

# agenda

## Wales' rail connectivity



*Richard Wyn Jones*

**Nation takes another historic step**

*Gerald Holtham*

**Long-term investment needed in education and infrastructure**

*Kevin Morgan & Adam Price*

**Social enterprise and the smart Welsh state**

*Peter Stead*

**End of the Imperial romance**

*Cynog Dafis*

**Bro Teifi's all through 3 to 19 schools**

*Lowri Angell-Jones*

**The Cardiff School where 54 languages are spoken**

*Trevor Fishlock*

**Bringing Ryan and Ronnie back to life**

*Rhian Davies*

**The 19th Century adventures of Orlando Parry and Franz Liszt**

*Katie Gramich*

**The intimate circle of Kate Roberts' life**

*Daniel G. Williams*

**How to be a Welshman**

iwa



Sefydliad Materion Cymreig  
Institute of Welsh Affairs

The Institute of Welsh Affairs gratefully acknowledges funding support from the **Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust**, the **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation** and the **Waterloo Foundation**.

The following organisations are corporate members:

#### Private Sector

- A4E
- ABACA Limited
- Alchemy Wealth Management Ltd
- Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
- British Gas
- BT
- Capita Gwent Consultancy Ltd
- Capita Percy Thomas
- Capper & Co Ltd
- Cardiff & Co
- Castell Howell Foods
- CBI Wales
- Cheeky Monkey Creative Ltd
- Co-operative Group
- Corus Steel Strip Products
- Covanta Energy
- Darwin Gray
- Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water
- Eversheds LLP
- FBA Ltd
- Geldards LLP
- Good Relations
- Hugh James Solicitors
- Iaith Cyf
- Inst of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
- Institute of Directors
- ITV Wales
- Julian Hodge Bank
- LBS Builders Merchants Ltd
- M&A Solicitors LLP
- Media Wales Ltd
- Morgan Cole
- Morgan LaRoche
- Mulberry Wealth Management Ltd
- Navigant Consulting
- Nuon Renewables
- OCR Cymru

- Ove Arup & Partners
- Peter Gill & Associates
- PricewaterhouseCoopers
- Princes Gate Spring Water
- Royal Mail Group Wales
- RWE NPower Renewables
- S A Brain & Co
- Severnside Recycling
- The CAD Centre Ltd
- The Principality Building Society
- Venture Wales
- Wales and West Utilities
- Welsh Water Elan Trust
- Working Links

#### Public Sector

- Aberystwyth University
- Acas Wales
- Bangor University
- BBC Cymru Wales
- Bridgend College
- British Waterways
- Cardiff County Council
- Cardiff University
- Cardiff University
- Cardiff University (CAIRD)
- Carmarthenshire County Council
- Centre for Regeneration Excellence Wales (CREW)
- Children's Commission for Wales
- CIPFA
- City & County of Swansea
- Coleg Glan Hafren
- Coleg Gwent
- Coleg Menai
- Consumer Focus Wales
- Countryside Council for Wales
- Cyngor Gwynedd Council

- Cyngor Ynys Mon / Isle of Anglesey County Council
- Embassy of Ireland
- Environment Agency Wales
- EVAD Trust
- Fforwm
- Forestry Commission
- Gower College Swansea
- Harvard College Library
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Higher Education Wales
- House of Commons Library
- House of Lords Library
- Law Commission for England and Wales
- Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru
- Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Service
- Milford Haven Port Authority
- National Assembly for Wales
- National Assembly for Wales Library
- National Museum Wales
- National Theatre Wales
- Newport Business School
- North Wales Fire Service
- Northern Ireland Assembly Library
- Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
- Powys County Council
- Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
- Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama
- S4C
- South Wales Police
- Swansea Metropolitan University
- Swansea University
- The Electoral Commission
- University of Glamorgan
- University of Wales, Newport
- UWIC Business School

- Wales Audit Office
- WLGA
- WRAP Cymru
- Ystrad Mynach College

#### Voluntary Sector

- Age Cymru
- All Wales Ethnic Minority Association (AWEMA)
- Autism Cymru
- Cartrefi Cymru
- Cartrefi Cymunedol Community Housing Cymru
- CAVS
- Community - the union for life
- Cymdeithas Tai Cantref
- Cynon Taf Community Housing Group
- Disability Wales
- Energy Saving Trust Wales
- Friends of the Earth Cymru
- Job Force Wales (GVCE Ltd)
- Keep Wales Tidy
- Menter Mon
- Royal College of Nursing
- RSPB Cymru
- Sustrans Cymru
- The Law Society / Cymdeithas y Cyfreithwyr
- The National Trust Wales
- The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in Wales (RICS)
- Wales and West Housing Association
- Wales Millennium Centre
- Wales TUC
- Waterloo Foundation
- WCVA
- WWF Cymru

For information on IWA events and publications please visit our website at [www.iwa.org.uk](http://www.iwa.org.uk) or call **029 2066 0820**.

Editor: John Osmond

**Associate Editors:**

Geraint Talfan Davies  
Rhys David

**Administration:**

Helen Sims-Coomber

**Design:**

marc@theundercard.co.uk

To advertise, tel: 029 2066 0820

**Institute of Welsh Affairs**

4 Cathedral Road  
Cardiff CF11 9LJ

Tel: 029 2066 0820

Email: wales@iwa.org.uk

www.iwa.org.uk

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

**Branches**

**North Wales Secretariat**

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

**Gwent Secretariat**

c/o Chris O'Malley  
University of Wales, Newport,  
Caerleon Campus  
PO Box 179, Newport NP18 3YG  
Tel: 01633 432005

**West Wales Secretariat**

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

**Swansea Bay Secretariat**

c/o Beti Williams  
Department of Computer Science,  
Swansea University,  
Swansea SA2 8PP  
Tel: 01792 295625

**Cardiff and Valleys Secretariat**

c/o Llio Ellis  
3 De Clare Drive,  
Radyr, Cardiff CF15 8FY  
Tel: 07971 246116

**IWA Women**

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

**Wales in London**

c/o Robert John  
First Base, 22 Ganton Street,  
London W1F 7BY  
Tel: 020 7851 5521

## We need some courage and a bit of flair

The new Welsh Government that will be elected in May faces an immensely challenging five years if it is to live up to the hopes that have been invested in it following the successful referendum in March. It may have more powers but it will have a lot less money than previous administrations have enjoyed since 1999. It will also confront a much less benign government in London, absorbed as it is with the UK deficit and the spending cuts it insists are necessary to address it.

When the next Assembly election appears on the horizon in 2016, a year beyond the normal four-year term to avoid clashing with the Westminster election in 2015, how should the forthcoming Welsh Government be judged? There are three major policy arenas where it needs to make a measurable impact: education, the economy and health. In the referendum the No campaign made the case that since the Welsh Government's exercise of its powers had been so dismal since 1999, voters should not allow it any more discretion. This argument sought to conflate the powers of the National Assembly with the performance of the Welsh Government. However, Yes campaigners successfully argued that the referendum was about the former while the latter could be voted on at the Assembly election this May.

The large majority of those who voted took the view that although they might not like the Welsh Government very much, perhaps didn't approve of many of its policies, and certainly were dubious about many of its achievements, nonetheless they supported having the Assembly and wished its standing within the United Kingdom to be enhanced. This demonstrated a sophisticated distinction between the principle of devolution and the Welsh Government's record.

Nevertheless, the success of the new Welsh Government will be extremely important, both in tackling issues which are central to the lives of the people of Wales, but also in embedding a still fledgling institution in the affections of the electorate.

The major challenge is money. Faced with a shrinking budget over the coming four years of the Westminster Government's Comprehensive Spending Review, Wales has responded by protecting current spending as far as it can, especially on education and culture – the right calls – and by slashing its overall capital spend by 41 per cent. How the Welsh Government should be judged in five year's time is the way it responds to this shortfall.

First Minister Carwyn Jones has claimed, correctly, that the National Assembly needs borrowing powers, arguing that Wales has again been left in the slow lane while both the Scottish Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly are able to borrow. This is a reasonable argument, but not one that the UK Treasury is likely to respond to very swiftly. The First Minister should heed the advice of Gerald Holtham, in his article (page 24), in which he suggests that the Welsh Government should take advantage of local government's ability to borrow.

In an accompanying article Gronw Percy advocates Tax Incremental Financing, that is allocating a proportion of future income from business rates as a way for local authorities to lever new investment. This is being piloted in Scotland and could be undertaken in Wales. The Government should also consider establishing not-for-profit mutual concerns, on the template of Welsh Water, to make major infrastructure investments. One strong contender would be an electrified Metro light rail system to connect the Valleys with Cardiff and Newport, discussed in our special feature on Wales' rail connectivity (pages 14 to 23). Such arms-length organisations could borrow on the bond market at favourable rates in the current climate, underwritten by income streams from their operations and by the Welsh Government itself. Borrowing up to £3 billion – enough to build the Metro – could be serviced by 1 per cent of the Welsh block grant.

This is the way for the new Welsh Government elected in May to face the next five years – with determination, courage, and a bit of flair. Go for it.

# a

## 4. Essay

### Take your new partners for the dance of death

*Dafydd Glyn Jones responds to Education Minister Leighton Andrews' injunction to Welsh universities to 'adapt or die'*

## 9. Outlook

### After the referendum

–Alun Davies  
–Jonathan Edwards  
–Jenny Randerson  
–David Melding

# 1

## Wales rail connectivity

## 14. Running our own railroad

*Stuart Cole argues that Network Rail's devolution of its Welsh operation should be good news for electrification*

## 17. Wales' rail future

*John Rogers suggests the Welsh Government should re-nationalise Welsh railways*

## 20. Swansea's nine lines

*Mike Smith puts the case for connecting the Amman Valley with Swansea and Mumbles to create a light rail transit system for Wales' second city*

## 22. The easiest, and fastest route

*Mike Joseph advocates a revival for Wales' first high speed line*

# 2

## Economy

with PricewaterhouseCoopers

## 24. Wales needs long-term investment in education and infrastructure

*Gerald Holtham says to achieve it the Welsh Government will have to deploy joined-up thinking to set new cross-departmental priorities*

## 27. Robust response to the recession from Welsh business

*Rob Lewis provides a snapshot of PricewaterhouseCoopers' Welsh Economic Barometer unveiled at the IWA's National Economy conference in March*

## 28. Accelerated Development Zones could plug Welsh funding gap

*Gronw Percy advocates a new model to finance capital projects*

## 30. Despite the cuts some of us are doing well

*James Foreman-Peck explores Welsh pay differentials between the public and private sectors*



## Agenda 43 Spring 2011

# 3

## Politics

## 32. Nation takes another historic step

*Richard Wyn Jones argues that the 2011 referendum has given an unforeseen impetus to constitutional change*

## 34. End of the Imperial romance

*Peter Stead examines an account of how the British constitution has clambered out of the footnotes and up the agenda*

## 36. Reorganisation can damage front-line services and increase costs

*Rhys Andrews wonders whether a reduction of Welsh local authorities will achieve the desired results*

## 38. No silver bullet in service delivery

*Jon House questions whether outsourcing can save money*

# 4

## Education

## 40. Targets must be accompanied with freedom in our schools

*Stevie Upton reports on the IWA's study of pupil attainment at Key Stage 3*

## 42. Bro Teifi's all-through school would raise standards

*Cynog Dafis puts the case for educating the entire 3 to 19 age range on single sites in rural Wales*

## 44. Akan to Zulu

*Lowri Angell-Jones describes a school in the Welsh capital which is home to 54 languages*

# 5

## Health

## 46. The serpent inside England's health reform

*Marcus Longley asks whether Wales can learn from Andrew Lansley's radical experiment with the NHS*

## 49. We need a whole system approach to health care

*Ceri Phillips and Mansel Aylward summarise the work of the Bevan Commission*

## 6

## Social Policy

**52. Social enterprise and the smart Welsh state**

*Kevin Morgan and Adam Price outline ways the next Welsh Government could revolutionise the delivery of key public services*

**54. Challenges facing foster carers**

*Judy Hutchings and Tracey Bywater report on a new initiative to help looked after children in Wales*

## 7

## Environment

**58. Carbon dioxide is not the only problem**

*Gareth Wyn Jones explains why we urgently need to reduce the greenhouse gases produced in our countryside*

**63. Cutting back on hypermobility**

*James Shorten and Roger Levett say we should pay more attention to the low carbon transition challenge facing rural Wales*

**65. Learning by design**

*Haf Roberts examines the design principles behind Rogiet's new primary school in Monmouthshire*

## 8

## Culture

**68. Fishlock's File Bringing Ryan and Ronnie back to life**

*Trevor Fishlock talks to Hywel Gwynfryn*

**70. The intimate circle of a writer's life**

*Katie Gramich takes a look at the unknown, glamorous Kate Roberts*

**75. When he wore a cloth of gold**

*Rhian Davies chronicles the mid 19th Century adventures of Orlando Parry and Franz Liszt*

**80. Reviews****How to be a Welshman**

*Daniel G. Williams*

**A poet of loud desperation**

*Peter Read*

**L.G. as viewed through the prism of high Westminster politics**

*J. Graham Jones*

**A penchant for bad news**

*John Osmond*

**88. Last Word**

*Peter Stead*

# Newsflash

## Coming Up

**Coffee Shop Debate: Musical improvisation**

with Ben Challis, composer and performer

Tuesday 3 May 2011, 6.30pm – 7.30pm,  
Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff (Entry free)

**IWA Inspire Wales Awards 2011**

*In association with the Western Mail*

Friday 17 June 2011, 7.00pm – City Hall, Cardiff

An evening recognising achievers in the fields of business, education, science and technology, arts, media and creative industries, environment, citizenship, Welsh in the workplace, global Wales, youth activities and sport.

£65 (£52 IWA members)

**Coffee Shop Debate:****The Live Music Scene in Wales**

with Paul Carr, Head of the Musical Academy, University of Glamorgan.

Tuesday 5 July 2011, 6.30pm – 7.30pm,  
Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff (Entry free)

**National Conference****Future of Welsh broadcasting**

Friday 8 July 2011

for details see [www.iwa.org.uk](http://www.iwa.org.uk), click on events.

**Darlith yr Eisteddfod Lecture**

Wreccsam / Wrexham

**Gwleidyddiaeth y Gororau yng****Ngogledd Ddwyrain Cymru / Border Politics in North East Wales**

2 Awst/August, 11 to 12 y.b /noon – Pabell y Cymdeithasau

Aled R. Roberts, Arweinydd /Leader, Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Wreccsam / Wrexham County Borough Council

*Darperir cyfieithu ar y pryd*

*Simultaneous translation provided*

**Trafodaeth IWA Debate yn yr Eisteddfod**

Wreccsam / Wrexham

**Rhagolygon ar gyfer y pedwerydd Cynulliad.****Outlook for the fourth Assembly**

4 Awst/ August 11 to 12 y.b /noon –Pabell y Cymdeithasau

Enwau siaradwyr i'w cyhoeddi nes ymlaen  
Speakers t.b.a.

## Just Published

**Making a Difference at Key Stage 3 – Learning from five successful schools**

By Stevie Upton

£10

**Unique Paths to Devolution – Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland**

By Arthur Aughey, Eberhard Bort and John Osmond  
£7.50

**Growing Wales's Civil Society**

Edited by John Osmond

£10

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

—Essay

# Take your new partners for the dance of death

Dafydd Glyn Jones responds to Education Minister Leighton Andrews' injunction to Welsh universities to 'adapt or die'

We are told that Y Coleg Gymraeg Cenedlaethol (the Welsh-medium federal college) is now coming into existence, and that it will be operative in this year, 2011. Is the day therefore drawing near when I shall be saying my last word in public on this matter, which has engaged me almost daily for thirteen years? As at all previous stages of this discussion, we shall see. Today I shall say something of the context and the general situation in which this development is to take place – if it is to take place. All of this predicament may be summarised in one word: catastrophe.

The catastrophe is man-made. It was conceived and brought about by what may be termed the Higher Education Establishment in Wales: all the HE institutions, their officials and governing bodies, together with the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW). All this has also taken place with the encouragement of government in Cardiff and (now less importantly) London, and with the connivance of organisations and individuals who should at the very least have sounded an alarm.

After 1992 institutions in Wales termed 'universities' multiplied from one to twelve. The merger of Trinity College (Carmarthen) with St. David's College (Lampeter), then with Swansea Metropolitan University, and now with the University of Wales Institute (Cardiff) to create what the *Western Mail* describes as a 'New Super University' has, in three rapid steps, brought the number down to eight.

However, the Education Minister, Leighton Andrews, seconded by HEFCW, wants to see five or six. The explosion since the 1990s came about in two stages, first the re-designation of training colleges and polytechnics, and then the de-federalisation of the University of Wales. The government's call to amalgamate, which may be sensible in itself, takes on a farcical aspect in the light, not so much of the first development as of the second. The injunction "Unite!" comes just as the fragmentation, for long a cherished ambition in some quarters, is finally effected.

"Come together!" is the call. But they were together! Reading the Minister's address to the IWA's Carmarthen conference *Building a Confederal University in South West Wales* last December, I found myself gasping with incredulity at his words:

"Wales has been held back for years by too many institutions which are too small to make a mark internationally, too small to operate effectively and efficiently, and too small to respond to the growing pressure of international competition... My message to higher education institutions throughout Wales is, 'adapt or die'."

## Articles

### Essay:

Take your new partners for the dance of death

### Outlook:

After the referendum

Alun Davies

Jonathan Edwards

Jenny Randerson

David Melding



Education Minister Leighton Andrews (centre) at the launch of the Welsh-medium Federal College's undergraduate scholarship scheme, at the Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff late last year. To his left is Geraint Talfan Davies, Chairman of the College's Implementation Board, and to his right, Dr Ioan Matthews, Director of the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education.

The Minister may not remember, but some of us remember, that there was an institution not hampered by any of these deficiencies. It was called 'the University of Wales'. Owing to an appalling lack of leadership and of self-belief, its potential was never realised. It is hard to believe that any institution which exists today, or any combination which may emerge, can ever provide a better service than the federal university, with reforms, could have provided.

One thing seems certain. Academia will go along. The process of forming a new configuration is well advanced. What should concern us now is whether it will be, or can be, the right one. Will it be one which will allow university education, as traditionally understood, to develop and flourish in Wales, or will any such ideal finally be laid to rest?

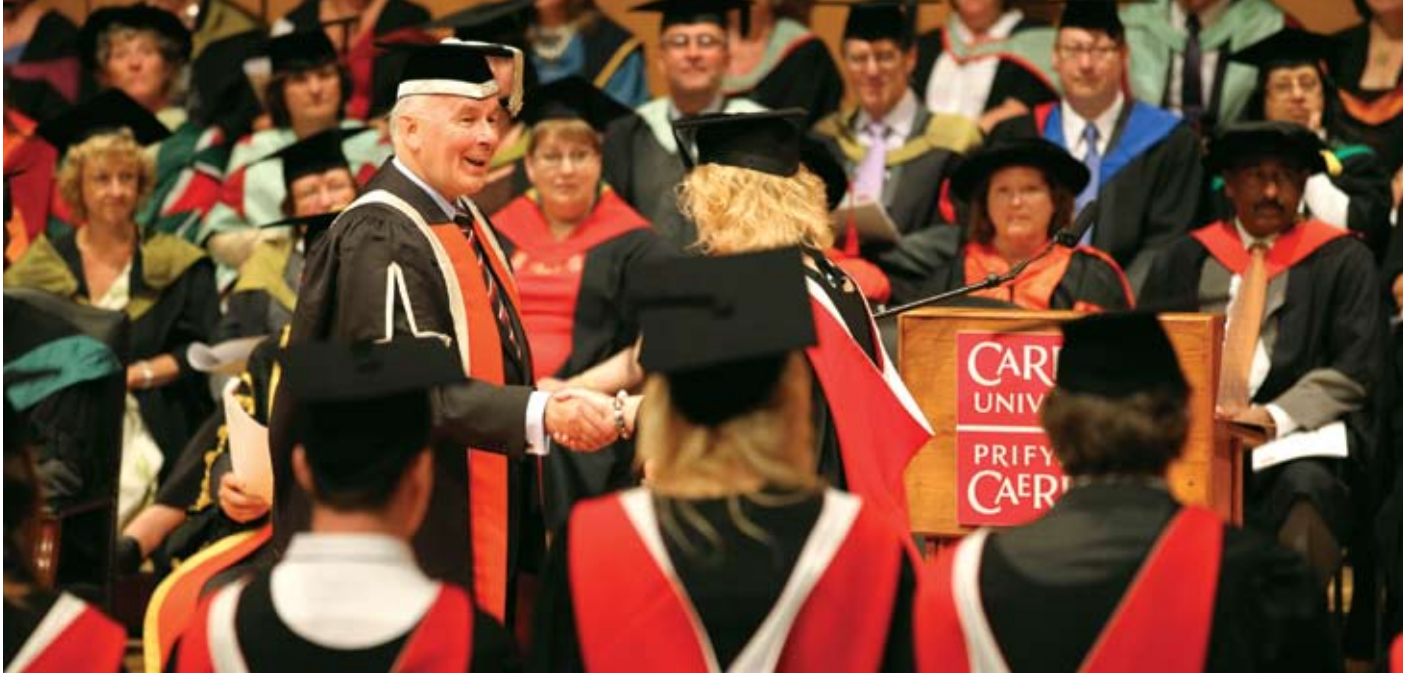
Like others, many of whom should have spoken and acted earlier, I look back with much anger on the near-ruin of the University of Wales. Once Cardiff

had started awarding its own degrees, there was a certain rationale that the other colleges of the University should want to follow suit. But the decision was short-sighted and the negative outcomes are plain to behold. One of these is what seems to be a politically-motivated assault by the Funding Council on the University of Wales Press.

The context has always been political, with de-federalisation being seen in certain fashionable and influential quarters as something smart, progressive and with more than a touch of the anti-Welsh. Some anger must be reserved for those who worked to bring about the *débâcle*, for those who should have been much more active in opposing it, and especially for the officials of the University of Wales and its Guild of Graduates over the last ten to fifteen years. They should have rallied the members, as Alwyn D. Rees did in the rôle of Warden in the 1960s. This time they capitulated before a shot was fired, failing at the same time to recognise their friends: always a grievous fault in an institution as in an individual.

Other factors add to the confusion. Among them are a cavalier neglect of historical facts and of the most fundamental constitutional points. Principals have almost universally become 'Vice-Chancellors', making the Deputy Principal a 'Pro-Vice-Chancellor'. This may look fairly harmless until one starts going round the former university colleges asking, "who's your Chancellor?"

Arithmetic seems to have become unhinged. We have moved into a world where Bangor University, having come into existence in 2007, is able two years later to celebrate its 125th anniversary! This must prompt the question, if a new 'Bangor-Ystwyth University' were to come into being, how old would it be? A still more disquieting instance is the use of the word *alumni* in the context of the University of Wales. A magazine called *Campus* (its punning title being the best thing about it) describes itself as being for "University of Wales Alumni" (*Cyn-fyfyrwyr Prifysgol Cymru*). Someone



Cardiff University degree ceremony – “Once Cardiff had started awarding its own degrees there was a certain rationale that the other colleges of the University of Wales should want to follow suit.”

should have pointed out to the editors that the University had, and in principle has, no *alumni* in the accepted sense of ‘former students’. We were *alumni* of our respective colleges. They were called ‘the University of Wales, Aberystwyth ... Bangor, Cardiff and Swansea’ and were still essentially colleges until the very recent date when they began to award their own degrees. On graduation we became *members* of the University of Wales, which we will remain as long as we live, and in which capacity we are joined, *pro tem*, by the University’s elected and appointed officers, from the Chancellor down. Other institutions are known to follow different procedures. At Oxford, if my understanding is correct, the student becomes simultaneously a member of his college *and* of the university on matriculation. In the University of Wales, we graduated *from* our colleges to become *members* of the university. This is quite clear in the statutes, and has important practical implications.

But enough of angry retrospect. Let us return to the question. What is to be done, if the pressure continues for a reduction of our universities from eight to five or six? We could speak with more confidence if we knew the nature and extent of the savings envisaged by HEFCW and the government. No doubt these are being carefully considered, since money-saving is the immediate end in view. When the Minister (for so he is reported) refers to “fewer managers”, he is talking what all except the managers themselves will see

as very good sense. It is to be hoped that he will press this point, a little unexpected from a Labour minister, but most welcome.

He also mentions “fewer vice-chancellors”, a matter on which we should exercise more caution. Today’s vice-chancellor is a tidy earner, but as a fraction of the entire budget half a principal’s salary is hardly a significant saving. And, although many principals are as unseen as Mr. Godot, Joe Maplin in *Hi-de-Hi!* or Harry Lime during the first hour of the film, it is hard to conceive of a situation where half a principal would be a gain. In a college as in a school, the principal had better be on the spot. So should the professor of whatever subject is professed. If less exalted members, from readers to tutors and demonstrators, are to become wand’ring minstrels, that may effect a saving, against which the cost of travel and accommodation must of course be placed. Video-conferencing offers a partial solution, but one, in my experience, more tolerated than loved.

