacy.

On the other hand, we can refuse to capitulate to the imperatives of Whitehall securocrats and much of the political establishment about overriding our freedoms for their security agenda. As the writer Philip Pullman observed at the Convention of Modern Liberty, “We are a better people than our government believes we are”. We should insist on a new Respect Agenda, not this time from feral youths but from a failed political class at Westminster. As Lord Bingham put it, “The Commons should be a bastion and defender of our freedoms, not an accomplice in their unjustified erosion.”

In a country which has contributed so much to human liberty, we should now in the age of the database state develop impeccable standards of data protection and entrenched civil liberties passed by a new reformed parliament. If we remain as careless on liberty as we in Wales have been hitherto, then let us heed Tom Paine’s warning that when we do not value something, it is tantamount to losing it.

Paul Jeremy is a member of Liberty and a life-long supporter of the Labour Party.

National Assembly Cross Party Group on Human Rights www.epghr.com

Founded in November 2009 the Group meets in the Senedd every two months. The chair is Bethan Jenkins, Plaid AM for South Wales West, and the secretary is Cathy Owens, Programme Director of Amnesty International Wales. Supporting AMs include Joyce Watson, Labour AM for Mid and West Wales; Darren Millar, Conservative AM for Clwyd West; Jenny Randerson, Lib Dem AM for Cardiff Central; and Leanne Wood Plaid AM for South Wales Central.

Concerns so far raised by the Group include the representation of asylum seekers, the treatment of older people especially in care home settings, and violence against women. The Group’s next meeting, on 12 May, will be addressed by Kate Bennett, National Director Wales, Equality and Human Rights Commission.

A further hindrance is the almost invisible role of the Welsh media in the coverage of civil liberties issues: a negligent Assembly feeds a lazy Welsh press, online and broadcasting culture.

So what is to be done? The first thing is to look north to Scotland. No doubt many AMs get irritated by constant invocations to the land of milk and honey beyond the Tweed, but there are some important features of the Scottish human rights scene which merit attention from the National Assembly and from wider Welsh society.

Scotland has a number of organisations directly involved in Scottish civil liberties issues such as No2IDSScotland and Scotland Against Criminalising Communities. In May 2009 the Scottish Human Rights Law Group was formed to raise awareness and knowledge of human rights law in Scotland and to provide a forum for discussion of matters of interest across the field.

The most significant development, however, has been the creation of the Human Rights and Civil Liberties Group in the Scottish Parliament.

‘liberty map’ providing a comprehensive study of the institutions and legislation impacting on the civil liberties and privacy of people in Wales. It could include some positive approaches to data collection adopted by the Welsh Government, which receives very little credit for its privacy policies. This should be a brief study which would be available for wide circulation to MPs and Peers, AMs, Welsh MEPs and the media.

Thirdly, a new Human Rights group has just been established within the National Assembly, with a positive agenda for human rights. However its role in promoting civil liberties is far from clear. The obvious differences between Wales and Scotland are that Scotland is responsible for its criminal justice system and has a parliament with law-making powers. Yet it would be eminently possible for the Assembly’s Cross-Party Human Rights Group to develop over time a major role in defending our liberty. Like the Scottish Parliament’s group, it could co-opt a broad range of Welsh institutions. It could encourage committees of the House of Commons and the Assembly



John Dixon

Tackling gender imbalance

The IWA's recent report *Critical Mass: The Impact and Future of Female Representation in the National Assembly* draws attention to the way that both Plaid and Labour are stepping back from positive discrimination, steps which both parties had previously taken. From its outset the National Assembly has achieved a level of balance between the genders which is better than most legislatures. That was a direct result of the steps taken by Labour and Plaid, without which I have no doubt that our Assembly would have looked much more like Westminster.

To date, mechanisms for achieving gender balance have effectively concentrated on outcomes rather than processes. They have focused on addressing symptoms rather than dealing with underlying causes. There has been an implicit, usually unstated, assumption that by achieving a balance in the

outcome, both the institution and the party itself would become feminised to the extent that the balance would become self-perpetuating. The message from the IWA report is that without such positive mechanisms continuing, far from being self-perpetuating, the situation will revert to one in which males will predominate.

One response to that would be to reinstitute or continue the mechanisms used to date. However, there is little evidence that doing so will have any more effect on the underlying causes than it has to date. It is likely to continue to address symptoms rather than causes.

Almost everybody involved with political selection processes argues, I believe honestly and sincerely, that they are not guilty of discrimination. Yet one does have to ask - if there is no discrimination involved, then why is the outcome so heavily skewed?

One possibility is that there is an element of indirect discrimination. Indirect discrimination can sometimes be difficult to identify. There are some obvious examples one could quote. If a party was to select only blue-eyed candidates, it would probably end up with a reasonably gender balanced list. It would be a wholly unfair system of course, but it would not of itself cause a gender imbalance. Replace blue-eyed with tall, and you get a completely different result. (Of course, if we were looking at ethnic balance, selecting blue-eyed candidates would also be

discriminatory). The point is that sometimes we set criteria which are not obviously gender discriminatory, but which might well have that effect in practice. Identifying these is key to addressing the causes of the unbalanced results of selection processes.

There is potential for indirect discrimination to occur at a number of points in the process. One difficulty lies in persuading women to put their names forward. Rather than accepting that as a reason, we need to ask ourselves why politics is unattractive to women in the first place.

Perhaps we should start by considering people's perception of what politics is and what politicians are and do. A great deal of political reporting on television news programmes revolves around Prime Minister's question time. This is an intensely aggressive piece of theatre where two people endeavour to put each other down in the nastiest possible way without straying outside the bounds of Parliamentary language. Many panel programmes involving politicians encourage similar attitudes.

It doesn't surprise me that many people would find this an unattractive process - is it possible that that would be more true amongst women than amongst men? Or conversely, is it possible that this style of politics is likely to appeal more to males than to females?

Politics doesn't have to be like that, and many of those of us who worked for a better gender balance hoped to change the nature of politics in the process. Whilst the Assembly has avoided the worst of Westminster's excesses, coverage of 'politics' in the widest sense still revolves largely around Westminster, which remains resolutely macho.

To what extent do parties actively seek out and develop talent, or do they sit back and wait for people to apply? Certainly, in Plaid, we have in recent years based our approach to selection on responding to the ambitious candidates. But, if we thereby select for ambition could that be indirectly discriminatory?

Looking at the selection processes

The IWA's report predicts that the number of women members of the National Assembly will fall by around eight following the May 2011 election, from 28 (or 47 per cent) to around 20 (nearer 30 per cent). This it, says, is close to the 'critical mass' necessary for women to have a significant impact on the institution's style, tone and working patterns. So far, it says, the presence of large numbers of women has meant that the Assembly has avoided any charge of being institutionally male dominated, as is the case with the House of Commons.



themselves, the intention is to select the best candidates, those with the most 'merit'. However, merit is something which needs to be defined and measured. I am not convinced that our selection process has taken a sufficiently broad and non-discriminatory view of what merit actually is.

For instance, central to our internal hustings processes has been the requirement for candidates to stand up and make a speech and to face questions. Both of these are clearly important attributes of a politician, but are they all we require? Don't we also want people to be able to listen, to learn, to change their opinion in the light of facts, to arrive at a consensus where necessary in order to move forward, to empathise with their constituents and so on? Is there a danger in selecting which attributes we actually assess, and how we assess them, that we are indirectly discriminating?

It would be wrong to assume that any or all of these issues do actually introduce unfairness; that would be gender stereotyping of the worst kind. But it is equally wrong to assume that they do not. Assumptions can sometimes be the enemy of truth.

In an attempt to avoid possible discrimination in these aspects, Plaid are doing three things. The first is to become more pro-active in seeking out able and talented people, rather than waiting for them to push themselves forward. The second is to broaden the range of attributes which we measure in our vetting stage before candidates are added to our national list. And the third is to look at how we can change the nature of the hustings selection to make a rounder assessment of candidates.

Real, meaningful, long-term gender balance is something which we desperately need to achieve. But we will only achieve it if we change the way politics works sufficiently for it to become a self-perpetuating and self-sustaining outcome, based on real change to the underlying processes, rather than looking only at results.

John Dixon is Chair of Plaid Cymru.



Trevor Herbert

Small country: big history

In 1970 the distinguished zoologist Harford Williams, from Meidrim in Carmarthenshire, took the reckless step of resigning from a comfortable post in the Marine Laboratory at Aberdeen University to become the first Welsh Director of an institution that was enshrined in doubt and controversy. It was, after all, an experiment of the most daring kind, one based on nothing more than idealism, optimism and faith in the fragile notion that a significant proportion of the UK adult population would find the prospect of tagging 'BA' to their moniker particularly alluring.

Forty years and two million students later (nearly 100,000 of them in Wales), the level of scepticism generated in those early days is but a faint memory. Paradoxically, much of the success of the OU in Wales actually came from the abundance of academics from traditional Welsh institutions who, rather than opposing the idea, embraced it enthusiastically by becoming its first cohort of part-time tutors. This was important, for Wales was always a challenge for the OU centrally: it made something of a mess of the University's carefully devised 'regional' strategy, because it occupied the second largest land mass (after Scotland) of its thirteen regions, but had the second smallest number (after Northern Ireland) of the potential student base. Other challenges, such as the one of dealing fairly and economically with a highly distributed student population, kept the Wales operation on its toes, but devolution introduced issues of a somewhat

different flavour.

In 2004 the anomaly that the University's Welsh operation was funded by the Higher Educational Funding Council for England came to an end, and it aligned with the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales. An expectation quickly and quite reasonably emerged that the OU should demonstrate how it was to be perceived as a distinctively Welsh institution. It could make justifiable utterances about its service to various employment sectors in Wales, but more challenging was the idea that it would deliver a Welsh curriculum. From the beginning, the course production endeavour has been based in the central Milton Keynes campus, and the curriculum aimed not at apparently small-scale, 'local' markets, but at courses that would be subscribed to in industrial proportions. How could a Welsh curriculum be developed, and who in any quantity would want to study it anyway?

Croeso: Beginners Welsh was presented online in 2008 and recruited well, but somewhat surprisingly it drew most of its students from outside Wales. Yet more surprising was the response to the OU's initial curriculum offer in Welsh history. Welsh history has been a part of the OU's interest in Wales for some time, but never part of its formal curriculum. In the 1980s, with Professor Gareth Elwyn Jones, I co-edited a series of books sponsored by the Welsh Office and published by the University of Wales Press. It played on two related features: essays about different topics and periods in Welsh history, and a persistent scrutiny of the nature of history and the way that historians do their work. The books drew contributions from almost forty major historians and enjoyed significant success. This project was revived for the OU course *Small country, big history: themes in the history of Wales*, which was written in, and is taught entirely online from, Wales.

The legacy of the 1980s project follows through to the new course in that it too is about the nature of history, the way that historians use historical sources and the impact of the work of

historians on issues of national and cultural identity. This type of emphasis allowed the rejection of a chronological approach in favour of one that is entirely thematic. After a brief introduction through an examination of the techniques and motives of 18th Century Welsh historians, the students are introduced to a number of topics grouped under three themes:

- Culture: based on material from post-war Wales, the Rebecca Riots, Wales and religion.
- Society: 19th Century migration and women in Wales between the wars.
- Nationhood: the Edwardian conquest and a study of Lloyd George and Wales.

unproblematic, the OU has always been relaxed about the order in which courses are studied anyway.

Allied to the course is a large, richly resourced, multi-media, free-access internet site which carries the original book series title: *Welsh History and its Sources*. This site is part of the OU's Open Educational Resources offering, which has rapidly become one of the most important aspects of its public engagement. The idea was developed in the USA where the Hewlett Packard foundation provide MIT with funds to place most of its teaching materials online for free and open access across the globe. The OU was next on Hewlett Packard's list of beneficiaries, and it produced the massive portfolio of

anticipated, but that the impact has been most apparent outside Wales. *Small country, big history: themes in the history of Wales* attracts about 250 students a year. This is more than any other institution that teaches Welsh history – but, of course, for just one module. Only about 25 per cent of these students live in Wales. The rest are spread very widely across the world. Contrary to expectation, the anecdotal evidence is that they are not ex-patriots, but just people who have long harboured an interest in the history of Wales.

Yet more interesting is the data that emerges from the OpenLearn unit. The measurement of 'hits' on the Open Educational Resource sites is important, because it provides some indication of curriculum markets and directions. There were some murmurs early on that the Welsh history site was doing well, but it soon became clear that it was doing better than anything else that the OU had to offer, in any subject. It has consistently been the most visited OU site, with most visits and (critically) re-visits coming from outside the UK.

Everyone who professes any expertise in the measurement of internet sites recommends against too much enthusiasm, because internet audiences are famously promiscuous and fickle. This is probably good advice. However, even at this stage it prompts thoughts about the potential of the OU in Wales as an agent for the internationalisation of the country's culture. The Welsh history project also emphasises the rude health of the partnerships that the OU has struck in Wales. The present curriculum and the materials on which it is based exist only because the OU has recognised both its strengths and its limitations and built on the legacy of co-operation with the wider Welsh academic community that was established four decades ago.



NEVER MOTHER'S TURN

This image, taken from a 1930s newspaper, is used to illustrate one theme in the Open University's Welsh history course, the life of women between the wars. As the course material comments, "Early histories of women in Britain tended to concentrate on those women who were 'extraordinary' rather than 'ordinary', for example Florence Nightingale or Queen Victoria. They studied only those women who managed to gain fame and prominence in the public world, that most believed was the sole preserve of men. Now historians generally agree that it is just as important to look at all women because their experiences varied enormously according to their age, class, marital status and where they lived."

The presentation of chronologies has never played much of a part in the OU's curriculum, partly because, leaving aside the fact that chronologies – or at least the selection of what goes into them – are themselves not

free-access learning material under the generic title *OpenLearn*.

The remarkable and so far unexplained phenomenon of the OU's Welsh history material is not simply that its impact has been much greater than

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Iain McLean

Devolution's quiet bombshell

The famous – although much misunderstood - Barnett Formula has governed the distribution of public spending across the UK for 40 years since the 1970s. Yet it is only in the last decade that devolution has provoked a growing and impassioned debate about how public spending is distributed. Politicians, commentators and the public are increasingly asking: who gets what, and is public money distributed fairly.

The Barnett formula is regularly attacked for allegedly over-rewarding Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland at the expense of England. Territorial finance seems to be one of the key issues driving English dissatisfaction with the devolution settlement and the Union itself. Recent data from the British Social Attitudes Survey suggests that the proportion of people in England that think Scotland receives ‘more than its fair share’ of public spending has risen from one in five in 2000 to one in three in 2007. In reality, this is despite Barnett rather than because of it. Nonetheless, ‘Barnett’ gets the blame.

But Wales is different. Every authoritative survey since the Treasury’s half-suppressed Needs Assessment of 1979 has shown that, however relative ‘needs’ might be assessed, the current formula arrangements seem to be delivering less to Wales than it ‘needs’. Furthermore, the mathematics of the Barnett Formula are convergent. If Barnett were allowed to run undisturbed by politicians, in due course Wales would receive the same

public spending per head as England, despite being one of the poorest of the UK’s twelve standard economic regions. Thus the Welsh and Scots problems are different. Scotland has done very well out of the block grant; Wales has done badly. Scotland has a more robust tax base than Wales. The devolved parliaments in each country appointed a committee to study alternatives to Barnett. In Scotland, the Calman Commission, advised by an academic “Independent Expert Group”, of which I was a member, reported in 2009, and the UK Government has accepted almost all of its recommendations. In Wales, the Holtham Commission (the Independent Commission on Funding and Finance for Wales) is still sitting. As the problems differ, so, unsurprisingly, do the solutions.

Calman’s focus was on making the Scottish Parliament fiscally responsible. One of the fatal defects of devolution is that the centre taxes, but the periphery spends. To the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly their block grant is like manna. It just arrives on the ground: no effort is needed to pick it up. Accordingly, Calman’s central proposal is to cut the rate of UK income tax chargeable in Scotland by half, and force the Scottish Parliament into a mature discussion on tax-and spend.

All parties in Scotland claim that they are in favour of something called ‘fiscal autonomy’. Calman has offered them that, and has started to force a grown-up debate on what fiscal autonomy would actually entail. It would entail grown-up attitudes to taxing and spending that, for all the many virtues of the Scottish Parliament, have not been seen at Holyrood since it started. Calman did not discuss needs assessments at any length. It was obvious to all that Scotland would do worse under a needs assessment regime than it does now. By contrast, Holtham’s work to date has involved in-depth study of needs assessment. In December, Gerry Holtham and his colleagues threw a quiet bombshell into the debate. They first ran what

economists call a regression model to determine what seems to influence actual expenditure on health, local government and schools in each local area in England. They found that:

“It is possible to replicate to a surprisingly high degree of accuracy the funding allocations of very complicated needs-based formulae using only a few key needs indicators. Over 90 per cent of the variation in funding for these public services across English sub-regions could be captured using a single equation with just two needs proxies.”

To determine the weights of each of these deprivation factors, or ‘needs proxies’, they extended the model to Scotland and Wales, again modelling the actual money available to spend on these services. They found that, using the actual allocations in place across the UK, public spending per head on these services for England, Scotland, and Wales should be on the basis of the ratio 100:105:115. The Wales ratio is the same as that reached by other methods, which increases confidence in the method. The Scotland ratio is far below actual allocations, which is also true of other methods of attempting to judge relative needs. Any needs-based formula would lead to painful adjustments in Scotland - and probably also in Northern Ireland, although it was not in the Holtham model. On a recent visit to Wales, Shadow Chancellor George Osborne said, “I would start with a needs-based assessment across the UK and that is a good basis for having a discussion on both funding and tax”. This is, as John Osmond has commented on the IWA’s *click on wales* website, highly significant. It seems to indicate that the Conservatives are travelling in the same direction as the Holtham Commission. On the other hand, their Scottish spokesman David Mundell has recently given a cautious welcome to Calman. It will not be easy for the next UK government, of whatever party, to ride both of these horses at once.

Iain McLean is Professor of Politics at Oxford University.

Missing out on the essentials

John Osmond finds that education offers the best means for stemming the rising numbers of Welsh children living in severe poverty

A quarter of Welsh children live in poverty, that is in households with incomes below the commonly agreed threshold of 60 per cent of average earnings. However, a much more significant figure is the number of children who live in 'severe poverty', in households with below 50 per cent of average incomes. This is the point where basic necessities cannot be afforded.

The number of Welsh children living in severe poverty has been rising sharply in the last two years, from 90,000 in early 2008 to around 96,000 or 15 per cent today. By some margin these statistics are worse than in the rest of the UK - 13 per cent (1.5 million) in England; 10 per cent (43,000) in Northern Ireland; and just 9 per cent (95,000) in Scotland

Indeed, it is quite possible that the Welsh level is currently edging nearer 20 per cent, with more than 100,000 of our children living in severe poverty. This is because the latest statistics compiled by Save the Children do not measure the impact of the recession during the last year.

What exactly does 'severe poverty' mean? This is Save the Children's definition:

"... a household with an income of below 50 per cent of the median (after housing costs), and where both adults and children lack at least one basic necessity, and either adults or children or both groups lack at least two basic necessities."

Being in severe poverty for a couple with one child means living on less than £12,220 a year. This amount leaves them around £113 a week short of what they need to cover food, electricity and gas, phones, other bills, clothes, washing, transport and healthcare, not to mention furnishings, activities for children and

In particular, for families in severe poverty the hidden costs of their children attending school – items of clothing (those extra trainers), school trips, computer equipment for homework, access to broadband and so on – are an ongoing burden, and often simply unaffordable. According to Save the Children the following groups of children are most likely to be at risk of living in severe poverty:

- Children whose parent are not in work.
- Those whose mothers (or fathers in the case of single fathers) have low educational attainment.
- Children in single-parent households.

"A revolution in our education system will be the only way to end child poverty by 2020..."

other essential items. Children in severe poverty are missing out on everyday essentials such as food and clothing. They cannot afford things that most families take for granted, such as celebrating a birthday or having a short family holiday.

To put this in perspective:

- 60 per cent of children in households where both parents are not working live in severe poverty.
- Just over a quarter (28 per cent) of children whose parents have no



An end child poverty march in Cardiff during 2009.

educational qualifications live in severe poverty.

- A quarter of children in single parent families are in severe poverty.

In understanding these statistics we need to acknowledge that every person living in poverty experiences it in different ways. There is not a distinct ‘poor’ population as such, but rather varying degrees of poverty. There is a wide spectrum of people living in poverty.

Even so, identifying those in severe poverty is important because the classical government action in dealing with the problem – tax credits and manipulating the benefits system - tend not to reach the worst off. So for example, it is relatively easy to lift those people living on incomes just below 60 per cent of the average income to just above it.

In 1998 the UK Government

committed to halving child poverty by 2010 and then eliminating it by 2020. Up until about 2005 it was doing fairly well in terms of the global statistics. However, its main policy instruments – tax and benefits – only captured those families where at least one person was in work. Severe poverty typically involves people outside the formal workforce where tax credits have little purchase.

So, in the early years of the Government’s commitment, those closest to the edge of what is defined to be ‘in poverty’ were the ones most quickly helped – which, for a time, improved the statistics. In recent years, however, the proportion of people in poverty has become more residualised to people experiencing severe poverty, a group that by definition is harder to help.

Save the Children’s main response is to highlight education as the main long-

term means of tackling severe child poverty. As it says:

“A revolution in our education system will be the only sustainable way to end child poverty by 2020, but it will require those delivering education from the Department for Education and Skills, devolved bodies and local authorities to be much bolder and redistributive in focusing resources on those currently leaving our education system with few or no qualifications and skills.”

This places a heavy burden of responsibility on the Welsh Government in Cardiff Bay and our 22 local authorities. Some of the main policies we need to deploy are articulated in *Tackling child poverty and disadvantage in schools*, a ground-breaking report published by Estyn, the Welsh schools inspectorate, in January.

A key message in the report is that

helping the most disadvantaged children, gauged by the number receiving free school meals, helps *all* children in a school. The indisputable evidence for this is that the educational performance of *all* pupils declines as the proportion of those receiving free school meals increases.

The Estyn report comes up with

in particular schools. Generally early intervention was key, especially in the years before children enter primary school. For example, one primary school used funding from a Welsh Government programme to employ an extra teacher. This allowed the school to offer nursery places alongside a parents' support programme that included training

which offer solutions, for example a project being undertaken by the Glyncoch Communities First Partnership near Pontypridd. As Sarah Lloyd-Jones reports, in the following article, this involves long-term intensive work to build relationships between families and schools in the area to support children and young adults in learning.

Despite such case studies of good practice there is a huge variance between the performance of schools, and also between local authorities across Wales. The Estyn report picks out Neath Port Talbot as a local authority where disadvantaged learners in secondary schools achieve well. In 2008, it was the best-performing local authority for pupils aged 14 to 18, with 28 per cent of free-school-meal pupils achieving the core subject indicators (English or Welsh, Maths, and Science) compared to just 8 per cent in the worst local authority and an average of 17 per cent across Wales as a whole. As the report says:

"A key factor in the success of Neath Port Talbot has been the high quality of leadership from the local authority and from individual schools. The local authority and schools have worked together over a number of years to develop a culture that promotes high standards of achievement, especially for disadvantaged learners. There is a clear emphasis on openness, partnership working and a strong sense of trust between the authority and schools, and between schools. This has led to a transparency in sharing information about the performance of all schools and a willingness to share best practice."

Such best practice needs to be rolled out on a systematic basis across Wales as the best long-term hope of stemming the rising number of Welsh children living in severe poverty.

John Osmond is Director of the IWA.



Illustration produced by a child from a south Wales Communities First area, working with a Save the Children project.

mainly commonsense recommendations, but important ones nonetheless. It found that schools that do well in disadvantaged areas have highly effective leadership and consistently good teaching, and place an emphasis on particular activities or combination of activities. For instance, successful schools:

- Attach great importance to extra-curricular and out-of-school-hours provision, including cultural and sport enrichment, as well as extra educational support such as homework clubs at lunch times or after school.
- Have high expectations of standards and behaviour and a zero tolerance of excuses for poor provision or underachievement.
- Work closely with parents and the wider community to reinforce expectations.
- Give substantial attention to developing pupils' social and emotional skills, and improving their confidence and self-esteem.

The Estyn report highlights best practice

sessions for parents on learning through play. A simple weekly activity was given to parents in order to stimulate discussion at home.

Some secondary schools exploited the potential of learning coaches to help improve the performance of disadvantaged pupils by providing additional support and guidance. One school had a coach assigned to each year group and interviewed the pupils each month. In these meetings the learning coach had the brief of developing a relationship with the pupil so that they could support and guide them through difficulties with class work, behavioural issues and relationships. The coach advised on study skills, organisational strategies and approaches to homework.

There are also some very useful practical ideas on tackling child poverty in a report on *Guidance for Community First Partnerships*. Published by the Welsh Government in October 2009, this highlights a number of initiatives



Young people involved in the *Build it in Glyncoch* project which supports access to further education and employment.

Finding the tipping point

Sarah Lloyd-Jones reports on the Glyncoch initiative to tackle low education achievement

Poverty predicts poor educational attainment, but it cannot be simply seen as its cause. Some children from poor families do very well in school. The evidence suggests that a complex mix of factors impact on why so many children from poor families fail to achieve in school. These include the aspirations and expectations of their families and friends, cultural and behavioural issues, the conditions of life that poverty creates, such as overcrowded houses, poorer health and greater reliance on services and the family learning environment. For the last two years the People and Work Unit has been working in Glyncoch, a community near Pontypridd, with the Communities First Partnership and local schools to develop a better understanding of how poverty works to depress educational attainment and what practical steps are effective in combating its effects.