We are on surer ground when we ask what sort of combinations the Minister and the Funding Council have in mind when they envisage five or six “sustainable” institutions. The emergence of the ‘New Super University’ leaves Cardiff University, the University of Glamorgan and the University of Wales, Newport as three separate institutions in the south-east. Swansea University stands alone in west Wales, Aberystwyth University in



central Wales, Bangor University in Gwynedd and Glyndŵr University in the north-east.

Some have looked forward to the creation of 'dual-sector universities', but hitherto I have not noticed any representatives of the traditional universities jumping on this particular bandwagon. They are wise to reserve their judgement, for the reason is plain to see. It is illustrated in the history of the northern colleges, Bangor and the former North East Wales Institute (NEWI) – now Glyndŵr. For some months in 2003 all the talk was of their amalgamation. Spokesmen for Bangor college council saw it as a *fait accompli*, and anyone who questioned its wisdom was accounted mad. Then the college senate, the academics, woke up, realising that the new partner, whatever strengths it might have, would have rather little to contribute in the all-important research stakes. Whistle blown, and that was the end of that!

We may be completely cynical in recording it, but this is what counts. As we all know, a research 'assessment', or – I would prefer to say – 'inspection', is applied to all HE institutions. Of its value, one has very mixed feelings. On the one hand, it may be felt that anything which periodically jolts academics out of their habitual indolence cannot be altogether bad. On the other, we ask how the great scholars of the past achieved anything at all without this stimulus. There are serious doubts concerning the validity of procedures and criteria, and we hear intermittent rumours that the 'exercise', as it is termed, may be discontinued. What matters today is that it is with us, and that a good result is worth a great deal of money. Less cynically, it may be regarded as a crude method of reminding ourselves that there is still a difference between a traditional university and, shall we say, a less traditional one.

What Bangor realised in 2003 in the nick of time, all the former university colleges should bear in mind today. Forced marriages between traditional and 'new' university institutions will spell the end of university education as we have known it in Wales and as recognised world-wide. The balance between the academic and the vocational, which has characterised and, in a way, defined universities for 800 years, would be fatally impaired.

University 'league tables' are collated and published by some of the 'quality' newspapers. When consulting them, salt must be liberally applied. The *Guardian's* table for 2010 has

columns for nine criteria, of which 'research assessment' is one. Others vary from the concrete factor of 'entry standards', through 'graduate prospects' (largely guesswork) and 'good honours' (which can be arranged), to 'student satisfaction' (which can mean virtually anything).

The London South Bank and Metropolitan Universities bring up the rear at numbers 114 and 115. Observing Oxford and Cambridge at numbers 1 and 2, one may ask why none of their colleges has yet opted to go it alone, or to propose amalgamation with a local technical college. Of the Welsh institutions, Cardiff (at 41) and Aberystwyth (47) are in the upper half. The University of Wales Institute, Cardiff (UWIC), Swansea and Bangor make a respectable showing at 59, 60 and 63; and here come Glamorgan (86), Newport (89), Glyndŵr (92) and Lampeter (99) – presumably before the amalgamation with Carmarthen (which, like Swansea Metropolitan, does not seem to feature at all in the table). It must be stressed again, that this and similar tables should not be approached with any undue reverence, let alone superstition. But they may offer a very rough suggestion of what combinations might be workable.

Cardiff University, having initiated a chain of events by declaring its independence, would stand to gain nothing, but would lose a great deal, by becoming part of a south-eastern institution in which, by a quick calculation (excluding further education and sixth-form colleges), the ratio of academic to vocational would be almost 60:40. No-one has hitherto suggested that this should happen. Bangor with Glyndŵr would not be as seriously affected, and Bangor-Aberystwyth-Glyndŵr would show a balance of something like 7 to 3 in favour of the academic. But there is no reason why Bangor, having stepped back before, should succumb again. Nor should Aberystwyth acquiesce, merely by being assured "you won't lose that much, but you will lose". We are told that Bangor and Aberystwyth, having only recently severed their interconnection through the University of Wales, have, at some considerable expense, formed a partnership in which an 'International Academy' also features.

Let us say that, under pressure, they take the further step and come together as one University of North and Western Central Wales. Would they in any respect perform better than they did in the old days as parts of the federal university?

## Meanwhile, bits of the wreckage of the University of Wales still float around. The Centre for Welsh and Celtic studies soldiers on, as does *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*.

Or as well? It is very hard to imagine how. 'Whither Swansea?' is a pivotal question. There seems to be an assumption, which I would not wish to challenge, that Swansea can stand alone. But the Guardian table, all due precaution being applied again, places Abersytwyth above Swansea both for general performance and for research. Why, then, the ready assumption that Aberystwyth must amalgamate? Interestingly, in the research column, Swansea and Bangor stand equal at a 2.43 which is somehow arrived at.

Meanwhile, bits of the wreckage of the University of Wales still float around. The Centre for Welsh and Celtic Studies soldiers on, as does *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* (the University of Wales Dictionary). Gregynog has not yet been turned into a wool warehouse. The Press has survived so far, though seriously and scandalously impaired by the new funding proposals. The University Registry still functions, though a sign saying 'Under New Management' would restore some of the confidence lost.

The Welsh National School of Medicine, although integrated with Cardiff University, continues to work towards University of Wales degrees. We also read in the ever-inventive *Campus* of a 'University of Wales Alliance', which on examination is found to be a list of five institutions of which only half of one, Lampeter, was ever a part of the functioning federal university. While this much remains, it should be reinforced. In so doing, university education in Wales can be saved.

To come to the point: Swansea, Aberystwyth and Bangor should come

together again, not under any fancy new name, but under the name of that which still exists, the University of Wales. They should each re-adopt the name under which it functioned well enough for twelve years (1995-2007), 'The University of Wales, Swansea', '... Aberystwyth' and '... Bangor' respectively. They should re-invest in traditional fields of study, perhaps making a gift to the newer universities of those newer subjects which are neither academic nor properly vocational, and which need not be named. They should each re-examine their entry requirements, and agree on a standard which, if not absolutely uniform, would be consistent. They should each have a Principal, but under one Vice-Chancellor in the real and traditional sense.

They would need to work towards the University of Wales degree, of which they still have the option, and to lend validity they should ensure an element of common examination in all subjects. Simultaneously the practice of touting the degree on the international market should cease, so as to avoid any further Danish and Malaysian fiascos. With all this set in place, it would be possible to enter the research stakes, for the first time, as 'the University of Wales'. We would soon find that there would be a powerful new contender in the 'Research *Eisteddfod*' or the 'Academic *X-factor*', no doubt to the surprise of other universities which have fancied themselves cleverer.

Would this not amount to a *volte-face*? It most decidedly would. But a change of heart – a euphemism which

many of my readers will immediately recognise as meaning 'a change of tune' – has never presented any great difficulty for academics. The matter is so urgent and the peril so great that even the consideration of a decent interval may have to be put aside. It would mean going back to the Privy Council with the preamble "er ... ahem ... it seems we've made a colossal mistake". Bothersome and no doubt embarrassing, but an essential stop on the road back to sanity in a mad, mad, mad world.

In all this, what of Cardiff University? Cardiff can probably fend for itself, and should be left to its own devices.

Bangor, Aberystwyth and Swansea must re-group as one university of some 32,000 students. In any other configuration, there is only one way they can go, and that is down.

This I should emphasise. That the federal university must be revived is purely coincidental with the possible appearance of the Welsh-medium federal college. 'Federal' here has two different applications. At the same time, the Welsh-medium federal college would be a stronger institution if it had been established between 2000 and 2005 by the University of Wales, and it would have given the University a new impetus as a teaching institution. That this was not done is unforgivable. The University Proclamation (of which, still for some of us, there can only be one), ends with the words of Isaiah: "Then shall thy light rise in obscurity and thy darkness be as the noon-day, and they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places". Never have the words been more pertinent.

**Dafydd Glyn Jones** was a reader in Welsh Language and Literature at the University of Wales, Bangor. He is the author of *Problem Prifysgol a Phapurau Eraill* (2003).

## After the referendum

### Election will be fought on entirely new territory

Alun Davies



Like others I enjoyed listening and watching the referendum results coming in. Back in 1997 it felt like we'd crashed over the winning line, exhausted and mightily relieved. I still remember the long anxious wait into the night listening to the radio for news (it's a long story but I was in Beirut). In the early spring sunshine on 4 March 2011 devolution became mainstream.

It's certainly fair to say that several times during the campaign I felt a frustration that we had to fight a referendum on such an arcane and difficult issue. However, on reflection the referendum has strengthened not only the institution but its relationship with the people. We have the new powers not by Act of Parliament but by the popular vote. And that's a more powerful mandate.

In this way, my feeling is that the referendum reflected and measured the settled will of the Welsh people. This wasn't a victory delivered by the hard work and organisation of a political machine. It was a quiet and determined democratic decision. Devolution is not only here to stay, but it is now an accepted part of Welsh national life and there is a strong and still growing feeling in Wales that we want to take more responsibility for own domestic affairs. And that was the real difference between 1997 and now.

The fact of the referendum campaign has tested all the parties and allowed us

to have a glimpse and a preview of their relative strengths and weaknesses.

We know from by-elections and polling that the UK coalition parties are experiencing strangely different fortunes. During the referendum campaign Nick Bourne, the Tory leader, was almost irrelevant, turning up for set-piece photo opportunities and speeches.

On the other hand what is to be made of the Welsh Liberal Democrats? Their leader Kirsty Williams emerges from the campaign as a strong and compelling advocate, able to connect easily with people and their concerns. But all too often she appeared to be a leader without a party. Certainly on the ground there was no sign of Liberal Democrat foot-soldiers and no sign either that the people have either forgotten or forgiven them for the choice that was made for them in London last summer.

For Plaid Cymru the referendum was a greater test than for either the Liberal Democrats or Tories, but it was also an opportunity for the party to energise its activists in a campaign that you'd expect to be right up their street. But they seemed out of sorts, unsure of themselves. Ieuan Wyn Jones appeared to have been hidden from view. Perhaps there was a fear that he would frighten the voters? In Blaenau Gwent he certainly did. The single most common issue I had to confront was fear of nationalism and of Plaid Cymru. Four years in government has done nothing to earn them any trust in the Valleys of north Gwent. "This is nothing to do with nationalism is it?" was the question from people unsure how to vote. Had Plaid Cymru led the campaign then it would have been lost. This was a vote for a strengthened Wales within the UK. Anyone who believes that it was in any way a vote for nationalism or separatism simply wasn't there.

It was this trust of Labour that enabled nearly 70 per cent of people in Blaenau Gwent to ignore the distortions, fabrications and, frankly, the lies of True

Wales (and the local Independents) and to vote Yes. It was also Labour activists that (in this case – literally) delivered the campaign. We produced our own literature and canvassed and campaigned for a strong Labour says Yes vote. The result was a strong endorsement of that message. On the wider stage, Carwyn Jones has emerged as a popular and trusted national leader. He stepped easily and confidently out of Rhodri's shadow and is now his own man with his own popular mandate. He won the Welsh Labour contest easily but this was his first national test. He came through it strengthened and with his authority enhanced.

But how will all this translate into the election campaign? My guess is that the new context of additional powers will generate higher expectations of the parties and a greater scrutiny of their manifestos. In this way the 2011 Assembly election will be Wales' first ever proper parliamentary contest which means that the election will be fought on entirely new territory.

Post-referendum I believe there is a real sense that Welsh Labour is again at the centre of gravity in Wales, leading the way, and in step with the grain of the Welsh mood. But Labour will be making a terrible mistake if anyone believes that simply the shared values of Wales and Welsh Labour will be sufficient for the next five years. It is true that we represent the only real alternative to the ideology and hard right theocracy coming out of Westminster. Yet Wales deserves more than a government in exile, a government of perpetual opposition.

Devolution has come of age and all the political parties need to up their game. More of the same simply won't be good enough.

**Alun Davies** is Labour AM for Mid and West Wales and the party's candidate in Blaenau Gwent in the May Assembly election.

## Welsh political game changer

Jonathan Edwards



The word historic is often over used in politics. However the referendum result on 3 March will go down in the history of our nation as the first time our people united behind the concept of a distinct Welsh political identity. If 1997 was too close to call, the result of this year's poll was never in doubt once the first two counties to declare, Blaenau Gwent and Denbighshire, overwhelmingly voted yes.

Despite the consistency of the polls, never in my wildest dreams did I imagine such a conclusive result - 63.6 per cent voting yes. Carmarthenshire once again played its part. It scored the highest turnout in Wales with over 44 per cent voting and over 71 per cent supporting law making powers for our Parliament. I shed a partisan tear looking at the boxes of my home communities in the Amman and Gwendraeth valleys recording emphatic Yes votes – some as high as 90 per cent according to our samples.

To say that the referendum is a game changer in Welsh politics is an understatement. During the week following the referendum the House of Commons was a very interesting place indeed, to judge by the long faces and shell-shocked figures of Welsh Tory and Labour MPs.

Such is the categorical nature of the result, it will force the unionist parties in Wales to adopt a more federal approach, in which the historic nations of the UK are treated equally. Of course, parity with our Celtic cousins was the battering ram of the Yes campaign. But let us reflect that despite the referendum result, Wales will continue to have far less fields of responsibility than Northern Ireland and Scotland. Set against this reality, political parties that continue to treat Wales as a second class nation will find themselves increasingly marginalised.

Labour faces particular difficulties as it is split in two between a unionist and nationalist tradition. Let us remember that the No campaign was led by Labour party activists. For Labour, the party at the end of the day is more important than any other consideration. This is why their immediate response to the result was to rebuild unity by talking down any future devolution of power. It is a very dangerous game for Labour. They will be strategically exposed if they stand as a roadblock to further change, in a situation where the people of Wales have found an appetite for greater freedom.

The Tories also find themselves in the middle of a bitter civil war between their AMs and MPs on the future direction of travel. No other party has such a profound spilt between their National Assembly and Westminster politicians. Anything the Tory AMs promise that would need to be delivered by their MPs is completely worthless. I was very interested to see the recent Welsh Tory Economic Commission join Plaid in calling for lower corporation tax rates for Wales to stimulate the economy. Whenever I have called for this in Westminster, Ministers dismiss the idea.

As a federal party the Liberal Democrats should be in a good position to benefit from the result. However, despite being a party that has historically supported a proper Welsh Parliament since the days of Cymru Fydd, a large proportion of their voters are anti devolutionists. The closeness of the result in their Powys stronghold speaks volumes. The Lib Dems will be punished in the May Assembly election based on events in Westminster. Being a junior party in a Coalition is never easy, but the key to success is a watertight programme with some clear red lines. Apart from AV I don't really see a Lib Dem signature in the UK Coalition deal. This leaves them carrying the flack for the consequences of the overt fiscal consolidation policies of the Tories – a policy they warned against in the run up to the Westminster Election.

On the other hand, the *One Wales* coalition deal in the Assembly was littered with clear constitutional, cultural and social justice objectives for Plaid.

The referendum was the tip of an iceberg which included dismantling the NHS internal market, stopping the NHS centralisation proposals of the previous Labour administration, the scrapping of right to buy, and the language Measure to name but a few clear policy gains. As a result Plaid's poll ratings have remained remarkably solid during the four years of the *One Wales* government. This is no mean feat, as I like to remind colleagues.

For Plaid, winning the referendum more than justifies the decision to create the *One Wales* Government involving a partnership with Labour over the last four years. In opting for *One Wales*, Plaid turned down the possibility to lead our own country. The reason was to secure the referendum and to ensure we had the best chance of winning a Yes result. The poll on 3 March means that our major short term strategic objective has been achieved. Whilst the other parties will have to fundamentally re-adjust their positioning, Plaid will be able to concentrate on the forthcoming elections with a clear programme for creating a better Wales. The focus will be the economy, health and education.

In terms of where Wales goes from here, there is little doubt that the next debate will around reforms of the funding of the Welsh Block Grant. A Calman-like process has already been promised for Wales. I welcome the drive towards greater fiscal autonomy, but these reforms cannot take place before the Barnett formula is revised.

Labour, which has enjoyed a bounce in the polls since last May, are preoccupied with a wider game of undermining the Tory Lib Dem UK Government. Their core narrative is that the only way to protect Wales from the reckless policies of the UK Government is to change Administrations. I think there is an opportunity here for my party. Plaid's core vision has always been that the best way to defend Wales from UK Governments of whatever colour is to develop our own democracy and sovereignty.

**Jonathan Edwards** is MP for Carmarthen East and Dinefwr.

## Taking control of our own destiny

Jenny Randerson



From very early on we all thought that there would be a yes vote but the scale of it was surprising. Even Monmouth came within a whisker of voting Yes. In Flintshire there was a 24 per cent swing towards 'Yes' since the 1997 referendum and in Powys there was a 9 per cent swing thanks to a sterling effort from Lib Dem activists. The referendums were not completely comparable but the 24 per cent figure does illustrate how Welsh people have taken control of their own destiny.

The record of the Plaid-Labour Government has been mixed, with particular failures in terms of the education system, waste in the NHS, and a chaotic management of the economy brief. It is therefore heartening to see that voters saw beyond that and saw the vote for what it was: a 'Yes' vote for a positive technical change in law making procedure against a 'No' vote for the marginalisation of Wales as a political entity.

The Yes vote will speed up the process of making laws in Wales and allow us to be more reactive. When you look at the time taken to deal with the Housing and Mental Health legislation it is pretty astonishing. It was painful to have to explain to constituents that even when we had cross party support we had to wait several years to see laws affect people's lives.

You cannot ignore the low turnout which we all knew was coming. Putting to one side the fact that it was

better than many expected and that the 'no' campaign made sure that neither side received funding to promote the event, we still have a problem with engagement. Part of the problem is that Wales is dominated by the London media so Wales's stories are marginalised. You can be sure that the Welsh General Election will be dwarfed by the English slant on the AV vote.

We will fight on Welsh issues because that is what Welsh people deserve and we know Labour-Plaid are running scared of their record. If the elections were only about how each party has performed in the Assembly and what they have achieved there, then the Welsh Liberal Democrats would romp ahead of the other parties.

Kirsty Williams is often referred to as the leader of the opposition as a result of her strong performances in the Assembly. I am confident we will do well in the election because where we work we win and we are working hard across all of Wales. We are particularly looking to make gains on the South Wales Central list as well as in Ceredigion, Newport, Swansea, Pontypridd and Montgomeryshire.

It is a big concern that the number of women represented may take a dive. Many of the female candidates standing down are likely to be replaced by men. Across all parties they are individually capable but Wales has benefitted enormously from having a more balanced legislature. Half of Wales is female so we should always aim for those proportions. Unfortunately, despite the extra help available fewer women put themselves forward and I think it is dangerous to select candidates on anything other than merit. For instance, I think Cardiff Central's MP Jenny Willott much prefers knowing that she is there because of her ability.

After the election dust has settled the Welsh Liberal Democrats' position is very simple. We will seek to implement as many Welsh Liberal Democrat policies as possible. This

would include a Welsh stock exchange bringing Welsh investment to Welsh businesses and a pupil premium targeting money at those who start out in education the furthest behind. This pupil premium would address the shocking £604 funding gap between Wales and England.

Despite being in coalition in Westminster we disagree with many Tory policies. They have plans to take an axe to the education system in order to protect NHS managers. They have made a pledge to ring-fence the NHS which is a tall order in Wales when you consider that 40 per cent of the entire budget goes towards the NHS. Inefficiencies in such a large part of the budget have to be looked at in any mature handling of the nation's finances. According to experts up to one billion pounds could be better spent. To fund the ring-fencing of the NHS, massive cuts would have to be made in other budgets including education where the inefficiencies are not so large.

The next Assembly will be an extremely exciting time for Wales. I think you will see a much more assured Welsh Assembly. It will be operating with a much bigger mandate than has previously been the case. I would regret stepping down were it not for that fact that I am getting the chance to help Westminster understand the devolved UK. This seems to have passed some Labour and Conservative MPs and Peers by.

The next few months offer a great chance to start making the best decisions for Wales with relative speed. They also offer the best chance for Wales to stand proudly in the world again and declare, "We can do better!"

**Jenny Randerson** is AM for Cardiff Central and sits for the Liberal Democrats in the House of Lords. She leaves the National Assembly at the forthcoming election.

**DARWIN GRAY SOLICITORS**

# THE PROFESSIONAL LAW TEAM WITH THE PERSONAL TOUCH



Darwin Gray is a commercial law firm with a difference; we have all the skills and experience you'd expect from a large firm, combined with the flexibility, energy and personal approach of a small firm.

- Business sales and purchases
- Commercial agreements
- Commercial property
- Employment law
- Insolvency and restructuring
- Commercial disputes

029 2082 9100 ■ [www.darwingray.com](http://www.darwingray.com)

**DARWIN  
GRAY**

## A new voice for Wales

David Melding



All elections have their own distinctive timbre. The 2011 contest already promises to resonate beyond its own campaign-time and influence Welsh politics for a generation. This is not so merely because of the acquisition of grown-up, law-making powers or the fact that it is a Conservative-led Westminster government that must now deal with the devolved administrations.

These factors will colour the campaign a bit, but not much. Rather each of the four parties currently represented in the Assembly face seminal choices.

A little first about the strange dynamics that are shaping the election. Every poll this year has predicted that Labour will do better than the miserable 32 per cent it polled in 2007. This is not strange in itself, of course. Political parties can bounce back after a series of poor election results. What is strange is that this apparent renaissance has not come at the expense of the Conservatives. The Tory vote, in those same polls, appears solid. That is certainly my impression on the doorstep.

Labour seems to be benefiting from a conglomeration of political factors that might even deliver their first majority in the Assembly. Despite the decisive 'Yes' vote in the referendum, Plaid's support is relatively weak and Labour seem to have a clear run in their traditional heartlands.

The Liberal Democrats have clearly lost ground to Labour. And perhaps most significantly of all, the Labour vote looks likely to turn out with a strength more typical of Plaid or the Conservatives. So what would a traditional Labour-Conservative clash do to Welsh politics and its actors? The old adversaries should never forget that the most lethal dangers lurk in complacency. 'Come

home to Labour' is a pitch set to play well in many parts of Wales given these tough and uncertain economic times. They will be disappointed with fewer than 30 seats and no doubt hope for more. My own view is that Labour will struggle to win a majority because much of their support is in their traditional heartlands. Piling up majorities there will not win extra seats in the more competitive parts of Wales.

Paradoxically this would be a great blessing for Labour. Not winning outright would mean that alliances have to be made, alliances that are vital for the long-term health of the party. One good election is not going to restore Labour's position as the dominant party in Wales. Alternatively, a Labour majority would strengthen the position of the diehards intent on pressing true, pure, or classical-Labour. And anyway, Carwyn Jones is likely to resemble James Callaghan on a sleepy afternoon if he leads a majority administration.

For the Welsh Conservative Party a good result would be second place and the prospect of a rainbow coalition. Yes, the rainbow coalition looks less plausible than it did in 2007, but it needs to be in play. Being viewed as a protest party detached from the heart of devolved politics and not capable of being in government would be fatal to the long-term prospects of Welsh Conservatives. Crucial also to Tory fortunes is a robust defence of our five constituency seats from a reinvigorated Labour challenge, and beyond that perhaps picking one or two up from Labour. Labour may be complacent in seats like the Vale of Glamorgan or the Vale of Clwyd. Nonetheless, these are key seats to watch on election night.

Plaid must feel they have benefited from taking the plunge into government in 2007. Eighty-two years of political opposition came to a sudden end. True, they have also had to put up with the vicissitudes of a Labour-led government, but there is no doubt that the status of Ieuan Wyn Jones and the likes of Elin Jones (his most likely successor?) has been enhanced by the chrism of office.

Nevertheless, Plaid's long-term direction is not at all clear. Now that quasi-federalism has been achieved, should Plaid push for independence? And if they don't, what are they for? One obvious thought is that they should aim to be not only Labour's principal

opposition, but a Party capable of beating Labour. This is what the SNP has done in Scotland. But note, the SNP has never based its strategy on out-Labouring Labour. Instead, they have sucked in the centre and particularly the centre-right vote on the grounds that only the SNP can take Labour on. Plaid seems to believe that it can replace Labour from the left – a strategy that allows Welsh Conservatives to sleep more soundly.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats are hoping to hold what they have got and should they do so they would deserve high praise indeed. The naughty thought in Welsh politics at the moment is whether a Labour-Liberal coalition is possible. Westminster Labour would welcome it as a precursor to Roy Jenkins' great vision of a united centre-left dominating British politics. It seems unlikely, but Labour will want to talk this up as much as Plaid will the rainbow coalition.