The last Census showed that 51 per cent of adults in Glyncoch have no qualifications and only 12 per cent had a qualification at Level 3 or above. Two years ago, when the work started, there was not one young person from Glyncoch in university. GCSE examination results showed that even the real stars of the primary school failed to fulfil their potential. We focused on three core conditions for success in education being:

- High quality opportunities.
- The capabilities and orientation of young people to make best use of those opportunities.
- Support that would build their capacity at best, or compensate for gaps at worst.

Our analysis was that children can still do well where only two of those components are in place. However, where two or three are lacking, and with children in poverty they frequently are, we would need a holistic, long-term

and multi-dimensional approach.

The second criteria for our work was that the community had to be part of the solution to tackling the gap in attainment, since issues around aspirations and expectations, behaviour and support are culturally informed. This meant working with everyone and making education and learning core to all aspects of the work of the Glyncoch Partnership.

The third criteria was that we needed to know how we were doing in stimulating change and when we had reached an hypothesised 'tipping point'. We judged this to be the moment when there were enough people in Glyncoch committed to learning and celebrating success to have a material impact on the achievements of local children. We decided on a narrow focus around changes in pupil attainment, attendance and family involvement in learning. Not all the work would focus on school, or even families with pupils in school, but our hypothesis is that there is a 'community effect' that impacts on learning and this can be measured.



In partnership with Rathbone Glyncoch trainees gain basic skills in carpentry.

Finally there had to be ‘quick wins’, obvious evidence of change and impact that would make people want to be a part of whatever was happening. Consequently, the work has been linked into a whole range of activities that help make people feel good about where they live.

The Glyncoch Partnership identified education and learning as one of its three key strategic programmes. At the outset it held a series of events to bring local people and key agencies together to identify how to bend mainstream programmes to better meet the needs of

local people, and to help them use the programmes effectively. Where possible the decision was taken not to set up new learning provision. Instead, we set out to develop ‘enabling’ programmes that would support access to, and success in, mainstream services. We were successful in gaining support from the Rank, Paul Hamlyn and Esmée Fairbairn charitable foundations to get some new work going. As a result the Glyncoch Partnership was able to refocus its resources through Communities First to take the programme forward.

An integrated programme of activities was set up to work across the community with specific elements for adults, young people, and children at school. In each case there are dedicated programmes: *Chance to Learn* for adults, *Build it Glyncoch* for young people, and *School Focused Communities* for children.

Adults:

Chance to Learn works to identify, recruit and support adults to attend adult, community, further and higher education courses or to go into employment. The case worker, herself an experienced adult and further education tutor who has a counselling degree, gets to know people, visiting them at home and providing information, advice and encouragement to bring them into local learning provision. She also works, in partnership with staff in the Glyncoch Partnership, to identify learning providers, monitor the quality of provision and map out progression routes. She provides support as long as it is needed. So, for example, after helping two young women apply to go to university and complete application and finance forms, going with them to open days and interviews, she has continued to provide encouragement and support as they work on their degrees.

Young people:

The *Build It Glyncoch* project provides direct learning opportunities and supports young adults to access further education and employment. The programme focuses on built environment trades and recruits young men (so far) from Glyncoch into a team that is working to improve the local environment. In partnership with Rathbone the young trainees are helped to gain basic skills in carpentry and woodworking, painting and decorating, ground work and plastering. They have refurbished a flat owned by RCT

Homes and cleared an area of woodland in the centre of Glyncoch and helped make benches and sculptures to create a forest path. Two of the first group of trainees are now in college following trades and will be supported to find apprenticeships. The role of the team leader continues to be important as they go through college, as he writes below:

I had a visit from T saying he had been kicked out of college for poor attendance and that he was too far behind to catch up. He said 'I'm gutted, I didn't realise what I had until it was gone!' I made contact with the Head of Construction and explained the situation; he went and spoke to T's tutors and agreed that T could continue in college providing his attendance improves and he catches up with the rest of the programme. I then asked him if I could have some sort of relationship with the college where they can inform me of any issues they might

but I think what he doesn't realise is that these boys didn't have the support from home he or I had. And at some point we've all needed that little push when things get tough.

School pupils:

The *School Focused Communities* project works to build pupils' capacity to succeed in school and their families' capacity to help them do so. One strand of the work is following a cohort of Year 6 (last year primary) and Year 7 (first year secondary) pupils from Glyncoch right through to GCSE results day. The idea is to work with them and their families both in school and back in the community. A second strand works with young people from Glyncoch in other year groups who have been identified by the school as needing additional help. The first step is to identify services that can be brought in to help, such as a Family Learning programme. Where necessary

impact on some of the poorest attendees. This project has now been developed through the Communities First Demonstration Fund to involve four other Communities First areas and the People and Work Unit is monitoring its effect.

These three areas of work are underpinned by a strong Communities First Partnership that provides high quality, strategic programmes around play and youth work, environmental development and community development. Although it is early days to assess the impact of the work on Glyncoch some striking improvements have already been made:

- Chronically low attendance amongst year seven pupils has improved dramatically.
- For the first time, young people and families are accessing homework support.
- More young people are accessing extra curricular activities and other services that the local school has to offer.
- Young people who have had a reputation for challenging behaviour have developed personal goals and are making significant progress.
- Five school leavers disengaged from education and employment are one year into a five year intensive programme to learn a trade.
- Young people from Glyncoch are accessing university for the first time in years.
- Adult learning has doubled within one year.

So far *Chance to Learn* has been running for 18 months, *Build it in Glyncoch* for two years, and the *School Focussed Communities* project for nearly a year. Despite these short periods the results so far indicate a promising response to the initiatives.

Sarah Lloyd-Jones is Director of the People and Work Unit, based in Abergavenny.



be having and then I can possibly resolve them before they get out of hand. He is very much in favour of the students being responsible for themselves. I agree to a certain level

new activities have been developed, such as a homework club and one to one support for A-Level students in the community. The work started in April 2009 and already has had a dramatic



Effective parenting

Judy Hutchings says Wales should build on its record of early intervention to tackle children at risk

Youth crime and extreme antisocial behaviour in children and young people continues to hit the headlines. The recent Doncaster case of two boys, aged 10 and 11, who battered and sexually abused two other children, leaving one for dead, is one of the more extreme examples. The story prompted renewed press coverage of Jamie Bulger's death a decade ago at the hands of two boys, who were at the time only 10 years of age. The coverage intensified in March when it was revealed that one of the killers, Jon Venables, had been returned to prison following a breach of the terms of his release on a life licence. More outpouring of public hatred were accompanied by repeated showing of the video footage of the moments when Jamie was led away.

It is hard to imagine the kind of life experiences that these youngsters have had that leave them so lacking in empathy and able to behave in such cruel and sadistic ways. Nonetheless, there is clear evidence of the circumstances that can produce such behaviour and many other lesser degrees of damage that result in antisocial youth behaviour. Lowering

the UK age of criminal responsibility, currently 10 and among the lowest in Europe, is not the answer to such problems. These youngsters are not likely to be deterred by the threat of punishment since in all probability they have already experienced abuse, violence and harsh and inconsistent parenting. The recent suicide of Fiona Pilkington and death of her daughter Francessca at her mother's hands as a final escape from teenage campaign of violence, hassling and bullying is another example of the problems we face as a society. We have to find solutions that stop these things from happening in the first place.

One by-product is a rise in anxiety levels among social workers about the many complex cases that they are monitoring, resulting in an upsurge in requests to take children into the care system. Whilst this is an understandable response, outcomes for children within the care system themselves carry risks. Care leavers are 50 times more likely to go to prison, 60 times more likely to be homeless, and 88 times more likely to be involved in drug use than children and young people who have not been 'looked after' by local authorities.

We have our share of such problems in Wales. The north Wales child abuse inquiry relating to children in care between 1974 and 1990 found evidence of systematic abuse of young people by their adult carers. The resulting Waterhouse report, published in 2000, proposed wide-ranging reforms of the care system. In south Wales, police report that children as

young as 10 are among a wave of youngsters committing violent offences with more than 1,300 children aged 16 or below arrested for violent crime during the last year.

Finding ways to promote effective parenting for our children is the key to most of these problems. The death of baby Peter is an example of the extreme outcomes from poor and abusive parenting. In the case of the Doncaster youngsters we can only hope that their life in detention exposes them to experiences that give them an opportunity to establish the trusting relationships that are the foundation of empathy. The remarkable story of Jimmy Boyle, the Glasgow gangland killer, who during his prison years took part in a rehabilitative educational project in Baerlinnie prison and now lives and works as an artist and author, is an example of a success story. Erwin James, double murderer who first started writing a column whilst still in prison and is now a Guardian journalist, is another. It serves to remind us that, with the right support, it is possible for even the most damaged people to learn new ways of viewing the world and themselves and obtain some happiness that they surely deserve.

Problematic environmental influences on children can start in utero where foetuses are exposed to drugs, legal or illicit, and the effects of circulating hormones that are a response to maternal stress and anxiety. They can then continue through early childhood where damage is done either by neglecting the child's emotional, social or physical needs, whether by

mothers who are extremely depressed and therefore unresponsive to their child's needs, or by deliberate emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

The first three years of life are particularly important. The growth of brain imaging techniques has demonstrated that babies are born with very immature brains, in a sense premature, and their brains undergo remarkable changes in the first three years of life. This includes the development of areas of the cortex that are responsive to others, the roots of empathy. Without appropriate opportunities to develop close and loving relationships, with people who are responsive to their needs, damage is done in these early years that, though not beyond repair, becomes ever harder and more costly to resolve. The likelihood of children experiencing poor parenting is greatly increased if they live in poverty, with single, young or unsupported parents who are struggling with substance dependency, mental health problems and/or in coercive and possibly violent relationships themselves.

The answer has to be effective early intervention for which there is now an enormous amount of high quality evidence. One of the best summaries of this evidence was recently published by two MPs, Graham Allen and Iain Duncan Smith, whose book *Early Intervention: Good parents, great kids, better citizens* is available to download free from www.thesmithinstitute.org or www.centreforsocialjustice.org. The case that they set out for early intervention, and the longer term costs of failing to do so, is irrefutable.

We know how to identify children at risk of both harm and of developing antisocial behaviour problems (in most cases these are the same children), but identification requires skilled professionals to both monitor and intervene and this is expensive. We also know which programmes have evidence that they work in improving parenting and reducing risk, but again there are significant costs and the savings are not immediate. My own

early work demonstrated that, after treating young severely conduct-disordered children aged 10 or younger, it took four years for savings to the public purse to become apparent.

Early intervention has to include all of the environments in which children find themselves, whether it be in the home, child-care or school. It is encouraging that services are developing across Wales to address all of these settings. In *Agenda* two years ago I wrote about how the Welsh Government was leading the way in providing evidence-based support to parents living in high risk disadvantaged communities across Wales through its *Parenting Action Plan for Wales*, published in 2005 and

up data has shown that all of these improvements have been maintained.

Welsh Government funding to train staff to deliver the programmes started in 2006. By March 2008 all 22 local authorities in Wales had trained staff to deliver the *Incredible Years* parent programmes. By Summer 2008 they had all delivered the programme, with over 150 groups delivered across Wales during 2007-08. This represented an excellent return on investment and encouraged the Government to continue to fund the training activity. In the meantime the Sure Start project in Wales was incorporated into Cymorth funding, spanning a wider age range. A new initiative, *Flying Start*, was established to target families in the most



Children from the Vale of Glamorgan participating in the *Incredible Years* baby and toddler programme.

implemented since 2006.

This included implementation of our *Incredible Years* parenting scheme, developed at Bangor University to engage with parents of high-risk three and four year olds in north and mid Wales. Our study reported improved parent-child relationships, increased positive and reduced negative parenting, increased child compliance, reduced child aggression and improved parental mental health, and specifically a reduction in maternal depression. Even more impressively, our four-year follow-

disadvantaged communities in Wales.

Flying Start, which supports parents with children aged 0-3, has four components: intensive health visiting, parent and child language and play sessions, nursery provision and parenting support. The *Incredible Years* baby and toddler programmes fit well with this project and since 2008 Government funding has enabled staff to be trained to deliver them. An additional grant enabled us to research the toddler programme across Wales with parents of one and two-year-olds.

The results demonstrated reduced negative parenting and improved parental well-being relative to control families that did not attend the programme. New funding was found in 2009 to research the baby and school readiness parent programmes and we are also researching the benefits of delivering the toddler programme to crèche and nursery staff. The baby and toddler programmes have been enthusiastically taken up across Wales, ensuring that services are offered to parents even earlier in their child's life. This is really starting to address the delivery of support to parents from the start.

There have been important changes in early years education across Wales. The development of the 'Foundation Phase' curriculum for children in their early school years has its focus on learning through play and exploration with the aim of creating self-motivated learners. As with the abolition of SATS in our primary schools, to free teachers from a rigid academic curriculum, this again put Wales at the forefront in promoting the social and emotional development of children that is an essential foundation for academic success. The Foundation Phase philosophy is supported by the *Incredible Years* Teacher Classroom Management programme and linked to the Dinosaur School social, emotional and problem solving curriculum.

The Welsh evidence for the child and teacher programmes comes primarily from Gwynedd which has invested heavily in training staff from all of its 102 primary schools in the *Incredible Years* Teacher Classroom Management principles and to deliver the Classroom Dinosaur curriculum. Research in Gwynedd has demonstrated both their acceptability to teachers and objective benefits, including increased teacher use of positive discipline strategies, improved teacher-pupil relationships and greater engagement by pupils.

The benefits of the Gwynedd approach have been repeatedly identified in Estyn reports, both in individual reports and for the countywide education service as a whole. Collaboration with Gwynedd continues with a £400,000 Big lottery funded research project to establish the added benefits of additional social and emotional coaching for high-risk children using the therapeutic Dinosaur School programme.

The potential contribution of the



Nazli Savasan, a child worker from Turkey with Dina the Dinosaur, participating in the Dinosaur School social, emotional and problem solving programme

child and teacher programmes to the Foundation Phase goals has been recognised by the Welsh Government and funding has included training for school staff in these programmes from 2009. In a further innovative step the Government incorporated training for school-based staff to deliver the school readiness programme, a four-session initiative targeting parents as their children start school in order to promote home-school partnerships. Again Gwynedd have taken the lead here and have a growing number of schools delivering *Incredible Years* parent programmes. Government funding for 2010-11 continues to expand the skills of staff across Wales in delivering the *Incredible Years* parent, child and teacher programmes.


Will developments in Wales be sufficient to protect against the sort of problems discussed at the beginning of this article? The Welsh Government has made great progress in setting up effective

services but to date these have targeted 'high risk' communities. Whilst there is greater risk to children living in these areas there are many high-risk children living elsewhere that need identification and support. In terms of education the Government has put in place some innovative programmes as part of the Foundation Phase and this is a 'universal' provision. However, children's contact with school comes too late to prevent the serious early abuse and neglect.

There will be some hard choices to make in Westminster and Cardiff. The financial difficulties faced by the Westminster Government will require cuts in public spending, whichever party is in power after the election, and this will impact on funding for Wales. At the present time the UK is 24th out of 29 countries in the EU league table for child wellbeing, with unemployed families, poor environments and low numbers of young people in education among the factors that contribute.

We must continue to make the case that any reduction in funding for early intervention is morally and, in the long term, financially unacceptable. Despite difficult times ahead more, not less funding is required to support children and families and to reduce the longer term costs of abuse and anti-social behaviour. The lifetime costs of an anti-social child are well documented and can include special education, entry into the care system, criminality, prison, mental and physical health problems and a lifetime on state benefits adding up to £1million or more over a lifetime of one individual. We already have Welsh children costing their local authorities £5,000 per week in high security residential settings. There is some excellent work being done in Wales and it is rewarding that the *Incredible Years* programmes are contributing, but there is much more to do.

Judy Hutchings is a Professor in the School of Psychology at Bangor University.



Anita Myfanwy makes the case for moving child poverty and social exclusion in rural Wales higher up the policy agenda

Out of sight out of mind

Rural playing field at Ysgol Botwnnog, near the centre of the Llŷn - one of the most isolated in Wales.

Rural child poverty is difficult to see and so it tends to get overlooked. One of the biggest unseen problems for many children is the distance they have to travel from their homes to school or the nearest town when public transport is either infrequent or non-existent, especially in the evenings.

Ysgol Botwnnog, near the centre of the Llŷn Peninsula, must be one of the most isolated secondary schools in the whole of Wales. It is 12 miles from Pwllheli and Aberdaron. Its 500 pupils aged 11 to 16 come from a catchment area within a 15-mile radius of the school. Accessing public transport and the costs involved are undoubtedly a major reason why children, young people and their families face social exclusion and isolation.

Certainly, every member of Ysgol Botwnnog's School Council stated that they have to rely on parents to take them by car to after school clubs, Young Farmers Clubs, Yr Urdd and school matches. A cross-section of their views is contained in the accompanying panel.

One way of enabling these children to travel more easily would be to extend the hours on their school bus passes. Of course, this would not help when, as is often the case, there are simply no bus services in the evenings.

Although transport is a frequently cited problem by young people in rural Wales it is by no means the only 'unseen' issue that gets overlooked. The number and quality of public services have declined generally in rural areas in recent years. Rural schools face being closed down due to the decrease in the birth rate, many rural post offices have been closed, and banking facilities have

also diminished. As the larger supermarkets have been built on the periphery of towns the rural shop has met with an additional threat to its livelihood. Medical services, especially dentistry, Job Centres and libraries have also become more centralised.

All this has left many rural communities with little or no public services. Low-income households have

"There needs to be a way of getting the young people of Pen Llŷn together. The answer? Regular buses, which allow children to go to different places so that they can enjoy each other's company. There isn't any bus passing my house to take me anywhere, not to Pwllheli the nearest town, nor to the library, nor to the cinema."

"We are being excluded from amenities because we live in a rural area. This is unfair and it is not acceptable. I want to be able to depend on local buses instead of on my mother and father. They cannot take four children to different places at the same time."

"It is difficult to socialise and go to local clubs because there is no transport like public buses to take us from one place to another. Indeed, if we want to change this situation people need to listen to the voice of young people in Pen Llŷn. As a person from a rural area I feel a bit if I'm suffering because I am far from everywhere and that there are no buses to take me from place to another."

"I can never see my friends during the summer and I lose touch with them. I cannot pop over to see them because they live too far away. But it would be alright if there were buses."

Child Poverty and Social Exclusion in Rural Wales, End Child Poverty Network Cymru, September 2009.



A car is essential for out of hours activities at Ysgol Botwnnog.

become particularly more vulnerable to social exclusion in their rural communities. And not owning a car in rural Wales makes a family highly vulnerable to social exclusion.

Unemployment is highest in the western rural parts of Wales which also have the lowest income levels in the country. The Welsh Rural Observatory found that of the 4,000 household surveyed in 2004, a quarter of them lived on less than £10,000 a year. Only 52 per cent of those living in low-income households were in full-time employment.

In these same areas there is a prevalence of part-time, seasonal and self-employment, much of it linked to tourism. So three-quarters of low income households were employed in hotels and catering.

There is also a lack of affordable housing in rural Wales which, despite

the recession and general fall in house prices, has still been compounded by phenomenal price rises in many parts of west Wales, specially near the coast. Coupled with the low-income economy, this means that the ratio of house prices to income is higher in Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion and Gwynedd than the rest of Wales.

Many examples of community self-help are highlighted in the *Child Poverty and Social Exclusion in Rural Wales* report. One is a Local Committee that has been organised in Nebo and Nasareth, villages in the Nantlle Valley in Gwynedd, to keep the community alive. It organises a Clwb Cant, a summer play scheme, open evenings, coffee mornings, plant swaps, potato growing competitions, and seasonal activities such as walks in the locality. This enables children and

young people to participate and to develop a sense of connectedness and belonging with their communities. Being a member of a local youth club is important for confidence building and developing social skills.

However, child poverty and social exclusion needs to be addressed in a more systematic way by government. One reason that this has not happened adequately in the past is simply because they are more difficult to measure in rural areas. The *Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation* measures deprivation in clusters which inevitably creates a bias towards urban communities. Funding is mainly allocated to areas which are identified as

Being a member of a local youth club is important for confidence building and developing social skills.

having multiple deprivation, which tend to be Communities First areas in urban Wales. Hence deprivation in isolated rural areas tends not to receive the priority it deserves.

Recently, however, more recognition for rural deprivation and social exclusion has been acknowledged. Greater credence was provided by publication of *Poverty and Deprivation in Rural Wales* by the National Assembly's Rural Sub-Committee in 2008, and the *Families not Areas Suffer Rural Disadvantage* report by Children in Wales in the same year.

There is hope, therefore, that the rural dimension of child poverty will rise higher up the agenda when the Welsh Government publishes its revised National Child Poverty Strategy in May.

Anita Myfanwy works with Children in Wales in north Wales and is Development Officer with End Child Poverty Network Cymru.

Breaking the cycle of deprivation

Huw Lewis advocates integrated support mechanisms for families in the fight against child poverty



Deputy Minister for Children Huw Lewis speaking at the launch of the Pupil Voice Wales Website.

Having campaigned on child poverty issues for more than a decade I remain convinced that tackling child poverty is one of, if not *the* biggest challenge, facing the Welsh Government over the next few years. When I was appointed to the cabinet in December the First Minister Carwyn Jones made it clear that the major focus of my role as Deputy Minister for Children would be to co-ordinate Government action to tackle child poverty.

The Assembly Government has made an ambitious commitment to support the UK Government's drive to eradicate child poverty by 2020. Although we have made good progress in meeting our child poverty goals since devolution, the most recent figures since the start of the recession show a slight increase in the number of children living in poverty. We must raise our game if we are to break the cycle of deprivation and change the lives of disadvantaged children. It is crucial that we use all the policy and

legislative tools at our disposal in Wales to make further progress.

The child poverty agenda is too quickly dismissed as a Westminster issue by some. Although tax and benefits are key levers in reducing poverty, by using the multi-billion pound Welsh Government budget we can transform the life chances of thousands of children in disadvantaged communities. We must continue to seize this opportunity at all times and do even more.

In Wales today, there are around 200,000 children living in poverty. These children and young people growing up in poverty are vulnerable in a number of different ways. We know they are at more risk of poor health, poor education attainment, have lower skills and aspirations – and are more likely to be low paid, unemployed and welfare dependent in adulthood. Our new child poverty strategy sets out how we will address the needs of low income families with children and ensure that our cross-government range of policies,

resources and services will be used to improve outcomes and reduce the inequalities that currently exist.

We have made early use of new law-making powers to add weight to our action to tackle child poverty. The Children and Families (Wales) Measure, which became law in February 2010, demonstrates our commitment to providing support to those families and children in greatest need. It specifically places a duty on Welsh Ministers to publish a new statutory Child Poverty Strategy for Wales in 2010 and to keep this under review. We recognise the key role played by other partners in the shared fight against child poverty. Therefore the legislation also places a duty on specific Welsh public bodies to identify, and take action, to assist in the goal of eradicating child poverty by 2020.

The potential range of issues facing families in poverty can vary enormously. Getting the right partnership working is therefore a complex, but fundamental challenge. Integrating support from agencies as diverse as the NHS, schools, youth justice, Jobcentre Plus and the third sector as well as local authorities is not easy.

The programme of support which each family will need to help them escape poverty needs to be tailored to their individual circumstances on a case by case basis. Our vision is to take a holistic family approach, to put in place coherent support for families that will help take them on a journey out of poverty.

We therefore need to strengthen local partnership working to offer the right support for individual families across a range of issues from unemployment, education, health and housing to debt, parenting and benefits. At the same time it needs to remain simple to access from the perspective of the family. Our family-focused solution needs to be able to reach out to families and win their trust. In short, we need a solution that locally offers families help

to improve their chances of escaping poverty through offering help to find work as well as providing the right information on benefit issues. It needs to be tailored to help individual family circumstances, integrated in terms of ensuring that help from different organisations is effectively coordinated, as well as pro-active in looking for those families which can benefit from early preventative help.

Good practice in Wales already exists in the work being carried out by several Children and Young People's Partnerships. Some 'Team around the Child' approaches show great promise in bringing professionals and people from a range of agencies together to deal with families on a holistic basis.

Further afield there are good examples elsewhere in the UK and other countries which we are using to develop our approach. One example is the Harlem Children's Zone in New York which offers all-encompassing education, social-service and community-building programmes to children and families in the area. The programme has helped end the cycle of poverty through innovative schemes which teach parenting skills, help parents and children prepare for school as well offering advice about benefits, financial advice and debt relief counselling. It is this type of integrated model of support for families that we want to replicate on a Wales-wide basis. I have recently committed £1.5 million to fund a pilot which adopts this type of community approach to family support.

Tackling poverty reaches across every area of Government policy in Wales. The evidence shows that employment (particularly-full time employment) is highly protective against poverty. However, we know that employment does not always provide the route out of relative poverty. It is also important that we take action to tackle 'in work' poverty through policy action on workforce development, job flexibility and so on.

We are fully committed to promoting parental employment in a way that is consistent with family life. Our new child poverty strategy aims to provide parents of children with the skills necessary for paid employment as well as help young people take advantage of opportunities into employment. In order to achieve this we will continue to target support to Communities First areas where people face several barriers to accessing work and training. We also need to continue supporting the parenting of children and improving the home environment in which some children live as we know this can have a major impact on the developmental, education and health outcomes of children and young people. Programmes we already have in place such as Flying Start and Genesis Wales are helping to remove barriers to employment by making free childcare available so parents who can work or learn new skills.