Unemployment, the economy, and the quality of public services – these are the issues that will dominate the campaign and then form the basis for judgement on the fourth Assembly and the next Welsh Government. Every candidate contesting this election should remember that these are the real concerns of the electorate.

No doubt the future of devolution will be at the back of some people's minds but rarely will it be a dominant thought. Of course the campaign needs to explore the implications of the Holtham reports on the funding of the Assembly, and other questions like the emergence of a Welsh legal jurisdiction (inevitable with the development of a Welsh statute book). These questions are important because they will have a bearing on wider socio-economic challenges. Yet they are complementary factors to the immediate challenges that the electorate expects parties to face and tackle.

The Party that has the best election in 2011 might not be the one that wins the most seats or achieves most of its short-term objectives. Political parties are truly healthy when they reach well beyond their base or at least put in place strategies that will allow such outreach to occur in the near future.

David Melding is Conservative List candidate for South Wales Central.

# 1

## Wales rail connectivity

### Articles

Running our own railroad

Wales' rail future

Swansea's nine lines

The easiest, and fastest route

# Running our own railroad

Stuart Cole argues that Network Rail's devolution of its Welsh operation should be good news for electrification

Network Rail's announcement in March that its Welsh operation is to be devolved to a single entity covering Wales and the borders, and run by a Cardiff-based managing director, is to be welcomed. It has the potential for giving the Welsh Government greater flexibility in planning an integrated public transport system for Wales. In particular, it holds out the prospect for a Welsh decision on electrifying the Great Western line to Swansea and also along the north Wales main line.

What we need now is a commitment to funding the Welsh railway system on an equal basis to England. This implies pro rata levels of expenditure for Wales following, for example, from the London Crossrail scheme which is worth £16 billion – an amount that is ten times the cost of electrifying the line from Cardiff to Swansea. From this scheme alone a 5 per cent allocation under the Barnett formula, would hand £800 million to Wales. So, potentially, the devolution of Network Rail to Wales is an extremely attractive proposition. However, the financial agreement and the investment level have to be higher than in the past and also have to be transparent.

The new set up will cover the entire railway network in Wales, together with the line that connects north with south Wales which runs mainly through England. This is not a new concept. When the argument for a Wales and Borders franchise was being made in the early 1990s, long before it was finally agreed to go ahead in 2001, the parallel argument was made for a Wales division of Railtrack, the predecessor of Network Rail. It was dismissed at the time by senior managers at Railtrack and the remnants of British Rail with the response - how or even why would Wales want to run its own railroad? Later in 2005 when the Railways Act and the Transport (Wales) Act was going through the Westminster Parliament an offer was made by the Department for Transport to set up a Wales and Borders region. However, agreement on fair financial provision was not forthcoming from London and so the Welsh Government quite rightly rejected the offer.

There are many advantages to this new move, quite apart from the leverage it gives the Welsh Government in arguing for a fair funding settlement. The underlying concept of an integrated transport policy has long been the objective of the Welsh Government. So what should be its priorities?

First is persuading the Department for Transport to extend electrification of the Great Western Main Line to Swansea in one scheme using the most efficient method of construction. This is the continuous investment approach which will give the highest rate of return. Carrying out electrification to south Wales in two tranches would increase the cost by up to 20 per cent and probably reduce the benefit to cost ratio to an unacceptable level. According to Lord Adonis, the previous Labour Secretary of State for Transport, electrification to Cardiff had "a strong business case", with a benefit to cost ratio of

Departures			
08:06	Treherbert	On time	Plat 6
08:09	Shrewsbury via	On time	Plat 4
08:10	Barry Island	On time	Plat 7
08:11	Aberdare	On time	Plat 6
08:16	Rhymney	On time	Plat 6
08:16	Penarth	On time	Plat 7
08:20	Bridgend		



2.6:1. With electrification, journey times between Cardiff and Swansea would be reduced by only 5 to 7 minutes. As a result the comparable financial ratio of electrification to Swansea borders on 2.0:1. However, the crucial argument is that when the wider economic benefits are considered the rate would rise to nearer 2.3:1. This is the case the Welsh Government must deploy.

The next stage of electrification is that of Valley Lines – enabling the development of a Cardiff Metro along the lines advocated in the IWA's recent report by Mark Barry *A Metro for Wales' Capital City Region*. Of all the rail capital schemes in Wales, this has the highest rate of return and thus a strong business case. The present carriages used on the Valley lines are life expired. Meanwhile, the response to congestion by car commuters has led to an 8 per cent a year growth in rail passenger demand. This shows no sign of falling, thus justifying the Welsh Government's investment in longer platforms, longer trains with more capacity, new stations, added park and ride capacity and new services.

Several electrification options are available – electrification of heavy rail, improved track and signalling, new, faster, and higher capacity, more efficient rolling stock, and some extensions of the existing network, for example, north west of Cardiff to Creigiau. In addition new tram, tram/train and rapid bus transit routes are set alongside the heavy rail operations. Trams would take over on the south side of Cardiff's central business district with services to Penarth, Barry and the Vale of Glamorgan, and the proposed new Gateway Wales Airport station. This implies a ten minute frequency to each of those locations. If the success of the Newcastle Metro is an indicator, then up to 25 per cent of Cardiff Airport passengers would be attracted to travel by Metro.

The use of fast trains, for example from Trefforest to Cardiff Central along spare



Arriva's Pacer class trains, built in the mid-1980s, are nearing their sell-by date, making the need for a decision on electrification imminent.

capacity on the City Line would reduce journey times from the upper Valleys, while light rail could be the commuting mainstay of most urban areas within five miles of Cardiff Centre. Based on costs of constructing tram systems in Bordeaux and Manchester, track investment in Cardiff would be £800m with a further £200m for electric heavy rail.

This funding will largely come from the public sector as most of the impacts are economic. One might argue that there are private companies in central Cardiff which will benefit. However, it is society as a whole which has to put up with the inefficiencies of traffic congestion and it is for this reason that Government funds investment on an economic rather than a financial basis.

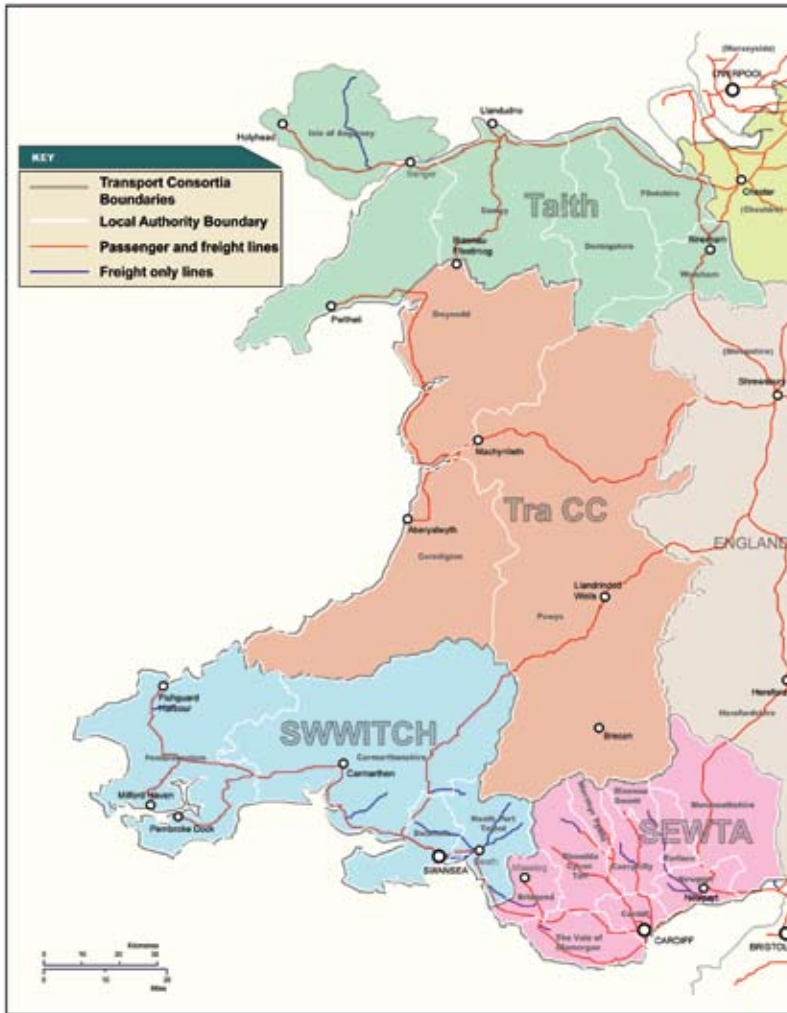
There has been some commentary following the launch of the IWA's Metro report suggesting it is only a means of moving people into and out of the central business district of Cardiff. While this is a key element of the expenditure, new routes are proposed, for example across the Heads of the Valleys and from Bridgend to Pontypool via Llantrisant, Pontypridd and Newbridge. The fact that Cardiff Central Station is the hub

of the operation does not preclude the travel opportunities within the Valley communities and over a wide area of south east Wales.

The primary reason we need a rail-based solution to the public transport dilemmas of south-east Wales is the sheer number of commuters. With a population of 1.4 million people living within a 20-mile radius of Cardiff and with 100,000 travelling into the city every morning, the only form of mass transit able to move that number efficiently in an hour is rail.

At present we still have to persuade many people out of their cars. This will become an even more urgent necessity as the number of daily commuters into Cardiff climb inexorably towards 150,000 or even 200,000. At some point on this trajectory only public transport will be able to meet the demand.

The south Wales network was designed for coal movements from the Valleys to the docks in Cardiff, Penarth and Barry. Fortunately the routes have also proved suitable for passenger movement. It is noteworthy, for instance, that the new Ebbw Vale to Cardiff passenger service, which opened in February 2008, has exceeded forecast



The train map of Wales, showing the borders route between north and south, and the four local authority transport partnership regions – Taith (North Wales Transport Consortium), TraCC (Mid Wales Regional Transport Consortium), Swwitch (South West Wales Regional Transport Consortium), and Sewta (South East Wales Transport Consortium).

demand, reaching 2 million passengers by Spring 2011.

However, the infrastructure and some of the rolling stock is now as much as 40 years old. The required 72 car electric trains will cost between £150 and £250 million depending on the mix of ‘normal’ trains and tram trains / trams and the extent of joint purchase giving economies of scale.

The Valley lines were simply not built to carry large numbers of commuters. They require replacing and the power source cannot be diesel, particularly if the new rolling stock has to last a further 40 years. The electrification of the Valley Lines has to be a priority for the next Network Rail financial period from 2015 – 2019.

Of course, the IWA’s Metro report was financed by business interests in Cardiff and as such the capital is their main concern. However, there is also a major need for investment along the east-west main railway line and M4 corridor, as the report acknowledges. Regrettably, in the short term the M4 will never be emptied. But most research shows that if urban traffic flows can be reduced by 20 per cent then the main cause of congestion, the slowing of traffic at junctions, will be resolved.

Electrification will increase the track capacity on the Great Western Main Line and on the Cardiff Metro lines. Passengers on the railways to and from and within Wales have doubled over

the last ten years. If this growth rate continues then more and longer trains travelling at higher speeds and using less track length per train will be the only way to accommodate the increased demand.

Wales is on the periphery of the European Union. We cannot hope to balance our higher labour costs compared with eastern Europe unless we reduce other costs such as transport. The movement of goods and efficient logistics require an electrified railway. It is essential if we are to regenerate the Welsh economy.

One might also ask what a lack of investment in major infrastructure will look like to potential inward investors, especially those contemplating Swansea Bay. Might they ask the question, “If the British Government does not invest in south west Wales what’s the problem and why should we invest?”

This connectivity is linked directly to our competitiveness as a country. Cardiff is the economic powerhouse of Wales and must therefore be efficiently linked to one of the world’s biggest economic powerhouses – London. That is a connectivity opportunity we should not throw away.

South Wales is already in direct competition with Bristol. If Birmingham, Sheffield, Leeds and Manchester have journey times of around an hour to London while Cardiff remains at two hours, our competitiveness will fall markedly. Even at 1 hour 40 minutes we will have to fight our economic corner, though Cardiff’s status as a capital city might take us through. Large London headquartered corporations have found Cardiff a positive place to locate back offices, and for some even to move head offices. So long as we sustain a ‘there and back in a day’ train facility – and electrification is essential for that – our capital city will remain an attractive location.

.....  
**Stuart Cole** is Emeritus Professor of Transport in the Wales Transport Research Centre at the University of Glamorgan.

# Wales' rail future



An Arriva train on the Cambrian Coast line alongside the Dyfi estuary, heading west towards Aberdyfi and Towyn.

## John Rogers suggests the Welsh Government should re-nationalise Welsh railways

At first glance many might think that any version of a mini-British Rail for Wales would be plain daft. Yet growing dissatisfaction with privatisation is leading to new ideas and proposals along these lines. For instance, Plaid Cymru's manifesto for the May election includes a plan for a not-for-dividend Welsh rail company, on the lines of Glas Cymru, the Welsh water company.

Railfuture Wales' ideas go further in advocating a fully-owned network, including passenger services and the infrastructure – the track, signalling and so on. This would follow the Irish Rail model, which complies with EU law by simply having separate accounting processes for passenger and freight operations and infrastructure.

One important criticism of the present

rail scene is that operating a franchise system is expensive and wasteful of time, even if Westminster were to extend the time-scale of the franchises. For example, in November 2006 Govia, which runs the Kent south-eastern rail franchise, told the Commons Transport Committee that it was common for bidders to pay £2 million in consultancy fees to prepare a franchise bid. Its own bid had consisted of 22 lever-arch files, six copies of which had to be submitted to the Department for Transport.

According to the Christian Wolmar, writing in *Rail* magazine in 2009, the Association of Train Operating Companies had admitted that the Department for Transport spends £24 million a year on consultants to oversee the franchising system involving the 19

passenger companies.

Of course, profit lies at the heart of the privatised railways. This is money that disappears from the industry and into the pockets of executives and shareholders.

- In the six months to June 2008, Arriva Trains Wales' operating profit was £14.8 million, the interim dividend up by 10 per cent.
- In the six months up to September 2008, First Group's operating profit was £48.3 million, and in 2007, the company paid dividends totalling £55.5 million.
- Infrastructure companies make similar profits, for example Atkins rail-related profit of £14 million in 2009.

This is not an argument against profits as such. Rather it is to argue that any surplus to operating costs, should be reinvested in the industry.

It is the hunger for profit which has led to companies to bid unrealistically on the high side to ensure they win a franchise. This led to the recent east coast fiasco whereby the operating company tried to close the revenue gap by raising car park charges; then imposing seat reservation charges; then cutting catering - until the inevitable crunch came and National Express (East Coast) just walked away, leaving the London government shadow franchise to run the abandoned service.

Many rail travellers will have experienced missing a connecting service, perhaps by 30 seconds, just because the station dispatcher did not dare risk a reprimand for delaying a service, possibly incurring a penalty for the train operating company.

Another too frequent experience for today's passengers is overcrowding. Admittedly most services now no longer have the option of being able to slot on an extra coach at the back, as most services are fixed formation or diesel units.

Then there is the complexity and level of fares, baffling at times even to rail staff. Not only could a Welsh Government set the levels of fares but it would surely not emulate Westminster 'tricks' such as demand-management by pricing.

In calling for a government-owned, arms-length Welsh Rail company, I am not suggesting that financial control can fly out of the window and that any gulf between costs and income on, say rural services, will not matter. At the same time running a national service that both serves the public and helps our Cardiff Bay government meet the needs of its eco-principles, will almost certainly need some sort of revenue support. Which country's rail system does not? And if the true costs to society of both private and commercial road transport are calculated, what does the balance sheet indicate?

## Most people now realise that Wales languishes at the bottom of the European electrification league. Along with Albania we don't possess a single mile of electrified track, despite generating more electricity than we use.

A Welsh rail company could build up a strategic reserve of rolling stock, both motive power and coaches. As older coaches or locos are replaced by newer ones, some could go in reserve for special sporting occasions, tourist or enthusiast runs, or Friday and Sunday nights extra services.

If the rail experience is to be promoted, overcrowding should slowly become a rare event. That would mean investing in additional units, whether diesel or eventually electric. In turn this could mean that there will be surplus units at the depot, although with lower maintenance costs if the units were used less intensely. Everything has its price.

It should be remembered what the current franchise of Arriva Trains Wales is based on: no additional capacity; no new train investment; and a continued reliance on 30-year old class 150s and 40-year old Pacers. Surely we can improve on that?

Moreover, with full control of the infrastructure (currently Network Rail's responsibility despite devolution to a Wales and border region), the Welsh rail company would be ideally suited to gradually expand the network by doubling single line sections, re-opening closed stations and lines, and where necessary building entirely new stations or routes.

We could see an end to exorbitant Network Rail quotes and in-the-mists-of-time timescales. From the time that there was agreement to re-open Llanharan station, at least three general elections took place before the building work was complete.

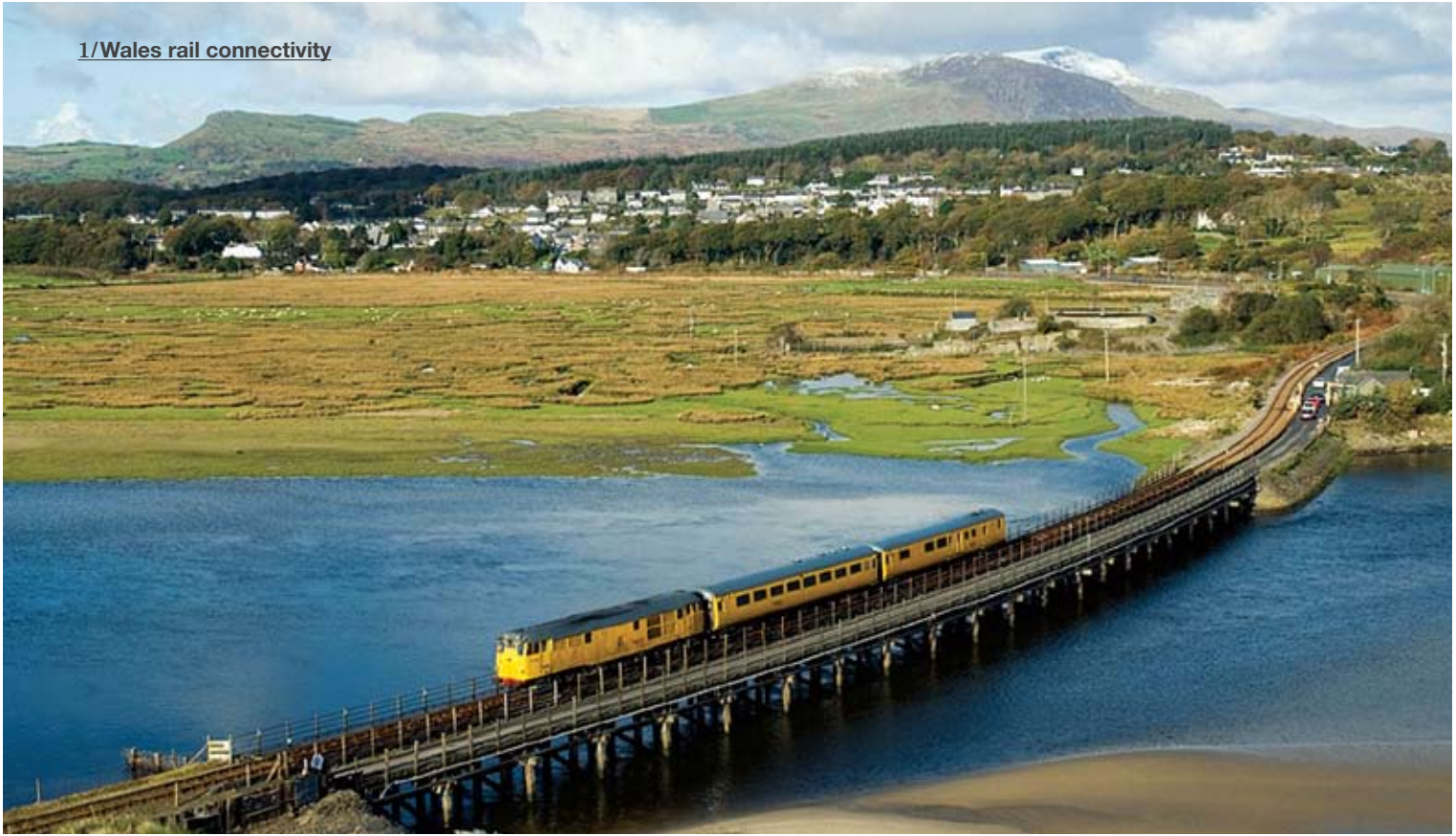
Most people now realise that Wales

languishes at the bottom of the European electrification league. Along with Albania we don't possess a single mile of electrified track, despite generating more electricity than we use. Full control of our rail network will surely facilitate a government-sponsored rolling programme of electrification. If mountainous Switzerland can run a 100 per cent electrified network, why not us?

Network Rail is to be split into semi-autonomous regions based on its current nine Route Directors - with moves already afoot to experiment with closer links between the train operating company and the 'local' Network Rail. These regional entities could even be sold off to become more closely integrated with the coterminous operating company and the Welsh Government. Or there could simply be an intermediate link, a vertical alignment whereby the operating company takes over responsibility for some network rail functions. Consultants LEK have suggested testing these new ideas in East Anglia by linking the two operating companies with Network Rail's Anglian region. With its single national operator, Scotland would also be ideal for this.

Network Rail's devolution to a single all-Wales region including the borders route will make it easier for the Welsh Government to take over the Welsh operation. The optimum moment for this would be when Arriva Trains Wales' franchise runs out in 2018.

If Network Rail's Anglian region is to be England's test bed, the Welsh Government needs to clear the decks and make up its mind how our railways



Train crossing Pont Briwet at Penrhyndeudraeth returning from Pwllheli and heading to Aberystwyth. A dusting of snow can be seen on Moel Hebog to the north.

can be radically transformed. It should set up a special team to transform ideas into practice. The 2005 Transport Act ensures that Wales has to be consulted on franchise letting and changes, though it has to be acknowledged that Scotland gets preferential treatment in terms of consultation and powers.

It's not just Welsh minds that are turning to the benefits of vertical integration. Five years ago, Mersey travel estimated that they would save £33 million over their franchise-term by integrating track and wheel. NedRailways also advocate vertical integration on a regional level, and another convert is the Stagecoach company.

What of the cross-border services issue? This should not cause any headaches, for example, on the Newport, Hereford to Shrewsbury route, just as it does not in similar cases on the Continent. As for London services run by Virgin and First Great Western, these could continue with or without a Wales-owned service slotting in on a shared basis. Virgin and First Great

Western could continue to pay track and signalling charges as they do at present, but to Cardiff.

The Railfuture Plan also advocates either leaving freight services as they are, or with the new Welsh company joining the scene by setting up its own freight company. Independent freight carriers could continue to use Welsh tracks, paying us as they do now to Network Rail.

Currently, Westminster transfers to Welsh Government the appropriate revenue support for Arriva Trains Wales. Any enhancement of franchise services has to be financed by the Welsh Government from its block grant - for example, re-opening the Ebbw Vale line and running the new north-south service.

The principle of 'need', something not provided for by the Barnett formula, would have to be negotiated if Wales were to take over all responsibility for Welsh railways. There is a strong feeling that Wales has been losing out when you consider the massive sums being spent on rail schemes in England, especially in

the greater London area.

Railfuture Wales has produced a dossier of research on the myriad nuts-and-bolts legal issues that would need sorting if and when responsibility was transferred to Cardiff. When we launched the Plan two years ago, we made it plain that we didn't have all the answers. Our aim was to highlight a ludicrous situation - a privatisation that even the perpetrators, the Tories, admitted they had got wrong. In July 2006, the Conservatives' then shadow transport spokesman, Chris Grayling, admitted that the 1996 split into track and train components was a mistake which had increased costs. He also said, "The industry lacks clarity about who is in charge and accountability about decisions."

Now is an opportune time for us in Wales to stake a claim to a new vision for Welsh rail transport.

---

**John Rogers** is chairman of Railfuture's south Wales branch [www.railfuture.org.uk](http://www.railfuture.org.uk)

# Swansea's nine lines

Disused track on what used to be the Abernant branch line in the Amman Valley.

**Mike Smith** puts the case for connecting the Amman Valley with Swansea and Mumbles to create a light rail transit system for Wales' second city

*Swansea9Lines*, a light rail system for the city, would run over the metals of nine different old railways and look rather like a figure 9 on the map, hence the name. More than half of the circuit is already in place, while much of the rest of the line can utilise old disused track beds, which for the most part have not been much encroached upon.

The project would connect the 27-miles of the so-called Amman Valley Loop with the old Swansea and Mumbles railway. Branching off the heart of Wales line at Pantyffynnon, the line would pass through Ammanford, Pontardawe and Clydach before joining the Swansea District line near the M4.