Child poverty is not an issue that will disappear overnight. Tackling child poverty takes a huge amount of commitment across government and our partner organisations in the rest of the public, voluntary and private sectors. Our new Child Poverty Strategy is about taking a fresh look at how we can prevent progress from stalling further by having the right programmes and support mechanisms in place to help low income families with children out of the poverty trap. Through the new strategy we will be setting a new policy direction on child poverty at the Wales level so that there is absolute clarity on what the Welsh Government's contribution to this crucial agenda will be over the next few years. The political will and drive is there and essentially we will do whatever it takes.

Huw Lewis is Deputy Minister for Children in the Welsh Government.

Tackling severe child poverty

Trudy Aspinwall sets out some priorities for the Welsh Government

The first priority for the Welsh Government's Child Poverty Strategy, due to be launched in May, should be to engage with the severe poverty of the at least 96,000 Welsh children living in households with below 50 per cent of average incomes.

The Strategy should aim to bring a holistic approach to the implementation of policy. It needs to co-ordinate the interventions that can be made by the education, health and social justice departments within the Welsh Government. Without the ability to work across departmental boundaries, both locally and nationally, we will not achieve our goals. Key priorities should be:

- **Income maximisation:** The Welsh Government should encourage increased take-up of benefits, including Working Tax credits for those living in severe poverty. This should be done by providing more advice. One welfare rights worker costing approximately £25,000 can expect to generate £250,000 of income for families and individuals eligible for benefits.
- **Employment:** Improving the availability, affordability and flexibility of child care provision, so that parents can find work, are central to any action on poverty. Employment programmes should be more flexible and 'family

friendly' to meet the differing needs of parents and those hardest to reach.

- **Education:** Narrowing the attainment gap between the poorest children and the better off is key to breaking the cycle of poverty in the medium to long term. Action is needed to remove the hidden costs of education for low income families. There should be more emphasis on the transition of poorer children from early years through primary and into secondary school. Urgent action is needed to reduce disengagement from schools for parents as well as pupils, to raise aspirations and to prepare and support young people for working life.

- **Engaging harder to reach families with multiple disadvantage:** This is a major challenge for Wales to be able to deliver on child poverty within current resources. The strategy should set out ways that all services and providers can be involved, not just those traditionally in the children's sector. Those working in economic development, transport, and housing benefit administration will need to collaborate to tackle child poverty. The Welsh Government's aspirations for a partnership approach between services needs to be made to work. For example, analysis of local authority Children and Young Peoples plans shows that progress is patchy across Wales. Many areas have a long way to go in terms of devising and implementing effective plans to reduce child poverty.

Public bodies and planning partnerships should be required to 'child poverty proof' all of their policies and services.

Poor
no home
no food or drink
no where to sleep
no friends or family
no other clothes
not healthy



Illustration produced by a child from a south Wales Communities First area, working with a Save the Children project.

For example, education inspection regimes should develop criteria relating to the achievement and attainment levels of children living in severe poverty.

Save the Children Wales has commissioned a study examining how partnership working can improve the educational attainment of the poorest children in Wales. Whilst this has found some examples of good practice few were being implemented strategically across the board. Problems often stemmed from different views and perspectives taken by different agencies. So, for example, schools may be implementing literacy and numeracy strategies, voluntary sector organisations may be providing parent support, and Communities First may be providing extra curricular activities. However, such different interventions are rarely integrated into a coherent child poverty plan.

A robust child poverty strategy also requires clear milestones and targets to monitor what is being delivered, both by the Welsh Government and by local authorities. The strategy should identify short-term targets that can be delivered quickly, and also medium and long-term targets. These need to be ambitious but achievable. In implementing a target-driven approach the Welsh Government needs more robust evidence. The strategy should therefore address the further development of the Child Well Being Monitor in Wales and increase the size of the Wales sample of the UK-wide

Family Resources survey.

Finally, the child poverty strategy should focus on listening to children and enhance the participation of children from the poorest families and communities who are often denied this opportunity. The illustrations accompanying this article and on page 20, demonstrate the real contribution that young people's views and experiences can make. They were produced by young people working with Save the Children to develop their understanding of children's rights and poverty issues and to campaign for changes they would like to see in their Communities First areas in south Wales.

Article 4 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified over 20 years ago by the UK Government, obliges governments to fulfil children's rights to the "maximum effect of their available resources". If child poverty is to be a top priority for the Welsh Government it has to deploy more of its own resources to the task of eradicating child poverty by 2020.

This year marks the half-way point since the 2020 target date was set. The Welsh Government's forthcoming Child Poverty Strategy needs to contain bold and radical commitments if the lives of children in the most severe poverty are to be transformed.

Trudy Aspinwall is Child Rights Policy Officer with Save the Children Wales.

Future of the Red-Green Alliance

Fault lines in Welsh politics

Jonathan Edwards

For the best part of the last century Labour political domination over the nation at all elected levels has meant that opposing parties such as Plaid have had to operate within a hegemonic political environment. Unable to directly implement our political programme we have had to work with those elements of the Labour party who share our vision of delivering social justice in Wales via greater political self determination.

Now, however, we are entering a new political environment where Labour's traditional domination over Welsh politics is at an end and a new plurality is developing. This requires a significant strategic adjustment for all political parties in Wales, but particularly Plaid and Labour.

The coalition that was built to secure the referendum victory in 1997 remains the main achievement of the Red-Green strategy so far, and a tribute to the close working relationship of then Plaid leader Dafydd Wigley and the then Welsh Secretary of State, Ron Davies.

The current *One Wales* agreement is Red-Green in its purest form, with the Labour party effectively operating a delivery device promoting Plaid's social justice, cultural and constitutional objectives. At the same time we should be totally clear that Part 4 of the 2006 Government of Wales Act is Labour's policy. It's just that we wanted to implement their policy faster than them. I'm delighted that we have won that battle. In return, the Labour party has been allowed to lead the Welsh Government.

However, it would be misleading to portray *One Wales* purely as a nationalist programme of Government. The values and policy aims are shared by many progressives in the Welsh Labour Party. In many ways the Red-Green alliance is a natural partnership. The Welsh wing of the Labour party has far more in common with Plaid than it does with its own unionist wing.

Political strategies always have a secondary motive. Ultimately, from a Plaid perspective, Red-Green aims to undermine Labour political hegemony over Wales. To this extent, the strategy has been far more successful than anticipated. Labour is in electoral free fall in Wales, losing



Heading up the Red-Green Alliance - Deputy First Minister Ieuan Wyn Jones and First Minister Carwyn Jones.

control of all but two local authorities in the 2008 elections, and probably more significantly not winning a Welsh national election for the first time in nearly a century in the 2009 European elections. Labour are likely to lose a significant number of their Welsh MPs at the Westminster General Election in May to both Plaid and the Tories, and possibly to the Liberal Democrats in Swansea and Newport. Without Rhodri Morgan at the helm Labour is likely to hemorrhage further support to Plaid and the Tories in the 2011 National Assembly elections.

For Labour, Red-Green enables them to pursue a pan-Wales political strategy by challenging Plaid in the northern and western parts of the country. Following a unionist strategy would be a road to political ruin for Labour as they would effectively become a Greater Gwent party, whilst facing a growing Plaid challenge in that much of the rest of the country. Carwyn Jones knows he has no hope of securing the holy grail of an overall majority in 2011 unless he wins back seats like Llanelli, Carmarthen West, Arfon, Aberconwy, Clwyd West and Ynys Mon. Some of these seats are obviously Tory held constituencies and in fact will be Plaid

(Article continues on page 34)



Those of us who lived through the 1980s read so many obituaries of the Labour Party that it was often a surprise to wake up in the morning and find that we were not only still alive, but winning elections at every level here in Wales. Then we were told that demographic and economic change ‘proved’ that Labour could never win again. Today, the soothsayers are at it again, only now they assure us that it is Labour’s very electoral success which dooms the Party to opposition. We’ve simply won too many elections. ‘Time for a change’, one of the most potent slogans in any politics, means that we can’t win again.

The lesson, and the health warning, is this: beware any one who tells you that anything is ‘bound’ to happen. Determinism may work well enough for Marxists but voters appear to be less impressed by such a doctrine. Instead, the realities of politics are more banal. There is an electoral lesson for Labour from the devolution decade, but rather than any high-flown talk of ‘realignment’ or Darwinian decline, it is simply this: that political success depends on:

Future of the Red-Green Alliance

Facing the future with confidence

Mark Drakeford

- Having a message which Welsh citizens understand as authentically Labour.
- Communicating this message in a language which voters recognise as their own.
- Never, ever, taking the support which the Party has enjoyed for so long for granted.

The ratio of perspiration to inspiration is the same for politics as it was for the inventor Thomas Edison, and in achieving electoral, as well as electrical illumination there is no substitute for hard work.

Looking forward, there seems little reason to depart from what recent opinion polling in Wales suggests – that the Assembly’s particular electoral system is very likely, in the 2011 election, to leave Labour as the largest party, by some distance, with an outside, but by no means impossible, chance of an overall majority. Having experienced the 2003–07 Assembly, my own conclusion is unambiguously that 30 seats does not represent a working majority for a full Assembly term. There may be political exigencies which make it impossible for a Labour leader to do anything other than attempt to form a single party administration in such circumstances, but its knife-edge existence does not make for stable government, or one which can easily make long-term decisions. In a period when financial circumstances are going to face all Ministers with difficult choices, the need for durability and an eye to the future will be all the more necessary.

Against such a background, some thinking about a coalition after May 2011 is a necessary precaution. It seems clear to me that Labour’s interests are best served by having more than one option open, should this be the verdict of the voters. The coalition between Labour and Plaid Cymru has, I believe, been a success. It has benefited from a clear and open policy agreement and a set of political arrangements, agreed in advance. Business has been conducted, too, by Ministers who possess a nuanced understanding of what it takes to pursue a common programme, while retaining distinct party identities.

Coalition government requires a quiet maturity far more

(Article continues on page 35)

Fault Lines in Welsh Politics

versus Tory marginals in 2011. Nonetheless, the easiest route to victory for Labour would be to supplant Plaid support.

The challenge for Plaid is to withdraw from basing its political approach on supporting Welsh Labour versus Unionist Labour. Our strategy must be to polarise the political debate in Wales between ourselves and the Conservative party, particularly as the Tories are likely to form the next UK Government. This would then create a dynamic of a right wing London Government against an increasingly Plaid dominated Government of Wales.

This reality is underlined by Labour's choice as their leader of Carwyn Jones who has to hold together an increasingly divided and directionless party. His position would have been stronger if he had followed Edwina Hart's line in pressing for a more autonomous Welsh Labour Party in the leadership election last Autumn. However, his need to keep Welsh Labour MPs on board during his campaign prevented him from taking this position. My colleagues in Government inform me that they can do business with the new First Minister. However, his dithering on the Referendum Trigger forced him into a humiliating climb down that shows where the real balance of power lies within the Welsh Government.

Labour will obviously also try and polarise the political debate between them and the Tories, which is Peter Hain's strategy. However, after 13 years of following a Thatcherite political approach their narrative will lack any meaningful credibility. Consequently, the alternative to a Tory London Government after the General Election will not be a New Labour London Government, but the development of Welsh political sovereignty and democracy.

For Plaid the social justice and constitutional advancement agendas have always been interdependent and interlinked. This message is likely to have significant appeal to Labour voters who are Welsh identifiers. This will be reinforced if we have a right wing Tory Government in London ruthlessly cutting public expenditure and undermining the Welsh economy.

For Plaid to make progress in 2011 we have to make significant advances in Valley seats. The new Development Unit under the control of the Campaigns Directorate is already laying the foundations for an aggressive election strategy in 2011. With the Labour party imploding after a defeat in the Westminster election, we have a once in a generation opportunity to replace Labour as the dominant political force in Welsh politics following the May 2011 Assembly elections.

If we can defeat Labour in the Amman and Gwendraeth Valleys, as we have done in Carmarthen East and Dinefwr for the last decade, there is no reason why we can't penetrate right through the Welsh coalfield. Neath, Rhondda, Cynon, Islwyn and Caerffili are winnable and with the Tories also



Jonathan Edwards – "To make progress in 2011 Plaid has to advance in Valley seats."

gaining additional constituency seats in those regions it should be possible to maintain a regional presence with Labour losing the electoral bias it has enjoyed in those parts of Wales under current electoral arrangements. At the very least, Plaid needs to win three Assembly Members from each of the South Wales West, South Wales Central and South Wales West regions in 2011.

For Labour the new political environment poses significant

challenges. As ever the major battles in Welsh politics will be fought within their party. Traditionally the Labour leadership has tried to placate both its Welsh and Unionist wings. The 2006 Government of Wales Act is an obvious example. On the one hand it turned the National Assembly into a legislative body, while at the same time ensured that the sovereignty of the people of Wales was undermined by allowing a Westminster veto over democratically mandated legislative proposals. Similarly, on Part 4 of the Act, their position was that they supported their own policy but only after 2011. In this respect securing the Trigger Vote has been a significant political achievement for Plaid that only a few commentators have acknowledged.

For Labour to survive it must decide whether it is a Welsh progressive party or a Unionist party. At the moment it is a coalition of inherently incoherent political traditions. Failure to make a defining choice will mean that Labour will increasingly become marginalised within an increasingly polarised Plaid versus Tory political environment. Labour strategists are banking on a period in opposition at UK level to renew the party at Welsh level in electoral terms. I don't think that sort of shallow approach is going to be enough. They have to renew politically and once and for all make a defining choice about how Labour views Wales and what sort of nation it wants to build.

Labour's political hegemony over Wales which has lasted for nearly a century is at an end. To avoid oblivion Labour has to make a defining choice between the Welsh and Unionist wing. Failure to do so will make Plaid's strategic aims easier to accomplish as Welsh politics becomes a fight between the forces of progressive nationalism led by the national movement and the regressive conservatism of a Tory London Government.

Jonathan Edwards is Plaid Cymru's Parliamentary candidate in Carmarthen East and Dinefwr.

Labour Can Face the Future with Confidence

than it does the Tuppenny Tarzan posturing of those who believe that politics is best conducted as a combination of breast-beating and jungle calling. Fortunately the Assembly, with its high proportion of women politicians, has a predisposition to the former way of doing business, even as other elected forums seem to attract those who prefer the latter.

However, even though the current coalition has been a success, Labour will not want to forget the similar experience of forming a government with the Liberal Democrats. The failure of nerve by that Party in May and June 2007 remains one of the great mysteries of contemporary Welsh politics. Nonetheless, if the Lib Dems are in a different frame of mind, post 2011, the possibility of a progressive alignment in that direction should not be discarded out of hand. My point is not, at all, that one form of coalition has more to commend it than the other. It is simply that, from a Labour perspective, flexibility will be an essential bedrock of a willingness to respond constructively to whatever the outcome of the next Assembly might be.



Mark Drakeford – “Labour should embrace a policy of permissive proportional representation in local government.”

“Here in Wales, Labour at the Assembly elections will concentrate not on grandstanding, but on demonstrating its distinctive approach to dealing with the different circumstances of the second decade of devolution.”

That is why, I believe, Labour needs to return to a proposition first made by out-going First Minister, Rhodri Morgan, that it should positively embrace a policy of permissive proportional representation in local government. Certainly, such a proposition had much more to commend it, both politically and practically, than the immense distraction of a further round of local government reorganisation – a chimera which exercises a continuing hold over some in the Party. It is why, also, Labour will want to throw its weight behind the green energy revolution which has such potential, if single-mindedly pursued, to move Wales from the margin to the centre of the European economy, creating jobs in manufacturing as well as energy production, and contributing well above our weight in power generated through wind, wave and water.

In the end, of course, governments are judged by the ways

in which they pursue the fundamental issues of the economy and public services. This is why, as the General Election approaches and electors face a choice between a Labour or Conservative government in Westminster, the gap between the parties has narrowed. The future rests between a Labour Party which has demonstrated the crucial role of public spending in dealing with the global economic down-turn, and a Conservative Party which believes, in its DNA, that public spending is only there to be slashed and public services only there to be burned. Plaid Cymru’s suggestion that the election of a viscerally rightwing government in London could somehow be to Wales’ advantage is unlikely to be forgotten.

Here in Wales, Labour at the Assembly elections will concentrate not on grandstanding, but on demonstrating its distinctive approach to dealing with the different circumstances of the second decade of devolution. This is an approach which retains a commitment to universal services; which celebrates the value of public services, publicly provided; which knows that front-line, as well as back-room services, will have to be reformed, but recognises that this can only be done effectively by harnessing the experience and commitment of front-line staff in the reform process.

In a period when money will be very tight, the experience which Labour has of leading the Assembly will be more important than ever in re-shaping public services which retain the trust, and feel the influence, of Welsh citizens. Above all, Labour will offer an approach which resonates with the long-established preferences of Welsh voters – the understanding that when we act collectively we achieve more than we when act alone, that pursuing the public interest is more important than the pursuit of self-interest and, more than anything else, that greater equality brings a set of social and economic advantages which markets alone can never match.

There are many reasons why Labour in Wales will face next year’s elections with confidence. New First Minister, Carwyn Jones, demonstrated a sureness of touch and a steely political nerve in steering the Assembly vote on commencing the referendum process to a highly successful conclusion. Labour retains its hard-won reputation as the party of devolution – the party which has consistently delivered those practical democratic advances which devolved government represents. With the record of what active government can do in combating the recession in Wales, and a programme which concentrates on making a difference in the everyday lives of all its citizens, Labour can look forward confidently to the future.

Professor Mark Drakeford was Rhodri Morgan’s special adviser in the Welsh Government 2000-2010 and will be Labour’s candidate in Cardiff West in the May 2011 Assembly election.

The power of purchase

Kevin Morgan argues that a chronic procurement skills deficit is a hidden crisis in the Welsh public sector

We keep asking the wrong questions of the public sector in Wales even though it has loomed large in our lives for the best part of half a century. All too often the political debate in Wales – and in the UK too for that matter – has been obsessed with the question as to whether the public sector is too big. This debate usually revolves around the public sector’s share of GDP, an index that invariably generates more heat than light.

It is well known that a big public sector depresses productivity, destroys incentives and undermines the private sector – well known but wrong. The Nordic experience gives the lie to these neo-liberal myths, proving that the key question to ask of the public sector concerns *competence* not scale, *performance* not prejudice.

Central governments have three great powers at their disposal to effect change – the power to tax, to regulate and to purchase. Of these powers, the power of purchase has been the most widely neglected by governments of all ideological persuasions. With notable exceptions – like military technology in the US or energy and mass transit in France for example – the history of public procurement is a tale of untapped potential.

This highlights the Procurement Paradox – the social and economic significance of procurement is high, while its political status is low. Admittedly, the political visibility of

public procurement has improved in recent years, but for the vast majority of public sector organizations it remains a backroom function rather than a boardroom responsibility, too often associated with the purchasing of prosaic items like office supplies, rather than a strategic driver of innovation, jobs and social justice.

To deploy the power of purchase in a more creative fashion, the first thing we have to do is to jettison the wholly inappropriate mechanical metaphor of the state, which implies that power is a lever that simply has to be pulled to be exercised. In reality, of course, one has to have a certain amount of competence and confidence to deploy power in a creative manner. Yet these strategic skill sets – the skills of statecraft – are woefully inadequate in the Welsh public procurement community.

The true scale of this public procurement skills deficit needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency at the

In public procurement circles it is generally accepted that one needs to have one manager with a Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply qualification for every £15m of public procurement expenditure. In Wales there are only about 130 public sector managers with a Purchasing and Supply qualification in the entire public sector, which means that we have a professional skills deficit of more than 55 per cent according to current best practice.

Far from being a minor technical matter, this chronic skills deficit raises profound questions about the competence of the public sector in Wales. What’s more, when its professional capacity is less than half of what it should be, how can the public procurement fraternity possibly deploy a budget of nearly £5 billion a year in a creative fashion?

At a time when the public sector in the UK is being told to expect two

In Wales there are only about 130 public sector managers with a Purchasing and Supply qualification in the entire public sector, which means we have a professional skills deficit of more than 55% according to current best practice.

highest levels of the Welsh Government – including the Cabinet and First Minister’s Office – because it has simply failed to register in the debate about public sector reform in Wales.

parliaments of pain, because of unprecedented fiscal austerity in coming years, managers will need to be more creative than ever to ensure that the public sector strives to promote the



We need greater professionalism in procurement in our schools, as elsewhere in the public sector.

multiple goals of innovation, job creation and social justice. This coming challenge will be especially acute in Wales for two reasons - we are more dependent on the public sector than the English regions and the new Economic Renewal Strategy is predicated on us getting more value from our own indigenous resources.

Aside from the skills deficit, the power of purchase is also stymied by the fact that good practice is a bad traveller. That is to say, good procurement practice does not disseminate from one public body to another as quickly as it should, a problem compounded by the fragmentation of public procurement policy. One would have thought that the Welsh Government would have done more to address the variability of performance, especially in local government and the health service, which between them account for more than three-quarters of public procurement expenditure in Wales.

The main reason why fundamental public sector reform was not pursued in the past is because generous financial settlements concealed the problems.

Such generosity will be conspicuous by its absence in the coming decade, exposing weaknesses that should have been addressed in times of plenty.

These weaknesses can have tragic consequences - like the *E.coli* crisis that gripped the school food service in 2005 and claimed the life of five-year-old Mason Jones. We should never forget that John Tudor & Son, the Bridgend-based firm that supplied the cooked meat that caused the crisis, was awarded the school food contract despite serious misgivings about its hygiene practices and despite a catalogue of complaints from school caterers about the quality and safety of its products. Why was it awarded the contract? For one simple reason - it was the cheapest. The *E.coli* crisis was a tragic illustration of the high price of low cost.

If the argument here is correct, the two key weaknesses of public sector procurement in Wales are competence and governance. More professional skill sets are needed to get more public dividends from public expenditure. And a more integrated approach to the

management of procurement is essential to ensure that good practice becomes the norm not the exception.

We have many examples of good procurement practice in Wales. Examples include Carmarthenshire and Caerphilly County Councils in school food and Bron Afon and RCT Homes in social housing. However, these are the exceptions to the rule. What more can be done?

The *One in a Million* campaign, designed by public procurement consultant Richard Macfarlane who has advised the Welsh Government, is a good example of what can be done. The campaign aims to get more tangible social and economic benefits from procurement by persuading all public bodies in Wales to use their contractual leverage to ensure that suppliers provide employment and training for new entrants to the labour market. As a bare minimum the campaign expects 52 weeks employment with training for each £1 million spent. With nearly £5 billion spent a year, Wales could generate a minimum of 4,300 new entrant opportunities every year, targeted at people most in need, amounting to perhaps 40,000 careers in a decade.

The *One in a Million* campaign is closely associated with the public sector pioneers that designed the CAN DO Toolkit, one of the best examples of public procurement being used to target job opportunities in the poorest communities in Wales. This campaign is a microcosm of what can be achieved when public procurement gets the recognition that it deserves and the political leadership that it needs. Far from being a backroom function, the power of purchase can be a strategic driver of innovation, jobs and social justice.

Kevin Morgan is Professor of Governance and Development in the School of City and Regional Planning at Cardiff University.

Provincial stagnation or European powerhouse



The Senedd building in Cardiff Bay – the arena for existential choices facing Wales.

John Winterson Richards suggests Wales faces a far more radical choice than we might imagine

We are entering a period of uncertainty in British politics. For the first time since 1992, there is serious doubt about the outcome of a General Election. There is a strong possibility of a hung Parliament, perhaps a string of hung Parliaments.

The Blair administration destroyed many of the certainties of the old British constitution without putting anything definite in its place. The current unhappy compromise Welsh Assembly is but one aspect of Mr Blair's meddling in the constitution without a coherent vision or plan of what he wanted to achieve. This combination of electoral uncertainty and constitutional uncertainty may turn the next decade into a free-for-all in British politics. Welsh devolution cannot be viewed in isolation but must be considered in the context of an extremely fluid situation at Westminster.

Indeed, one of the paradoxes that could arise is that the force that propels Wales to greatest autonomy might be the London-based, indeed the London-obsessed Conservative Party, formerly the Conservative and Unionist Party. Its current leadership has little interest in their party's Unionist traditions. They would have no qualms about a deal with the Scottish Nationalists, if they held the balance of power in a hung Parliament, giving them whatever they wanted in Scotland in return for a Conservative government in Westminster. A similar deal would probably be offered to Wales and national pride would induce the Welsh to accept.

Even without the Machiavellian deals that come with a hung Parliament, there are good reasons why more devolution could actually benefit an English Conservative Prime Minister who lacks a strong Unionist commitment. He could trade greater powers to the Scottish and Welsh legislatures in return for a diminished role for Scottish and Welsh MPs at Westminster, or diminished representation, or both. This would increase the influence of English

MPs, who are, of course, far more likely to be Conservative. He could also grant the Scottish and Welsh legislatures full fiscal responsibility in return for an end to payments from the UK Treasury. This would go down well with many of his own supporters in England who are complaining about above average public expenditure in Scotland and Wales.

Of course, a Conservative administration is far from assured, and even if the Conservatives win the General Election, they seem unlikely to retain power throughout what may be a very turbulent decade. However, the SNP and Plaid Cymru are obliged to press actively for ever greater devolution, while Labour and the Liberal Democrats are committed to support it. So it is safe to assume that the pressure from Westminster will be in favour of more devolution and certainly not against it.

It is equally safe to assume that any referendum in Wales will approve proposals to increase the powers of the Assembly. This is a reflection not of the merits of any particular proposal but of the huge imbalance of political firepower

in Wales. In any referendum, the UK government will support its own proposals, as it did in 1997. In addition, the new power that has arisen as a result of the 1997 referendum, the National Assembly itself, will obviously be active in support of any measures that will give it more power: the Assembly has spent a great deal of taxpayers' money on developing a large public relations and publicity organisation, by far the most powerful in Wales. In any case, the media – particularly the local television stations and the *Western Mail* – were almost universally and actively pro-devolution in 1997, and will probably be just as eager to support any proposal in the foreseeable future.

Of the four main political parties in Wales, three are actively pro-devolution, while the fourth seems reconciled to it. There are now literally hundreds of full-time political activists in Wales on the public payroll, including MPs, Assembly Members, leading Councillors, and their personal staffs of researchers, political advisers, etc – and nearly all of these hundreds of paid professional politicians will be active on the side of devolution in any referendum.

Against that, it is difficult to see how a serious campaign against further devolution could be organised. There is no focus for opposition. Any future 'No' campaign would have no paid activists, little hope of favourable media coverage, and hardly any money. Although many in the business sector remain at best sceptical about the benefits of devolution, and positively frightened by its more extreme forms, the lack of a well developed business leadership class in Wales means they are not very influential, and few have the large amounts of surplus cash necessary to finance a serious political campaign.

Sir Julian Hodge, the principal funder of the previous campaign, is now deceased, and it is significant that he was not resident in Wales. Most entrepreneurs who actually operate in Wales are reluctant to put their heads above the parapet. Given the high levels of public sector spending in Wales, even

private business relies to a great extent on government contracts, not least with the National Assembly itself. Those who need such contracts are unlikely to argue publicly against more power being given to the people who give them out. In any case, no one wants to be seen on the losing side.

So increased devolution of political power to the Welsh Assembly is all but inevitable. That decision was effectively taken back in 1997. It is simply a fact we have to face, and what we urgently need to do is consider seriously how and whether Wales can cope with the practical consequences.

Given Wales' relatively low GDP per capita, the probability of a decrease in the amounts coming from the UK Treasury, in order to reduce the current deficit, is bound to have a severe effect on the Welsh economy irrespective of devolution. As soon as the Assembly is granted tax raising powers, which will surely happen, it will come under pressure to use them, both internally from within Wales and externally from the UK government. It would be naive to plan on the expectation of an indefinite continuation of the current situation, in which the Scottish and Welsh legislatures are allowed to make their own decisions while the UK taxpayer covers the bills. Sooner or later, as the powers of the Scottish and Welsh legislatures are increased, they will be asked by English taxpayers and their political representatives why they are not using their tax raising powers to cover their own expenditure.

That is bound to happen one day, though no one seems to want to discuss it now. When it does we will need a strategy to develop an enterprise culture in Wales that increases our capacity to generate our own wealth. If that sounds easier said than done, here is a radical suggestion that might work.

Look at other small nations. Some of them are very prosperous. The old idea that a nation had to be big to survive is now out-dated, if it were ever true. We no longer need huge workforces to operate economies of scale or enormous

reserves of manpower to fight major wars. With an increasingly globalised economy small nations can have significant competitive advantages. Look particularly at those small nations with a GDP per capita higher than our own. Some of them are very small indeed.

Look at the factors they have in common. The most obvious is a low tax regime. It may take great political courage to introduce such a regime but it is difficult to think of an example where doing so has not turned a vicious circle into a virtuous one. While higher

“Any future ‘No’ campaign would have no paid activists, little hope of favourable media coverage, and hardly any money.”

taxes drive out businesses and higher earners, thus reducing the tax base and forcing taxes higher, lower taxes attract businesses and higher earners, so increasing the tax base.

Most interesting of all, there appears to be no correlation between a low tax regime and low standards of public services. Indeed, purely on the basis of subjective observation, 'tax havens' are more likely to have well-maintained and well-lit roads, modern leisure facilities, a visible police presence, and clean public buildings than Wales. They also usually have fewer signs of absolute poverty. It is impossible to comment on services that have not been experienced directly, but there is certainly no evidence to suggest the general standard in such places is lower than in Wales. This is due in large part to a wide tax base being able to finance public services generously even with a low tax rate. However, the presence of a large number of private sector high achievers might also have a positive effect on the management of public services.

Of course, there are exceptions. No

one in their right mind would want Wales to become the British equivalent of Dubai or Hong Kong, but there are useful role models in Europe. Wales might not have the sun like Monaco or Jersey, or the snow like Andorra or Liechtenstein, but Welsh decision-makers could do a lot worse than study the Isle of Man. Although we need not follow the Manx example in every respect, it does illustrate how even a very small, geographically isolated country can combine relative prosperity with social cohesion, a vibrant polity, and well-maintained public facilities.

Wales has some enormous advantages over the Isle of Man. The fact that we are part of the mainland of Great Britain

regulation regime generally, and replacing the current over-complicated UK tax and benefits systems with a single simplified and unified tax-benefits system of our own. This would require not only tax-raising powers but the power to pass primary legislation to reconstruct the whole tax and benefits systems from the bottom up. This goes beyond mere devolution.

Now here is the great irony. These words are being typed by an unreconstructed Unionist, who was never convinced that the Assembly would bring any advantage, who has seen nothing in it since then to make him change his mind, and who is well aware of the danger that giving it

“In the same way, even a quasi-independent Wales would have to accept that England will always want a say in what happens next door. Yet an autonomous Wales would at least have the option of passing laws that could give it immense competitive advantages, even over England.”

and that Cardiff is only two hours from London by train gives us the potential to become the best located low tax regime in Western Europe.

If Wales had a low tax regime in place now, it is almost certain that a large number of the entrepreneurs and bankers who are leaving the UK, or planning to emigrate, because of the new 50 per cent higher rate tax would rather relocate in Wales.

Yet it is not enough simply to lower tax rates in order to attract wealthy outsiders. The great lesson of the Irish experience is that the wealth generated by tax breaks will not endure if it is merely spent. Instead, Wales must take advantage of the window of opportunity and develop home grown enterprise at the same time. This could be done by extending the low tax and low

increased powers will allow it to pass bad laws. Yet, much as some may wish otherwise, there is no turning back the clock or denying that increased powers are coming.

So the irony is that, if change is indeed unavoidable, it would be better to embrace it completely, to advance to meet it on our own terms, even to accelerate it if necessary, than to sit waiting for it or to try to delay it. A gradual increase in the powers of the Assembly, including tax raising powers, can do little good and much harm. However, if the Assembly were given the power to design its own tax system, it could use that power to transform Wales.

So rather than mess about with ‘independent commission’ reports on increasing powers, the Assembly should immediately petition to become a

Parliament which is fully autonomous within the United Kingdom or perhaps a self-governing Dependency of the Crown, like the Isle of Man.

Full independence is a meaningless concept in the modern world. For one thing, the UK government can still in practice exert great influence over its smaller autonomous neighbours. For example, in 2007 it practically forced Sark to accept a constitution for which there was no real local demand or need. In the same way, even a quasi-independent Wales would have to accept that England will always want a say in what happens next door. Yet an autonomous Wales would at least have the option of passing laws that could give it immense competitive advantages, even over England.

The big question is whether Wales has leadership with the imagination and the political courage to pass such laws. The great danger is that increased powers may be abused. One can only fall back on the classic liberal doctrine that giving people responsibility tends to make them more responsible. This does not always work in practice, but it is certainly true that people are unlikely to act responsibly if they are not given responsibility.

Wales has choices. One choice is provincial stagnation. Another is to develop as an enterprise culture and one of the powerhouses of Europe.

John Winterson Richards is a management consultant specialising in small business. He stood as a Conservative and Unionist in the 1992 General Election, and served as the last Leader of the Opposition on Cardiff City Council before Local Government Reorganisation in 1996. He retired from party politics in 1999 and now has no political allegiance.

Wales needs a delivery plan

Geraint Talfan Davies discovers a gulf between business and government at the IWA's inaugural National Economy Conference

If the IWA's first National Economy Conference held in late February achieved anything, it was to underline the gulf in thinking that exists between the worlds of business and the Welsh Government. On this showing the good relations between government and business, said to have been forged during the recent Welsh economic summits, may well be only skin deep, and the government's current review of economic development has a lot to do to persuade business that policymakers are up to the challenge that Wales faces.

It wasn't just the torrent of depressing statistics - Wales now the lowest UK region in terms of Gross Value Added per head, tenth out of twelve for research and development expenditure, the lowest

that there was a state of "paralysis", and that "dealing with the Assembly is like punching a sponge".

The conference had drawn a wide range of top-flight speakers, including the new First Minister, Carwyn Jones, to give Welsh, UK and world perspectives on the economic challenges that face us. Gerald Holtham, one of the UK's top investment managers and chair of the Commission that is examining the Barnett formula and other Assembly funding options, warned us that although growth over the next year could turn out to be better than forecast, we were in for 8-9 years of tight fiscal policy, with those at the bottom of the skills ladder sure to be the hardest hit.

The only silver lining that Holtham could see was the fall in the value of the pound which would help Welsh

“Within Wales, Cardiff is the only city whose competitiveness is above the UK average. It ranks 12th, against Newport at 30th and Swansea at 38th.”

for private equity and venture capital investment, as well as for overall competitiveness – it was more the unanimous conviction that the government has yet to deliver a coherent strategy and, more importantly, a delivery plan that business finds convincing. Nigel Roberts, chair of Cardiff-based Paramount, told the conference that business was disillusioned with the Assembly, that initiatives took forever,

manufacturing. But since a later speaker, Professor Robert Huggins of UWIC, reminded us that Wales is also at the bottom of the export league table, with only 2.16 per cent of Welsh companies exporting, this might not make a huge difference to the overall situation in Wales.

Concentrating on competitiveness, Huggins reminded us that the low R&D expenditure by business in Wales meant



Gerald Holtham – Wales is in for 8-9 years of tight fiscal policy.

that Wales was more dependent on R&D in the higher education sector than any other UK region. But he also pointed out that the whole of the UK is unbalanced in this regard: only the southeast England 'super-region' scores above the UK average for competitiveness, a factor that, he thought might account for the fact that the UK has dropped from 7th to 12th in world competitiveness rankings in recent years. He concluded that the concentration model is not working for the UK.

Within Wales, Cardiff is the only city whose competitiveness is above the UK average. It ranks 12th, against Newport at 30th and Swansea at 38th. Merthyr and Blaenau Gwent are at the very bottom of the pile – 405th and



Clockwise from left: Lord Mervyn Davies – Wales should concentrate on the industries of the future; Chris Rowlands – not averse to a new Welsh banking institution; and Professor Robert Huggins – Wales is at the bottom of the export league table.

407th out of all UK local authority areas. In the Welsh context Huggins believed that it would make more sense to concentrate resources in regions that are strong – notably the Cardiff-based city-region – a call echoed by several people through the day, but one which runs counter to current political orthodoxy in the Assembly itself.

But the root cause of business frustration may have been identified by Dr. Stevie Upton, the IWA's Research Officer. This, she thought, was the information deficit: the fact that, following the absorption of the WDA into the civil service, it is almost impossible now to tell where the money spent on economic development in Wales actually goes. This is all the more important in the light of Upton's other finding that Wales is spending more per head on economic development than any other UK region - £107 per head, £10 per head more than the north east of England, and £30 more than Scotland. She has been seeking out this information over recent months at the request of the IWA's recently formed Economy and Finance Study Group.

There is no little irony in the fact that the abolition of the greatest of the Welsh quangos, allegedly in the interest of accountability, has resulted in reduced accountability: no annual reports, no

reporting of spend by detailed programme, no external evaluation of the effectiveness of individual programmes. The Welsh Government's 'Flexible Support for Business' scheme, which telescoped several other programmes, was a particular target of criticism throughout the day, because of the way it rolls up so many different programme spends under one heading.

Upton was able to point to figures which, on the face of it, suggest that while the Yorkshire RDA is spending 19 percent of its budget on enterprise, Wales is spending only 9 per cent - a comparison that the Assembly's Enterprise and Learning Committee might like to explore.

What the conference audience found most worrying was that this now stands in stark contrast to the situation in Scotland and England. Upton was able to point to an illuminating report, commissioned by the UK Government from PricewaterhouseCoopers, that examined the effectiveness of each of the English RDAs in considerable detail. There has been no comparable external evaluation of the economic development spending and programmes of the Welsh Government. Everyone, including the Assembly's own scrutiny committees, are in the dark.

The suggestion that this might be an

endemic problem was raised from the floor of the conference by Ian Courtney, part of a three man task and finish group, charged by the Welsh Government itself with investigating the commercialisation of intellectual property in Wales. He revealed that, despite being a government-sponsored group, they had had so much difficulty getting information from government departments that they had to threaten the government with the Freedom of Information Act.

Apart from the lack of external evaluation, Upton detected evidence of risk aversion in the absence of any demanding performance indicators, allied to a too frequent shift to new initiatives, with little innovative thinking and policies too dependent on a changing politics with each Assembly term.

Professor David Blackaby, from Swansea University, made a plea for improving skills of Welsh workers and managers – a call that struck a chord with a large number. He reminded us that the problem of inadequate skills was apparent at several levels. He pointed out that among the 30 top OECD countries, the UK had the lowest proportion of managers with degrees. He questioned whether education was currently fit for purpose, which led to some debate about

whether university education should be vocationally focused or not. More encouragingly, David Stevens, Chief Operating Officer for Admiral Insurance plc, Wales only FTSE 100 company, said they had built the business largely on home grown talent.

When it came to the question of what to do, Chris Rowlands, the Welsh businessman who last year produced a report on finance for business for No 10, was clear that there was a financing gap to be filled – for investments of between £2m and £10m – that would not be covered by normal debt finance or by private equity and venture capital companies. He accused private equity of being lazy, having concentrated for so many years on the easy pickings of leveraged buy-outs.

There would have to be a major intervention to fill this financing gap. It would need scale – a fund of funds - and a strong risk management function, but would have to be a regionally distributed fund. He did not think there would be any problem of lack of demand from business in Wales, but it would need people on the ground to search out and create opportunities. However it would have to be done on a commercial basis, not by government. It was clear that he would not be averse to a new Welsh banking institution and pointed to plans for a Scottish Investment Bank. Could we see a Bank of Wales re-emerge, as many of us have been urging?

There were those who thought that government should not be in the business ‘picking winners’ and should stick to ‘educating people, keeping them healthy and moving them around’. Not unnaturally, this was not the view of speakers who were in government: the First Minister, Carwyn Jones, the UK Trade Minister and former Chairman of Standard Chartered Bank, Lord (Mervyn) Davies.

Lord Davies, who is also Chair of the Council of Bangor University, threw away his prepared text and, once he had excoriated the banks for not learning the

lessons of the recent crisis, delivered an impassioned plea for Wales and the UK to concentrate on the industries of the future: IT, mobile technology, medicine and life sciences, education (where the UK has 20 per cent of the world market for students) and the creative industries.

Infrastructure was another priority, and Government faced a huge challenge to find the £450 billion that would be needed for infrastructure investment over the next 15 years: investment in energy security, universal broadband, high speed rail, roads and water.

He also thought it essential to develop long-term strategies that went beyond the five-year political cycle. This argument also applied to Wales, and he urged the Welsh Government to copy Gordon Brown, by bringing business people like himself into government. Carwyn Jones, the First Minister, wasn't present at this point to respond.

Later, however, Carwyn Jones picked upon on the criticisms of poor delivery and stressed that the last thing he wanted was for government to become ‘a strategy factory’. Asked whether he stood by the ‘clear red water’ message of his predecessor, he said it was important that the government believed in reducing inequality, but that did not mean Wales was shut for business.

As for the recent case of health service reform where no redundancies appear to have ensued, he acknowledged that “this cannot go on for ever” and that “voluntary redundancies would have to come”. Faced with criticism of the FS4B scheme, he took the line that while this was new to him, if that was the perception he would take it on board. His barrister's training means that he has little fear of a critical audience, but there were signs that he was in listening mode, and that this honest exchange of views with business at the start of his tenure may have been timely.

Geraint Talfan Davies is Chair of the IWA.

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Wage rates and profitability explain lagging economy

Eurfyl ap Gwilym questions whether Wales is being held back by an over-large public sector

Whenever the performance of the Welsh economy is debated two factors usually surface very quickly, the relatively large size of the public sector and the low Gross Value Added (GVA) per head compared with the other countries and regions of both the UK and the EU. Undoubtedly these are two important elements when assessing how well Wales is doing economically. But what substance lies behind these headlines and is the private sector being squeezed out?

Table 1 shows official estimates of public sector employment as a proportion of total employment.

In the fourth quarter of 2008, 23.9 per cent of those in employment in Wales worked in the public sector compared with 19.8 per cent in the UK as a whole, and 17.8 per cent in London. Thus from the viewpoint of employment the public sector is larger in Wales but

not that much larger. It should also be noted that over the last decade growth in public sector employment in Wales has been lower than in most of the regions of the UK, although relative GVA has continued to decline.

Another measure that can be used to gauge the scale of the public sector is to look at the relative levels of public expenditure in each country of the UK. Table 2 shows *identifiable* public expenditure which is public expenditure incurred in a territory for the benefit of people living in that territory. Examples are health, education, welfare spending and housing.

According to the Treasury, in 2008-09 Welsh identifiable expenditure per capita was 111 per cent of the UK average compared with 118 per cent for London. Identifiable public expenditure in Wales was relatively high compared with the UK average but not so much higher as to appear to justify the view that the Welsh economy suffers because it is

dominated by an overlarge public sector.

Excluded from the expenditure data in Table 2 is what is termed *non-identifiable* expenditure such as defence, overseas aid, interest payments on the national debt and the costs of the UK Parliament. Non-identifiable expenditure is deemed as being of benefit to all the people of the UK irrespective of where it is actually spent. Analysis of ONS and Treasury data indicates that Wales enjoys a relatively low proportion of such spending. In the case of defence spending, estimates show that with 4.9 per cent of the UK population Wales receives less than 2 per cent of expenditure incurred in the UK.

Notwithstanding the fact that non-identifiable public expenditure is comparatively low compared with England, and in particular the south east of England, many economists allocate either a population-based or GDP-based share of non-identifiable public expenditure when estimating total public

Table 1:
Public sector employment as a proportion of total employment (%)

	England	Scotland	Wales	UK
1999	18.3	23.1	23.9	19.2
2008*	18.9	23.0	23.9	19.8

*Fourth quarter 2008.

Source: Regional Analysis of Public Sector Employment, Office of National Statistics.

Table 2:
Relative identifiable public expenditure per capita compared with the UK average (UK 100%).

	England	Scotland	Wales
1996-97	96	118	114
1999-00	96	118	114
2008-09	97	116	111

Source: HM Treasury, Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2002 and 2009.

Table 3: Wales GVA by component (£per capita) and as a proportion of the UK average (%)

	1995		2000		2007	
Compensation of employees	5,424	81.9%	7,006	77.76%	9,181	75.4%
Operating surplus/mixed income	3,665	87.5%	4,006	75.6%	5,696	73.2%
Total	9,089	84.1%	11,012	77.0%	14,877	74.5%

Source: ONS Regional Accounts.

expenditure in Wales. The reasoning behind this is that the people of Wales benefit from such expenditure although it is incurred elsewhere. In this approach the indirect economic benefits arising from such expenditure are ignored. Total public expenditure per head in Wales (identifiable plus non-identifiable) is between 109 per cent and 103 percent of the UK average depending on whether population or GVA is used to allocate non-identifiable expenditure. If one used pay cost as an indicator of where non-identifiable public expenditure occurred the relative total public expenditure per capita in Wales falls to approximately 102 per cent the UK average.

In summary, public sector employment in Wales is 4.1 per cent higher than the UK average and relative total identifiable public expenditure is between 2 per cent and 9 per cent higher depending on the method of allocation.

Given this analysis why is Wales viewed by many as being 'dominated' by too large a public sector? The answer is that when total identifiable public expenditure is measured as a proportion of GVA generated in Wales such spending is materially higher than the UK average. Thus the key issue is not higher public expenditure but the much lower level of GVA in Wales.

Why is relative GVA in Wales so low and why has it declined over the last 20 years? To make meaningful comparisons between regions and countries GVA per head needs to be used. Furthermore this measure needs itself to be deconstructed into population and GVA.

The working population as a

proportion of the total population of Wales is low compared with the UK as a whole. According to the ONS, in the final quarter of 2009 there were 1.31 million in employment in Wales compared with 28.91 million in employment in the UK. Corresponding proportions of the population in work in Wales and the UK were 43.4 per cent and 46.7 per cent, respectively. This difference is due to a number of factors:

- **There is a higher level of age dependency in Wales:** There are proportionately more young (under 16) and older people (over 65) people compared with those of working age in Wales compared with the UK. In 2007, 39.9 per cent of the population of Wales was not of working age compared with 38.0 percent for the UK.
- **Low economic activity rates:** Economic activity rate is the proportion of people of working age who are either employed or seeking employment. In the final quarter of 2009 the employment activity rate in Wales was 75.7 per cent compared with 78.7 per cent for the UK. Factors depressing activity rates include high numbers on long-term invalidity benefit and a perceived lack of job opportunities in the area.
- **Higher unemployment rates:** In the final quarter of 2009 the unemployment rate in Wales was 8.6 per cent compared with 7.9 per cent for the UK as a whole.

If the employment rate were the same in Wales as in the UK relative GVA would be 80.3 per cent compared with an actual level of 74.5 per cent. Thus the structure of the working population in Wales, and in particular the age distribution and low activity rates, are material contributors to lower GVA. However, they do not provide the whole answer to the shortfall in GVA per capita. The balance of the shortfall lies in the principal factors determining GVA, namely wage rates, gross operating surplus and what is termed 'mixed income'.

Gross value added is the commonly accepted measure of the value added or wealth created through economic activity. It was the measure used by the EU in deciding to allocate Objective 1 and Convergence Funds to West Wales and the Valleys. GVA is made up of a number of elements and these are summarised in Table 3.

By themselves these two key indicators explains a good deal of the relative under-performance of the Welsh economy as a whole, compared with the UK:

- Compensation of employees (62 percent of total GVA): This has tracked at about 80 per cent of the UK average over most of the last 20 years but has declined quite sharply in the last few years. If compensation of employees in Wales in 2007 had been the same as in the UK then relative GVA per capita would rise by 12.4 per cent.
- Gross operating surplus (31 per cent of total GVA) and Mixed Income (7 per cent of total GVA): These have shown a sharp reduction relative to the

rest of the UK from 91.0 per cent in 1989 to 73.2 per cent in 2007. Gross operating surplus includes an apportionment of profits of the private sector plus an imputed rent income for owner occupied households (approximately 6 per cent of total GVA). This decline in operating surplus needs detailed analysis. Is it due to a move from capital intensive industry to more labour intensive ones or are there other structural changes?

The ONS publishes a time series of GVA by industrial sector for Wales and other countries and regions of the UK. Analysis could demonstrate whether or not the change in industrial structure of Wales compared with the rest of the UK has been a material contributor to the relative decline.

A strong area of growth in the UK over recent years has been financial services. Table 4 shows that whilst London, starting from a high base in 1999, has enjoyed massive growth in this sector Wales remains weak.

Table 4: Proportion of GVA Generated by Financial Services (%)

	2007	1999
London	18.1	11.4
England	8.9	6.3
Scotland	7.7	5.2
Wales	4.4	3.4

In the case of Wales manufacturing has traditionally been an important source of employment and wealth. Table 5 shows how this sector has shrunk as a contributor to total GVA.

Table 5: Proportion of GVA Generated by Manufacturing (%)

	2007	1999
London	5.9	10.1
England	12.4	18.3
Scotland	13.7	19.4
Wales	17.9	24.9

Mixed Income is the surplus of non-incorporated enterprises owned by households, this is the self employed. If operating surplus and mixed income were the same in Wales as in the UK then relative GVA per capita in Wales would rise by 7.3 per cent.

The analysis described here shows that the factors that lead to the variance in GVA per capita in Wales compared with the rest of the UK are:

- **GVA of UK** **100.0 per cent**
- Lower proportion of population in work in Wales (5.8 per cent)
- Lower compensation of employees (12.4 per cent)
- Lower Operating Surplus and Mixed Income (7.3 per cent)
- **GVA of Wales** **74.5 per cent.**

Of course, some of these factors are interlinked. For example, low employee compensation contributes to low activity rates, and depressed operating surpluses may lead to low compensation. Low employee compensation will tend to encourage migration of more able people of working age to countries offering more lucrative employment. Critically, low operating surpluses will mean that there is lack of capital for reinvestment in businesses with a knock-on effect on employment.

A time series of this sectoral analysis could cast further light on which factors have been driving down relative GVA per capita over the period under review. What is clear is that the central challenge of the Welsh economy may not be directly related to the size of the public sector, but to three other factors, namely:

- (i) The structure of our population.
- (ii) Relatively low compensation of employees.
- (iii) Low and declining operating surpluses in the private sector.

If the Welsh government is to formulate and execute an economic development strategy to address the weaknesses of the

Welsh economy it needs to address the causes of the weaknesses identified in this analysis. It is also clear that to achieve success will take decades rather than years.

Eurfyl ap Gwilym serves on the boards of a number of companies, is an IWA trustee and an economic adviser to Plaid Cymru.