This novel approach of devising a light-rail link to Swansea from the north reverts back to concepts

developed but never completed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. What is now on the table is an efficient, reliable, frequent, and cost effective lightweight public transport system linking Swansea with the Amman Valley.

Both the Amman Valley Loop and the Swansea City System should be viable in their own right. However, combining them would result in a much more enhanced system. Provisional demand forecasts indicate an annual passenger uplift of around three million a year, with revenue over the initial 20 years exceeding £100 million.

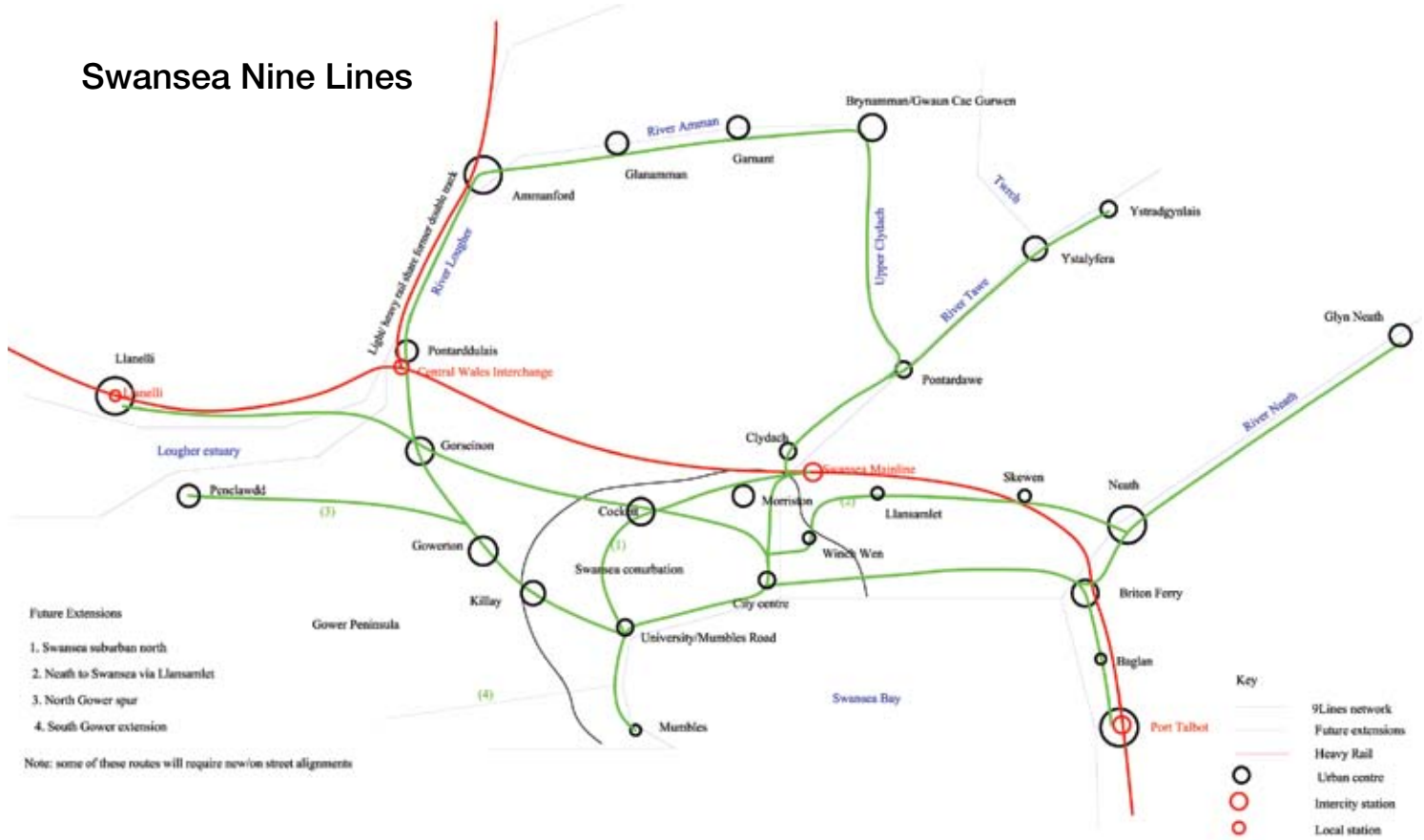
The capital cost of putting the system in place is estimated at around £200 million. It is estimated that 350 jobs would be created directly with large-scale spin-offs for tourism, the retail sector and manufacturing. It would be a major part of the long-term regeneration of the Western Valleys, which lie within Wales' European funding region.

The present Heart of Wales Arriva Trains service is inadequate in serving the needs of the Amman Valley, whose residents are becoming ever more isolated due to escalating fuel costs. *Swansea9Lines* would link more than 30 communities with an environmentally friendly light transit system. There would be no need to build new halts because the 'trams', 'street cars', 'rail buses' – call them what you will – are designed for street-level boarding.



A coal train at Ammanford.

# Swansea Nine Lines



Jerlan Consultancy; Pengwmares, Odeyswan, Cwmllynfell, Swansea. March 2011

Note: all solid green (9Lines) alignments on existing former heavy rail formations. Parts may currently be part of the road network - on-street running planned

Map of the rail system that could link Swansea with its hinterland.

They are able to accommodate freight, bicycles, wheelchairs, pushchairs, prams, shopping carts, even mobility scooters.

The aim is to have the service operating at ten-minute intervals throughout the route, with a possibility of five-minute intervals within Swansea itself and on the re-opened track to Mumbles. Here heritage-style open-top trams could be deployed, especially in the summer months.

To enable such a timetable and alleviate possible delays due to malfunction of any kind, it would be desirable to maximise double tracking through the city as far out as Mumbles and Morrison, and preferably to Clydach as well.

The Amman Valley Railway Society has the engineering capacity within its membership to oversee the delivery of a cost-effective design for the lightweight tram type vehicles that would use the

Swansea9Lines system. We are in touch with a number of companies capable of supplying them with the potential for their manufacture taking place within south west Wales. There is potential, therefore, for creating a new manufacturing base.

Our engineers have also patented the design of track for the new lightweight rolling stock. This entails going back to basic principles of engineering practice in railway design by laying a continuous rail track on a timber base – in a sense reverting to what Brunel practised on the broad gauge most effectively for 50 years. This avoids hammer blow effects, reducing both track and wheel maintenance by some 75 per cent.

New integrated lightweight laminate vehicle bodies are envisaged, along with other new track developments, including a newly invented 'steered' powered wheelset initiative which can save a very

large proportion of costs associated with heavy modern 'standard rail' trackwork and vehicle running costs.

Phase 1 of the project, a two-year trial, could start as early as 2012 on the Gwaun Cae Gurwen part of the line. Phase 2, starting in 2013, would see extension of the track. By 2014 we envisage beginning the manufacture of advanced vehicles at a new facility in Abernant (Phase 3). Over the following four years we envisage project extending into Swansea (Phase 4).

All this provides real potential for bringing a cost-effective and innovative light rail system to this corner of Wales, providing low-cost environmentally friendly access to Swansea's hinterland.

**Mike Smith** is Chief Executive of the Amman Valley Railway Society.

# The easiest, and fastest route

Mike Joseph advocates a revival for Wales's first high speed line

Google Earth's view of Swansea West services at the M4's Junction 47, sandwiched between the motorway and the double track express rail line that by-passes Neath and Swansea. This could be the location for a Swansea Parkway.



The year was 1912. Cardiff, the world's greatest port, had recently seen the world's first million pound business deal. East European refugees boarding steamers at Hamburg with tickets for New York would (as the story goes) often be put off at Cardiff, assured they had reached their destination. And such were the city's economic boom time and ethnic diversity that (so the story continues) many remained in Cardiff convinced that they had reached America.

But the boom didn't stop at Tiger Bay. A hundred miles to the west, the Great Western Railway was on the point of realising Brunel's vision of seamless travel between London and New York. Fishguard was the nearest port to America for British liners plying the Atlantic. On a few occasions the *Lusitania* and *Mauretania* sailed non-stop between New York and Fishguard, where London-bound passengers disembarked for the boat train, reaching London nearly a day earlier than by continuing to Liverpool.

The express from Fishguard to London took under five hours, stopping only at Cardiff – or rather it would finally do so with the completion in 1912 of Wales' last mainline railway. This new line, the HS2 of its day, took a direct route from Cardiff westwards, ignoring Neath, Swansea and Carmarthen, forming the final link in the high-speed service between London and New York.

The First World War and the Depression finished Cardiff as a great port, and Fishguard as a transatlantic terminal, its harbour reduced to serving the Irish ferries. Without them, today's surviving service of two daily trains to the harbour station would have disappeared, with or without Beeching. Yet surprisingly, a century after the Great Western completed its high speed line



The ferry terminal at Fishguard harbour. At the end of March Transport Minister Ieuan Wyn Jones announced there would be five trains each way between Fishguard and Carmarthen each day, from September, in addition to the existing twice-daily boat-train service. The Welsh Government additional annual subsidy for Arriva Trains to run the service will be £1.4 million a year.

across Wales, it may amount to more than a mere footnote in railway history. It could be the key to unlock dramatic improvements in travel across south, west and mid Wales.

A *Metro for Wales' Capital City Region*, the IWA/Cardiff Business Partnership report launched this spring, is a proposal whose time has come. Cardiff's commuter rail system is the busiest in the UK outside the passenger transport executive areas. Yet the case for a full-blown metro is only now possible and credible as a result of years of modest investments and reopenings.

The whole network is a legacy of coal, and its recent growth has been boosted by four freight line conversions – west Cardiff, Maesteg, the Vale of Glamorgan and Ebbw Vale. As Deputy First Minister Ieuan Wyn Jones told the Assembly's Enterprise and Learning Committee in October 2009:

“We have also recognised that, because of the popularity of trains and because we want to get people out of their cars and using more public transport, the easiest route for us to take is to look at the success of the Ebbw Vale line and at whether there are other tracks that are not being used.”





Rail map for southern Wales showing Great Western's express boat train line that bypasses Carmarthen, Swansea and Neath.

So when Fishguard campaigners learnt that the business case for a regular service to north Pembrokeshire places it in the top three of all rail re-openings in England and Wales, we thought we were pushing at an open door. It was not to be. The 2009 Wales National Transport Plan Consultation offered no rail enhancements west of Swansea. The reason given by all parties in the Assembly was, as Michael German told the Petitions Committee:

“We need to look at the barriers to getting more trains to Fishguard, like the dualling issue at Gowerton and Loughor.”

At the nadir of railway fortunes in the 1980s, Thatcher reduced the line west out of Swansea to a single track. To this day Cardiff politicians believe that Gowerton remains a serious obstacle to delivering a decent rail service to west Wales.

But Fishguard trains don't run through Gowerton. They use the Great

Western's boat train line, as they have done for a century. This is a double track express line that bypasses Neath, Swansea and Carmarthen, as it did in 1912, reaching Llanelli from Cardiff in only an hour, and Fishguard in two and a quarter hours, easily beating the car. That explains the mysterious extra line that's started to appear on Arriva Trains maps, a surviving and precious inheritance from Wales' boom years.

It is waiting to be restored to full service as an express route between south east and south west Wales - Carmarthen, Milford and Pembroke as well as Fishguard. The potential extends even as far as Aberystwyth: the boat train line links directly to the Heart of Wales line near Pontarddulais. Direct trains could reach Llandeilo from Cardiff in an hour and a half, and a connecting express bus could deliver passengers to Aberystwyth in 2 hours 50 minutes from Cardiff, compared to over four hours today, either by TrawsCymru and its coach/bus or rail via Shrewsbury.

The result would be radically improved access for the whole of west Wales, all using existing infrastructure.

But the best part of this vision concerns Swansea. Far from being bypassed by this reopening, Swansea stands to gain Wales' first genuine Parkway station. The boat train line passes through Swansea West Services at M4 Junction 47. The services are sandwiched between the motorway and rail line. Infrastructure for a Swansea Parkway Station already exists: parking, services and an exit to the M4. From here drivers could be in central Cardiff in 48 minutes – not easy by road. Ieuan Wyn Jones wants “to get people out of their cars and using more public transport”. Half way along “the easiest route” between Cardiff and west Wales, Swansea Parkway is exactly what he's looking for.

**Mike Joseph** is a writer and historian and an Honorary Research Associate at Swansea University.

# 2

## Economy

### Articles

Wales needs long-term investment in education and infrastructure

Robust response to the recession from Welsh business

Accelerated Development Zones could plug Welsh funding gap

Despite the cuts some of us are doing well

## Wales needs long-term investment in education and infrastructure

**Gerald Holtham** says to achieve it the Welsh Government will have to deploy joined-up thinking to set new cross-departmental priorities

The next several years are going to be very difficult ones economically in Wales and in the UK as a whole. The recent recession was a very steep one in which GDP fell by some 6 per cent from peak to trough. As the chart on the facing page shows, the economy normally grows more quickly in recovering from a recession but even so it took about eight years after the recessions of the early 1980s and 1990s for the economy to return to its old trend line. Only then did unemployment fall near its pre-recession levels.

This time we have had no bounce out of recession. Growth has resumed but it was about 1.5 per cent last year and is forecast to be of the same order in 2011. That is rather below the old trend growth rate, so slack in the economy is growing, evidenced by the continued rise in unemployment. With the government tightening fiscal policy severely through planned reductions in public expenditure it is hard to see a sharp acceleration in growth in the near future.

Moreover, the household sector went into the recession with unusual levels of debt – well over 100 per cent of annual income – after a number of years in which savings rates were historically low. In the colder economic climate of today it is more than likely that they will continue to try and pay down some of that debt rather than accumulate more, a process known in the markets as ‘deleveraging’. With both households and the state deleveraging, it will take longer than eight years this time to get the economy and the labour market back on trend.

As a result the prospect is for unemployment and particularly youth unemployment to remain a problem for some time. The UK economy will rebalance with slower growth of domestic credit and spending by government and households and more reliance on net exports for growth. However, it risks being a protracted and uncomfortable process with growth slower than it has been for some years to come.

What can public policy in Wales do to improve the situation? We need to approach the problem with urgency but also with realism. UK GDP in the chart is shown on a logarithmic scale, which means a straight line represents a constant percentage growth rate. What is striking is how GDP has moved around the same straight line for 50 years. We have had huge changes in government policies over that time. The Labour governments of the 1960s tried to accelerate growth via a national plan. Mrs Thatcher’s governments tried to do it by privatisation and setting the markets free. Through it all the UK economy grew at an average rate of 2.25 per cent. That should tell us that changing the underlying growth rate of a mature economy is no easy task even for a sovereign government with all the tools of

In association with

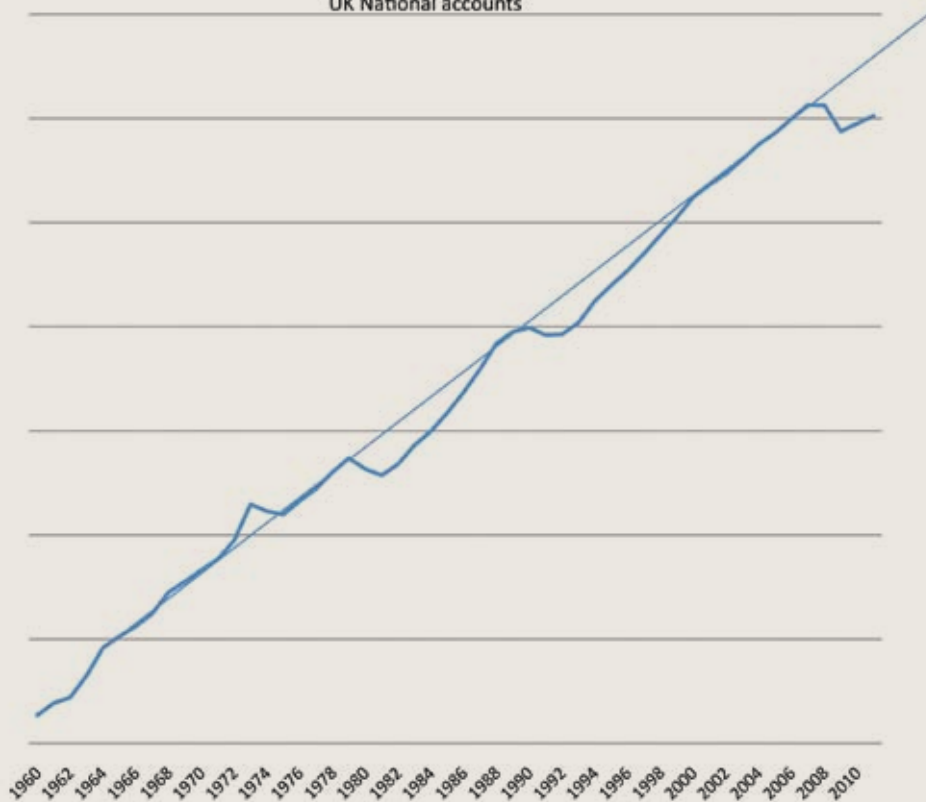


## UK GDP

inflation adjusted - log scale

Source:

UK National accounts



The UK's GDP growth rate between 1960 and 2010. What is striking is how GDP has moved around the same straight trend line for 50 years, despite the huge changes in Westminster policies over that time, whether implemented by Conservative or Labour. After the recessions of the early 1980s and early 1990s the economy took about eight years to return to the trend line. In the current recession there has been no bounce-back and the return is likely to take longer.

economic management at its disposal.

A subsidiary government like that in Wales, lacking many of the powers of the UK government, cannot be expected to work miracles. Paradoxically, the best hope is that Wales has fallen behind the rest of the UK and much of the European Union in GDP per head. History shows that it is easier for lagging economies to 'catch up' than it is to accelerate growth in economies that are already among the more prosperous.

The first thing to note is that the Welsh Government cannot do a great deal to influence the short-term situation. It does not have any control

over the instruments of macroeconomic policy, neither can it affect interest rates or even the size of its own budget. The policies it follows can at best have long-term effects. So it needs to educate the Welsh public to that fact and attempt to engage them in a strategy that will pay off after a decade has passed – much longer than the usual political horizon.

That strategy must be based on investment, building for the future. In the UK the state has no great record when it comes to commercial investment. It persisted with commercial white elephants like Concorde and quit on things with commercial potential like tilting trains.

But there are some things that only state investment can do. And the two things that analyst after analyst has pointed out need investment in Wales are physical infrastructure and education.

Certainly there is widespread consensus that those are two areas on which the Welsh Government should concentrate. I tend to sympathise with George Bernard Shaw's remark that the majority is always wrong. Show me a consensus and my first instinct is to wonder what's wrong with it. But sometimes, boring as it may be, the consensus is right. I believe it is now. The

## Show me a consensus and my first instinct is to wonder what's wrong with it

best thing that Welsh Government can do is enjoy patience on the electorate and invest as heavily as may be in education and infrastructure.

Even so, success is not guaranteed. Transport links may be used by people leaving, for good, or just to shop. Trained graduates may say thanks for the education and emigrate to where the money is better. Investment in education and infrastructure is not sufficient for economic prosperity. But it is surely necessary. We won't get anywhere without it.

Moreover, there is no point in trying to be too clever in identifying the precise skills or the specific form of training that will be needed in 10 or 20 years time. The best policy is the one that is robust, not the one that relies on forecasting skills that hardly exist. We have to teach kids to learn and solve problems. We have to raise the general educational level so all our people are literate and numerate and a high proportion have followed degree-level courses. Specific training for market niches then follows easily.

Ireland's success before its recent crash was put down to things like a low rate of corporation tax. Equally or more important was the educational level of its workforce. In the 1970s Irish governments reformed education and accelerated expenditure. Today 45 per cent of Irish people under the age of 34 have a degree-level qualification. In the UK it was around 20 per cent at the time of the last census and in Wales lower again at about 15 per cent. The numbers have risen subsequently but we have far to go.

The Welsh Government has to devote more of the budget to education and explain to people the rationale. If you have to wait longer for the

## The Welsh Government must adopt a more collaborative and, dare I say, less high-handed approach to local authorities.

hip operation it is to improve the life chances of your grandchildren.

There are issues in higher education but most education will continue to be provided free. In a time of great budgetary stringency that makes it important for the state to charge for services where it make sense to do so. Road developments, for example, should be partly financed by tolls or user charges, especially when the road provides a relief or alternative route – like the long delayed M4 relief south of Newport and Cardiff.

Apart from road developments, Wales needs rail electrification, high-speed broadband roll-out and the development of at least two ports to service offshore wind and wave power generation in the decades ahead. Where is the money to come from?

The Welsh Government wants to get borrowing powers from the UK government and is investigating ingenious ways to borrow off balance sheet without falling into the traps of PFI (private finance initiative) deals that were poor value. It is not clear whether those efforts will succeed but meanwhile there is an easier way.

The Welsh Government must adopt a more collaborative and, dare I say, less high-handed attitude to local authorities. They have unexploited borrowing powers, that could be mobilised in their's and the national interest. Take the Heads of

the Valleys road that needs upgrading at a cost of several hundred millions of pounds. It goes through six unitary authorities. They could each borrow an average of £50 million and form a syndicate to build the road. That is well inside Public Works Loan Board ceilings for local authority debt. The Welsh Government could sign a hire purchase agreement with the unitary authorities to buy the road over the next 20 or 30 years at a rate that services their debt.

With an annual budget of over £15 billion, if the Welsh Government put aside just one per cent for debt service, that would amount to £150 million. At an interest rate of 5 per cent, that could service up to £3 billion of debt, enough to make a huge difference to Welsh infrastructure. And the local authorities could borrow much of that money under an agreement with the Welsh Government. Moreover, the interest rates at a fraction of one percentage point over the UK gilt rate would be much lower than anything available under PFI or other ingenious wheezes. Would the Treasury object? It can't be ruled out but the approach breaks no current rules and a couple of billion is a drop in the ocean of UK debt and debt servicing so it shouldn't give any real cause for concern.

Some Welsh Government officials have a tendency to regard local authorities in a less than respectful and collegiate way. But the mutual dependency is enormous if investment is to be maintained – and must be recognised. Wales requires, in the cant phrase, joined-up thinking to set cross-departmental priorities for infrastructure development. It further requires consultation with local authorities on regional priorities. Some hard bargaining is inevitable on the distribution of costs and benefits and the allocation of borrowing quotas. Moreover, the public sector urgently needs to improve its procurement and project management skills - private sector expertise would surely need to be tapped. But then a programme of national infrastructure development could be launched that would provide some jobs over the next few years and set Wales up better for the future.

---

**Gerald Holtham** chaired the Commission on Funding and Finance of the National Assembly. This article is based on a presentation he made to the IWA's National Economy conference in March.

# Robust response to the recession from Welsh business

Rob Lewis provides a snapshot of PricewaterhouseCoopers' *Welsh Economic Barometer* unveiled at the IWA's National Economy conference in March

Welsh business confidence appears to be better than might have been anticipated given the downturn, although the position is mixed, with some polarisation at both ends of the spectrum. Nearly 40 per cent of our respondents were not confident of what is in store over the next 12 months. In the longer term, however, prospects appear to be much more positive. Disappointingly, many of our respondents had not read the Welsh Government's Economic Renewal Plan. Of those that had, only 15 per cent thought it would improve the prospects of the Welsh economy over the next few years.

Among the key priorities for the new Welsh Government that will be formed in May are better quality support for SMEs, investment in skills and training, and more effective public sector procurement. The survey invited businesses to respond to 14 questions. Results to questions on business confidence indicated that 42 per cent were either very confident or somewhat confident of their prospects, whereas over a three year period this rises to nearly 60 per cent.

A majority 57 per cent expected growth to be funded from internally generated cash, with bank lending in second place at only 14 per cent, while 6.5 per cent looked to private equity. Nobody expected to finance growth through government sources. Related to this was the response to the question on the nature of business conversations that have taken place with respondents and the Welsh Government in the past:

- Conversations around grants and funding came top with nearly 50 per cent.
- Training at 27 per cent ranked second highest.
- Business advice came in at just under 20 per cent.
- Higher education was identified by 13 per cent.
- R&D funding, export and trade advice and infrastructure advice all ranked at less than

10 per cent.

- Export and trade was lowest at 7.5 per cent.

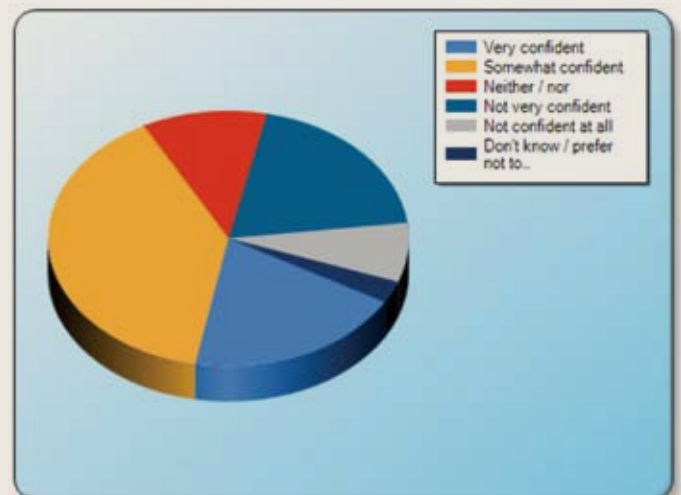
Just over 24 per cent of respondents expected revenue growth to come from new product development accounts, and 12 per cent through expansion into new geographical markets. Only 8 per cent expected growth to be the result of acquisition activities.