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Opaque funding streams

Stevie Upton calls for greater transparency and more evaluation of the Welsh Government's economic policies

In 2005, the Welsh Government's culling of three major quangos – the Welsh Development Agency (WDA), the Wales Tourist Board (WTB) and Education and Learning Wales (ELWa) – prompted an article in *Agenda* entitled *The New Centralism*. In it, my then colleague, Professor Kevin Morgan of Cardiff University, and I called into question the claimed benefits of the mergers.

Five years on, in conducting research into Wales' economic development performance commissioned by the Institute's Economy and Finance Group, I revisited the article. It makes uncomfortable reading.

The two principal rationales put forward for the mergers were increased accountability, and greater efficiency and responsiveness to user needs. We questioned both of these justifications and, at least in relation to the WDA's replacement – the Department for the Economy and Transport – it is now clear that the grounds on which our critique was based were correct.

In relation to accountability, we argued that a command and control approach to politics, characterised by "more stringent control over access to information, which in turn limits society's capacity for effective scrutiny of political actions", was emerging, and consequently asked "whether Wales will become a less pluralist, more state-centric country".

Having recently attempted to trace economic development spending over the course of the Assembly's first decade, I can only conclude that

Claimed benefits of the merger of the WDA, WTB and ELWa into the Welsh Government

Accountability

Abolishing the quango boards will establish a clear line of accountability to Ministers; external advice will be incorporated into this new structure.

Improved customer and stakeholder service

Linking policy development and delivery within Government will provide a coherent one-stop shop system.

Demonstrable results and application of best practice

Robust performance and benchmarking data will allow progress to be monitored and performance compared nationally and internationally.

Streamlined delivery

Streamlining will be achieved through shortening of the decision-making process and transfer of resources from administration to delivery.

Opportunities for staff

Staff will have access to a wider job range and will progress based on their delivery as much as their policy-making skills.

Organising to deliver

Integration of departments will improve delivery and create savings that over the long term can be invested in front line services.

Source: Welsh Government, 'Making the Connections: Delivering Better Services for Wales', Consultation Document, January 2005

society's capacity for effective scrutiny has, indeed, been limited. Whilst the WDA was required to publish annual business plans, the Welsh Government is less forthcoming with information.

In the first year of the Department of Enterprise, Innovation and Networks, (as the Department for the Economy and Transport was originally called), a highly detailed business plan was produced that not only listed planned spend down to the level of individual initiatives, but also went into some detail on strategy.

More recently, however, there has

been a reduction in the level of detail made public. The departmental budget is no longer published to the more detailed level of the Budget Expenditure Line, but rather only to the Spending Programme Area level. In other words, only the headline spend is now reported.

Moreover, 40 per cent of the economic development budget for 2010-11 will be categorised as 'Flexible Support for Business'. Designed to streamline delivery of business support, the creation of this large, opaquely-named funding stream introduces a lack of transparency that renders futile any

attempt to evaluate the relationship between spend and performance.

This is in marked contrast to the situation in the English development agencies (RDAs). In England, RDAs are required to produce business plans and to demonstrate progress in annual reports. In 2009 these data were further supplemented by a report commissioned from PricewaterhouseCoopers that set out in considerable detail the impact of their spending.

Our second concern in 2005 related to the claim that efficiency and responsiveness would be enhanced by the merger. It was our expectation that the new Department for the Economy and Transport would lack the capacity to out-perform its predecessor, the WDA.

Two sets of data now combine to suggest that here, too, our unease was well founded. Whilst tracking of economic development spending over the Assembly's first decade is virtually impossible at a detailed level, it is

2004-05. However, these data tell only a partial story.

Extensive research undertaken by Robert Huggins, Professor of Management and Policy at UWIC and co-founder of the Centre for International Competitiveness, consistently places Wales at or near the bottom of a whole raft of national rankings, on measures including competitiveness, GVA, R&D expenditure and proportion of exporting companies. On these measures and others, Wales is failing to make the progress that should be expected given the significant investment in economic development that has taken place.

There are three things that the Welsh Government can do to help reverse these fortunes in the short to medium term. Firstly, there is an urgent need for data on both spending and performance to be made readily available to those outside government. It is by no means certain that rigorous

evaluation of potential strengths and weaknesses that identifies not only where funding will be spent but also where it will not.

At present, eighteen months on from the publication of the revised Spatial Plan, which should be one of the most significant elements of an economic strategy, there remains no sign of the promised Delivery Framework for National Priorities. It is hard to see how priorities can be coordinated, let alone monies spent, without such medium-to long-term planning at the national level.

Finally, fundamental both to the design and delivery of this economic vision and to accountability, is an effective evaluation system. In 2005 we called for the replacement of undemanding and unimaginative performance indicators with quality-based criteria, such as "the level of research, design or development spending attached to a project, or the number of apprentices, technicians or technologists generated by the investment in question".

Judging by the Enterprise and Learning Committee's recommendation earlier this year that "Welsh Government business support should focus more in future on quality not quantity", this has yet to happen. Nevertheless, such a change remains crucial for the development and future sustainability of the Welsh economy.

One final set of statistics lays bare the true cost of failing to get this right. One in twelve of the economically active population is currently unemployed in Wales and a further one in four of those of working age is economically inactive. It is therefore to be hoped that the Welsh Government's new Economic Renewal Programme, the future focus of which is currently under consultation, will address these three issues and improve our economic fortunes.

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Regional Development Agency

Per capita spend 2009-10 (£)

Welsh Department for Economy and Transport	107
One North East	97
Scottish / Highlands and Islands Enterprise	76
Yorkshire Forward	61
North West Development Agency	58
Advantage West Midlands	55
London Development Agency	50
East Midlands Development Agency	36
South West Regional Development Agency	30
East of England Development Agency	24
South East England Development Agency	20

Sources: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills; Scottish Enterprise; Highlands and Islands Enterprise; Department for the Economy and Transport

possible to make an approximate comparison between per capita spend in Wales and that in the English and Scottish RDAs.

As the table shows, Wales tops the league of economic development spending (even when funding for transport is removed from the equation). Importantly, this high level of spending is apparent at least as far back as

evaluation is being conducted internally, making the need for external scrutiny all the more imperative.

Once we have ascertained where the money has been spent and how effective individual funding streams have been, the second step will be to generate a strategic plan for the Welsh economy. This is not just about picking 'winners'. It is about a realistic and critical

Improving what we already do

John Ball says we need to understand the true meaning of innovation

In the winter 2009 edition of *Agenda* a two page spread announced the arrival of yet another expensive project aimed at “enhancing the innovative capacity” of businesses in Wales (*Royal scholarships will help economy punch above its weight*). This latest £11.4 million initiative once again presses the right buttons - science, technology (cutting edge of course), digital revolution, R&D capability and the compulsory mention of Silicon Valley and MIT. The worrying thing is that these ideas are wrapped up as ‘innovation’, yet again illustrating the clear lack of understanding as to what innovation really is and its importance to the future of the Welsh economy.

When please are we going to stop putting science, high technology, R&D and all the other buzz words together with innovation as if in some way they are inseparable concepts? They are simply not the same thing and until we recognise this, real and productive innovation will simply not occur.

What is far more relevant to economic development is to create national competitive advantage based on nurturing *innovation* – but in the proper sense and understanding both of what innovation really means and its importance to the economy. Indeed, such an approach is a priority for the European Regional Development Fund which includes enhanced regional competitiveness and its pre-requisite, innovation.

Innovation is the mainspring of economic growth and is central to competitiveness. The idea that pure, blue skies research and development, patents and entirely new, original ideas

equate to innovation is dangerously misleading. There must be an awareness that innovation is *not* about technological change or totally new products. Innovation comes from the Latin *innovatis*, meaning novelty, renovation or modification. The Oxford English Dictionary defines innovation as “making changes to something established”. Meanwhile, Michael Porter emphasises the point by defining innovation as “a new way of doing things, product and process changes, new approaches to marketing and distribution” and that in reality, innovation is actually “mundane and incremental rather than radical”.

In a reflection on the role of education, Porter goes on to point out that “innovation and innovative capability is defined as the skills and knowledge a firm needs to effectively absorb, master and improve *existing* as well as new technologies, processes and business models”. Indeed, research has

“Essentially, innovation has two stages: the new idea and its application.”

shown that innovative capability is the most important determinant of firm performance and consequently that of the wider economy.

The great economist Schumpeter showed that innovation is the driving force of economic progress. While new ideas are fundamental to economic growth, differentiation and segmentation

of products and services and changes in markets are as important, if not more so. It is not suggested that research and development, new ideas and patentable ideas should be abandoned. What is required is a change in approach to understand and develop not just a culture of innovation, within its proper meaning, but a clear policy.

This is the lesson for the Welsh economy. In reality, despite the continued hubris associated with the idea of a successful science policy, high technology and R&D, it is questionable whether the Welsh economy is equipped to develop entirely new products that are in any way meaningful or groundbreaking. The number of patent applications granted in Wales illustrates the point. There were 147 successful applications in 2005, this had fallen to 88 in 2006 and fallen even further to just 62 in 2007.

It should be remembered that patents are granted for processes and product improvements as well as entirely new ideas. Indeed, development and improvements of *existing* products and processes are, in reality, the source of most new patents. Interestingly, the late American scientist Professor Robert Rines had over 100 patents to his name, almost all of which were improvements to existing products.

Essentially, innovation has two stages: the new idea and its application. The two are not the same. The first stage is the ‘upstream’ development and creation by engineers and scientists of new inventions and technological products, often with no obvious commercial use and which are in reality, relatively rare. This is the R&D stage, often supported and encouraged by government (of which there is very little in Wales) or agencies but without any real understanding of any future potential use. The truly interesting thing about this initial stage is that these new ideas travel quickly and easily, often across national borders. The American motor industry has grown over a century and a half by adapting a simple piece of

German engineering, the carburettor.

The second stage is the 'downstream' stage when these original ideas are developed for the market. This is the real meaning of innovation and is more complex and potentially far more challenging than the original, first stage - it is the commercial development that is the most valuable for economic growth. The worth of the innovation at this stage is to the user, not the original creator. The real added value is at this, the consumption stage and what is required here are business skills: management, sales and marketing, design, financial and organisational.

The issue to be addressed is how a culture of innovation can be created. It requires appropriate education, business skills and experience. Openness to new experiences is known to encourage creativity, the precursor to innovation. There are four approaches:

- The first is to look at ways of developing different, often simpler or more interesting products. Life cycles are becoming shorter and so incremental and continuous innovation is required, driven through a culture of sustaining innovation.
- The second is to develop operational innovation, looking at and developing different ways of making a product or delivering a service. Henry Ford did not invent the car, rather he changed the world through the way it was made.
- A third approach is to develop strategic innovation, looking at the way the market is moving, the underlying changes in population or technologies that provide an opportunity but that do not necessarily require huge changes. Edison did not invent electricity, he found a way to harness its power.
- The fourth is through demand innovation, looking at ways in which existing demand can be met through

a different, innovative approach to meeting customers needs, such as different delivery systems. Macdonald's did not invent the burger, just a way to speed up its service.

Recent research in the Republic of Ireland underlines the role of innovation. Of the businesses that took part in the research, four fifths undertook product innovation and three quarters, process innovation. Product innovation was driven by interaction with, in descending order of input, customers, suppliers, and other external sources. In addition, the research highlighted the importance of process innovation, driven initially by limited product development (none was described as 'blue sky') and then, in order of importance, interaction with suppliers and customers. Importantly, the drive for change came through the businesses themselves and, most importantly, from the market.

This has important implications for the Welsh economy. Businesses are sensitive to the demands of their closest customers, thus home demand is fundamental in driving the basis of innovation. Intense competition spurs innovation. Particular emphasis is therefore placed on home demand as the driving force to upgrade, innovate and compete. Specialisation in products, based upon innovation, differentiation and segmentation is the driving force. For individual firms to flourish, the economy requires a strong sophisticated and demanding home market with an international outlook.

Pressure is brought to bear by local consumers on local firms to ensure they are innovative and responsive to changes, leading to strong competition among firms. The number of independent firms is vital in creating an environment stimulated by innovation. Consumers try these innovative products and services, while the number of independent businesses is vital in creating an economic environment driven by innovation and segmentation


by firms. This requires new and dynamic firms and an environment within which innovation, growth and competitiveness can flourish. It follows that developing incentives to encourage the formation of new businesses, the development of existing businesses and encouragement of innovation requires a clear over-arching policy.

There is of course nothing wrong or inappropriate in basing an economic development policy on science, new knowledge and R&D (even by accident), but what is required is perhaps a dose of reality. Interestingly, recently published research in America has shown no financial advantage to firms that undertook expensive, long term R&D.

At present, Wales lacks many of the individual factors required for an economy built on scientific research, R&D and is unlikely to do so in the foreseeable future. Let's be realistic. No Welsh firm is going to come up with the next ipod or electronic gizmo. What is needed is recognition of the success of other nations and the role of local businesses that compete locally, innovate locally and develop globally. The key to economic success is innovation. Until we understand this frighteningly simple and obvious lesson, the economy will continue in its downward trajectory.

The upshot for the Welsh economy is this. The chances of any of the organisations currently enjoying large chunks of European structural funding or the protection of the technicians coming up with new, scientific breakthroughs that will change the world are probably nil. The innovative skills required are those honed in the world of business and management, the ability to understand and drive innovative change. We need to think outside the box and see real commercial opportunities. So, do we need more business schools and fewer technicians?

John Ball is a lecturer in economics at the School of Business and Economics, Swansea University.



Reclaiming heritage is at the heart of the remaking of Merthyr.

Merthyr's progress

Rhys David measures the gap between vision and reality in the contemporary development of the first town of the industrial revolution

Is Merthyr Tydfil getting there? For those who only know the Welsh borough from its usual ranking at the foot of a range of prosperity and health league tables, the question might hardly seem worth asking. Yet, in the view of Alistair Neill, the determinedly optimistic Scots chief executive of the council, the figures that usually make the newspapers reflect a different past from which the area is now escaping.

According to Neill, a former senior executive with a number of multinational companies who is now in his seventh year at Merthyr, perceptions of the town are changing – whether they be those of its own residents, those returning after a long absence, or potential investors. Census Office statistics suggest that after declining for most of the past 100 years to a point where Wales's once biggest town is now home to fewer than 60,000 people, the population has grown in each of the past two years, and is expected to continue to do so, albeit modestly.

The body blows that have hit the town over recent years have not stopped. The most recent was the cessation of manufacturing at the iconic Hoover plant, Merthyr's biggest employer in the post-war period. It still has daunting socio-economic problems with some of the highest rates of sickness and lowest skills not just in Wales but in Britain as a whole.

Nevertheless, Neill argues, much of what was set out in Vision 2010, the plan

adopted shortly after his arrival, has been achieved, starting with a transformation in the services provided by 'Team Merthyr', the 4,000 people who work for the borough. The Local Government Data Unit's 2008 annual assessment found Merthyr to be the highest performing council in Wales. This was a marked turnaround from earlier Audit Office reviews that had identified it as a potentially failing council where intervention might be needed.

The changes have been brought about first of all by making sure councillors enjoyed a greater role in policy formulation – rather than implementation – and by ensuring staff were more aware of what was going on in departments other than their own and could contribute ideas more widely. Improvements have been sought through a bottom up rather than top down approach. "We wanted staff to know that their actions did make a difference and we were keen improvement teams were not just run by senior management. Someone on reception who sees 200 people coming in to the council each day is going to have a powerful set of views on how we react to visitors," Neill says.

Working with the Welsh Government and a range of other partners, the council has been able to embark on a large scale programme of regeneration across the town. In part, Neill explains, the aim has been to provide for the people of Merthyr, and its catchment area of up to 300,000 people across the Heads of the Valleys, a range of facilities

and services not previously available but which would be taken for granted in most communities across Britain.

A new retail park has brought in big name outlets such as Debenhams, Next and JJB Sports and also family restaurants. Such has been its popularity, a 65,000sq.ft Tesco superstore on land alongside the station has already had to add an upper deck to its surface car park. It is seen as a key support for smaller niche and locally-owned shops nearer the centre of town. The pedestrianised town centre has been paved in granite, and it is hoped one of its previously disused buildings, the old Town Hall, will re-emerge as a theatre and arts centre – a facility the town currently lacks.

A new business park has also provided the accommodation modern enterprises require and the Welsh Government has moved its social justice department to a site just outside the centre. Though many of those working there will be commuting from Cardiff, it is hoped some will decide to settle permanently and as staff move on they will, it is expected, be replaced by locally recruited replacements.

So, much of the 'hardware' – the town centre, new leisure, retail and business parks, riverside and heritage trails – have been put in place or repaired. Stock transfer of the council's housing to a housing association promises to release substantial funds for bringing properties up to modern standards.

More difficult will be the 'software' – the educational attainment of school

leavers, the skill levels of the working population, the poor health of not just the elderly retired but of many of those of working age. The investment that has taken place will be of little long term value if those problems cannot be sorted out.

An unstated part of the overall strategy has been to make people feel better about living and enjoying life, leisure and work in Merthyr and hence about themselves too. The next stage is to try to turn this into more positive attitudes towards learning – the sine qua



Merthyr's new retail park alongside the A470.

non pathway to stimulating and well-paid jobs. Though many of Merthyr's schools have been getting positive ratings from inspections and have had new buildings, this has not been reflected in the proportion of pupils going on to achieve good GCSE and A Level results, which still lag those for the rest of Wales.

Because of Merthyr's small size its schools have not been able to offer a wide enough choice of curriculum options at sixth form level. There is also a problem of disengagement among young people not interested in academic options, many of them, in Neill's words, having great brains and fantastic talents but weak literacy and numeric skills.

The proposed solution – currently out for consultation and not without its opponents – is a move to a new-build post-16 tertiary education system, the Merthyr Learning Quarter. This would cater on one site for academically and vocationally orientated young people, entering through the same gates for different courses enjoying equal levels of esteem. The centre will be developed jointly with the University of Glamorgan, which merged with Merthyr College in 2006. It is hoped the new Merthyr

Learning Quarter will double the number of curriculum options available and greatly increase the numbers interested in carrying on with their education beyond 16 years.

Another ambition, is a university presence in the town. The idea is not simply to add to the already long list of Welsh universities. A university institution in Merthyr would begin by offering foundation courses designed to encourage individuals who might not otherwise have the confidence or the necessary qualifications to take the first

steps towards a degree. "This is about saying 'Look, we will bring a foundation course to you, we will work with you so that you don't have to go away to study. You can prove to yourself you can do this and go on to another university to finish it'" says Neill.

New approaches being developed jointly with the health authority and local authority social services will attempt to persuade older people not to see themselves as "poorly" or less than fully fit, a significant attitudinal problem in the area. The aim will be to try to keep people away from hospital, or, later, a care home.

For other age groups a health park is planned opposite the retail park which will bring together GP surgeries, and a range of other primary care services, with a strong emphasis on the importance of diet and leisure activity as a means of maintaining health and preventing illness. It is hoped that this prevention strategy will reduce the high numbers in the area on incapacity benefit and speed their return to the workforce.

The aim is for the Merthyr that emerges from all this activity to have a growing population with higher skills and greater confidence and fewer individuals

on benefits. At the same time infrastructure will improve. The town centre will be renewed with good communications along the upgraded Heads of the Valleys road and the A470, plus a doubling in the frequency of train services to Cardiff. Merthyr will be in a much better position to market its dramatic geographical situation and its potential as the southern gateway to the Brecon Beacons. All of which should make the town more attractive for investors.

The gap between vision and reality could, of course, remain wide, particularly if the resources needed to complete developments in the pipeline – like the tertiary system – are not made available as a result of forthcoming public sector expenditure cuts. With the era of significant large scale overseas investment projects now over, it will be a challenge to create the jobs needed to keep an increased population in work, even if skill levels can be dramatically improved. And, of course, there always remains the prospect that the brightest and best will continue to flow out to the Welsh coastal plain and beyond.

There is an institutional danger, too, that the constant urge to re-organise public sector organisations in Wales – this time to reduce the number of local authorities from the present 22 – could yet see the borough distracted by further upheaval just as its plans begin to show promise.

For the moment, however, there is enough going on in the town and sufficient plans for a brighter future for the gloomy statistics not to appear to be all that the town is about. As Neill says: "Merthyr's place in the past is secure as a driving force of the industrial revolution. Its current regeneration aims to restore it to a significant status in the economy and life of south Wales once again."

Rhys David, a writer on economy and business issues, is a trustee of the IWA and a former senior editor of the Financial Times..

Angela Gorman pictured with mother and baby and Dr Grace Kodindo (right) at the National Reference Hospital in N'Djamena, Chad.



Saving 13,000 lives

Angela Gorman describes the work of her Welsh charity which prevents women dying during childbirth in the developing world

Every year more than 550,000 women across the world die in pregnancy and childbirth. That figure is equivalent to the number of people who died in the 2004 Tsunami, added to those killed in the Haitian earthquake. The statistic is not meant to diminish the tragedy of those events, yet these women die, unnoticed, year in and year out. Moreover, the figure does not include their babies who often die with them, or soon afterwards.

As each minute that you are reading this article ticks by, another woman will have died. If it takes you 15mins to read the article, no women in Europe, Australia or the USA will have died. At least 15 women in either southern Asia or sub-Saharan Africa will have died. Ninety-nine per cent of the women who die giving life are in the developing world.

Of all the the United Nations Millennium Goals listed in the

accompanying panel, the fifth – reducing the number of women dying in pregnancy and childbirth - is the only one which is going nowhere. The same numbers of women are dying in 2010 as were dying in 2000. Yet, this is probably the easiest of all to achieve and that very achievement will accelerate the rate of success of many of the others. In less than five years the Welsh-based charity *Hope for Grace Kodindo* has saved an estimated 13,000 lives by distributing drugs directly to where they are most needed. We have done this with minimal

resources - funds raised from the public, the purchasing power of NHS Wales, and the Welsh Government facilitating my secondment from a clinical role at Cardiff's heath hospital to the charity.

In June 2005 my life was changed in the time it took me to get out of a chair. I was working as a Senior Sister at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the Heath. One Sunday evening, having quite literally run a twelve-and-a-half hour shift, I came home, watched the 10pm news on the BBC and got up from my chair to turn the TV off, when

United Nations eight Millennium Development Goals announced in 2000

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
2. Achieve universal primary education.
3. Promote gender equality and empower women.
4. Reduce child mortality, that is to reduce the number of children who die before their fifth birthday by two thirds.
5. Improve maternal health, that is to reduce the number of women dying in pregnancy and childbirth by 75 per cent.
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability, including increasing access to safe drinking water.
8. Develop a global partnership for development, including an open and fair trading system.

the newsreader said, “In Panorama which is coming up, there is a report from the central African country of Chad, where a single doctor is fighting to save the lives of pregnant women”. I sat down again and watched in horror at the scenes in front of me. Women were dying for the want of cheap and available drugs for which their families had to find the money, only to return



The Life of Baby Brian

Baby Brian was born in September 2009 in Mbale Uganda. His mother died soon after he was born. Brian’s carers in the Salem Orphanage where he now lives told Angela Gorman that his mother had bled to death. His bare metal cot is now one of seven in the nursery occupied by babies whose mothers have died. Three mothers died of post partum haemorrhage, a condition which can be prevented by administering three tablets which cost 15p each.

Brian will probably remain in the orphanage until 2025 when he reaches the age of 16. The team at Salem do their very best to give the babies and children the time and care they need, but the children are desperate for the one to one attention that most babies and children take for granted.

and find that it was too late.

When the programme was finished, I logged onto the BBC website and got in touch with other viewers who had contacted them. I approached my trade union UNISON and came away with £5,000 to source the medications. We shipped them to Chad and in November 2005, four of the group visited the very hospital which we had seen only five months before. The difference was that on this occasion we saw women being brought back from the brink of death using our medications. During the visit, we met with representatives from the United Nations Population Fund who asked that we keep them up to date with our progress.

In May 2007, having received regular reports from me on the numbers of Chadian women saved, our charity received a request from the Fund to provide the same medications to Liberia and Sierra Leone. Thanks to my seconded role and following visits to both countries, funded by the Wales for Africa Programme, the supply of two key medications began to Liberia in 2008, and to Sierra Leone in 2009. The latter is now recognised by the UN Population Fund as the most dangerous place on earth to be pregnant.

One of the biggest killers of women in the developing world is post-partum haemorrhage – excessive bleeding following delivery - which claims approximately 34 per cent of lives. It can be prevented using a drug called Misoprostol which costs 15p per tablet. A woman would need three. The other significant cause of death is eclampsia (high bloodpressure during pregnancy) which claims 14 per cent of the total deaths. It is treated with a drug called Magnesium Sulphate, which costs 55p per dose. A woman would need 3 to 5 doses. Both of these drugs are always available on delivery units in the West. In the developing world they are either nowhere to be seen, or even worse, are available but at a cost. If women cannot pay for them, they die.

Total fatalities from these two

conditions amount to almost half of the 550,000 deaths a year. Yet it’s extremely cheap and easy to either treat or prevent them. So why has this not happened?

In May 2008, Dr Grace Kodindo, the central figure in the Panorama programme I saw, reported to the European Union that the maternal mortality rate from eclampsia at her hospital had reduced from 14 to 2.3 per cent and the numbers of newborns dying had dropped from 23 to 7.3 per cent of total births. She added that this had not been achieved by large organisations, or governments, but by a small organisation in the UK, the *Hope for Grace Kodindo* charity. More women are now coming to her hospital to give birth because they are seeing women going in and coming out again, alive!

When I visited Redemption hospital in the coastal city of Monrovia in Liberia in March 2009 the Chief Pharmacist danced me around his office saying, “Angela the numbers of women dying are going down and down and down because of your medications!” We both cried.