Responding to a question on their restructuring activities over the last 12 months, nearly 70 per cent of businesses had implemented cost reduction initiatives, with 21.5 per cent entering into a new strategic alliance or joint venture, while nearly 17 per cent had outsourced a business process or function. A further 8.4 per cent had in-sourced a previously outsourced function.

Welsh businesses confirmed that headcount has been a casualty in the past 12 months with just over 35 per cent of respondents having reduced

## Welsh Economic Barometer

How would you assess your level of confidence in prospects for the revenue growth of your company over the next 3 years?



their workforce. Of these 14 per cent had cut back by more than 10 per cent. Interestingly 25 per cent of respondents have seen increases in their workforce of which just over 10 per cent confirmed this was at more than 10 per cent. So we have some clear indications of businesses succeeding while others are not responding to the economic conditions so well.

A question was also included on sustainability and climate change. Just over 55 per cent said they were not preparing to introduce any climate change initiatives in the next 12 months, with only 25 per cent saying they were actively making changes. Of those that are implementing actions in response to climate change, many are focused around energy consumption and seeking accreditation to efficiency indicators, for example to ISO 14001 and BS8901.

Looking ahead to 2020, respondents were asked to consider which were the most important requirements for the Welsh economy to be competitive on the global stage. Respondents were allowed to indicate more than one reason:

- A well educated, skilled and flexible workforce was identified by 43 per cent of the respondents.
- innovation and a supportive tax regime was mentioned by 30 per cent.
- Centres of excellence and a collaborative business environment were listed by 26 per cent
- Access to capital was mentioned by 22 per cent.

In addition, and interestingly, 34 per cent identified a safe, secure and pleasant living environment as an important factor.

The final group of questions focused around what the priorities should be for the incoming Welsh Government. Nearly 19 per cent identified better support for SMEs and nearly 18 per cent wanted less bureaucracy for business in Wales. A better understanding of the needs of business was given by 14 per cent with a similar percentage wanting improved infrastructure. Only 9 per cent identified a need for more funding for business.

With regard to the Welsh Government's Economic Renewal Plan, only 30 per cent of respondents said that they had read the document. Of those, 16 per cent said they felt the plan would improve the competitiveness of the Welsh economy. However, nearly 41 per cent said they did not believe it would have any impact at all, with a further 31 per cent saying it would have a detrimental effect.

These results demonstrate that Welsh businesses have responded robustly to the recession and believe that there is room for optimism for their future prospects. There are some tough challenges ahead and some clear views from the business community as to where the Welsh Government should be focusing its efforts over the next few years to help the Welsh economy and especially the public sector get through some difficult times.

---

**Rob Lewis** is chairman of PwC in Wales.

## Accelerated Development Zones could plug Welsh funding gap

**Gronw Percy** advocates a new model to finance capital projects

A new approach to funding infrastructure is desperately needed in Wales. While some of our towns and cities have been transformed over the last 20 years on the back of high levels of public and private sector investment, more recently the scale and pace of regeneration has dramatically slowed. A number of flagship projects have stalled and new public sector funding mechanisms have yet to fill the gap.

A perfect storm of depressed project returns, ongoing constraints on development finance and significant reductions in public spending will continue to undermine conventional approaches to financing regeneration. This is at a time when the Welsh Government is highlighting the importance of infrastructure to provide the right conditions for business growth.

PwC are developing a number of innovative funding models including leveraging public sector assets, accessing European funding, tax-based models and attracting private sector investment. In particular we are working with a number of local authorities and the Core Cities Group in England to press central Government to allow local authorities greater financial freedoms. Specifically we have identified the introduction of a new mechanism based on Tax Incremental Financing which we have named the

Accelerated Development Zone.

Tax Incremental Financing is used widely in the United States to fund local community infrastructure. This mechanism allows councils to retain some of the growth in business rates revenue generated by developments in a specific geographical area which have been unlocked by initial infrastructure investment. These locations can either be single or multiple areas in a town or city or a sub-region.

The rates generated by such developments would normally be paid to central Government. Under this scheme, at least part of the revenue is used to repay the debt raised to finance the up-front infrastructure investment required to put in place the regeneration and subsequent growth. The proposal assumes that the local authority retains this revenue for a defined period of time, sufficient to allow a sensible debt funding term, say 25 years. At the end of the term the revenues revert to central Government. The initial capital funding can often be provided via increased Prudential Borrowing.

The *Accelerated Development Zone* proposal is particularly suitable to regeneration projects which:

- Demonstrate additional taxation flows at local and national level.
- Cannot be funded in part or whole by the private sector.
- Support projects where other forms of public sector funding are insufficient to meet the funding gap.
- Generate sufficient additional taxation (business rates and other) to support the investment.

For example, in the 1980s the Cardiff Bay development would have had had the right ingredients to be a potential *Accelerated Development Zone* scheme. Today the proposition has gained widespread political support in England and Scotland.

Providing councils in England with discretion to establish *Accelerated Development Zones* is consistent with the Coalition Government's Localism agenda. Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg has announced that the Tax Incremental Financing mechanism is to be adopted as Government policy in England.

Details on implementing the policy remain to be clarified. However, PwC is working closely with Government officials and local authorities to develop

an appropriate framework for the introduction of *Accelerated Development Zones*. Typical issues in the development of Tax Incremental Financing schemes, include:

- Economic modelling to assess and capture the taxation flows.
- Displacement impact of project.
- Level of borrowing that the taxation flows can support.
- Management of overall local authority borrowing.
- Development of the Tax Incremental Financing scheme bid process.
- Assessment of risk transfer.

PwC are working closely with a number of local authorities to consider new funding approaches and supporting their ambition to be among the first Tax Incremental Financing pilots. Scotland

**PwC are developing a number of innovative funding models including leveraging public sector assets, accessing European funding, tax-based models and attracting private sector investment.**

is leading the way on their development. It has launched the Edinburgh Waterfront project and has a number of other projects in development including the Buchanan Quarter in Glasgow, Union Terrace Gardens in Aberdeen, and the Waterfront in Dundee. In England, local Authorities in Leeds, Newcastle, Birmingham and London are considering pilot projects and are awaiting primary legislation.

Wales needs major infrastructure investment to sustain progress and develop key sectors for the future. The *Accelerated Development Zone* concept has the potential to support the delivery of a number of Wales' regeneration challenges. We await with interest the Welsh Government's response to its increased powers in the consideration of alternative funding mechanisms for infrastructure investment.

---

**Gronw Percy** is an assistant director in PwC's Cardiff-based corporate finance team:  
[gronw.percy@uk.pwc.com](mailto:gronw.percy@uk.pwc.com)

# Despite the cuts some of us are doing well

James Foreman-Peck explores Welsh pay differentials between the public and private sectors

In the face of the spending cuts could there be scope for reducing public sector pay in Wales to bring it more in line with private sector pay levels? According to the Office of National Statistics, public sector weekly wages in Wales have been rising more than twice as fast as those in the private sector. Between April 2009 and April 2010, for example, they increased by 2.4 per cent as against 1.1 per cent. Welsh public sector wages are now some 23 per cent higher than those in the private sector.

The accompanying table compares weekly wages of various occupations in Wales with those in the UK as a whole, and also with Scotland and the North East of England. It is striking that 'health professionals', 'health and social welfare associated professionals', and 'customer service occupations' command the greatest premium over the UK average, as well as over the equivalent pay in Scotland and the North East. The first two groups – the 'professionals' – must be almost entirely in the public sector.

An equally striking feature in the table is how low private wages are in Wales compared with those in Scotland and England. The Welsh private sector has a disproportionate number of small businesses and branch plants that tend to pay lower wages and salaries. There are few large privately owned companies headquartered in Wales – most are in London and the South East. This also results in a more restricted range of occupations than in big companies. Consequently, as the table indicates, Welsh corporate managers' average weekly pay is only 75 per cent of the UK level. Exacerbating the inequality, small firms are less likely than large to offer employee pensions.

Welsh public sector wages have been consistently higher than wages in the private sector because state pay rates are fairly uniform across the UK and Wales has more than its fair share of higher paid public sector jobs. For instance, there are heads of health service trusts and the associated salary hierarchy in every UK region. Then there are large decentralised central government services, such as the Office of National Statistics at Newport and the Royal Mint at Llantrisant.

A possible explanation, if not justification, for the health professionals' premium is faster growth of recruitment in Wales. In England the number of NHS doctors rose by 49 per cent between 1997 and 2008 (Institute of Fiscal Studies). In

Wales the percentage appears to be rather larger. Medical and dental staff increased by 58 per cent from 1997 to 2009 (Statistics for Wales, 2010). If this interpretation is correct, in this case high public sector pay relative to England reflects the more rapid expansion of selected public services. The market seems to be working, though the rate of growth of these public sector jobs might well be questioned.

What determines benchmark private sector competitive market wages? If a job requires more skill than another it is likely to pay better so as to encourage people to undertake the necessary investment in training. If some work is particularly unpleasant then a premium may be required to persuade individuals to do it. If one area is cheaper to live in than another perhaps employees would accept lower money wages, because they could still maintain their living standards. If there is simply a shortage of a particular type of worker relative to the demand for them at any particular place, higher

**The cost of living in Wales is lower than the UK average by probably more than 5 per cent. This provides an advantage to working in Wales which could be reflected in the proportionately lower money wages in the private sector.**

wages are likely until the shortage disappears. So if demand in a sector has expanded recently wages may be high temporarily to attract labour.

The cost of living in Wales is lower than the UK average by probably more than 5 per cent. This provides an advantage to working in Wales which could be reflected in the proportionately lower money wages in the private sector. The relatively low pay of 8 per cent below the UK average for Welsh 'Elementary Administration and Service Occupations' must be a response to the lower Welsh cost of living and to a lack of unionisation.

UK-level wage bargaining probably explains why teaching and research professionals, along with skilled



metal and electrical trades workers, are paid close to the UK average. Trade unionism tends to lean against the wind of market forces. It has traditionally been stronger in Wales than in London and the South East, and in the public sector than in the private sector.

Coupling this with public sector national agreements and national pay scales, the geographical pattern of pay for state employees may therefore be expected to show less variation than the private sector. Even though average pay may be the same in the two sectors, the public sector would then over-pay in low cost areas such as Wales, and under-pay in high cost areas such as London. Hence, in normal times there will be

unmet demand for public sector workers in the South East of England and an excess supply in 'Outer Britain' and especially Wales.

Across the UK on average the public-private wage differential largely reflects skill differences between the sectors. Higher average public sector pay indicates greater skills and training. However, this is less apparent in Wales. Here, there is less evidence that relatively high public sector remuneration is justifiable by greater skills.

.....  
**Professor James Foreman-Peck** lectures at Cardiff's Business School.

### Weekly wages in Wales relative to UK and other regions for selected occupations 2010

	Percentage excess of Welsh wage over		
	UK wage	Scottish wage	North East England wage
Health Professionals	9	19	9
Teaching and Research Professionals	1	-1	-3
Health and Social Welfare Associate Professionals	7	15	6
Caring Personal Service Occupations	1	-6	-3
Protective Service Occupations	4	16	10
Corporate Managers	-25	-20	-11
Culture, Media and Sports Occupations	-16	-10	14
Skilled Metal and Electrical Trades	1	-7	7
Customer Service Occupations	8	-4	2
Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	0	-2	-8
Elementary Trades, Plant and Storage Related Occupations	-2	-3	-4
Elementary Administration and Service Occupations	-8	-11	-1

Source: Office of National Statistics, 2010 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings  
[http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme\\_labour/ashe-2010/2010-gor-pps.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_labour/ashe-2010/2010-gor-pps.pdf)

### Articles

Nation takes another historic step

End of the Imperial romance

Reorganisation can damage front-line services and increase costs

No silver bullet in service delivery

# Nation takes another historic step

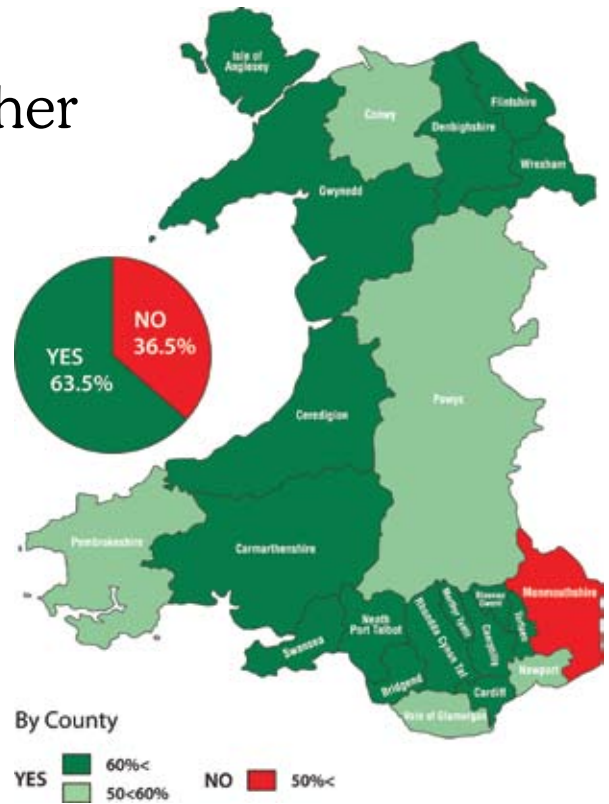
Richard Wyn Jones argues that the 2011 referendum has given an unforeseen impetus to constitutional change

We devolutionists are a strange lot. Following the debacle of 1979, when the referendum of that year defeated the Assembly proposals by four to one, we wallowed in self-lacerating misery and doubt. According to Gwyn Alf Williams, we were a “naked people living under an acid rain” (*When Was Wales?* 1985). After the drama of 1997, when we gained a majority for the Assembly by a whisker, we were so high on joy and relief that it took several years before some managed to regain their critical faculties and engage meaningfully with the manifold deficiencies of the devolution dispensation that had been granted. But then, following the thumping victory in the 2011 referendum, the response has been so understated – so blasé – that it’s almost as if nothing has changed.

There are doubtless many explanations for this state of affairs. Some may no doubt claim that we’re simply not used to success. Commemorating glorious defeat is more the Welsh style, from *Poni welwch chwi hynt y gwynt a’r glaw?* in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century (Gruffudd ab Yr Ynad Coch’s lament for the death of our last prince, Llewellyn ap Gruffydd - See you not the rush of the wind and rain?), to the endless eulogies to 1926 and all that in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

More prosaically, the exigencies of the political calendar may also have played a role in the subdued response to the outcome. No sooner had the final votes been counted than the activists who’d formed the backbone of the local Yes campaigns were beginning their campaigning for the forthcoming National Assembly election. With such serious business to attend to there was little time for contemplation let alone celebration.

The manifest weakness of the opposition may form another part of the story. Even if nothing else could quite compare to



Results of the referendum on Assembly powers held on 3 March 2011. It is striking that the counties scoring a majority of more than 60 per cent include all those which voted Yes by a majority in 1997, but now joined by counties extending into north-east Wales and Cardiff. Map: courtesy of the 2011 *Wales Yearbook* [www.eleven.walesyearbook.co.uk](http://www.eleven.walesyearbook.co.uk)

pitifully inadequate media appearances of the Welsh language No campaigners, by the final days of the campaign it was surely obvious to all that ‘True Wales’ as a whole was gaining no traction and making only minimal impact? If a Neil Kinnock-type figure had chosen to play a prominent role in the No campaign then it might all have been different. But when faced with opponents who were so anonymous and so obviously ineffective there was perhaps a sense that the Yes campaign found themselves in a position akin to the proverbial ‘flat track bullies’ of the sporting world. Easy victory was taken for granted. Only a failure to deliver the expected result would have been deemed newsworthy.

It is also true that the result served to confirm what we already knew. Those of us concerned with tracking public attitudes towards devolution in Wales have spent much of the last twelve or so years arguing that all the available survey and polling evidence has indicated that support for devolution firmed up rapidly after 1997,

while also evening out geographically. There was ample evidence to suggest that the Welsh electorate wanted to see the Welsh layer of government have more influence on Welsh life relative to Westminster. All of this was amply confirmed on 3 March.

Nonetheless, however muted the response, it would be a mistake to assume that the referendum result is not of major historic importance in its own right. Let me suggest five ways in which it is likely to prove consequential:

- This very public demonstration that devolution is now the ‘settled will’ of the Welsh electorate will bestow upon the institutions of devolved government a broader mandate and legitimacy that was withheld in 1997. This is likely to have important – if ineffable – implications for the self-confidence of those working within them.
- Coupled with the rather dramatic reduction in the number of Welsh MPs at Westminster that is set to take place by 2015, the emergence of the National Assembly as a fully-fledged legislative parliament means that it is now, without doubt, the main forum for Welsh democratic debate and deliberation. Welsh political horizons have shifted irrevocably to Cardiff.
- The transfer of extensive legislative powers to the Assembly across a whole raft of domestic policy areas means that Tam Dalyell’s West Lothian Question will now apply in its full effect to Wales. This is the problem that arises because English MPs cannot vote on matters devolved to Wales, while Welsh MPs continue to vote on the full range of English matters in the House of Commons. Time will tell if the UK coalition government’s promised review of the implications of the West Lothian Question will lead in future to Welsh MPs being excluded from voting on England-only legislation – a move whose apparently flawless logic is only matched by the formidable practical difficulties that surround its implementation. Even without such a change, it is highly unlikely that

any Welsh MP will ever again hold a ministerial role in one of the major UK government departments whose responsibilities have been devolved. Not only will there be fewer Welsh MPs but their role will also be diminished.

- Following on from all of this, the referendum result confirms a fundamental change in the relationship between Wales and the UK state, and indeed in the nature of the UK state itself. Since the so-called Acts of Union of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, Wales has been an integral part of the core of that state. From now on, however, Wales’ relationship with the UK is destined to be inter-governmental in character. This heralds a monumentally important change and we can only guess at its longer term impact. Importantly, this does not only apply to Wales. Although apparently unnoticed, one of the consequences of the referendum is that it also heralds the emergence, or perhaps more accurately, the re-emergence of an English polity as an incubus within the UK state.
- Finally, one suspects that the dire nature of the referendum campaign and the decisive nature of the result that followed will make it less likely that opponents of further change will demand referendums before the smallest reform is enacted in future. Or if those demands are made, that they will be not be acceded to. As the House of Lords Constitution Committee argued in 2009, referendums really do need to be reserved for matters of fundamental constitutional importance. The shift from Part 3 to Part 4 of the 2006 Government of Wales Act was not, and subsequent difficulties in framing the referendum question, and then campaigning on it, were only too obvious.

Apart from these longer-term changes, the referendum result will also trigger a more immediate development. Largely unnoticed in the text of the coalition agreement that underpins the Conservative-Liberal Democrat government is a pledge to establish “a process similar to the Calman

Commission” for Wales should a Yes vote be achieved. As the public debate on Calman has focused almost exclusively on the taxation powers of the Scottish parliament, few seem to realise what a far-reaching commitment this might prove to be in the case of Wales. But recall the Calman remit:

“To review the provisions of the Scotland Act 1998 in the light of experience and to recommend any changes to the present constitutional arrangements that would enable the Scottish Parliament to serve the people of Scotland better, improve the financial accountability of the Scottish Parliament, and continue to secure the position of Scotland within the United Kingdom.”

The Holtham Commission has already produced a report on the financial accountability of the National Assembly that is most unlikely to be surpassed in terms of either its authoritativeness or status. Given this, surely any Welsh Calman-equivalent will inevitably end up focusing on the first part of that remit?

Could the UK government’s commitment therefore end up placing onto the political agenda all those issues that inevitably follow from the establishment of a legislative parliament for Wales, but which Wales’s largest party has proven very reluctant to face-up to? These include the establishment of a Welsh legal jurisdiction, the Richard Commission’s 2004 recommendations to increase the members of the Assembly from 60 to 80, in order to ensure proper scrutiny, and to elect them by the STV system of proportional representation, and much more. The next step in the story of Welsh devolution may be upon us sooner than we had imagined. This referendum result is important in the impetus it has given to constitutional change that will affect the whole of the United Kingdom and not just Wales.

---

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

# End of the Imperial romance

Peter Stead examines an account of how the British constitution has clambered out of the footnotes and up the agenda

A.J.P. Taylor's judgement that "British Society came of age in 1945" was probably the most widely used quotation in the university classrooms of the closing decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. As Mrs Thatcher set out to prove that there was "no such thing as society" it was all so easy for academics to embrace every aspect of what was termed the Post-War Settlement and to explain it in terms of a particular British disposition. Fundamental to this view of history that was pleasurable to teach was the notion of consensus, so beloved by historians. It was all beautifully British. Prompted by the huge trade union movement in which so many 'Celts' were prominent, the Liberal policies of the Welfare State and Keynesianism were eagerly adopted by Labour and largely accepted by the Conservatives.

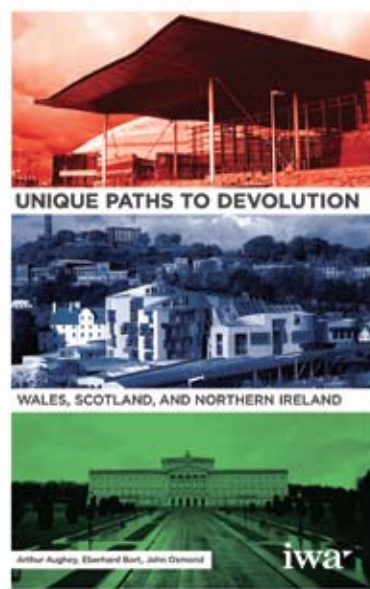
The various historians of consensus were never entirely unprofessional. In asides they would make references to wartime class tensions and the 'myth of the Blitz', as well as to the ways in which the War had made Britain economically subservient to the United States. However, in all of this there was hardly any reference to constitutional matters. The British dimension was entirely taken for granted. This was done all the more easily as it was so seamlessly blended with the Imperial romance. Although the Americans had called a halt to the Empire, for the time being it could still be celebrated as another aspect of the British genius.

In that era the authors of the standard texts felt very little obligation to discuss the constitutional nature of a state whose name we never used, other than to scribble UK on cards sent from abroad. We were famously a country without a constitution. Our essential informality was conclusively illustrated by the fact that two Welshmen, Lloyd George and Aneurin Bevan, had created the Welfare State, that the Scots were prominent in the Empire, on ships and in the Labour Movement, and that people of Irish Catholic extraction were an essential component of urban life throughout the land.

The one exception to all of this was the matter of Ireland. In terms of History the irritant of its story had to be told, but it was not difficult to shut out any detailed analysis of either the implications or consequences of the two Irelands. We were able to do this partly by just ignoring the details, accepting the Irish who lived amongst us as being the real representatives of their country and, perhaps, above all by romanticising the story by enjoying Guinness and singing their songs. The island of Ireland was just an 'other' that we could accept and define on our own terms.

As I relive those post-war decades I realise how comfortable I was living within those notions of Britishness, Empire and Consensus. I was thrilled by sports fixtures that brought teams from every part of the Empire to play cricket and rugby, and by 'home international' matches that more than anything else seemed to define what I took to be my status as a citizen of a particular state.

Of course, John Charles and Ivor Allchurch were the best players in the world, but I was just as thrilled by Danny Blanchflower, George Best and Kenny Dalglish. The story was the same with entertainment. My favourite comedian was a Scot, my favourite tenor Irish. To all of us with this frame of mind, any discussion of precise constitutional matters and any indication of dissatisfaction with consensus were the last things we wanted to encounter. The boat was not for rocking.



But, of course, the boat has rocked. The question of the constitution and the nature of the British state has clambered out of the footnotes and the cheaply-printed pamphlets and worked its way up the main agenda. In *Unique Paths To Devolution* the three authors - Arthur Aughey, Eberhard Bort, and John Osmond - clearly and succinctly tell the story that so many ignored in the 1950s and 1960s, and then bring it right up to date.

In doing so they explain the reasons for a political transformation that took most of us by surprise. The Irish settlement of the early 20th Century had been hurriedly improvised at a time of great crisis for the British state. The subsequent 'marginalisation' of Northern Catholics was a matter that was bound to rear its head eventually.

Politics is all about capturing and harnessing cultural energies. In Scotland and Wales, tribal Labour Parties rooted in the 1940s no longer seemed relevant to professional and youth activists. The fact that British parties never recruited in Northern Ireland encouraged the chickens to come home to roost. Suddenly whole political orthodoxies and shibboleths were impotent.

As a contemporary historian I found this telling of the strange and piecemeal story of Devolution utterly meticulous and convincing. This is a text that needs wide distribution and it should certainly find its way into the hands of all politicians and their respective advisors and consultants.

The authors do more than tell the story. They also ask questions of the future. What is most valuable

In Scotland and Wales, tribal Labour Parties rooted in the 1940s no longer seemed relevant to professional and youth activists. The fact that British parties never recruited in Northern Ireland encouraged the chickens to come home to roost.

Miraculously religious sectarianism never became violent in Scotland but now the whole of the UK was affected by wider issues. North Sea oil and the European dimension are always cited as factors loosening established constitutional bonds, but far more important was the phenomenon of de-industrialisation. Industry had been the element in which most people had lived, breathed and had their being. The whole notion of Britishness was based on the fact that a miner in Wales had more in common with a miner in Kent or Fife than he did with someone in Wales who was not a miner. As the 'real' jobs went so identity became an issue.

At the same time there occurred the failure of the traditional political parties, and in particular the Labour Party. The old historians of consensus had stressed that one of the crucial factors explaining the genius of British politics was that the newly professional sons of blue-collar workers retained their parents' commitment to Labour. At some time in the 1980s, by which time it was clear that Labour had already surrendered the youth vote, this ceased to be the case.

about their analysis is that in accepting that there is an ongoing process of devolution they make no attempt to disguise the fact that the dynamic of the process is way ahead of public opinion in all three of the nations they examine.

We come back then to the point of harnessing cultural energies. They are surely right to maintain that by now "the United Kingdom is a multinational state" and that at some point down the road that fact will have to be formalised. In each constituent nation there are minorities that know precisely where that road should end. For the moment the rest of us remain in a kind of no man's land. This invaluable text reminds us all, and especially our politicians and historians, that for the first time we need to do some serious constitutional thinking..

---

**Peter Stead** is a cultural historian. *Unique Paths to Devolution* is available from the IWA at £7.50 (members receive a 25 per cent discount).

# Reorganisation can damage front-line services and increase costs

**Rhys Andrews** wonders whether reduction of Welsh local authorities will achieve the desired results

Senior politicians in Wales are increasingly vocal in their desire to consider a reduction of the 22 Welsh local authorities. It is argued that fewer councils will save money by doing the same with less.

Since the Beecham Review local government has been urged to 'join-up' and make the connections with each other to enhance service delivery. However, policy-makers remain concerned that such voluntarism has yet to really take hold. Invariably, where voluntary compliance is perceived to be failing, central governments turn away from 'softer' measures and draw upon legislative powers to mandate structural change.

Reorganisation of local government has long been a default response of UK central government to the aspiration to improve coordination of public services. While the coming era of fiscal austerity will undoubtedly increase the pressure towards local government reorganisation, numerous questions about the effects of such large-scale restructuring remain. Can the costs of the process of reorganising be recouped? Are bigger units of government really more cost-effective? What are the implications for local democracy?

The optimum organisational size for the delivery of public services is one of the most enduring issues in the theory and practice of public administration. Policy-makers across the world continually debate the merits of alternative local government structures in terms of their consequences for costs and performance.

In recent times, central governments in several countries have enacted or considered reorganisations of local government on the grounds of efficiency. For example, in Denmark, the number of local government units was recently reduced from 270 to 98, and there is on-going discussion about another reduction in the future. Similarly, in Australia and Canada, debates have long raged about the amalgamation of local governments. In Eastern European countries, such as Poland and the Czech Republic, municipal consolidation has also become a common aim of central policy-makers.

All of these reforms assume that the scale economies accruing to bigger units of government translate into better, less expensive services. However, despite the proliferation of programmes for local government reorganisation, politicians' rhetoric on cost-savings and service improvement is rarely backed up by hard evidence.

Several studies have examined the transition costs associated with reorganisation. Research by Michael Chisholm, a member of the Local Government Commission in the 1990s, showed that the financial cost of the 1994-5 reorganisation of English local authorities was greatly underestimated and that it was unclear whether this was ever recouped through any subsequent efficiency savings. A recent study by Cardiff Business School suggests that the recent voluntary process of restructuring amongst some English county councils led to a rise in expenditure of about one per cent and a corresponding decline in service standards of about 5 per cent.

It is possible therefore that the main risk of restructuring is damage to front-line services rather than the impact on council budgets. Medium-term or long-run gains in performance simply may not be sufficient to compensate for the losses associated with the reorganisation process.

Although there is strong evidence to suggest that bigger units of government benefit from lower administrative overheads, empirical studies published around the time of the last round of local government reorganisation in the 1990s present inconsistent evidence on size and council effectiveness. A recent report by Cardiff University's Centre for Local and Regional Government on behalf of the Department of Communities and Local Government found the relationship between population size and local authority performance in England to be a complex mosaic of insignificant, positive, negative and non-linear effects. For some local services bigger may be better, while for others small may be more beautiful – at least in terms of effectiveness.

Even if the hypothesized scale economies reaped from reorganisation were uniform, there is another

influential strand of literature on local government size that suggests that as scale increases important virtues of local democracy are lost. Theorists of participatory democracy have long asserted that small scale government is best for citizen engagement with politics and policy-making.

Indeed, a commitment to making local services more citizen-centred has been at the heart of the Welsh Government's public service reform agenda. To be truly democratically responsive, the argument goes, councils, or rather councillors, must be close enough to the communities that they serve for each to develop a healthy familiarity and respect for the other. Survey data from several West European countries points towards a strong negative relationship between council size and community-orientated outcomes. Citizen satisfaction, trust in government and participation are all higher in smaller units of government.

Thus, although it is conceivable that larger councils may be able to devote more resources to building community capacity or empowering local people, it is likely that these efforts will be focused on overcoming a democratic deficit that may simply be absent in smaller authorities.

So what does all this mean for the prospects for local government reorganisation in Wales? First, it indicates that a long-term perspective is required to assess whether the short-term financial and performance costs of reorganisation are likely to be recouped. The multiple reorganisations of Local Health Boards in Wales serve as a reminder that structural change is too often a default response to short-lived political priorities.

Secondly, if, as the available evidence implies, economies of scale vary across services then it may be the case that alternative structures are required to reap the benefits of large or small size for each of the major local public services for which the Welsh Government is responsible.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, all of this highlights that political judgements about trade-offs between efficiency and democracy are inevitable. The extent to which those judgements reflect the will of local citizens is a matter of political leadership, both from the centre and the local community.

---

**Rhys Andrews** is a Senior Research Fellow at Cardiff Business School.



“helping to improve the Welsh economy”

**Contributing to economic  
development by supporting  
businesses to start and grow in Wales**

For more information on how we can help, call us or visit us at:

**0845 0453150 [www.venturewales.com](http://www.venturewales.com)**

# No silver bullet in service delivery

**Jon House** questions whether outsourcing can save money

The 'perfect storm' of tightening public finances combined with increasing demands from service users means that councils are increasingly having to do more with less resources. The result is that we have to make some hard decisions about what we deliver, and how we do it. Ultimately the question that needs to be resolved is do local authorities deliver fewer services, or do they try and make their current business model more efficient?

One of the options increasingly being considered by local authorities is the 'make or buy' choice. That is to say, do they deliver the services themselves or work with an external partner? There are, clearly, advantages and disadvantages of 'buying in' outside expertise. Working with private partners,

for example, can mean that some projects are delivered quicker, more efficiently, and with less exposure to risk for the public sector. In layman's terms many people think that outsourcing public services will help councils to save money.

However, as always things aren't that simple. Outsourcing gives us less control over what we are delivering, and when objectives and circumstances change it can be harder to respond. Working with private partners also means we're less likely to see any surpluses reinvested back into services. Furthermore, there are also a plethora of partnership models, such as public finance initiatives, joint venture companies, arms length companies, social trusts and mutual partnerships, each with their own advantages and disadvantages, both in terms of the business case and in terms of political considerations.

Working with external partners to deliver services is far from a new approach. One estimate of the size of the outsourcing market for council services in the UK puts it at £37 billion for 2008-09, which is not too far off the total GVA for the entire Welsh economy. Typical outsourced activities include social services, social housing and professional services. We know that this market is likely to increase. Last year a survey of 150 council managers in England found that almost every respondent said they would be comfortable sharing services with another public sector partner, whilst almost four out five respondents said they would also consider working in partnership with the private sector.

As a result we are seeing more councils in England look to outsourcing as means of addressing the cuts they are facing. In Bournemouth the council has signed a ten year £150m outsourcing deal with Mouchel, that will make savings of up to 40 per cent from their revenue budget. The contract will hand over the delivery of the council's ICT, revenues,



## Prosiect Gwyrdd

Prosiect Gwyrdd is a partnership between Cardiff, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and the Vale of Glamorgan Councils whose combined municipal waste makes up 40 per cent of the Welsh total. Together they are spending £1 billion

in an effort to meet the Welsh Government's target of a 70 per cent recycling and composting rate by 2025. In 2009-10 the five authorities achieved the following recycling and composting rates:

- Newport 43.43 per cent
- Caerphilly 52.85 per cent
- Cardiff 42.64 per cent
- Monmouthshire 47.84 per cent
- Vale of Glamorgan 42.42 per cent

The European Union Landfill Directive restricts the amount of biodegradable municipal waste that can be land filled. Land suitable for landfill operations is fast running out in south-east Wales. Landfill also produces methane, which is 23 times more potent as a green house gas than carbon dioxide.



benefits and facilities management services, and is expected to create up to 650 private sector jobs.

In Selby there are plans to reduce the number of council staff to just 14. The council will operate as a commissioner of services rather than delivering services through an arms-length service delivery vehicle. In January Lambeth Council published their plans for a 'Co-operative Council' which includes community-led commissioning in each council department, as well as proposing ways to support local businesses and third sector organisations in delivering local services.

In Cardiff our approach to working with the private sector is taken on a case by case basis. Recently the Council began a partnership with Tata Consultancy Services to enable us to provide more accessible services, whilst also reducing costs through improved use of ICT. We've also been looking at how we can work with partners to address pressures that local government is facing with regard to waste (see panel opposite). The European Union Landfill Directive restricts the amount of municipal waste that can be landfilled, whilst land suitable for landfill in the region is fast

running out. To address these issues we are working in partnership with Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Vale of Glamorgan Councils on Prosiect Gwyrdd, a £1 billion project to procure the best solution to deal with residual waste.

Ideally Cardiff wants to work as much as possible 'in-house', and invest in our internal capacity as a council to put the skills in place to ensure the new ways of working are sustainable in the long term. However, we also recognise that in some cases there will be a requirement to work with external partners. Where this takes place we will have a mandatory requirement for partners to work with Cardiff Council to transfer knowledge and skills to internal staff through mentoring and instruction.

While efficiencies can be found, outsourcing is no silver bullet for the issues faced by local government. First we need to maximise our in-house capabilities, and only then bring in external expertise where we don't have the skills in place to deliver.

.....  
**Jon House** is Chief Executive  
of Cardiff County Council.



## A wyddoch chi gallwch gysylltu â BT yn Gymraeg?

Os am drafod bil neu brynu cynnyrch, neu hysbysu nam ar eich llinell, galwch 0800 800 288, Llun i Sadwrn 8am - 6pm.

Ymholiadau llyfr ffôn – galwch ni ar 118 404\*, 24 awr y dydd.

\*Galwadau i 118404 yn costio £1.16 y funud neu rhan o funud, a phris cysylltu o 49c yr alwad o linell sefydlog BT (ac eithro ffonau talu BT). Gall ffonau symudol a rhwydweithiau eraill amrywio. Prisiau yn gywir Mai 2010.



# 4

## Education

### Articles

Targets must be accompanied with freedom in our schools

Bro Teifi's all-through school would raise standards

Akan to Zulu

## Targets must be accompanied with freedom in our schools

**Stevie Upton** reports on the IWA's study of pupil attainment at Key Stage 3

Wales' poor performance in the most recent round of the internationally standardised Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests has prompted a fierce response. This has been marked by reference to the "simply shocking" basic skills of many young people, to "system-wide failures", and to the "too cosy" relationship between government and educators. Education Minister Leighton Andrews has now indicated that rapid and substantial change is imminent. He has sent a powerful message that the Welsh Government will henceforth exert far greater control over the operation of our education system.

The government's response will drive towards the application of minimum standards for schools, sharper accountability, sharing knowledge so that best practice becomes the standard, developing high quality teaching and leadership, and building system capacity.

It is into this context that the IWA has launched a new report, *Making a difference at Key Stage 3 – Learning from five successful schools*. Key Stage 3, the first three years of secondary school, is a critical time in any child's education. Although it lays the foundations for achievement in GCSE examinations, it is also a time during which pupils' focus is at risk of drifting.

Over the course of the past eighteen months we have sought to develop recommendations on raising performance at this crucial stage. Evidence from the successful Welsh schools that provide our case studies has led to identification of a number of characteristics common to the schools' success. In turn, these provide insight into five issues addressed in the Minister's twenty proposed action points to deal with the poor PISA results.

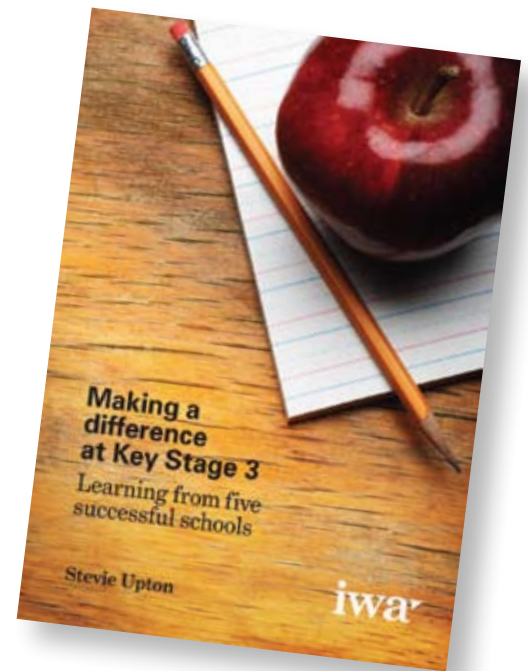
It seems likely that in future schools will be

expected to integrate PISA assessments into school assessment. This means that in 2012 pupils who will be expected to meet the challenges of the PISA test will, less than a year later, be required to perform at GCSE.

Whereas PISA measures ability to apply prior knowledge to new situations creatively, the GCSE examination remains predominantly a test of pupils' ability to acquire knowledge. Pupils can excel in both the acquisition and application of knowledge. However, unless this is an explicit goal it will be difficult to achieve consistency in the style and content of lessons throughout the course of a child's school career. Should this dual focus be considered necessary then careful consideration will need to be given to how it will work in practice.

Yet we must not seek to become accomplished in the PISA tests solely because we have previously failed to achieve highly in them. We must do so only if we believe PISA to be assessing something valuable.

We have not yet seen significant public debate on the fundamental strategic direction of our education system. The question of what ends we desire from the education of our young people must be settled as a matter of urgency. This is not a question of having a mission statement or strategy document. It is a question of being absolutely clear about an end goal and consequent direction of travel. Only from such a strategic sense of purpose can a truly coherent



and consistent system of education be formulated.

The Education Minister has made it clear that he will have more direct input to ensure that standards rise. Staff in our case study schools acknowledge that without rigorous and honest assessment of standards neither individual pupils nor the school as a whole would be able to progress. Nevertheless, a balance between structure and adaptability must be maintained.

The case study schools' approaches to self-evaluation are highly differentiated. No two systems are exactly alike, and yet each school's practices have been shown to be effective. These practices have been developed with reference to local context, such that each system operates in a way that makes use of the strengths of the staff whilst best ensuring ongoing development.

It is vital that a framework is in place in every school to ensure that performance is regularly and rigorously monitored, progress assessed and appropriate measures to achieve progression implemented. However, there is no 'one size fits all' solution. Placing trust in the professional judgement of the teachers and senior managers in our schools is not optional. Their detailed local knowledge makes them best placed to make decisions about their schools' development.

Any national stipulations regarding schools' evaluation frameworks must therefore be flexible enough to permit a diversity of approaches. If schools are to be required to share a rigid adherence to a set of monitoring protocols, the detail of how the protocols are implemented should be allowed to reflect local circumstances.

As for evaluation procedures, so for continuing professional development. The Minister has stated that continuing professional development will in future be focused on system-wide needs. Whilst there is a role for centrally-determined priorities, local context must be allowed to dictate at least part of the content of professional development. Teachers at different stages in their careers, with their own professional

interests and working in environments with very particular challenges, will desire and need quite different forms of professional development.

The removal of decision-making powers from teachers and managers would deprofessionalise teaching, making it a far less attractive prospect to the most capable individuals. But this is not to say that there is no role for government. The Welsh Government needs to make sure that there is a supply of high quality graduates for teaching and senior management posts. It also needs to guarantee funding to allow teachers to undertake continuing professional development and observe good practice elsewhere in the system. This will ensure that schools have the capacity to undertake rigorous evaluations and to plan and implement new strategies.

The indications are that the government plans to set targets centrally, against which all schools will be expected to perform. Targets have a part to play in any monitoring process, but they provide only a narrow indicator of success. If targets are the only means by which schools' trajectory and absolute standard are judged, the rational response will be to alter behaviour to meet them.

There is, however, no guarantee that a response to these short term demands will be in the best interests of a school and its pupils in the longer term. Measurement against the newly proposed targets will be annual, whereas comprehensive Estyn inspections operate on a six year cycle. The potential for schools to modify behaviour to meet the targets, at the expense of longer term strategic development, is therefore high. To avoid short term gaming behaviour, targets should be used with extreme caution.

Furthermore, however carefully chosen the targets, a school's success cannot be reduced to performance against them. Our case study schools' own monitoring procedures show just how complex and demanding a process it is to maintain an upward trajectory. The government must therefore consider how local authorities can be best equipped

to develop detailed knowledge of the subtleties of their schools' performance and to engage in in-depth partnerships to support them.

The government's planned focus on literacy and numeracy mirrors efforts in the case study schools to ensure that all pupils have the skills necessary to access the curriculum. It must, however, be implemented with care, so as to avoid a return to an overly prescriptive curriculum.

Recent reductions in prescription as regards lesson content have been welcomed by teachers. It has given them greater independence and allowed them to be more creative in their teaching. It has also encouraged greater cross-departmental working and improved pupil motivation. This latter benefit is of particular importance given the challenge of sustaining momentum during Key Stage 3.

Sustaining pupils' progression requires flexibility of approach in response to a nuanced understanding of individual needs. Needs vary not only between schools, but within schools over time. Excellent teachers are able to adapt their teaching methods as needed, but must have a degree of autonomy to be able to do so.

Success in the case study schools has been built on the combination of a coordinated response to underachievement and a high level of creativity. Development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is crucial, but must not be pursued at the expense of teachers' freedom to motivate and challenge their pupils. A balance must therefore be struck. A structured response to low literacy and numeracy levels must still allow schools the flexibility to simultaneously address other causes of underachievement.

---

**Stevie Upton** is Research Officer at the Institute of Welsh Affairs. *Making a difference at Key Stage 3* is available from the IWA at £10 (members receive a 25 per cent discount).

# Bro Teifi's all-through school would raise standards

Cynog Dafis puts the case for educating the entire 3 to 19 age range on single sites in rural Wales

The publication of the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results, showing Welsh performance sinking since 2006 in both global and UK terms, came as blow to the solar plexus of the nation's educational establishment. Education Minister Leighton Andrews pulled no punches. The results he said the results revealed "an unacceptable fall in our overall performance – everyone in the education sector in Wales should be alarmed". Suggesting the failure was systemic he added, "We all share responsibility for this and we must equally share in the difficult task of turning things around".

Ceredigion Local Education Authority's radical proposals for restructuring education in its more rural areas predate the PISA findings, but they may well hold one of the keys to the transformation for which Leighton Andrews calls. The challenges in these areas are formidable:

- Falling rolls, reduced budgets, and ageing buildings.
- Primary provision devised for the Victorian era with individual schools under continual threat of closure.
- A requirement to provide a wide range of choice at 14-19 years.

Rather than fight a rearguard action in the face of these trends, the Authority has proposed an outside-the-box model of schools for the entire 3 to 19 age range in the Tregaron, Lampeter and Llandysul catchment areas. In Lampeter, where the primary and secondary schools are adjacent, the model has been up and running as a pilot for five months and an independent interim report is entirely positive.

The Authority has now submitted a bid to the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme for £22.4 million to undertake a similar exercise in Bro Teifi, based at Llandysul. Together with a 30 per cent contribution from Ceredigion County Council, this would make a total investment of £32m. A decision is expected in the early summer.

The scheme would involve the closure of five primary schools, so unsurprisingly there has been opposition, spearheaded by Cymdeithas yr Iaith. However, parents, primary and secondary teachers and governors along with local business people have responded with creative enthusiasm. They have come together through Cefnogwyr Addysg Gymunedol

**The close-knit community ethos of the existing schools can and will be maintained. While the primary and secondary units would be separate, though closely linked, there would be opportunities to experiment with 'vertical registration'.**

Gymraeg ym Mro Teifi (*Supporters of Welsh-medium Community Education in Bro Teifi*) to develop the scheme.

As part of the process they have visited several all-through schools in England and, more significantly, Finland whose outstanding educational success, placing them at the top of the PISA table, has been explicitly linked to the development of the all-through model. According to Tuula Haatainen, former Finnish Minister for Education and Science:

"The educational success of the country can be attributed to the

all-through schooling system where pupils stay in the same school between 7 and 16 years rather than having separate primary and secondary schools".

Inspired by what they have seen, and applying their minds to the specific circumstances of rural Wales, a vision for the proposed 3-19 Bro Teifi school has been set out in impressive detail. The result is an excellent example of turning a cluster of daunting challenges into a transformational opportunity. Their document *Sharing our Vision* was presented to AMs and Welsh Government officials on a visit to the National Assembly in February.

The all-through school model in a new purpose-built building would raise standards in a number of ways. It would eliminate the break at 11 years and the accompanying dip in attainment levels. Primary pupils would gain access to specialist teaching and provision such as laboratories and IT resources while the skills of primary staff in for

example cross-curricular teaching and special educational needs would inform teaching at all levels. New technology and multi-media would be given pride of place, providing powerful and flexible tools for autonomous learning, creativity and research. At the same time the progress of the pupils would be tracked seamlessly from 3 to 19 years, facilitating the development of individual learning programmes.

The intellectual and social engagement of staff members in continual interaction with each other across the sectors would in itself provide a stimulus for innovation

and enthusiasm. The opportunities for collaboration and collective planning would be greater as would the scope for professional and career development, and a greater variety of teaching experiences. Recruitment, retention and the development of leadership skills would all benefit.

The close-knit community ethos of the existing schools can and will be maintained. While the primary and secondary units would be separate, though closely linked, there would be opportunities to experiment with 'vertical registration'. Senior pupils would learn to care for and mentor younger ones and provide role models for them. School productions would provide one ideal context for such activity. A key proposal is for the appointment of a Community Coordinator to develop links and collaboration with the wider community, including the villages of the catchment area.

Regeneration of this wider community is a key theme in the vision document. Despite the pressures on the rural economy, there is much to build on in the Teifi Valley. As well as widening links with local businesses, the school would be a resource centre for Lifelong Learning with an on-site presence for social and health services, youth services, counselling and careers advice. The Supporters see no contradiction between their passionate commitment to strengthening the cultural, social and economic heritage of the locality and the need to foster a sense of global citizenship at the same time.

Which brings us to the 'ecological vision'. The plan is for the new building to have the highest standards of sustainability and energy efficiency. In turn, via the new technology the buildings themselves would become a pedagogical tool, with for example sensors making the pupils constantly aware of their ecological footprint, individually and collectively.

Bro Teifi would be a Welsh-medium school, as is the present Ysgol Dyffryn Teifi in Llandysul. No one should underestimate the significance or the revitalising impact of establishing a Welsh-speaking educational community of about a thousand people on a single site within one of the language's strongest areas outside Gwynedd. Nor indeed of creating a dynamic association between Welsh and all that is innovative and expansive in a globalised world.

The Ysgol Bro Teifi vision might well be replicated in other areas and could provide a unique opportunity for Wales to set the pace of change and rising standards for the rest of Britain.

Cynog Dafis is Chair of Cefnogwyr Addysg Gymunedol Gymraeg ym Mro Teifi. A summary of their project can be obtained by emailing [ysgolbroteifi@aol.co.uk](mailto:ysgolbroteifi@aol.co.uk)

## More than just lectures

The University of Glamorgan can offer you more:

- Business Consultancy
- Postgraduate Degrees
- Professional Qualifications
- Research
- Work Placements

Contact us today for details.