The same medications are now being supplied to eight hospitals in Somaliland, through the strong links with the Somali community in Cardiff. They are also being supplied to Mbale in Uganda via Pont, the Wales for Africa Health Link based in Pontypridd which is twinned with Mbale. A shipment has been sent to Northern Nigeria following a request from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. Doctors there told me, “Angela, there are wards full of eclamptic women in Northern Nigeria. We go there to teach the staff how to use medicines that they haven’t got!” By the time you read this article they will have received them.

Requests for help are being received from other sub-Saharan countries, including Rwanda, Senegal, Gambia, Tanzania. However, we have a fine balancing act to perform with our resources. We have to ensure that we have sufficient funds to provide the medications for the countries to which

“...I believe that for generations, we in the West have robbed Africa of its natural resources and also its human resources..”

The Labour Ward at the National Reference Hospital in N'Djamena, Chad. Women are referred to it from across the city, but facilities are basic. There is no oxygen. New-born babies are washed under a cold tap, placed on cold tiles, with just a thin coloured sheet. A new blood bank has built but there is no blood supply. Patients have to find family members with the same blood group and bring their blood to the hospital in carrier bags.

we have committed. The need is huge and we are pursuing funding from as many sources as possible.

Why is so little progress being made on the fifth United Nations Millennium Goal? The answer is the tragically low status of women in the developing world. Their value is often assessed by the number of children they produce. These women are unaware of their right to health. When I travel to African countries and see schoolgirls I ask myself how many of them will live past 25 years of age. Or I see pregnant women and ask myself whether they are going to survive their pregnancies. I would never have to think of, or ask myself these questions in the UK.

If the fifth Goal was achieved, the numbers of children dying under 5 years of age would reduce dramatically, thereby achieving the fourth Goal to reduce child mortality by two-thirds. Mothers are the source of nutrition and nurture. They ensure the mosquito nets are in place and the vaccinations are given. The chances of a child dying under the age of 5 years increase tenfold when a mother dies. If

the fifth Goal were achieved it is also likely that we would:

- Reduce poverty levels, the first Goal: women work at producing goods and wealth as well as caring for their families. The financial cost of losing 550,000 women has been estimated to be \$15billion every year.
- Move closer to universal primary education, the second Goal: children (mostly girls) are often taken out of school to look after families when a mother dies.
- Promote gender equality, the third Goal: in countries where maternal mortality has been reduced women are empowered, taking responsibility for their own fertility and having smaller families.

The cost of universalising the *Hope for Grace Kodindo* charity's activities - providing free medications and increasing the numbers of appropriately trained staff - would only be \$5billion. If we don't save these women on humanitarian grounds, we have to do it on financial grounds. The world can't afford to continue losing

such precious resources. The woman lying in a bed in Sierra Leone or Afghanistan, receiving the medications we have sent, won't know or care why she has been saved. All she will know is that she will be safely returned to her family.

I am often asked why I am doing this. Why, in the face of such a monumental task, do I think I can make a difference? I have two answers. The first is I believe that for generations, we in the West have robbed Africa of its natural resources and also its human resources. Having worked in the NHS for 35 years I am all too aware of the numbers of third-world doctors and nurses we depend on, leaving their home countries struggling and failing to keep their citizens alive. So this is a debt we owe, which now needs to be paid back.

The second reason is what I call 'The L'Oreal Effect'. What, you may ask do I mean? Simply, "because they're worth it!"

Angela Gorman is founder of *Hope for Grace Kodindo* – Making Birth Safer in sub-Saharan Africa

Chwarae Teg trading

Ann Hemingway and Elen Jones celebrate the second anniversary of Wales' declaration as the first Fair Trade Nation

Wales became the world's first Fair Trade Nation in 2008 having secured the endorsement of an independent panel of experts. At present, we are the only nation that has achieved this, although Scotland is not far behind. It is aiming to declare national fair trade status by the end of the year if they can meet the same criteria as Wales.

The foundation of Wales's achievement was the 55 per cent of Welsh towns and 40 per cent of universities actively supporting fair trade, coupled with evidence that 43 per cent of the Welsh public were buying at least one Fairtrade product on a regular basis. Support has grown over the past two years. By now 82 per cent of our local authorities and 93 per cent of our universities have achieved Fairtrade status.

In all 91 Fair trade town, counties and village groups in Wales are working at a local and regional level spreading the word and educating others on global interdependence and how making the right consumer choice can bring about positive change. Last year the Farmer's Union of Wales and NFU Cymru declared their support, joining an unprecedented partnership.

The movement began to grow in the late 1990s and took real shape in 2002 when Ammanford became the first Welsh town to achieve Fairtrade Town Status. Shortly afterwards Wrexham became the first county to achieve Fairtrade County status and



Pupils from over 30 schools gather for a Fairtrade event at the Colomendy education and adventure activity centre near Mold in north Wales.

Cardiff the world's first Fairtrade Capital City.

To be a Fairtrade Town a community has to form a steering group, register with the Fairtrade Foundation and produce a dossier evidencing that Fairtrade goods are being sold or used in a range of different outlets and businesses. The Town Council or equivalent body has to sign up to actively support Fairtrade and when functions are held involving refreshments Fairtrade products should be used wherever possible. The achievement of Fairtrade Town status lasts for one year before being reassessed and thereafter reassessment is every two years.

Fair trade is perhaps the most

radical way we can help third world countries. It avoids the traditional approach of seeing communities slide into poverty and then offering aid. Fairtrade certification guarantees not only a fair price, but a premium for community development, education and health projects, human rights including empowering women, prohibition of child slavery, and respect for the environment by promoting sustainable farming practices. The beauty of Fair Trade is that it contributes to at least five of the eight Millennium Development Goals and sits strongly alongside the climate change agenda. It explains why the movement has such strong backing from the Welsh Government and, in particular,

Environment and Sustainability Minister Jane Davidson.

The Fairtrade Mark is an independent certification label that appears on products certified in accordance with Fairtrade economic and environmental standards set by Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International. Following consultation with producers the buyer of Fairtrade products sets a minimum price which guarantees that the producer can cover the cost of sustainable production. When the market price is higher than the Fairtrade minimum price, the market price is payable. All products marketed in the UK carrying the Fairtrade logo attract a premium paid to producers on top of the minimum price. This is then invested in social environmental and economic development projects agreed to by workers on a plantation.

Young people are the key to fair trade becoming part of our normal shopping habit. A third of schools in Wales are registered on the Fairtrade Schools Scheme, with 82 of them

achieving Fairtrade Status. This is 29 per cent of the total number of UK Fairtrade schools. With only seven per cent of the schools in the UK, this is a clear indication of Wales's leadership

Fair Trade Nation status sustainable. Last year saw established brand names such as Cadbury's, Tate & Lyle and Nestle launching products that have been sourced under the Fairtrade

“Young people are the key to fair trade becoming part of our normal shopping habit. A third of schools in Wales are registered on the Fairtrade Schools Scheme, with 82 of them achieving Fairtrade status.”

and commitment to ensuring that young people across the country learn not only about where products come from but about global citizenship, trade justice and sustainability. As an educating tool it can motivate and inspire the next generation and it creates opportunities to discuss global issues and responses.

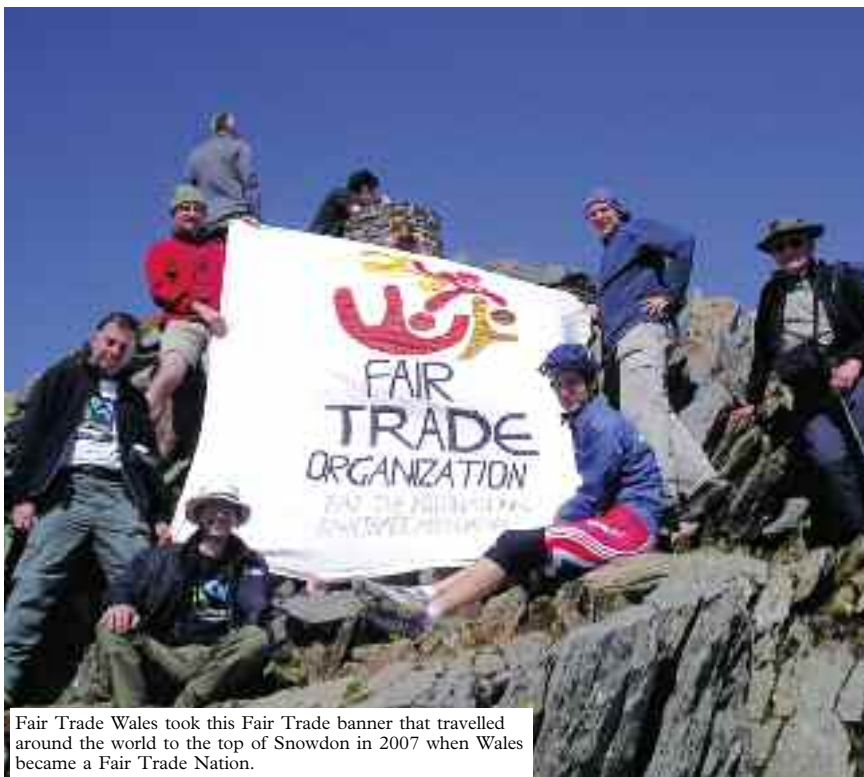
This is undoubtedly a success story. The challenge now is to maintain the momentum. Fair Trade Wales is currently working towards a second phase of targets to make our claim to

criteria. Perhaps this signals a new stage of ethical purchasing that we have not seen before. However, as the multi-nationals sign-up to the Fairtrade label there may be a risk of losing the valuable support of volunteers and the groups that made us a Fair Trade Nation. There is a danger, too, that leaders will take a back seat assuming that fair trade is now so well embedded that they can turn their attention elsewhere.

So we need to remind ourselves of the practical reasons for continuing to develop the market for fair trade products. Actions speak louder than words. With 4,500 products now available in the Fairtrade range, from wine to tropical fruit and clothing to soap, the Welsh Government, local authorities and the NHS should continue to lead by example in procurement policies and affirmative action. For example, can NHS Wales be brave enough to use Fairtrade cotton sheets and Fairtrade cotton uniforms?

Over the next few years the Fairtrade movement is set to grow significantly with a UK wide sales target of £2 billion against £700m last year. Our aim in Wales should be to build on what we have achieved so far, and continue to demonstrate that our small nation can punch well above its weight in the quest for fairer trade.

Ann Hemingway is Chair and **Elen Jones** National Coordinator of Fair Trade Wales
www.fairtradewales.com



Fair Trade Wales took this Fair Trade banner that travelled around the world to the top of Snowdon in 2007 when Wales became a Fair Trade Nation.

To cull or not to cull

David Hedges reports on the controversy over tackling TB in badgers in Pembrokeshire



If you find the science of climate change hard to understand don't try and make sense of the science which is being used to justify the latest action by Government to control an epidemic of TB in cattle and wildlife. It's a disease which at one time was almost eradicated but which is now costing millions of pounds.

We think of TB as a disease of the past but it's the leading cause of death from curable infection across the world and killed 1.8 million people in 2007. And we still see many thousands of cases in the UK. In Wales there are 200 cases a

year and in February Public Health Wales announced an outbreak in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Vaccination was introduced in the middle of the last century. Milk was pasteurised to prevent the spread of TB from cows to humans and infected cattle were culled.

Whilst we still struggle to eliminate TB from the human population we do at least have effective antibiotic treatments so it no longer kills. If only the same were the case with cows. The bacterium which causes disease in humans is different from the one which infects cows and other domesticated and wild animals. But we don't yet have a

vaccine for bovine TB (bTB) and we can't treat it in the same way.

In the early 1960s the UK was declared bTB free. However, in recent years cases have risen sharply – 12,000 cows were slaughtered in Wales in 2008 compared with 669 in 1997. And the £1m spent on compensating Welsh farmers for the loss of cattle in 2000 rose to £24 million in 2009. The Welsh Government has been forced to act by announcing it was to cull badgers during 2010 as part of a programme to control the disease.

While many wild animals carry the disease the badger is seen as the prime cause of TB in cattle. Badgers have protected status and the reaction to the cull is not surprising. But the headlines the cull has attracted have annoyed the Government which has had to deny any policy of badger extermination and reinforce its message that culling is only part of a wider programme to tackle all sources of infection.

The planned cull is part of a programme, influenced by experience of bTB control in New Zealand, which also includes tighter controls on cattle movement and improved bio-security on farms. All these measures are aimed at limiting the potential for cattle and badgers to infect themselves and one another. The programme is a result of the modelling of likely outcomes from a range of approaches which have been considered by Government officials, scientists, vets, animal health, wildlife and ecology experts. It includes five annual badger culls in north Pembrokeshire which has one of the most serious bTB problems in Britain, with 42 per cent of cattle owners who have had at least one case of bTB in their herd since 2003. Badgers will be caught in cages and then shot.

The cull is widely supported by farmers, their unions and by the veterinary profession. However, there is growing opposition from wildlife groups



Anti cull campaigners demonstrate outside the Senedd Building in Cardiff Bay at the end of March.

and landowners who will refuse attempts to access badger setts on their land and who feel the cull is unnecessary, illegal and potentially risking making the problem worse. The Badger Trust and Pembrokeshire Against the Cull are behind legal action which will, if it succeeds, interrupt the Welsh Government's plans.

Each side points to scientific evidence to support their case. The Government cites scientific evidence in support of the cull, while opponents point to research that culling makes things worse and ends up costing more. In England science is behind the UK Government's programme of badger vaccination trials (rather than culls) as a way of controlling the disease in bTB hotspots. There are many accusations of

discredited research methods and results but arguments over the scientific evidence can only go so far.

The bTB testing regime has been a difficult one for farmers. Many doubt the accuracy of the tests with some believing cattle test positive for the disease when they aren't infected. Other critics believe the test fails to discover all of the infection in herds. The testing regime is also viewed as overly bureaucratic and time consuming. But many farmers tire of arguments about whether it is their cattle or badgers that cause infection in the other. They point to the extent of the problem and the threat it poses to their way of life as justification for their pressure for action.

Farming families have seen their life's work in breeding high quality livestock ravaged by the disease, with in some cases whole families of prize-winning animals slaughtered in a matter of days. Some have watched unborn calves struggling inside their infected mothers as they are shot on the farm. And now the cruelty of the badger cull may follow the cull of cattle, with the risk that both sick and healthy animals will be killed.

There will be more protests and more arguments about whether the action is well conceived. But if the cull does go ahead, it will be hard after five years of experience to know what effect it's had on bTB as its going to be only one of a series of measures being used. On its own, therefore, its usefulness as a specific tool for dealing with the disease may be hard to establish.

So uncertainty about the causes and cure are likely to persist. If the programme is deemed to work, it will be rolled out in other hotspots. It seems likely that the combination of measures to control the potential for infection within and between cattle and badger populations will be seen as the way forward. To work it will have to include a badger cull that is effectively managed, a cattle movement regime which is honoured by farmers and proactively policed, better practice in bio-security to keep badgers away from cattle on farms as well as a compensation regime which

incentivises good practice.

It will be five years before we know if it has worked in north Pembrokeshire. What it will mean for other parts of Wales and the UK where bTB continues to be a problem. What will the badger vaccination trials in England show us? And for how long might any reduction in bTB continue? By then a vaccine for cattle may have been created – it's estimated to be at least 2015 before one will be ready. Perhaps the only way we'll ever be able to see cattle free of this disease is to breed disease resistant animals but that is likely to be many years away.

The importance of the dairy and beef businesses to the rural economy weighs heavy on the minds of politicians. Farmers and their representative bodies have worked hard to press Government into action in the face of worsening infection. Although the direct risk of bTB to human health is not a concern, the indirect risk to the health of families losing cattle and seeing their business go as a result, is something no Government can ignore. And many farmers are convinced, through their own experience, that infection in the badger population is a key agent responsible for the rise in bTB in their own herds. Whatever the truth, perception is powerful. And for those whose compassion for badgers is without compromise, there is little enthusiasm for measures they are convinced will not be effective.

Whatever the results of the imminent legal challenges to badger culling, the Government's critics will continue to dispute the science and the impact of culling as part of a wider programme of action. It is true that Governments have a frustrating capacity to introduce policy which is neither evidence-based nor designed to allow effective evaluation. On this occasion the Welsh Government's approach to controlling bTB is at least grounded in scientific study and will be capable of some kind of evaluation.

David Hedges is Director of the consultancy Cyngor Da.

Science shops Wales

Steven Harris advocates a bottom up approach to supporting participation in the knowledge economy

Science Shops Wales is now in its fourth year of operation as one of the leading community-university partnerships in the UK. Established at the University of Glamorgan in 2006 with support from the Higher Education Funding Council of Wales, it offers citizens' groups free or low-cost access to scientific and technological knowledge.

Science Shops Wales has eight full-time staff based at the University of Glamorgan and a network of contract researchers. Between 2006–9 it engaged with around 6,500 individuals, and more than 250 Welsh organisations. Its community research database contains at least 100 individual research questions. Access to the database is via the website www.scienceshops.wales.org which contains project reports, handbooks, leaflets and other publications.

At any one time between ten and 15 short-term and three or four major projects are underway, with partner organisations making contact either directly through the 'hub' at Glamorgan or through one of twelve contact points



Science Shops staff with local people undertaking a community bio-diversity audit at Cwmaman in the Cynon Valley.

in community buildings across south east Wales. Clients and collaborators include community and voluntary groups of all types and sizes, from mother and toddler groups and schoolteachers to regeneration trusts, environmental associations and Communities First partnerships.

The principal activities of Science Shops Wales are to match student researchers with external organisations to work on accredited research projects. We look to the following criteria when making these connections:

- Projects must have clear research questions that are practicable within available resources. Science Shops Wales offers support in developing projects which is often a useful learning exercise.
- Organisations must not have the full financial means to access research expertise by other routes. Science Shops research services are intended to complement, rather than compete with more conventional knowledge transfer routes.
- The results of Science Shops research

will be freely available for use by all.

- Priority is given to projects that promote social, environmental and cognitive justice.

Many Welsh organisations are attempting to replace or supplement their dependency on grant funding with more sustainable forms of income from community social enterprise. Some are also trying to build local resilience to threats such as climate change and peak oil. For example, Science Shops Wales projects have engaged with a number of sustainable community food production initiatives across south-east Wales, including:

- A ground-breaking feasibility study on a proposed indoor, hydroponic vertical food production centre in the Garw Valley.
- Permaculture design initiatives.
- Renewable energy feasibility studies on schools, pubs and community buildings within a whole valley.
- Support for a consortium of organisations to plan, build and then run two recycled biodiesel distribution



A permaculture course underway at Edwardsville primary school in Merthyr Vale. Permaculture creates artificial eco-systems for growing food which is highly intensive in terms of both labour and yield.

points in the Cynon Valley and Rhondda Fach.

Science Shops Wales has also gained experience in supporting community biodiversity audits, working in partnership with wildlife and conservation experts to upskill local citizens' groups. We have been working with the Welsh Local Government Association on a *Changing Climate, Changing Places* project with local authority staff; with National Museum Wales to produce a climate exhibition, now touring Wales. We have also delivered workshops to housing associations and voluntary organisations and distributed a wide range of literature on scientific, technical, social and economic topics.

The international Science Shops movement to which Science Shops Wales belongs brings together organisations in more than 34 countries around the world, all working with science in its broadest sense. Supported by the EU under successive framework programmes, the Science Shops process provides an effective means of generating

new, socially-relevant knowledge and of adapting and combining existing knowledge to specific economic and cultural contexts.

Civil society organisations extend their capacity to engage with problems, while benefits also accrue to the universities that host Science Shops. Student researchers use their community-based research to fulfil coursework commitments - typically through Honours or Masters' projects - greatly enriching their student experience and subsequent employability. Academic staff generate data, publications, and novel research topics and directions, while gleaning a rich harvest of case studies to support their teaching. Science Shop activities fulfil a university's core 'missions' of research, teaching and strengthening links with local communities.

The relatively late development of Science Shops in the UK reflects a lack of engagement with civil society. Since devolution Wales has forged ahead in this respect, although there is still a long way to go before we have a truly pluralist political culture. Access to knowledge is

indispensable to democratic participation. Science Shops Wales supports the emergence of 'bottom up' knowledge and expertise, offering a contrast to more 'top down' approaches.

At the national level, Science Shops can facilitate public engagement with science, technology and innovation, allowing citizen's voices to be heard in an arena all too often dominated by state and corporate interests. Of course, Science Shops can be difficult to finance. The multi-faceted and interdisciplinary nature of their work means they do not easily fit into neat funding categories. The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales has led the way enabling a pilot service that already far outstrips provision in other parts of the UK. Is it too much to hope that in the future Wales will emulate other advanced democracies such as the Netherlands and Canada by establishing a permanent, national network of Science Shops in our Welsh universities?

Steven Harris manages Science Shops Wales at the University of Glamorgan.

Merfyn Jones argues that investment in higher education should remain a national priority

Future of our universities

The 'cutting edge' of the new Environment Centre Wales at Bangor University is the building itself. It is one of only three buildings worldwide to have received a commendation for its sustainable credentials from the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors. It brings scientists from the University and the Natural Environment Research Council's Centre of Ecology and Hydrology together under one roof, creating opportunities for cross-fertilisation of ideas.

At the beginning of March the Minister for Children, Education and Life Long Learning, Leighton Andrews, announced the setting up of a Review of the Governance of Higher Education in Wales. This will be the latest in a series of higher education reviews dating back to the Aberdare Report of 1881. Indeed, in 2000 one of the first initiatives of the National Assembly was to launch a review of Higher Education, chaired by Cynog Dafis. But rather than being yet another review I believe this one may signal a culmination, rather than a repeat of the earlier surveys since it is to be focussed on one issue – how are universities governed.

I say that as the Chair of the so-called 'Jones Review' of higher education which was established by Jane Hutt in June 2008 when she was Minister of

Education. The first Phase of my review, presented to the Minister in September 2008, centred on student financing arrangements. Phase Two, which reported to the Minister in April 2009, considered the role, funding and mission of Higher Education in Wales.

Both Phases, particularly the first, were highly technical. Student financing arrangements are convoluted and a number of intricate options were considered. Phase Two considered a variety of issues: widening access, economic impact, employer participation, internationalisation, teaching and learning, the student experience, research, links with further education – as well as personal intellectual development. However, despite this inevitable complexity, the two Phases focussed on a couple of central and related themes:

- The balance between the funding of

Higher Education and the funding of students in Phase One.

- The positioning of Higher Education within national priorities in Phase Two.

Both issues held considerable political resonances given the debate on student financing. In 2004 this came within a whisker of undermining Tony Blair's premiership. In Wales it led to different arrangements being adopted under conditions of great political tension.

The Jones Review group argued that rather than subsidise fees for all Welsh-domiciled students at Welsh institutions – a hugely expensive exercise - funding should be targeted at those in greatest need and at the time when they needed that support, that is when they were students. No student would pay fees while studying but would start to repay when they started earning at a certain level. The monies

eventually released by this change would be invested in further student bursaries and in much-needed investment in higher education. Fundamental to this case was the understanding that students needed to study in well-funded institutions with excellent facilities and equipped with adequate learning and research resources and technologies.

Elsewhere in the world the debate had centred on the best ways of funding higher education as a key component in strategies to ensure global competitiveness. In Wales, the debate had tended to be centred on the funding of students rather than the institutions which they attended.

Phase Two of the Report explored the wider context of this debate. Why invest in higher education? What should the contribution of universities be to the creation of a knowledge economy, to the creation of a critical citizenry, to the health and well-being of our communities? We argued that a vibrant higher education sector was critical to the future of Wales. To give one example, in England most research and development is undertaken by business with higher education making a contribution; in Wales most research and development is carried out in our universities with business making a contribution.

At the recent IWA conference in Cardiff on *Making Wales more Business Friendly*, speaker after speaker emphasised the importance of higher education in attracting talent, creating export earnings, providing the advanced skills needed for the future, and in conducting research and development. Phase Two of the Jones Report argued that for the sake of the future of Wales we needed to reposition higher education in our national priorities.

Government responded positively and quickly. The new student funding arrangements advocated in Phase One were accepted. In response to our Phase Two report the Welsh Government published *For Our Future: The 21st*



A new generation high field Magnetic Resonance Imaging scanner at Bangor University's School of Psychology, used for both academic and clinical research.

Century Higher Education Strategy and Plan for Wales. This explicitly adopted many of the arguments developed in Phase Two. It rightly emphasised the importance of higher education to social justice and to economic development and enthusiastically adopted the proposed “repositioning within national priorities” of higher education. At much the same time Ieuan Wyn Jones, Minister for the Economy and Transport, signalled a shift in economic policy which would place more emphasis on generating innovation and skills, with a major role for our universities.

It could be argued, therefore, that Government has kept its side of the bargain. The central importance of higher education has been embraced and, albeit some years in the future, additional funding has been found. Critically, the swingeing cuts in the higher education budget announced in England have not been repeated in Wales although long-standing concerns about funding levels remain. Everyone recognises that the future of public sector investment is uncertain, to say the least.

Phase Two of the Jones Report had concluded that Higher Education “has to become central to the task of creating thriving and enquiring communities in a prosperous and culturally alive Wales, and the higher education sector itself must rise to that challenge with imagination and dedication”. The

Review announced by Leighton Andrews, and his subsequent Remit Letter to the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, published as we go to press, need to be seen in that context. How *does* Higher Education rise to the challenge? For it is widely acknowledged, and was readily accepted by the Jones Review, that a step change is required on many fronts, and in many dimensions, if we are to succeed.

The Minister has asked some uncomfortable questions as to our capacity and appetite to change and respond. Nonetheless, Higher Education Wales which represents the Vice-Chancellors, as well as the Chairs of Higher Education Wales which represents Governing Bodies - have welcomed the new Review of Governance. This is an immensely complicated and difficult area which involves Charters and Statutes and no end of technical complications, not to speak of some big and controversial questions concerning autonomy and accountability. These developments signal a new stage in policy making, and it is to be hoped delivery. Lord Aberdare might be justified in peering over our shoulders 120 years on to see how effectively we respond this time round.

Professor Merfyn Jones is Vice Chancellor of Bangor University, an IWA trustee and Chair of the IWA's North Wales Branch.

The case for self-regulation

Gareth Elwyn Jones declares that the profession would do away with the General Teaching Council for Wales at its peril

Organisations often spend absurd sums designing an immediately identifiable logo. Often these capsules of information convey a subliminal message. Consider that of the England and Wales Cricket Board – the traditional crown and lions of England, underscored by the initials ECB. We can draw our own conclusions. But others closer to the teaching profession can also tell an interesting, if not quite so demeaning, story. The logo of the General Teaching Council for England consists of the three large letters GTC. Scotland and Wales have to spell theirs out.

Timing is similarly illuminating. The Scots got their Teaching Council in 1966. Wales had to wait for its Council until the political will existed to create a Council for England. That only happened in 2000, a year after devolution. It was inconceivable in that context that a separate Council would not be set up for Wales, but we should be under no illusion as to why we in Wales had to wait.

And a long time it's been. The debate over the professional standing of teachers has been going on since the beginnings of state schooling in the 19th Century. Whatever we may think now, that status, particularly for elementary school teachers, was mixed, conditioned by snobbery and types of training. Only since World War II has the professionalism debate been more profound. Nevertheless, the teaching profession has quite rightly argued that there should be public recognition of its status, mirroring that of the medical and legal professions. One aspect of this was the ability to exercise a measure of

control over its members, implying a professional body similar to the General Medical Council.

The Medical Council has a history going back to 1858. Creating even a pale reflection of a similar kind of body for teachers amid the control freakery which has increased exponentially in the last thirty years among British governments, was not likely to be easy. Decades of pressure resulted in action only very recently. Too many vested interests did not wish to yield up control or influence to another body. Teachers' unions did not exactly warm to the idea. But the world has not been turned upside down. This is hardly surprising, given that the General Teaching Council for Wales, mirroring its English counterpart in a different context, has to work with the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and Estyn, the Welsh inspectorate, to name but a few.

Nevertheless, the General Teaching Council for Wales does have crucial responsibilities which reflect teacher professionalism. All practicing teachers in Wales have to be registered, giving the Council an important role in overseeing their qualifications, their professional conduct and status, as well as their professional development. In this last capacity it has distributed valued funds for individual teacher projects and research, now sadly curtailed by DCELLS.

We might imagine that teacher professionals would welcome an organisation which allowed their peers to protect these aspects of their professionalism. However, registration costs money and nobody likes paying bills, especially when recently those bills have become slightly in excess of those paid by teachers in England. A flurry of bad publicity was generated. In the vanguard were the teacher unions which have never been contented bedfellows of



A young teacher involved in Early Professional Development under the auspices of the General Teaching Council for Wales.



Sir William Atkinson, head teacher of Phoenix High School in London, delivers the 2009 General Teaching Council for Wales' annual lecture in Cardiff on supporting pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

any of the teaching councils. Complaints homed in on such matters as the chief executive's salary and the fact that disciplinary hearings take place in a reasonably up market city hotel. As a retired university teacher with no particular axe to grind I am in no position to take sides in such matters, although I suspect that if a disciplinary hearing were to take place in a disused aircraft hangar it might lead to a different kind of complaint.

What does concern me is not the minutiae but general principles, which tend to be neglected in favour of superficial polemic. It is important to think through the implications of some of the courses of action which have been suggested. The first of these, that the General Teaching Council for Wales be disbanded, would at a stroke undermine recognition of the professionalism of teachers. Of course, the existence of such an organisation is not of itself a guarantee of status. Nevertheless, it goes a long way to affording public recognition that teachers themselves are capable of drawing up and enforcing certain standards of professional conduct, registering that individual teachers are properly qualified and trained to do a crucial, high-level job, and can initiate their own professional development. The credibility of the

profession is at least partly bound up with the existence of an independent regulatory body and its position needs to be shored up rather than undermined if that body is to have sufficient authority to bring some pressure on all powerful central and local government.

For historical and social reasons, the teaching councils in Wales and outside cannot hope to replicate the influence which the General Medical Council has in determining the content of courses and their recognition. But for political and social reasons, teachers would surely be well-advised not to spurn the limited recognition conferred by the teaching councils. Education is politicised in a way entirely foreign to the world of medicine. Of course, government is obsessed by the National Health Service, and issues of public health but no government pretends to have the expertise to draw up the content of courses and set the standards for their recognition.

Nevertheless, education acts have come pouring out of Whitehall in the last few decades in unprecedented fashion. The result has been, with some modification recently and especially in Wales, the diminution of teacher responsibility, independence and professional judgment in doing a demanding job unsupervised by the nanny state. Just as significant is the

relationship between teachers and the public, with so many of the general population setting themselves up as experts in education. If the General Teaching Council for Wales did not exist its professional functions would be taken over by the Welsh Government, and specifically by DCELLS. Standards of conduct would be established and enforced by anonymous bureaucrats either there or in the local authorities. The teaching profession needs as much recognition as it can manufacture of its own involvement in regulating itself. It does away with the teaching councils at its peril.


The strangest new proposal, emanating from one Welsh teacher union, has been that the General Teaching Council for Wales should be disbanded and Welsh teachers join the English Council. What benefits are supposed to result are unclear. Pragmatically, it ignores a spate of virulent criticism of the Council in England. In fact, a *Times Education Supplement* columnist has suggested that disciplinary matters should be in hands of governors or local authorities, mirroring precisely some Welsh moans.

What it would achieve negatively would be profound harm to the teaching profession in Wales. It would be a statement of principle which wholly contradicted the notion of a separate education policy in Wales. The logic of this becomes even more weird in the light of the general approval among practitioners that education has been one of the striking successes of devolution, charting out a different course which is often the envy of teachers from across Offa's Dyke. We would land up with the teaching profession's version of the England and Wales Cricket Board - Wales in the subtitles but not in the logo. Is this really what teachers in Wales want for their profession and for Wales?

Gareth Elwyn Jones is Emeritus Professor of Education with the University of Wales.

Planning for behaviour change

Chris Mills explains how Environment Agency Wales is gearing up for climate change



Rhossili Bay on the Gower, viewed from Wormshead – the EU's revised Bathing Waters Directive means that standards are being raised even further. Photo: National Trust Cymru.

In many ways the quality of the environment in Wales has never been better. Significant progress has been made in improving our air, land and water as the basic building blocks on which society and wildlife depend. They are cleaner today than at any time since the the Industrial Revolution.

The most damaging pollutant emissions have steadily decreased over the last 20 years and over 300 hectares of contaminated land have been brought back into use since 2006. More of our municipal waste is recycled and composted, and the proportion of waste sent to landfill is decreasing.

Water quality has steadily improved. More of our beaches are achieving 'Blue Flag' status and nine out of ten of our rivers reached 'very good' or 'good' chemical and biological status in 2008. The River Taff which once ran black and thick with mine and industrial waste is now home to healthy and increasing salmon stocks and last year played host

to the UK's fly-fishing championships. Salmon are now spawning as far upstream as Merthyr Tydfil for the first time in over a century and more people are fishing.

More properties are being protected from flooding (we are spending four times more on flood defences today than ten years ago) and more people are warned about flooding.

But it's not all good news. Commercial and industrial waste is increasing. Fly tipping is still at an unacceptably high level and some of our aquatic biodiversity such as water voles and pearl mussel have declined to critical levels.

And we face new challenges, most crucially the global threat of climate change. This is a problem so great that we have to act now. There is an urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to prevent more severe climate change in the future.

Environment Agency Wales is supporting the Welsh Government to achieve its target of a three per cent

Carbon annual reduction from 2011. Even so the greenhouse gases emitted today will still be affecting the climate in a hundred years time. There's also a need to manage the consequences of the change in climate already caused, which will impact upon us for many generations to come.

One in six properties in Wales is already at risk of flooding and this figure is likely to increase as the impacts of climate change take hold. Extreme weather patterns are predicted, resulting in increased flooding and droughts. Within the next 40 years it is estimated that the amount of water flowing in our rivers could reduce by 10 to 15 per cent, and as much as 80 per cent during summer months, due to climate change. At the same time, Wales' population is set to grow by 400,000, meaning greater demand on decreasing water supplies, particularly in south east Wales.

Furthermore we now face tougher expectations. The European Water Framework Directive sets new and more challenging standards for rivers and other

water bodies, placing much greater emphasis on the ecological status of the water environment. And the revised Bathing Waters Directive demands that the standard of our bathing waters be raised even further. We are also charged with helping to achieve the ambitious target of zero waste by 2050, as part of the Welsh Government's 'Towards Zero Waste' strategy.

The Environment Agency's priorities include improving our flood forecasting to provide more timely and accurate flood warnings, and developing a long-term plan for flood risk investment and development, including how to deal with coastal erosion. We will also be increasing our community engagement work to make communities at risk of flooding more flood resilient. This will involve informing them of their flood risk, the steps they can take to prepare themselves for a flood, and to recover more quickly should this occur.

River Basin Management Plans are setting out how water companies, farming groups, industry, local authorities, the Environment Agency and others will taking collective action to tackle pollution and other pressures on the water environment. We're also



Salmon are now spawning in the River Taff as far upstream as Merthyr for the first time in 100 years... but the pearl mussel (below) is declining to critical levels.



working with partners to achieve the new higher standards for bathing water quality to help Local Authorities gain Blue Flag status for designated bathing beaches.

To help achieve zero waste by 2050, specifically to reduce waste sent to landfill, we have a part to play in influencing industry in terms of their resource efficiency, encouraging them through our regulatory role to produce

less waste and recycle more.

We will also continue to tackle contaminated land and historic mine pollution. And most crucially we are playing our part (both in an advisory and regulatory role) in combating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change, factoring climate change predictions into all of our work.

The pressures on public spending that we are bound to face over the coming five years, the lifespan of the corporate plan we have just published, will influence how much we deliver and at what pace. We aim to be as innovative and as efficient as possible and work even more closely with our partners. We intend to play our part in finding sustainable solutions to the challenges we face, by sharing expertise and evidence and pooling limited resources.

It is only through working together that we can create a better environment now and for future generations. We will all need to work together if we are to succeed in the behaviour changes that will be necessary to cope with the challenges of climate change.

Chris Mills is Director of Environment Agency Wales.

Forthcoming Conferences

iwa

Food in the City

Monday 24 May, 9.00 – 4.00pm,
Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff

Cardiff has just become a signed-up member of the World Health Organization's *Healthy Cities* programme which addresses such challenges as child poverty and obesity. Urban food planning has become one of the quintessential global challenges of the 21st Century. This conference charts the development of urban food planning and the Welsh Government's new Food Strategy.

Keynote Speakers: Professor Kevin Morgan, Cardiff University, Steve Garrett, Director, Riverside Community Market; Elin Jones AM, Minister for Rural Affairs; Barny Haughton, Chef and Owner, Bordeaux Quay, Bristol.

£65 (£50 IWA members)

New Life for Town Centres: Unique Places for Regeneration

Thursday 24 June, 9.00 – 4.00pm,
Gwent Branch Conference, Caerphilly
County Borough Council, Ystrad Mynach

A town's centre, its architecture, public art and other landmarks celebrate achievement and represent a community's cultural heritage, not just to itself but to the wider world. This conference examines of town centre renewal and the Welsh Government's regeneration policy.

Keynote speakers: Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive, Design Commission for Wales; Jocelyn Davies, Minister for Housing and Regeneration; Alun Ffred Jones AM, Minister for Heritage; Simon Quinn, Chief Executive, Association of Town Management.

£65 (£50 IWA members)

Building the Welsh Health Economy

Monday 28 June, 9.45am – 3.45pm,
Parc Hotel, Park Place, Cardiff

Wales has more than 290 companies working in medical and life sciences, key sectors for economic development and science policy. How can the sector make a bigger contribution to meeting Welsh health needs and growing the economy?

Keynote speakers: Professor Sir Mansel Aylward, Chair, Public Health Wales; Professor Ceri Phillips, Department of Health Economics, Swansea University; Gwyn Tudor, Forum Manager, Medi Wales; Ieuan Wyn Jones AM, Deputy First Minister and Minister for Economic Development, Welsh Government; David Perry, Chief Executive, European Care Group.

£95 (£80 IWA members)

Concept drawing of Covanta's proposed Brig y Cwm Energy from Waste facility on the outskirts of Merthyr



Making waste pay its way

Malcolm Chilton says non-recyclable waste should be used to generate sustainable electricity

Wales relies heavily on sending waste that cannot be recycled or reused to landfill sites. The rubbish rots underground and produces harmful greenhouse gases that have been proven to damage our environment. So, along with other EU countries we are faced with challenging reduction targets for the amount of residual waste we will be allowed to send to landfill in future years.

Under the European Union Landfill Directive Target, Wales must cut the amount of waste it sends to landfill by 50 per cent by 2013 compared to the amount sent in 1995. If this and ever more challenging future targets are not met, then heavy financial penalties will follow for local authorities. And that would impact on council tax bills.

In addition, the cost of burying residual waste is also set to increase significantly over the next few years with landfill taxes set to rise by 80 per cent this year. Combine all of this with the

anticipated £500 million cut in public sector spending in Wales, and the need for a new and more cost effective solution for the treatment of waste is compelling. Even allowing for ambitious government recycling targets, there will still be a need to dispose of millions of tonnes of residual waste. It is against this backdrop that Covanta Energy UK has developed its £400 million project to produce energy from waste on an industrial site at Brig y Cwm on the outskirts of Merthyr Tydfil.

Energy from Waste facilities divert residual waste from landfill and combust it to generate heat and electricity – in fact recovering some of the energy used in making the products that become waste. Covanta currently operates 45 such facilities worldwide. Energy from Waste is widely used in America and mainland European countries to treat residual waste. Covanta processes over 17 million tonnes of municipal solid waste a year which equates to nearly 46,000 tonnes per day.

Based on detailed calculations of waste that take into account ambitious recycling targets, the proposed Brig y Cwm facility will be adequately sized to process much of Wales's residual waste – greatly easing our looming landfill problem while producing sustainable energy. With the site being close to a railway line, it will be possible for large volumes of waste to be brought in from across Wales by rail, so minimising the need for road haulage. Covanta has already entered an agreement with the Freightliner Group that will enable the transportation of waste by rail from Cardiff to Brig y Cwm. This will form part of a network of facilities across Wales that we plan to develop.

With the ability to generate 70MW of energy, over 180,000 Welsh homes could receive energy generated from non-recyclable waste they threw into the bin just a few days earlier.

There is an opportunity as well to investigate making lower cost energy available to homes and public buildings

in Merthyr. This should help attract other new industry investors to an area in need of more employment.

Energy from Waste is new to Wales and so there are some understandable questions. Some, for example, have concerns about the impact it will have on recycling levels. Energy from Waste is not an alternative to recycling. It is an effective way of diverting residual waste from landfill and generating valuable energy. In fact, in America Covanta has seen recycling rates increase in areas where Energy from Waste facilities have been built. The key is for effective recycling and waste minimisation initiatives to be implemented in conjunction with an Energy from Waste facility.

There are also questions about the environmental and health impacts. Covanta will make the findings of environmental studies carried out into the Merthyr proposal available to the public. We will operate a very clean facility with negligible environmental impact. In Europe and America Energy from Waste plants are often located in

densely populated urban areas with some plants built close to good quality housing and new developments.

If given the go-ahead, the facility will be closely monitored by Environment Agency Wales and be required to meet strict emission targets. Operating in full compliance with these regulations is core to Covanta's environmental philosophy. In fact, Covanta is committed to operating well below environmental permit levels.

Wales still has a way to go in reducing its dependency on landfill sites for disposing of waste that cannot be reused or recycled. While landfill reduction targets are helping to reduce this dependency, they do not answer the question of what is to be done with residual waste after landfill sites have closed. Covanta's proposed investment in Wales offers the chance for a solution to this problem – and in the process providing sustainable energy for decades to come.

Malcolm Chilton is the managing director of Covanta Energy UK.



Covanta's Energy from Waste plant in Montgomery County in the USA, a rail fed operation similar to one proposed for Brig y Cwm.



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Lord Gwilym Prys Davies

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IWA Fellow, Liberal Democrat Peer,
Lord Livesey of Talgarth

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IWA Fellow, **Rt. Hon. Dafydd Wigley**
Honorary President, Plaid Cymru

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Beauty and Blaenau Ffestiniog

Blaenau Ffestiniog viewed from the summit of Moelwyn Mawr, looking eastwards. Tanygrisiau reservoir is in the foreground with the large white building immediately beyond the Rehau plastics factory. Photo: John Briggs.

Peter Ogden applauds the bid by the town at the heart of Snowdonia to become part of the National Park that surrounds it

Who would have thought 20 years ago that there would have been calls for one of the largest and possibly most dramatic of all industrial landscapes in Wales to be included in a National Park designated because of its natural beauty?

Well it seems that everything that goes round comes round. Not before time the true historic and social relevance of our latter day industrial heritage is finally getting its proper recognition. The bleak allure of Blaenau Ffestiniog will be all too familiar to anyone who has walked in the remarkable landscape of Cwm Orthin on a cold rain-soaked January day. Anyone who has done so will be aware of the contribution that those who worked in the Rhosydd and other slate mines made to Wales'

industrial heritage. The drama and silent awe that human effort has imprinted on this valley is probably one of the most powerful and evocative experiences that any landscape in Wales can provide.

Nostalgia aside and following many years of slow and painful post-industrial recuperation, this valley and the town of Blaenau Ffestiniog are now the focus of a new and intriguing call to arms. In February, a proposal was registered by Blaenau Ffestiniog's town council for their famous hole in the middle of the Snowdonia National Park to be osmotically absorbed into it. This request may send shock waves through the ranks of some landscape traditionalists or wildlife purists. In reality, however, the call focuses attention upon a much more fundamental issue, which is how we view

what is important to us and the values that we place on special landscapes, be they unspoilt or manmade.

The town of Blaenau Ffestiniog, with slate coursing every artery of life and its massive waste tips sculpturing every contour of its character, is nothing less than a heritage paradox. As a landscape it is certainly not one of Wales' most naturally beautiful. Yet as a expression of man's impact on his surroundings, the character of this unique landscape bears all the social hallmarks of the extraordinary toil and strife of human endeavour. By anyone's standards, this forgotten landscape is second to none and a testimony to one of the defining building blocks of Wales' industrial history.

So having been soundly rejected in the 1950s as an area which was

scenically worthless and unfit for inclusion in the National Park, Blaenau is rebounding and in so doing helping us to realise the true relevance of man's relationship with his surroundings and the valuable contributions such areas can make to understanding and appreciating our past. Our sense of respect for places and spaces shaped by past human activities should no longer be an embarrassing burden on our attitudes towards landscape quality. Rather, it should be an important driving force for the care we need to show for all aspects of our environment and for places that matter to the average person on the street.

Allowing the National Park flag to flutter over Blaenau Ffestiniog is not only a perfect example of the principles which underpin the European Landscape Convention, that "*landscapes matter*", but also illustrates that within this ambition, some landscapes now matter perhaps more than we had previously realised. If nothing else, Blaenau Ffestiniog has been propelled into the forefront of the debate about the cultural importance of 'bro' and of the value of places with

which people have strong connections.

Although "outstanding natural beauty" remains the legal benchmark used to define areas worthy of protection and inclusion in the nation's portfolio of prized landscapes, the marker posted for Blaenau Ffestiniog to be part of the Snowdonia National Park challenges us to think about how we now should define Wales' most cherished landscapes.

Blaenau Ffestiniog's bid, which has been supported in principle by Snowdonia National Park, raises intriguing questions as to the future status of those parts of Wales with a strong sense of place and how we attribute national identity to landscapes which reflect the distinctiveness of our social, cultural and industrial past. If Blaenau has the distinction of being a World Heritage site because of the "outstanding universal value" of its Ironworks and surrounding man made landscapes, where does that leave Blaenau, given its status as one of the world's most important and influential slate mining landscapes? Aren't the social-scapes of Blaenau Ffestiniog, Llanberis, the Rhondda and other

south Wales mining valleys just as much an important part of our landscape inheritance as the spectacular mountain-scapes of Eryri or the rugged seascapes of Pembrokeshire?

Although our existing National Park areas must be retained because of the public benefits their special qualities and outstanding natural beauty provide, ever changing circumstances mean that what they represent and our expectations of them should evolve. No longer should we view them as just scenic trophies, but recognise and promote these nationally important areas as exemplars of sustainable and culturally valued lived in landscapes. In so doing we must therefore actively support those who manage our National Parks to pursue pioneering and creative ways of managing our finest heritage assets. In the process we can also ensure that local communities in them can thrive, the 'green economy' of rural Wales can flourish, and Wales' premier open spaces can make an even greater contribution to the health and mental well being of our nation.

There is a growing acceptance in our National Park Authorities that their stewardship principles should not just see their territories as the storehouses of our natural and scenic treasures but also as the flag bearers of Wales' cultural heritage. As to whether Blaenau Ffestiniog will be absorbed into the Snowdonia National Park is a fascinating challenge for the Countryside Council for Wales and the Welsh Government. What could be important in this decision is that the notice given by Blaenau not only questions how we judge the true value of our landscapes, but also points us towards what a culturally refreshed 21st Century vision for Wales' National Parks can offer.

Peter Ogden is Director of the Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales.

A closer view of Blaenau Ffestiniog. Photo: John Briggs.



John McGrath explains how newly launched National Theatre Wales is part of a nation-building project

Improvising a tradition

Siwan Morris as Dirty Karen in National Theatre Wales's inaugural production *A Good Night Out in the Valleys*.

At a Europe-wide gathering of National Theatres at Teatr Narodowy in Warsaw last September, National Theatre Wales was the youngest company in attendance, although not by much. Europe's political geography has, of course, shifted hugely in the past 20 years, and, with those changes, the organisation of culture and its relationship to government and nation, have been open to many shifts too.

At first it might seem odd that Wales has national theatres in two languages, plus a stake of sorts in the building on the Thames – 'The Royal National Theatre of Great Britain'. Yet Wales is not alone. At the European gathering there were a variety of such bespoke solutions to the question of how a theatre can represent a nation. Greece has a national theatre for the north and another for the south, Belgium has one for each language, Sweden has one for Stockholm and another touring to every town and

village, while in the Balkans the whole situation is very complicated indeed.

Nonetheless, the meeting was heartening. In the midst of political complexity, the directors and producers who came together believed that theatre has a role in relation to the question of nationhood, not as a patriotic symbol, but as a forum where a country's past, present and future can be explored, imagined, and debated.

Like all national theatres National Theatre Wales grows out of a political context. In our case the creation of the National Assembly provided the essential capacity and momentum. While there have been movements in the past to set up a national theatre, this time the presence of a democratically elected body to sanction the initiative means that National Theatre Wales, and its sister company Teatr Genedlaethol Cymru, have a very different status and, it is to be hoped, a more secure long-term future.

Two of the other theatres in attendance at the Warsaw meeting were of particular relevance to Wales. The National Theatre of Scotland similarly



Boyd Clack as Con, and Sharon Morgan as Mabel.



Sharon Morgan in rehearsals for *A Good Night Out in the Valleys*.

grew out of the devolution process, and has pioneered the model of a national theatre without a building, with considerable success. The Scottish precedent helped Wales to imagine a national theatre that need not wait for vast capital investment, nor get lost in arguments about location. And while the theatre infrastructure in Wales is very different to that in Scotland, with far less of a producing theatre tradition, we have undoubtedly benefited from Scottish support and expertise in establishing National Theatre Wales.

An equally interesting contribution during the meeting came from the Abbey Theatre, based in Dublin. It is a theatre deeply embedded in the process of nation-building and decolonisation, but the child also of the very specific Anglo-Irish culture of Yeats's circle. One very interesting comment made by the Abbey's Literary Manager Aileen Howard was that the theatre, with its extraordinary literary tradition from Synge to O'Casey and beyond, today finds it hard to identify writers who will engage with direct political and social subject matter, the bread and butter of many English dramatists. She felt that the Abbey's success in developing a particular dramatic writing tradition had also sometimes trapped writers within that tradition.

All in all the European Meeting of National Theatres, which was the first ever - again emphasising the renewed importance of the 'national theatre question' - provided a very interesting frame through which to see the questions which inevitably get asked of National Theatre Wales. How will the company address history? How can it represent a diverse and decentralised country? What is the canon? The conference indicated that there are no magic answers to any of these questions, except to emphasise that the role of a national theatre is to engage with them in an open and imaginative way.

“By making each piece of work in this first year in a different location, and ensuring that a vibrant link from theatre to location, we will start to explore a nation in all of its many contemporary manifestations.”