## Mwy na darlithoedd yn unig

Mae Prifysgol Morgannwg yn medru cynnig mwy:

- Ymgynghoriaeth Busnes
- Graddau Ôl-Raddedig
- Cymwysterau Proffesiynol
- Ymchwil
- Cyfleoedd Profiad Gwaith

Cysylltwch â ni i wybod mwy.

08455 194 787 • [www.glam.ac.uk](http://www.glam.ac.uk)

University of Glamorgan  
Prifysgol Morgannwg



# Akan to Zulu

Lowri Angell-Jones describes a school in the Welsh capital which is home to 54 languages

Cathays High School, which serves Cardiff's catchment area of Cathays and Roath but takes pupils from all parts of the city, is home to 54 different languages. They range from Akan, spoken by an ethnic group in Ghana and the Ivory Coast, to Zulu. In all, 63 per cent of the pupils, that is 589 out of a total of 938, have English as an additional language.

Amongst the pupils, levels of fluency in English vary dramatically and range from completely fluent to knowing only a few words. Of the pupils currently studying at the school, 160 are either new to English or in the early stages of English language acquisition. As such, one of the school's main priorities is its 'Commitment to Communication'. Without competence in English, pupils cannot access the majority of the curriculum offered to them.

Every member of staff has responsibility for improving communication skills in English in every aspect of their role. For several years it has been a priority in the school to include a communication objective in every lesson and tutor period, regardless of the subject. This includes the correct use of full stops and capital letters, the use and revision of key words, reading aloud, and pupils speaking to the class. As the school continues to welcome new ar-

rivals, this remains an ongoing priority for the foreseeable future.

The challenge facing the school can be measured by the high number of pupils from the ages of 11 to 18 arriving at the school throughout the academic year. In the last year, 25 per cent of the pupils have either left or newly entered the school after the beginning of the academic year. This mobility rate is significantly higher than the rest of Cardiff's secondary schools, which all have rates below 20 per cent, and usually well below. Part of the reason is that Cathays High School has amongst the highest number of asylum seekers of secondary school age in Wales. Another factor is the school's location, close to three universities and a large teaching hospital.

The school makes every effort to accommodate the needs of new arrivals and ensure that they gain qualifications. At Key Stage 3, between 11 and 14, this is not a major problem. However, at ages above this there can be considerable difficulties, especially with regard to coursework. Some students even arrive late in the Sixth Form. Despite this, the vast majority leave school with some qualifications. A notable success was a 16-year-old boy who arrived in the April of Year 11 from Sri Lanka and succeeded

in gaining a starred A and two A grades at GCSE, despite only taking them a few months after his arrival.

The school is housed in a Victorian building which was once Cathays Grammar School. The building has been adapted to meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and similarly, the school has adapted its provision and internal structures to meet the needs of its population. For example, it has an Ethnic Minority Achievement department which caters specifically for the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language.

All students new to the school are tested in basic English. If they are not sufficiently competent they are taught a basic curriculum within the Ethnic Minority Achievement department, with a heavy emphasis on English language acquisition. When their English reaches an adequate level they are partially integrated into mainstream classes but continue to have some extra language lessons, with the aim of full integration eventually. The length of time before fully entering the mainstream ranges from two to 16 months (inclusive of holidays), which reflects the wide range of abilities and needs amongst the pupils.

The school also offers Sixth Form provision for students over the age of 16

## The 54 Languages spoken in Cathays High School

Akan  
Arabic  
Baluchi  
Bemba  
Bengali  
Cantonese

Chinese  
Creole (English)  
Creole (French)  
Czech  
Dari  
Dutch  
English  
Farsi (Persian)  
French  
German  
Greek  
Gujarati

Henko  
Hindi  
Korean  
Kurdish  
Latvian  
Lingala  
Lithuanian  
Malay  
Malayalam  
Ndebele  
Nepali  
Pashto

Polish  
Portuguese  
Punjabi  
Pushto  
Romany  
Russian  
Sinhala  
Slovak  
Somali  
Spanish  
Tagalog  
Tagalog/Filipino

Tamil  
Temne  
Thai  
Tigrinya  
Tsawna  
Turkish  
Urdu  
Vietnamese  
Welsh  
Wolof  
Yoruba  
Zulu



Living and working alongside people from all over the world is completely normal for pupils of Cathays High School.

who have little or no English. During 2009-10 we began offering special provision of English for Speakers of Other Languages. The course was delivered to 12 students who improved their English language skills but also succeeded in gaining accreditation in ICT, numeracy and workskills. Ten progressed to further courses on completing the year, the majority undertaking Level 2 courses in the Sixth Form. In 2010-11 the provision has been expanded to offer two courses at different levels.

Pupils' ability to speak many languages is celebrated within the school. All pupils are offered the opportunity to study GCSE, AS and A Levels in their home languages through the school's Community Languages Programme. Pupils are often taught after school and gain accreditation from the second year in school onwards. The scheme has been a great success, with 83 pupils gaining an award in 2009-10, including a Sixth Form student who gained the highest International General Certificate of Education mark in the world in Malay.

The students' language skills are also put to good use at Parents and Open Evenings. Sixth Formers wear stickers to indicate which languages they speak in order to assist parents and visitors who speak little English. In

the Year 11 awards evening, welcome greetings are delivered in a plethora of languages. This does not preclude use of Welsh - a Cathays High student was the first person to speak Welsh which was simultaneously translated into English in the European Parliament.

Pupils mentor children who are new to the school by attending their lessons and helping them with their work. Efforts are also made to include all the parents in the work of the school, despite language barriers. For example, Ethnic Minority Achievement staff often translate at Parents' Evenings, and a use is also made of a growing bank of letters in various languages to communicate with parents. Telephone contact can prove impossible due to many of them being unable to speak English.

Staff also have to be aware of issues such as forced marriage which can affect particular cultural groups. In a school where 71 per cent of the pupils have registered their ethnicity as being other than White British, we do our utmost to respond sensitively to religious and cultural diversity. Facilities are provided for Muslim students to pray at lunchtime. The school arranges INSET days for the two Muslim Eid festivals which mark the end of Ramadan and the completion of

the Hajj pilgrimage.

The school's annual Open Evening has stage items performed in Welsh, English and a range of community languages. A Languages Day is timetabled into the year and pupils and parents also have an opportunity to demonstrate culture-related skills such as dance and singing in an evening of performances, followed by a sharing of foods contributed by families. The school also has a successful Koranic Studies group which runs four evenings a week during term time for pupils from the school and also the partner primary school children and parents.

Living and working alongside people from all over the world is completely normal for the pupils. Friendships are formed across cultural and linguistic divides. Classes are made up of numerous nationalities and contain pupils able to speak many languages. As a result, tensions between different cultural and ethnic groups are rare and pupils mix well, though they do sometimes use their home languages to communicate with each other so that the teacher cannot understand!

All Key Stage 4 and 5 students study the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification. The Wales, Europe and the World element of the course could not be better suited to the school. Class discussions with pupils who share their first-hand experiences of different countries, languages and cultures in relation to such issues as food and marriage can be fascinating. The school has partnerships with schools in Lesotho, China, Brazil, Ghana, Nigeria, Bangladesh and Pakistan, mainly through the British Council's Connecting Classrooms project. In the words of the school's headteacher, Rodney Phillips, multiculturalism is not an ideal at Cathays High, but a living, breathing reality.

---

**Lowri Angell-Jones** is Head of Sixth Form at Cathays High School. She studied at Cardiff University and went on to complete a PhD in minority literature.

## Articles

The serpent inside England's health reform

We need a whole system approach health care

# The serpent inside England's health reform

Marcus Longley asks whether Wales can learn from Andrew Lansley's radical experiment with the NHS

*A Department of Health spokeswoman said the government would not dictate how services were delivered, but rather wanted patients to do that themselves.*

Thus the *Health Service Journal* reported the Westminster government's reaction to a story about millions of callers getting an engaged tone when phoning their GP surgery. Yet this could stand as shorthand for the whole of healthcare policy in England.

On 12 July 2010 the new Coalition Government in Westminster produced a health White Paper for England entitled *Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS*. As with any such document, it is a carefully judged exercise designed to seize the moral high ground, while not frightening the horses, and being studiously vague on detail. So the objectives are easy to endorse. Who could disagree with three of the four main sections: 'putting patients and public first', or 'improving health outcomes', or 'cutting bureaucracy and improving efficiency'?

But it is in the fourth section that the serpent lies barely hidden. Its title – 'Autonomy, accountability and democratic legitimacy' – points to the mutually incompatible tensions inherent in the NHS of all four UK nations. How do you encourage clinicians to develop the best services for their patients, at the same time giving the taxpayers a good deal, while simultaneously ensuring those in most need get most? These dilemmas are as old as the NHS, and the history of the health service is one of different attempts to square the circle.

This latest attempt aims to create a system which achieves all the desirable goals through self-regulation, without the need for detailed

intervention by the Secretary of State. So clinicians and managers will be incentivised to do the right thing, as 'money will follow the patient'. A whole package of measures will seek to give patients more control – 'nothing about me, without me'. They will

- Have choice of provider - 'any willing provider' whether it be consultant or GP - and choice of treatment.
- Rate hospitals and clinical departments.
- Have a new collective voice for patients locally - interestingly, to be led by local government - and nationally.

In short, the choice of providers is set to increase dramatically.

"We aim to create the largest social enterprise sector in the world... giving NHS staff the opportunity to have a greater say in the future of their organisations, including as employee-led social enterprises."

This is certainly one version of taking the politicians, if not quite the politics, out of healthcare. Providers will be paid according to the outcomes of the care they provide, and there will no targets which don't have a clinical justification. At the same time, you'll notice there is no promise to get rid of targets altogether.

Whether such competition works better than other models in public service is seldom tested with real evidence. But we do know that markets have transaction costs, and choice requires some spare (expensive) capacity. There will also be a fear that





Whitehall Health Minister Andrew Lansley meets NHS medical staff at the Centre for Surgical Reconstruction and Microbiology at University Hospital Birmingham, the first of its kind in the UK to focus on both military and civilian trauma care. A partnership between with the Ministry of Defence , University Hospital Birmingham and the University of Birmingham, would it be more efficient if it were privatised?

private providers will cherry pick those services where the national tariff allows for profit, leaving reduced NHS hospitals to pick up the unprofitable pieces. In turn this would further reduce their competitiveness.

Most of the debate since the White Paper's launch has centred on the re-structuring necessary to achieve all this. The 150-odd Primary Care Trusts in England will be abolished by 2013, to be replaced by 300-500 GP consortia. These new bodies will be accountable to local GPs and to a newly-established NHS Commissioning Board for commissioning most of the services needed by their patients.

Together, the consortia will spend about £80 billion a year – about three quarters of the total NHS budget. It is being speculated that they will get between £8 and £12 per patient per year in management costs to make this work. A year earlier, the Strategic Health Authorities will have been abolished, leaving no management tier between Westminster and the localities. All Trusts will become Foundation Trusts, with new freedoms.

Many observers are sceptical about the willingness

and ability of GPs to take on this sort of responsibility, especially at a time when the NHS in England has got to find about £20 billion in 'efficiency savings' to meet the government's promise to increase NHS spending in real terms. There are also fears that the White Paper grossly underestimates the scale of unavoidable residual functions, currently performed by the Primary Care Trusts, which might double the consortia's actual management costs.

Re-structuring on this scale is expensive, not just in redundancy costs, but even more in terms of the opportunity cost, as thousands of people spend the best part of two years worrying about their jobs rather than patient care. The manifestos of both Conservatives and Liberal Democrats were deafening in their silence about this restructuring - the Conservatives actually promised no top-down reorganisation. However, it is clear that Andrew Lansley has not endured years in the wilderness as Opposition Spokesperson on Health not to indulge himself now.

Meanwhile, the dissimulation continues. The

White Paper has the gall to promise the NHS “a coherent, stable enduring framework... the debate on health should no longer be about structures.” Tell that to the staff of Primary Care Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities.

At one level, we in Wales can shrug our shoulders, and watch with interest from the sidelines. Fascinating, maybe, but only of academic interest? I'm not so sure. Change on this scale might wash across Offa's Dyke in at least three ways. First, the umbilical chord that is the Barnett formula will be suffused with the consequences of English health



If Lansley's reforms are successful the NHS will start to manage itself. The warning delivered by Nye Bevan – pictured here the day the NHS was inaugurated in 1948 – to all future Secretaries of State about the perils of getting too closely involved in the NHS (“the dropped bed pan echoing down the corridors of Whitehall”) will finally be laid to rest.

spending – largely good news in the short term, at least in comparison with other budgets starting down the barrel of 25 per cent cuts. But if the Westminster government were to reduce health expenditure in the future, in pursuance of a ‘co-payment’ model, Wales would be saddled with the consequences of that too.

Second – and much more significant – is the contagion of ideas.

If, for example, Mr Lansley is even partially successful in distancing himself from NHS micro-management, and the focus of debate on new services shifts from the House of Commons to the patient/GP and consortium/local government arenas, that will be of historic significance. The NHS will finally be starting to manage itself. Nye Bevan's warning to all future Secretaries of State about the perils of getting too closely involved in the NHS – the dropped bed pan echoing down the corridors of Whitehall – will at last be laid to rest. How ironic, then, it will be if the Minister responsible for Health in Bevan's own home country is still embroiled in decisions about neuro-surgery, dirty wards and hospital car parking

charges. Contrast Wales' national Board which is chaired by the Minister, with its equivalent in England that will be “free from day-to-day political interference”.

Another potential ‘big idea’ is the metamorphosis of the state. Part of the English approach is about the privatisation of aspects of care, and that will find little favour in Wales. But the other element is all the talk about ‘social enterprise’, the ‘John Lewis model’, and employee cooperatives. It may never become more than talk. But if it does, and large numbers of staff in the English NHS come to quite like having some say over the service in which they work, will they still want to come and work in Wales? Would Wales not want to adopt something that looks rather like workplace democracy?

The third element is currently a sleeping giant – the influence of patients. If, as the White Paper claims, “shared decision making will become the norm”, care will be “personalised”, and there will be a strong collective voice for patients, backed by local government and a national Commission, will we not want some of that? Most patient groups in England have welcomed these aspects of the proposed changes, and the prospect of government support for developing their own roles in health service provision. In Wales we, too, are keen to move towards a model where patients – individually and in groups – do more to help themselves cope with the effects of long-term conditions such as arthritis and chronic heart disease. If England finds a way of liberating people's capacity to help themselves, we would be daft not to learn from it.

Inevitably with change on this scale, much of the detail has yet to be worked out, and the final product may look quite different. The whole thing is beset with suspicion. Can the Conservative Party really be trusted with the NHS? And there are real doubts about the practicality of it all. GPs may well not want to be the fall guys for painful health cuts, while all the talk of patient empowerment has yet to be realised.

The perennial tensions within the NHS may kill this off. These are the tensions between accountability to the centre and local freedom to develop new services, and between the sharp-elbowed middle class who get what they want, and those in most need who are too accepting of poor services. But one of the advantages of our model of devolution is that we do have the opportunity to try different approaches, and learn from the results. Let's hope that the changes are robustly evaluated.

---

**Marcus Longley** is Professor of Applied Health Policy and Director of the Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care at the University of Glamorgan.

# We need a whole system approach to health care

Ceri Phillips and Mansel Aylward summarise the work of the Bevan Commission

The Bevan Commission was established in July 2008 - to coincide with the 60th Anniversary of the formation of the National Health Service - as an independent and impartial advisory group to the Health and Social Services Minister (**Box 1 and 2**).

During its first year, the Commission received a series of presentations and a number of papers were presented for discussion which culminated in the publication of the Bevan Commission Principles (**Box 3**). It also published a statement defining what world-class healthcare would translate to in a Welsh context, accompanied by a series of metrics to enable this to be achieved

(**Box 4**). In taking these forward there remained a commitment to consider the extent of threats to the Bevan Commission principles and the role for shared responsibility for health between the people of Wales and the NHS.

On its first anniversary the Commission was granted a 12-month extension to its two-year remit and asked by the Minister to carry out three specific pieces of work:

**1. Define what a world class integrated health and social care system would feel like for the citizens of Wales:**

- What would be the early wins?
- What are the particular issues involving frail elderly people?
- What are the key boundary/interface issues including social care, primary care and pharmacy services?

**2. Advise on how to accelerate the adoption of best practice in minimising harm, waste and variation across NHS Wales.**

**3. Advise on the progress of the five-year strategic service, workforce and financial framework.**

These work programmes are ongoing, with progress made despite the inherent complexities of the tasks. The Commission has continued its mode of operation and has discussed papers on

- NHS contribution to health other than through healthcare services.
- Provision of health related services by other organisations.
- Approaches to reducing prevalence of long-term conditions in comparable healthcare systems.
- Public health intelligence and the integration of health and social care systems.

The Commission has also assessed the Primary Care and Community Health Services Strategy against each of the Bevan Commission Principles in terms of the clarity of the principle, the main obstacles to its achievement and how these obstacles can be overcome. At the same time it has considered issues in relation to redistribution, risk-pooling, service integration, population focus

## Box 1: Members of the Commission

**Professor Sir Mansel Aylward,**  
Chair of the Wales Centre for Health (Chair)

**Dr Tony Calland,**  
Chair of the Medical Ethics Committee of the British Medical Association and former chair of the BMA Welsh Council

**Sir Ian Carruthers,**  
Chief Executive of the South West Strategic Health Authority in England

**June Clark,**  
Professor Emeritus at Swansea University and former president of the Royal College of Nursing

**Karlene Davis,**  
former General Secretary of the Royal College of Midwives

**Dr Christopher Jones,**  
Senior Partner within the Taff Vale Practice

**Professor Sir Anthony Newman-Taylor,**  
Deputy Principal, Faculty of Medicine, Imperial College London

**Ceri Phillips,**  
Professor of Health Economics at Swansea University

**Allyson Pollock,**  
Professor of International Public Health Policy at the University of Edinburgh.



**We believe that age demands respect.  
It deserves kindness.  
Sometimes it needs help.**

Did you know that Wales had the highest percentage of people aged over 60 in the UK?

This is why our work is so important and why older people are at the heart of everything we do.

We can provide you with information, advice and training to make your organisation and your employees age aware. After all, our target audience is your target audience.

Call: 029 2043 1555  
Email: [enquiries@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@agecymru.org.uk)  
Visit: [agecymru.org.uk](http://agecymru.org.uk)

Age Cymru – the best informed and most influential charity for older people across Wales.

Registered Charity: 1128436



A allwch chi wella  
ein gwaith?

Can you make  
our work better?



Helpwch ni i gynrychioli a grymuso defnyddwyr drwy ymateb i'n hymgyngoriad ar gynllun gwaith Llais Defnyddwyr Cymru ar gyfer 2011-12 erbyn Ebrill 26.

[www.consumerfocus.org.uk/wales/cy/](http://www.consumerfocus.org.uk/wales/cy/)

Help us represent and empower consumers by responding to our consultation on Consumer Focus Wales' workplan for 2011-12 by April 26.

[www.consumerfocus.org.uk/wales](http://www.consumerfocus.org.uk/wales)

# clickonwales

- Daily news analysis of important developments in Wales
- A platform for you to debate
- National Assembly Bulletin - keeping you in touch with Cardiff Bay
- The Director's blog, by the IWA Director, John Osmond
- The Wales Lecture Library - key texts on public policy
- The Wales Factfile - one stop shop for all those facts you needed on Wales

[www.clickonwales.org](http://www.clickonwales.org)



**Box 2:**  
**Aims of the Bevan Commission**

- To scrutinise, debate and discuss the relevance of emerging health issues and ideas from a disinterested perspective.
- To assess opportunities for speedier improvements in health and social care provision.
- To evaluate and utilise relevant best international practice.
- To advise the Minister on how to ensure that the reformed NHS Wales remained true to Bevan’s principles and values.
- To provide support for the goal and aspirations laid out in One Wales.
- To advise on rebalancing and streamlining the health and social care system within Wales as appropriate, ensuring that the patient was the focus of healthcare.
- To help the Minister achieve the vision of:
  - o Establishing a ‘world-class’ healthcare service in Wales, through an integrated system of healthcare delivery.
  - o Ensuring that the “citizenship” model for public services was applied.

and patient and public accountability.

The Bevan Commission submitted its final report to the Minister in April 2011. A vision of the NHS in Wales that must be based on principles that are tried and tested and reflected in the reconstituted Bevan Commission Principles. There is a compelling moral argument for providing comprehensive universal healthcare at the point of need. It is an imperative, recognised across cultures and creeds, to alleviate suffering where possible, and to act justly towards all members of society.

The report also recognises that the NHS alone cannot meet all the health needs of the people of Wales. They need to be factored into all policies, because healthcare is only one element in improving the health of the people of Wales. The commitment to quality improvement, through reducing harm, waste and variation, has to be maintained but this cannot be the responsibility of the NHS alone. There has to be buy-in from other agencies and the people of Wales themselves.

Concerted efforts from individuals, communities, healthcare, government and all sectors within society to reduce the harm and risks to health of a host of lifestyle behaviours will yield a significant health dividend that can be

enhanced by efforts to address the social determinants of poor health. Better housing, social family care, parenting, job and wealth creation, education of children and adults, proactive public health awareness, and better public facilities for sport and leisure, all contribute to alleviating the burden on the NHS, and liberating the people of Wales and the NHS from many of the costly and chronic debilitating diseases.

The adoption of a whole system approach to health and social care, as reflected in current health policies, will result in a more integrated government policy. It will tackle the fragmented approaches that have been evident over the past decades and resulted in many of the ailments that have afflicted the healthcare system in Wales in recent times.

**Ceri Phillips** is Professor of Health Economics at Swansea University. Professor Sir Mansel Aylward is Chair of the Wales Centre for Health. The Bevan Commission’s final report can be accessed at: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/nhswales/organisations/bevan/?lang=en>

**Box 3:**  
**The Bevan Commission Principles**

- Universal access, based on need
- Comprehensiveness, within available resources
- Services free at the point of delivery
- Shared responsibility for health between the people of Wales and the NHS
- A service that values people
- Getting the best from the resources available
- Need to ensure health is reflected in all policies
- Minimising the effects of disadvantage on access and outcome
- High quality service that maximises patient safety
- Patient and public accountability
- Achievement of continuous performance improvement across all dimensions of healthcare.

**Box 4:**  
**World class healthcare in a Welsh context**

‘Health care that is best suited to the needs of Wales and comparable with the best anywhere’

and which

- must perform well against the Bevan Commission principles;
- must be balanced, integrated across all levels and effectively link health and social services;
- must achieve an excellent level of quality;
- must be matched by efforts to create world class health – with government having a crucial leadership role;
- must be supported by excellent information to analyse, compare and develop services.

# 6

## Social Policy

### Articles

Social enterprise and the smart Welsh state  
Challenges facing foster carers

# Social enterprise and the smart Welsh state

Kevin Morgan and Adam Price outline ways the next Welsh Government could revolutionise the delivery of key public services

A key decision for the next Welsh Government will be whether it will extend the social market experiment in housing - the stock transfer of properties from local authorities to housing associations - into education and health, the core areas of public service delivery. We need to continue to move in the direction of collaborative governance, with the public sector working with a massively expanded social business sphere to co-produce public value. Social enterprise - combining as it does the entrepreneurialism of the private sector with the accountability and public service ethos of the public sector - undoubtedly has the potential to drive up quality and effectiveness in public services.

To put it another way, an urgent question that will face the incoming Welsh government is whether it can transform Wales into a smart state? A preliminary first step would be to create a new work strand for the Welsh Government's Efficiency and Innovation Board, tasked with developing a new breed of public-service social enterprise.

The model of co-operative trust schools involving teachers, parents and the local community could be promoted in Wales as an alternative to current local authority provision. The still thorny problem of adequate Welsh medium provision - as most recently demonstrated by the saga of Ysgol Treganna in Cardiff - could be addressed by giving parents the tools to turn their right to Welsh-medium education enshrined in the 2007 *One Wales* agreement, into a reality through their own initiative. The issue of school reorganisation in rural areas could also gain a new dimension if co-

operative provision involving a stronger and structured level of parent and community involvement was included as an option.

Social care is another area where there are major opportunities for the expansion of the social business sector - not as a precursor to privatisation but as a bulwark against it. There are already plenty of examples of social businesses working in this field: worker co-operatives in domiciliary care, housing associations providing residential care, as well as charities and friendly societies. The advantage of the social business sector is its greater capacity to involve service users when compared to either private or public sectors.

It can also be more efficient (and better at income generation) than the public sector while the clear distinction with the private sector is that these financial gains are recycled for public purposes not private profit at the expense of the quality of care. At a national level the Welsh Government could make it an objective of policy to make the social enterprise sector the biggest provider of social care within a generation. Working with Housing Associations to create the sheltered housing necessary to shrink the £30 million still wasted within the NHS through bed-blocking annually would also seem an attractive public investment.