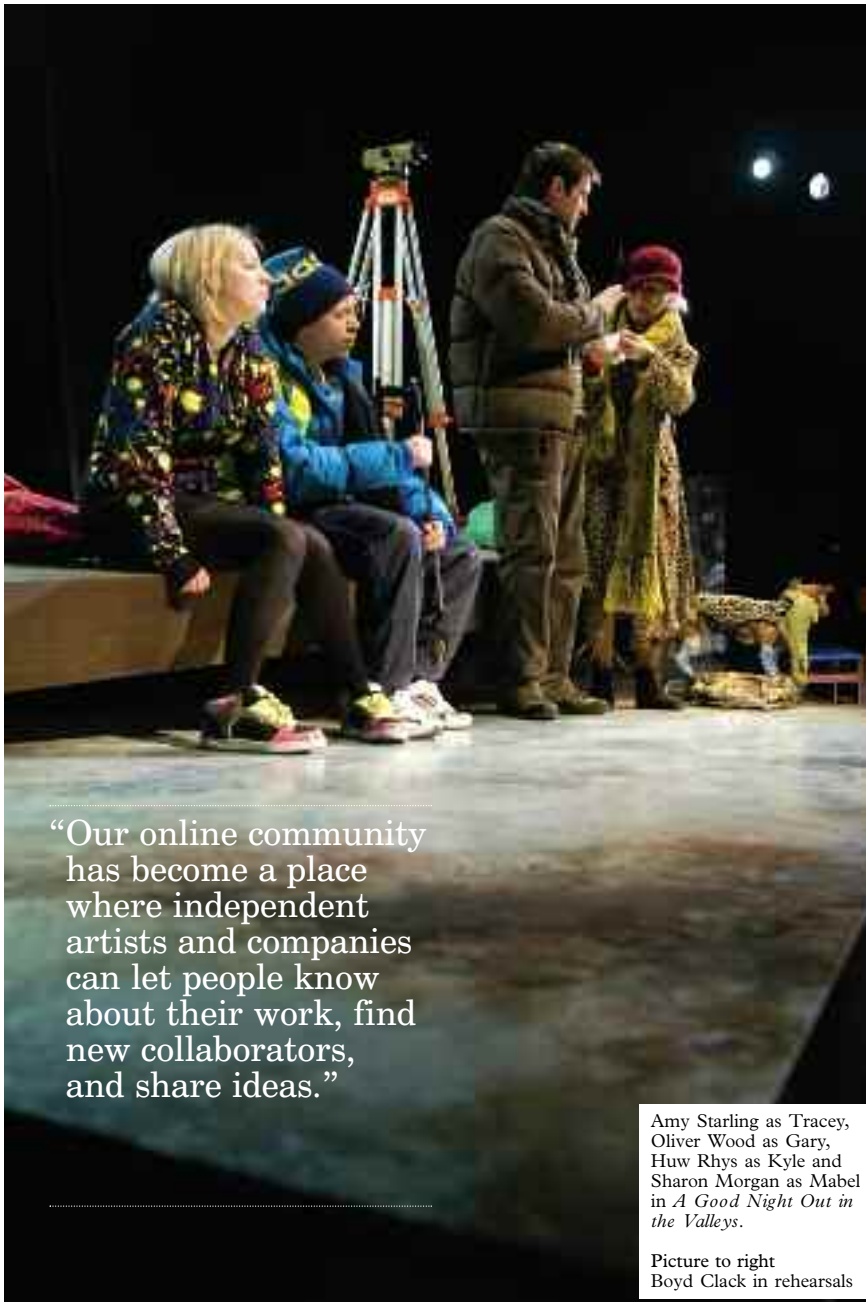
At National Theatre Wales we have decided to begin our exploration of nation and theatre through an opening year of productions in a series of different locations across the country. We will be performing one a month for a year, plus a bonus extra. We are emphasising that this whole year of work should be seen as our

launch. In producing a variety of differing kinds of theatre in a range of different places we can explore the possibilities of theatre for the nation. Inevitably, some shows will work better than others, but overall the year will, we hope, give everyone involved a sense of possibilities for the future. Shows include:

- A new production of Aeschylus's *Persians* in the Sennybridge Military Range.
- A journey through Swansea Old Library with a choir of librarians provided by Welsh National Opera.
- A lost Welsh-set John Osborne play.
- A collaboration with No Fit State Circus.
- A new play about Bridgend from leading Welsh playwright Gary Owen.
- A physical theatre take on the stories of Gwyn Thomas.

By making each piece of work in this first year in a different location, and ensuring that a vibrant link from theatre to location, we will start to explore a nation in all of its many contemporary manifestations. Of course, thirteen locations don't take us everywhere, and there is much of Wales still to reach. In our second year we will start taking work out on tour, allowing us to reach an ever wider number of communities.

Two other initiatives that run alongside our programme of productions will also help us engage with the nation. Our National Theatre Wales Assembly will be a cross between a debate, a public meeting, and a performance, taking place in each town, village or city where we put on a show, though usually not in the same space. For each



“Our online community has become a place where independent artists and companies can let people know about their work, find new collaborators, and share ideas.”

Amy Starling as Tracey, Oliver Wood as Gary, Huw Rhys as Kyle and Sharon Morgan as Mabel in *A Good Night Out in the Valleys*.

Picture to right Boyd Clack in rehearsals



interesting network of advocates.

Our online network is also important. Starting a new national theatre in the age of blogs, Facebook and YouTube has allowed us to create a dynamic social network from the very inception of the company. From the earliest planning stages, everything from the choice of the programme to our new writing policies have been debated online. Now there is a constant flow of ideas and information at nationaltheatrewales.org on everything from the progress of rehearsals to the future of criticism. Our online community has become a place where independent artists and companies can let people know about their work, find new collaborators, and share ideas. The Welsh theatre nation online is a dynamic, creative community which has gained considerable international attention for its vibrancy.

One thing that came across very clearly in the European National Theatres gathering was that the creation, and development, of a national theatre will always involve more improvisation than tradition. National Theatre Wales sits on the shoulders of the many artists, companies, and even politicians who have helped imagine it into being. It will fulfil its role if it remains a changing, dynamic and responsive organisation, embracing the process of constant reinvention that characterises the best of art, and, perhaps, nation-building.

John McGrath is Artistic Director of National Theatre Wales.

Assembly we will work with local people to identify a key issue they would like to explore – perhaps something very specific to their location, perhaps something more universal – and create a night of performance, debate and dialogue around that subject. The Assemblies will also inform our ideas for future productions, and provide a forum where the role of the national theatre can be addressed.

The National Theatre Wales TEAM programme is another initiative engaging with local people. The TEAMS will involve around 20 core individuals, from a wide range of backgrounds, in each of our chosen locations. Combining the best of marketing ambassador programmes, community arts and creative leadership development, we hope the TEAMS will give the company roots across Wales, and create an

‘Ravishing blind harmony’



A view of Gregynog Hall, home of the music festival.

Rhian Davies provides a curtain-raiser for this summer’s Gregynog music festival

Comparatively little has been written about Welsh music during the Georgian period. However, it became clear during research to plan this year’s programming for the Gregynog Music Festival that several significant north Wales composers worked at Vauxhall and Ranelagh, London’s great Georgian Pleasure Gardens. John Parry (*Parri Ddall*, 1710-1782), the ‘Celebrated Blind Harper of Ruabon’, played at Ranelagh’s famous Rotunda in 1746. Later, John Parry (*Bardd Alaw*, 1776-1851), a Denbigh-born musician and entrepreneur, was associated with the Vauxhall Gardens from 1809 and became “the principal musical caterer for that delightful summer retreat”.

Elizabeth Randles (1800-1829) of Wrexham, ‘the Little Cambrian Prodigy’, created such a sensation when she performed at the Vauxhall at the age of three that members of the Royal Family wished to adopt her! Miss Randles appears to be the first Welsh woman composer to have made a

professional career, and knowledge of her life and achievement adds context to the distinguished line of countrywomen who have followed her, from Megan Watts-Hughes, Morfydd Owen and Grace Williams to Rhian Samuel and Hilary Tann.

Parri Ddall, *Bardd Alaw* and Elizabeth Randles all benefited by the patronage of the Williams-Wynn family of Wynnstay, Denbighshire. Watkin Williams-Wynn (4th Baronet, 1749-1789) was the most significant Welsh benefactor of the arts prior to



John Parry, known as Parri Ddall.

Title page of John Parry's *British Harmony*.



Gwendoline and Margaret Davies of Gregynog and championed the music of Corelli, Geminiani, Avison and Handel as a Director of the Concerts of Antient Music which were held in London from 1776. These performances are considered the prototypes for today's classical music concerts, and an example will be recreated at Gregynog by members of the Academy of Ancient Music, directed by Pavlo Beznosiuk.

To reflect the fact that *Parri Ddall* was a triple harp virtuoso, the Gregynog Festival will also host the cream of today's triple harpers with a day school and concert at St Mary's Church, Ruabon, where he is buried. The event will feature presentations by Oliver Fairclough on Wynnstay's artistic heritage, Ann Griffiths on *Parri Ddall* himself, and Miles Wynn Cato on Parry's artist son William, the subject of his recent book. William Parry studied with Sir Joshua Reynolds and painted several portraits of his father which now form part of the collection at

Highlights from the 2010 Gregynog Festival

- 8 June:** Premièr of Gregynog Festival commission, on a Georgian Pleasure Gardens theme, composed by Huw Watkins, with 21-year-old flautist Adam Walker, newly appointed principal of the London Symphony Orchestra.

- 10 June:** Day school on John Parry (*Parri Ddall*) at St Mary's Church, Ruabon, and. an evening concert at Gregynog with Robin Huw Bowen, Rhys Ganol, Ann Griffiths and Angharad Evans.

- 11 June:** Dame Emma Kirkby performs a sequence of virtuosic arias written for the soprano Cecilia Young to perform at the Vauxhall Gardens.

- 12 June:** Catrin Finch, the leading Welsh harpist of the present generation will perform music by John Parry (*Parri Ddall*).

- 13 June:** Academy of Ancient Music, directed by Pavlo Beznosiuk.

- 18 June:** The Musicians of the Globe give the world première performance of their new Elizabethan programme, *All in a Garden Green*.

- 19 June:** International pianist, Noriko Ogawa, combines Romantic piano repertoire with contemporary works from her native Japan.

- 20 June:** Choral concert presented by The Tallis Scholars, comprising glorious settings of the *Song of Songs* by Renaissance masters including Palestrina, Vivanco and de Rore.

National Museum Wales, Cardiff.

Parri Ddall overcame the significant disadvantages of a disability and an impoverished upbringing on the Llŷn Peninsula to forge a successful performance career in Dublin, Oxford and Cambridge as well as in London and Denbighshire as harpist to the Williams-Wynns. Handel admired his

Edwards, and others from 1764 (and which is now deposited in the National Library at Aberystwyth), juxtaposes Parry's original compositions and variations on familiar airs such as *Millionen* [sic] and *Dafudd Gareg Wen* [sic] with music by leading 18th Century contemporaries including Handel, Corelli, Johann Adolph Hasse (a favourite

eighteenth-century Snetzler chamber organ which Watkin Williams-Wynn commissioned for his London home, 20 St James's Square, in 1775. The organ has formed part of the Museum's collection since it was acquired at auction in 1996.

Our Pleasure Gardens programming is completed by Dame Emma Kirkby who makes her Gregynog debut on with a sequence of virtuosic arias written for the soprano Cecilia Young to perform at the Vauxhall Gardens. According to the Shrewsbury-born music historian Charles Burney, Cecilia had "a good natural voice and a fine shake [and] had been so well taught, that her style of singing was infinitely superior to that of any other Englishwoman of her time". Handel created several roles for her to perform, including Dalinda in *Ariodante*, Morgana in *Alcina* and the title role in *Athalia*, while Cecilia's husband Thomas Arne wrote music for her to perform at the Vauxhall Gardens. Dame Emma's Gregynog programme with the London Handel Players features examples of these many roles, interspersed with instrumental music by other continental composers based in 18th Century London, including Johann Christian Bach (the eleventh and youngest son of Johann Sebastian), Carl Friedrich Abel and Felice Giardini.

Rhian Davies is a music historian and broadcaster and Artistic Director of the Gregynog Festival in her native Montgomeryshire. Tickets for Gregynog Festival performances are available online via the Festival website, www.gwylgregynogfestival.org, or by contacting 01686 207100.

“One of the features of our Ruabon programming will be the opportunity to hear a selection of these ‘classical’ and ‘traditional’ compositions played on the triple harp and to experience the sound world that would have been familiar to Parry and Handel themselves.””

playing and Parry is known to have performed the composer's famous B flat *Concerto* at Hickford's Great Room in London in 1741 and in Leeds in 1742. After hearing Parry play in Cambridge in 1757, the poet Thomas Gray was inspired to turn back and complete his famous work *The Bard* which had lain unfinished for two years. "Mr Parry has been here," Gray wrote to his friend William Mason, "and scratched out such ravishing blind harmony, such tunes a thousand years old, with names enough to choke you, as have set all the body a-dancing".

Parry's publications are rightly regarded as significant early collections of traditional music: *Antient British Music* (1742), *A Collection of Welsh, English and Scotch Airs* (1761), and *British Harmony* (1781). The 1761 volume includes his landmark *Four new Lessons for the Harp or Harpsichord* which are still widely played today. A manuscript compiled in the hand of a pupil, Robert

composer of Frederick the Great of Prussia) and Thomas Arne (notably his signature tune *Rule Britannia*).

One of the features of our Ruabon programming will be the opportunity to hear a selection of these ‘classical’ and ‘traditional’ compositions played on the triple harp and to experience the sound world that would have been familiar to Parry and Handel themselves. Sadly, Parry's own harp by John Richards, Llanrwst, was destroyed in the great fire at Wynnstay in 1858. However, its dimensions were preserved by the Brecon antiquary, Reverend Thomas Price ('Carnhuanawc', 1787-1848), meaning that the leading instrument maker Christopher Barlow has been able to build an exact copy. This harp will be heard at Ruabon. It was also heard at the Festival's media launch in the Wynnstay Gallery of the National Museum in Cardiff in March. At the launch some of *Parri Ddall's* music was played by Robin Baggs on an

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Hurricane from Llangennech

Dylan Iorwerth remembers the late Hywel Teifi Edwards

Since 4 January this year, many people have tried heroically – but in vain – to catch the essence of Hywel Teifi Edwards. Some of his closest friends have come close, but would probably admit that it is impossible to catch in words the vitality and presence of the man. Hywel Teifi was an experience.

The university lecturer who thrived particularly on his extra mural classes also had a comparatively brief period as a working politician, as a Dyfed County Councillor for Plaid Cymru for 14 years and as a two-time parliamentary candidate, once in Llanelli and then in Carmarthen in 1987. Succeeding Gwynfor Evans and suffering from the anti-Conservative Labour squeeze of that year, his creditable 23 per cent of the vote was still a disappointment. More so for being beaten into third place by the Conservative, Rod Richards, whose politics, considering his background, were inexplicable to Hywel Teifi.

That result denied us the enjoyment of seeing the hurricane from Llangennech whirling into the Westminster establishment, but it also saved him from years of frustration. A fairly reluctant candidate, he would hardly have enjoyed the suffocating atmosphere of Westminster.

So, his real political contribution was more lateral. Through his academic work, and particularly his public

lectures, he forced the Welsh speaking political community, in particular, to face up to the uncomfortable story of its evolution. Symbolically, the starting date, was around 1847, when the infamous inspectors toured Welsh schools and published the disparaging report that became known as the Blue Books or, more often, *The Treason of the Blue Books*. For Hywel Teifi, they were a cause of, and a catalyst for, the subservient, empire-loving, dying-to-please attitudes that were to blight much of Welsh-speaking Wales for the next century and a half. In those attitudes he was able to trace many of the complexes which held – and still hold? – us back from a confident, open and generous assertion of our identity.

And he told us so. To listen to one of Hywel Teifi's lectures was to be coaxed and cajoled, to be damned and

His ebullience – or bullishness as Meic Stephens put it in his obituary in the Independent – sometimes masked his scholarship. He was the oracle for Welsh culture in the second half of the 19th Century and the first decade of the 20th Century but, more than anything, was the historian of national attitudes, as expressed through literature, theatre and other vehicles of culture.

In Welsh-speaking circles, the Eisteddfod was the supreme expression of this. He analysed and, occasionally, dissected the great festival. Amongst his own people – in the Pabell Lân, or Literature Pavilion, which was invariably packed to creaking point when he spoke, he could be devastating about some of its weaknesses. To a less sympathetic audience, he would defend it to the last blow of the herald's horn. But Hywel Teifi Edwards enjoyed the

“Audiences for a Hywel Teifi lecture knew they were in for the long haul – almost a flask and sandwiches occasion – but would usually leave wanting more.”

delighted. It was like being in a half-time pep talk after a particularly inept performance. “What’s the matter with you?” he might have been asking, before proceeding to answer the question with all the wit, and some of the profanity, of an old-fashioned soccer boss. They were deliberately bravura performances.

Eisteddfod with all its foibles, just as he enjoyed the extravagant expressions of sentimental Welshness in events like the great pageant of 1909 or the Chicago World Fair of 1893.

These were the manifestations of the crack in our image brought about by the *Treason of the Blue Books*, often



Hywel Teifi Edwards in his white robes as a member of the Order of Druids at the National Eisteddfod.

expressing themselves in seeming confidence but more often in uber-moralism. Hywel Teifi often referred to “Cymru lân, Cymru lonydd” (Pure Wales, placid Wales) and “Gwlad y menyg gwynion” (The land of the white gloves), the image of a God-fearing, virtuous folk that developed in response to the Blue Books’s accusations of immorality and ignorance.

All this would be expressed in an explosion of language. Audiences for a Hywel Teifi lecture knew they were in for the long haul – almost a flask and sandwiches occasion – but would usually leave wanting more. It was an echo of the kind of vibrancy that he saw in the 19th Century, long suffocated in Welsh culture by stultifying biographies of ministers and dire epic poems that aimed to mimic the creations of the world’s great civilisations – Rome, Greece and, of course, the British Empire.

Many felt that Hywel Teifi himself would have been at home in that

period, as another Emrys ap Iwan, the essayist and polemicist who derided the Welsh for their subservience. He would have loved the cut and bludgeon of cultural and political argument and the idiosyncracies of the characters around him.

As an opponent in debate, he could use bluster and even mockery as a tactic but, as many of his eulogists mentioned, could be far more subtle when the need arose. M. Wynn Thomas mentioned his winning ways in defending the Welsh language within the University in Swansea. Many members of the erstwhile St. David’s Forum remember his paean to Llanddewi Aberarth, the Ceredigion seafaring village of his childhood. It was lyrical and loving but was aimed at smashing another myth. Far from being parochial, Llanddewi Aberarth had a Sunday School classfull of sea captains who had sailed around the Horn.

While he wrote a valuable book about the reality and myth of the village

in the Welsh cultural psyche, he was also one of the few who studied the image and role of the coal miner in Welsh literature, again vigorously shaken in the slipstream of the Blue Books. With family connections to the industrial valleys of south Wales and having lived and lectured in several parts of the industrial south-west he had a more complete vision of Wales than many Welsh speakers and non Welsh speakers alike. And his cultural world included boxing and soccer too.

Whilst Hywel Teifi’s numerous books manage to capture his scholarship and erudition – and some of his way with words – they can’t express the full force of his personality, as a person and cultural historian. Hywel Teifi’s political influence will be seen in the attitudes of people who heard him and read his work – those who had the experience.

Dylan Iorwerth is Managing Editor of the weekly *Golwg* and the *Golwg360* online service.



It was the coming of television in 1954 that clinched my adolescent passion for politics. I watched all the news programmes and prided myself on knowing every MP and their constituencies (Cyril Osborne, Louth: Harold Davies, Leek etc.) On my first visit to Westminster in 1960

I was enthralled as Gaitskell poured ridicule on Macmillan in a censure debate and later rode in the tiny Commons lift with Winston Churchill.

It was inevitable that in time I would be a parliamentary candidate and that was to be an experience that I relished. To this day I love the existential act of canvassing. When that door opens will it be a reactionary armed with a blunderbuss or a housewife in her nightgown. I always loved that moment in the movie *Left, Right and Centre* when the Tory candidate canvassed a house displaying his poster and then, as he leaves, we see the householder removing it.

My passion for political news survives but as the General Election approaches I must confess that for some time now I have been disillusioned by the actual act of voting. Indeed from the start it was something of an anticlimax. I was 22 before I was eligible to vote (I had been unenfranchised as I worked for Jim Callaghan in 1964) and, thereafter, I duly voted for dull candidates in safe seats. I often lingered in gimcrack canvas voting booths, stubby pencil in hand, but as the deed was done I never heard the Hallelujah Chorus ring out.

As every election approaches we are reminded that people died or, even worse, were sent to Australia so that we could vote. As I look at a Commons whose members finessed their expenses, as wars

Time to overcome tribal loyalties

were declared (on either spurious or mistaken grounds), as soldiers died, as banks collapsed and immigration, education, crime and health policies drifted unsatisfactorily, I feel little urge to vote for anyone. At PMQ the House reminds me of the audience at that old TV programme *The Good Old Days*.

In fact I see nothing wrong in not voting. After all, a vote has to be earned and, in any case, there is more to politics and public policy than Parliament. One can be an active citizen by lobbying, writing, joining the IWA or demonstrating. Nonetheless, the 2010 Election will be an important one. At stake is whether the country is going to descend into bankruptcy and post-industrial mediocrity. It is an election in which we should all vote but only after a thorough scrutiny of every candidate, regardless of party or the personality of party leaders.

You should certainly not vote for any candidate that you have not met. There is no excuse for any candidate who has not rung your bell, been in your street or held a meeting nearby. You should demand full biographical details. In recent years the career details provided in candidate addresses have become increasingly skimpy and impressionistic. Were those university courses completed? Was that job in advertising one of leafleting? Candidates need to be grilled about their local connections and knowledge. One can soon detect whether there is any sense of place and degree of empathy. When the Tory candidate in Cardiff South East once revealed that he did not know that there was a local steel works, his audience roared and the chairman told them that “if they were on the platform they would look as big a fool as the candidate”.

Above all we need to assess the political intelligence of people seeking our vote. One should only vote for candidates with a clear and coherent set of beliefs and values, a precise agenda and, above all, who are capable of displaying that they have the energy and determination to change things. I really believe that 2010

must be different in this essential respect. This is no time for returning lobby fodder or time-servers who regard the Commons as a prize for services rendered. If a particular candidate strikes you as being a good social worker, community official or local councillor perhaps it is best that they stay in those jobs.

In Wales it is particularly important that we grill our candidates about the big issues. Try to gauge whether for them the Past is, as Alan Harris has it in his new National Theatre Wales play, ‘a trap’. Are they so wrapped up in the rhetoric of Saunders Lewis, A. J. Cook or Aneurin Bevan that they are unable to focus on the urgent issues of our time? Working within our traditions of community and mutuality we need to create wealth and develop skills, confidence and ambition. That can only be done by harnessing the energies of educators, scientists, technicians and entrepreneurs. It is a time to cut through sentimental shibboleths, cramping tribal loyalties, inhibiting political correctness as well as the professional self-interest of policy consultants who have diverted our attention from the radical thinking needed in areas such as health and, most crucially education.

I feel very strongly that we should all make this Election into a new beginning. I do not intend to vote for any candidate unless I receive clear answers on these big issues. So great are the issues that they far transcend the pettiness of what passes for party politics. If there is to be a hung parliament (surely there is a case for a hanged parliament?) I would settle for putting in charge a National Government of Peter Mandelson, Alistair Darling, Vince Cable and William Hague.

I am so tired of the smirking Brown pretending that great issues such as war, defence and debt are nothing to do with him, with the earnest Cameron thinking up a new issue every day and with jeering backbenchers. These are serious times, almost akin to 1940, and what is needed is a new professionalism and courage in politics.



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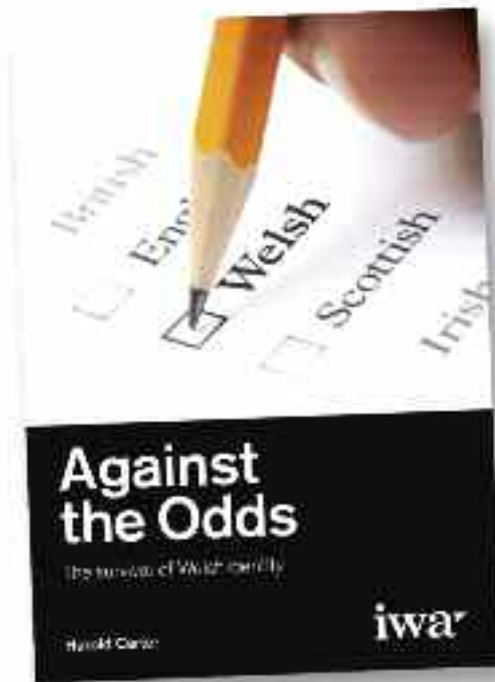
iwa new publication

Against the Odds

The survival of Welsh identity

Harold Carter

Over the best part of two millennia, notions of Welsh identity have ebbed and flowed but the desire to ensure the retention and survival of Welshness has stayed.



In this wide-ranging and scholarly new book from the IWA, Harold Carter, sometime Gregynog professor of Human Geography at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, looks at what constitutes identity and at the remarkable achievement of the Welsh in withstanding cultural assimilation into their much bigger neighbour. The book examines the importance of language as a marker for identity and the dilemma it poses in the Welsh context. It also engages with religion, myths and memories, as well as more modern symbols such as Wales's growing range of national institutions. Changes in the way the Welsh people perceive their identity, the somewhat ambivalent attitude of the nation's capital, Cardiff, and the impact of globalisation and multiculturalism on Welsh identity are all considered. Finally, it judges the prospects and the requirements for the Welsh carrying forward a renewed sense of their coherence as a people.

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