By far the most controversial area for policy makers is healthcare. Social business is already a part of this sector through the hospice movement, the children's hospital *Tŷ Hafan* and the work of mental health charities in providing support to mental health service users. Similar work in the area of substance-abuse by organisations



Flamenco dancing class at Chapter Arts Centre which demonstrates the breadth of social enterprise organisations. Because of its status as a social enterprise Chapter, which provides space for more than 50 cultural businesses, was able to borrow £650,000 from the Charity Bank to assist with an extensive refurbishment of the venue.

like Rhosserchan. The air ambulance service is supported exclusively through voluntary contributions. Overall, however, the idea of direct public sector provision has become something of an article of faith since the foundation of the NHS. Ironically, the oft-quoted model for the National Health Service was itself a voluntary health insurance scheme that continued to provide additional health care to its members until the 1990s.

While BUPA can hardly be described as a social enterprise – it would be akin to calling the pre-flotation Goldman Sachs a workers’ co-operative – the Welsh independent healthcare providers, WHA and the Gwent Hospitals Contributory Fund, are closer to healthcare friendly societies like Benenden that recently joined Co-operatives UK and Medicash, used by health union Unison for its own members health insurance. So efforts should be made to bring them into the social enterprise fold.

There is, in our view, considerable scope to expand the role of the social business sector in the provision of Welsh healthcare services. At the basic level, Welsh healthcare workers should be given the right, as in England, to form employee-owned co-operatives or community mutuals where they can demonstrate community benefit.

At a more radical level, thought

should be given to the means by which social business may be able to assist with the process of NHS reconfiguration – a must-do in the next twenty years if the National Health Service is to survive. Acute and specialist services should be provided in regional centres by the central NHS, and primary services managed progressively by the social enterprise sector, whether local GP co-operatives, community-owned hospitals, charitable organisations or genuinely mutual healthcare providers.

Social business could also be the solution to governance issues within public service broadcasting. Senior Labour politicians have suggested that the BBC Trust should become a mutual with license payers able to elect members to its Board. At the same time the accountability crisis at S4C has prompted renewed calls for the devolution of its supervision to the National Assembly. The fact that the channel is currently overseen by politicians in London who do not watch it, and could not understand it if they did, is for many the root cause of the current collapse in confidence in the broadcaster as well as the more long-term erosion in its viewing figures.

Gerry Holtham has suggested a mutual solution could strengthen accountability while continuing to provide independent funding. The new mutual could operate

along the lines of the Canadian regional broadcaster Knowledge, where 26,000 household partners make additional voluntary contributions in addition to its core funding. This extra cash, together with core funding for S4C and the Books Council, could help realise the dream of a Welsh language daily newspaper in printed form as originally envisaged by proponents of the social enterprise *Y Byd*. The Chair of the Authority would be elected by the membership, rather than appointed by an English Secretary of State – which from the point of view of basic accountability would surely be an improvement.

Other statutory bodies could also be candidates for mutualisation, as the experience of British Waterways teaches us. The historic site management responsibilities of CADW could be merged with the National Trust in Wales to form a new distinctive Welsh historic buildings and monuments entity – part-funded by government, partly by member contributions and through commercial revenue. Social businesses, imbued with all the passion a mission-driven, member-driven organisation can muster, are well-placed to deliver broader public goods like conservation. If anyone doubts this, look at the renaissance of Central Park in New York, rescued from terminal decline at the hands of the City Council by a determined group of civic entrepreneurs who formed the Central Park Conservancy that has been running and renewing the Park under a management agreement with the City since 1980.

.....  
**Kevin Morgan** is Professor of Governance and Development at Cardiff University’s School of City and Regional Planning. **Adam Price** is former Plaid Cymru MP for Carmarthen East and Dinefwr and currently a Fulbright Scholar at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. This article is extracted from their pamphlet *The Collective Entrepreneur: Social Enterprise and the Smart State*, published in March by Community Housing Cymru and the Charity Bank.

# Challenges facing foster carers

**Judy Hutchings and Tracey Bywater** report on a new initiative to help looked after children in Wales

Looked After Children often have a difficult start in life and they bring their challenges into their care placements. It has become clear that a 'Care' placement does not always address children's emotional and behavioural difficulties and can result in failed placements, poor social adjustment and antisocial behaviour.

Many Looked After Children come from deprived and disadvantaged backgrounds and their problems are often compounded by neglect, maltreatment and the experience of domestic violence. In Wales, 59 per cent of the children who came into the care system in 2010, came because of abuse or neglect of their social, emotional and physical needs. Looked After Children are four times more likely to exhibit psychological and behavioural problems than children in the general population. As adults, they represent 27 per cent of the prison population, half of all prostitutes and 80 per cent of all *Big Issue* sellers. Whilst still children they are two and a half times more likely to be cautioned or convicted of an offence than other children.

In 2010 there were 5,162 Look After Children in Wales, an increase of 10 per cent from the previous year and 44 per cent over the last decade. In both Wales and the UK generally there has been a shift away from residential care to foster care. Criticism of the quality of residential care and abuse scandals such as that exposed in the North Wales Child Abuse inquiry (*Lost in Care*, the Ronald Waterhouse Report, 2,000) have led to the closure of many residential care homes and those that are left are increasingly used as last resort placements for the more challenging children.

Thirty years ago only 35 per cent of children in care in Wales were placed with foster carers but

by 2010 this had risen to 78 per cent. Given the significant increase in numbers of children in care, and the proportion placed with foster carers, this represents a big increase in the demand for foster carers. At the same time the changing nature of children's difficulties has meant a change in the role of foster carers. Historically carers provided a safe and secure home without the expectation that they would also provide therapeutic support. However, they are increasingly being asked to look after children with significant emotional and behavioural problems and for some, with relatively little training.

Challenging child behaviours and carers' lack of skill in dealing with them are the two most common reasons for placement breakdown. In Wales 529 (10.2 per cent) of looked after children had three or more placements during 2009-10. Placement moves tend to exacerbate the child's problems, as attachments and school experiences are again disrupted. The more challenging the child's behaviour, the more placements they are likely to experience. North East Wales Foster Care Services, an independent fostering agency, reports that over the last two years they have placed 15 children, aged 9 to 15, who had between them 150 previous care placements, an average of 8.66. The most challenged children end up in residential care placements, often after the breakdown of multiple foster placements.

Children in care do less well in terms of education and employment. Only nine per cent of the over 16s leaving care in 2009-10 had gained five or more GCSEs at grade A\* to C, compared with the 57 per cent of all children in Wales. In the same year, 38 per cent of 19 year olds who had been in care were in full time education training or employment, an



increase of one percent from the previous year but still well below the 78 per cent reported for 19 to 24 year olds in Wales as a whole.

In other European countries, such as Germany and Denmark, looked after children seem to do better than in the UK. In Denmark 60 per cent of children in care go on to higher education, while only six percent in the UK do so. However, their system of supporting children in care is very different. Over half of their children in care are in residential care where education and child-care is provided by teachers who are qualified to degree level in *social pedagogy* that is currently widely taught in Denmark. Social pedagogy encompasses both the care and education of children (in fact it views these two as going hand in hand) and emphasises the importance of having a good trusting relationship with the child, the child's natural family and the need to include them in decisions regarding the child's future.

Unlike in the UK, residential homes in Denmark are perceived as places where children can have their lives turned round and staff are viewed as professionals doing an important and highly prized job. Residents are considerably more likely to go on to training or employment and are much less likely to have a teenage pregnancy or become involved in criminal activity than their UK counterparts.

By age 28, the average cost of publicly resourced specialist services for those with conduct disorder at aged 10, is ten times higher (£70,019) than for

those without behaviour problems. Given the high levels of conduct problems among Looked After Children and the added cost to families, society and services, there is a pressing need to support foster carers in the care of these children and to improve their outcomes.

Social workers currently provide the most immediate and easily accessible advice and support for foster carers. Most authorities provide initial training but the support needs of foster carers are ongoing and include the need for structured support to deal with the challenges presented by individual children that otherwise result in placement breakdown.

One small step to support foster carers has been taken in Wales by trialling the Incredible Years group-based parent programme with carers. This evidence-based programme was designed to help and support parents in learning ways to promote a positive relationship with their child and to manage problem behaviour. The programme had already been delivered and researched extensively in Wales with other populations. Since 2006 there has been support from the Welsh Government with funding of training for staff across Wales. Research findings from Wales have added to the international evidence of its effectiveness as both a clinical and early preventive intervention.

In 2006-07, a one-year pilot trial of the Basic Incredible Years parent programme with Welsh foster carers in Flintshire, Wrexham and Powys was



Foster carers involved with the Incredible Years group-based parent programme meet in Powys.

Yng nghanol bywyd  
Cymru, yr iaith a  
diwylliant ein Cenedl.

At the heart of Welsh life,  
language and culture of  
our Nation.

CALON CENEDL

funded by the Wales Office for Research in Health and Social Care and conducted by the authors. It was thought that the programme would be particularly relevant to foster carers because it is attachment-based. With its focus on play and other activities the programme establishes a more positive and trusting adult-child relationship. This sets the foundation for later success with strategies for managing problem behaviour.

The trial outcomes were positive, showing a substantial reduction in behaviour problems. Participants valued the fact that the programme was run specifically for them and felt able to share their experiences and difficulties in a confidential and understanding environment. A number of issues were raised during supervision of group leaders that helped to identify and discuss some of the specific difficulties experienced.

It became clear that the 'rules' set by social services were not always clear and not necessarily thought through in terms of supporting effective management strategies.

## We now have good evidence from across Wales that the Incredible Years parent programme can play an important part in developing effective parenting skills among the birth parents of cared for children.

The problem of drift into long-term foster care is well established. The goal for children in care is, wherever possible, for them to return home to their birth parents. However, as a study in the United States made clear, this requires planning, resources and interventions with the birth family as well as the carer to enable effective decisions to be made. It is important that birth parents are given appropriate support to enable the right decision to be made about the possibility of their child's return. We now have good evidence from across Wales that the Incredible Years parent programme can play an important part in developing effective parenting skills among the birth parents of cared for children. This can also ensure that the decision to return children can be made with confidence.

The parenting skills needed by carers and birth parents are similar but research suggests that parenting support seldom reaches the biological parents of children placed in foster homes. A recent pilot programme in New York, offered joint parent training for the carers and birth parents of children in foster care. This found significant increase in birth parents' and carers' practice of positive discipline strategies at the end of the intervention and again at the

three-month follow-up, a very encouraging outcome considering the low levels of positive discipline normally associated with abusive and neglectful parenting.

Gains were also made in collaborative parenting and problem solving, although these were not maintained through the follow-up. They suggest that there may be a need for more sustained support and opportunities for collaboration between birth and foster parents but have clearly demonstrated the benefits of delivering the programme to carers and birth parents. The New York programme further reinforces the Incredible Years feedback within Wales that has shown the programme to be acceptable and effective with both birth parents and carers but takes the process one step further by working collaboratively with them.

The challenges facing Wales in supporting children in the care system are similar to those in the rest of the UK. However, with the ongoing Welsh Government support for local authorities across Wales to deliver the Incredible Years programme, we are one step ahead. The infrastructure is there to train staff to provide specific support to carers with access to the Incredible Years parent programme that has proved to be effective in supporting, foster carers and children in care.

Its success with differing population groups is due to its ability to address their needs without affecting programme fidelity. We now need to establish its longer-term benefit for carers and looked after children to see whether it achieves reductions in the breakdown of their placements. So far the evidence suggests that the programme could be used as induction training, offered as an early intervention at the start of their relationship with a fostered child, when a foster child has specific treatment requirements, and when a placement is at risk of breaking down due to problematic child behaviour.

Local authorities must also ensure that birth parents seeking the return of their children also receive appropriate support. This includes opportunities to help them meet their children's social and emotional needs and give them secure childhoods. It is clear that the Incredible Years programme also has a part to play here.

---

**Judy Hutchings** is Professor of Clinical Psychology and Director of the Incredible Years Wales Centre, and **Tracey Bywater** is a Research Fellow in the School of Psychology, both at Bangor University.

# 7

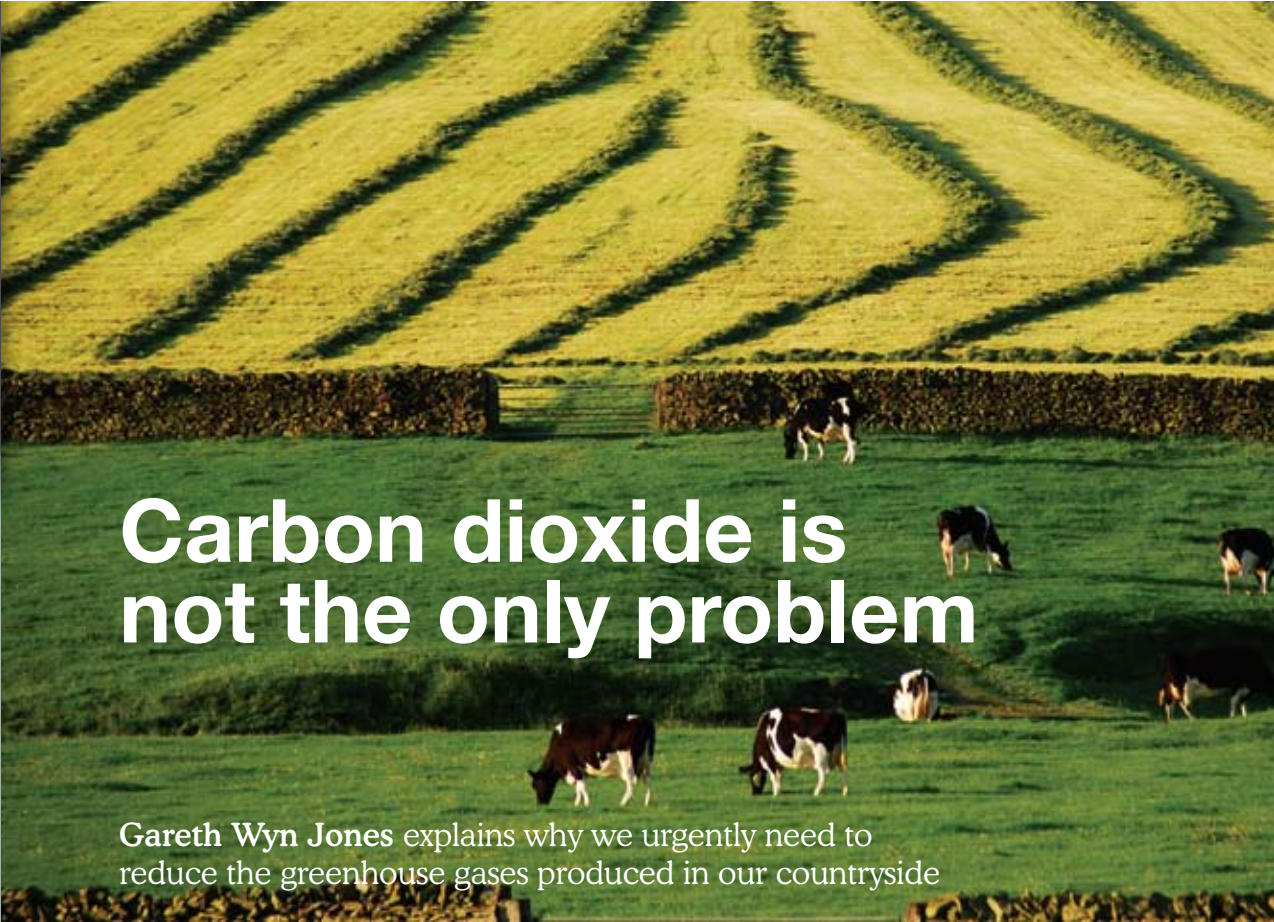
## Environment

### Articles

Carbon dioxide is not the only problem

Cutting back on hypermobility

Learning by design



# Carbon dioxide is not the only problem

Gareth Wyn Jones explains why we urgently need to reduce the greenhouse gases produced in our countryside

The Welsh Government's Land Use and Climate Change Group has been investigating how agriculture and forestry and associated food chains contribute to Wales' greenhouse gas emissions. We were asked to recommend how these might be reduced to contribute to the cumulative annual 3 per cent emissions reduction set out in the 2007 *One Wales* agreement. The whole sector contributes roughly 20 per cent, or 9-10 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents to Wales' total annual emissions of about 46 million tonnes – of which about 50 per cent is within the Welsh Government's jurisdiction.

The sector is unique in that we are not dealing principally with CO<sub>2</sub> released either from fossil fuel use or from land use changes, for example removal of forest cover or peat oxidation. A much larger combined contribution comes from:

- Release of nitrous oxide, as a result of microbial metabolism of soil nitrogen from both inorganic and organic sources – around 2.8 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents a year.
- Release of methane from ruminant metabolism and from handling manure and slurry - about 2.7 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents per year.

Together these contribute about 90 per cent of emissions from agriculture and about 60 per cent if the whole food chain is considered.

Considering emissions from an agricultural systems perspectives, then the largest contribution, more than three million tonnes, comes from the dairy-beef sector, a little under one million tonnes from the sheep sector, and a similar amount from the historic conversion of pasture to cropland. Surprisingly, almost 0.7 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions are due to the conversion of land to settlement, that is urban greenfield development.

Currently, forests developed over past decades are creating a major off-setting carbon sink, amounting to 1.4 million tonnes in 2007. However, in future this will

dramatically change into a major carbon source as the forest matures in the coming decade, only partly compensated for by timber harvesting.

Broadening the discussion to food supply as opposed to just Welsh food production, data are very sparse as we are locked into the UK supermarket supply system. Nevertheless, a reasonable estimate would be perhaps another 3 million tonnes a year, bringing the total to about 20 per cent of Wales' emissions.

This is a brief summary of the background and it must be stressed that, in many cases, reliable unambiguous data are sparse. Of course, the issue is the realistic possibility of making major cuts. The broader sustainability agenda, which weighs social and economic factors, must be considered as well as a wider environmental agenda. The Welsh countryside also provides us with crucial ecosystems services, not least water and energy supplies, biodiversity and natural beauty.

Numerous international statements commit Wales and Europe in general to 80 per cent cuts in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. So, if emissions from land use and food production remain unchanged while other sectors made their full contribution, this sector would dominate emissions. More realistically, if Europe is successful in moving to a de-carbonised energy economy by 2040-50, this will impact on much of the food chain, including transport and refrigeration. In this scenario methane and nitrous oxide will become the major green house gases, while agriculture and land use, as currently practised, would contribute a least half of residual emissions.

The Land Use and Climate Change group gave careful consideration to future options, taking into account global and local climate change scenarios and the possibility of a 'perfect storm' of energy, water and food shortages, and price hikes. Firstly, the group identified a large number of small efficiency gains which would together give around a 15 per cent reduction. Clearly this would not be sufficient in the long term to make much of a contribution to the 80 per cent target, or in the short term to the *One Wales* objective of an annual 3 per cent decreases in emissions. So we considered five scenarios:



Feeding sheep during winter in the Brecon Beacons.

1. 'Business as usual' based on adopting small incremental improvement, but essentially pleading that food production should be considered a special case and government and public would have to accept that methane and nitrogen would become increasing components of our greenhouse gas output.
2. A 'market driven scenario' based on the extension of international cap and trade to agri-business and to all gases.
3. A major 'cut in ruminant animal numbers' by 60 to 70 per cent as advocated by the Tyndall Centre and others and concomitant fundamental change in the pattern of rural life and urban diet.
4. The adoption of a 'lower intensity input, lower output system' with much greater diversification of agriculture and the enhancement of local, seasonal food chains and sourcing.
5. Because of global uncertainty of supplies, Wales should maintain its food production while minimising net emissions by adopting a number of initiatives. These would build on efficiency gains and maximise the renewable energy potential to create a modest shelter against rising prices. These initiatives would be:
  - (i) A major increase in woodland from 285,000 hectares to about 380,000 hectares by 2030 to increase net carbon capture, provide sustainable building

## PRENTISIAETH



APPRENTICESHIPS

## DATBLYGIAD CYNNYRCH



PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

## CYRSIAU BYR



SHORT COURSES



[www.linc.menai.ac.uk](http://www.linc.menai.ac.uk)

**SPAR**



## WHY BECOME A SPAR RETAILER?

**SPAR**



### The reasons are clear...

One of the most important decisions an independent convenience retailer will ever make is to become affiliated to a symbol group. Join Spar and you'll benefit from:

- 85 REAL DEAL PROMOTIONS EVERY 3 WEEKS, & POINT-OF-SALE ADVERTISING KITS.
- THEMED POINT-OF-SALE KITS FOR KEY CALENDAR EVENTS.
- THE BIGGEST, MOST COMPREHENSIVE OWN-BRAND RANGE - OVER 900 PRODUCTS.
- NATIONAL ADVERTISING SUPPORT INCLUDING TV, RADIO AND PRESS SUPPORT.
- AWARD-WINNING STORE DESIGN AND IMAGERY PACKAGE.
- NATIONALLY NEGOTIATED DEALS TO REDUCE COSTS IN YOUR BUSINESS.

Whatever reason, SPAR is an obvious choice for any retailer wishing to grow their business and can offer independent retailers a bright, secure and prosperous future. We're looking for retailers whose stores, whatever their size, have growth potential. There is no tie-in period so you are free to join or leave at any time. Join us and you really will see your business grow. The process of turning your store into a SPAR is simple. Please get in touch and tell us about yourself and your business - we look forward to hearing from you!

Ensure your business reaches its full potential - [CONTACT US NOW ON: 01443 235210](tel:01443235210)

material and fuel, improve upland hydrology, and provide additional habitat.

- (ii) Role out anaerobic digestion to decrease methane losses from slurry and manure and provide a renewable fuel. In time this could lead to fully housed dairy animal production, based on zero grazed feed systems to capture the methane from the animals themselves.
- (iii) Major expansion of renewable micro and meso energy production on farm and in rural communities - small scale wind, hydro, solar heat and photovoltaics, biomass and biogas, to increase energy self sufficiency.
- (iv) Major increase in the efficiency of the food chain, again including anaerobic digestion of waste and promoting life style changes and individual responsibility to *decrease waste*.
- (v) Increasing agricultural efficiency, for example marketable output per unit of greenhouse gas emitted, for example by increasing lambing and by using dual purpose dairy animals.

Of these scenarios the last two in combination was thought to offer the greatest and broadest potential. The group wish to defend the legitimacy of pastoral agriculture systems as viable ways of using resources. Indeed, without them much of the semi-arid regions and uplands of the planet would be barely inhabitable.

Combining the fifth scenario with some elements of the fourth would secure a wide range of ecosystem services to Wales. It would also assist in maintaining rural communities and a sustainable rural economy. Crucially, it would contribute a net cut in emissions of about 70 per cent by 2040. Meanwhile, a number of unresolved problems remain:

- The renewable energy potential of rural Wales (greatly stimulated by the new Feed-in-Tariffs) is constrained by connectivity to the grid.
- Apart from their practical, veterinary, economic and ethical issues, there is a question whether housed animal systems are compatible with Wales' natural advantages of low cost pasture production and a long growing season. The costs of housing are high and tend to favour producers in central England.
- Anaerobic digestion of slurry is problematical as the energy density is low. Combined food waste/slurry systems are better but raise regulatory issues.
- While organic systems are attractive to many, there is little evidence to show that they are superior to conventional systems in terms of productivity.

Given the scale of the global challenge all sectors must strive to

cut emissions, including food production. In our report we outline ways this can be achieved. It may be more valid to agriculture and food production to argue their special status compared with, say, air travel. However, all must respond. It would be interesting to know how, *in extremis*, readers of *Agenda* would choose between retaining their milk, cheese, butter, yoghurt, beef and lamb, and their holiday or even business flights.

### Given the scale of the global challenge all sectors must strive to cut emissions, including food production.

There is a critical and urgent need for better Welsh data and for focused research. The Welsh Government lacks the authority and resources to achieve its laudable ambitions and this must be rectified. The swingeing cuts emanating from Westminster and Whitehall are of major concern. In this and many other areas what is done in the next five to ten years is vital to make the required changes by 2030 to 2040. Delay would be disastrous.

While methane emission from ruminants is a source of public debate, the nitrogen issue tends to be ignored. Yet nitrogen is about 300 times as effective as a greenhouse gas as carbon dioxide. Soil microbes appear to release a little over 1 per cent of applied nitrogen, be it organic or inorganic, as nitrous oxide. Whether this can this be diminished, for example in clover/grass systems under Welsh conditions, is a vital research issue.

Nationally and internationally we must remember there is a near linear relationship between crop yields and available nitrogen (for compelling physiological and cell biochemical reasons). With a global population already over 6.5 billion and likely to reach 9 billion, controlling these emissions will become a pressing and difficult problem superimposed on existing concerns of excessive nitrogen in the biosphere and, of course, potential food shortages.

Mitigation of food production systems and adaptation to climate change and associated greenhouse gases must be part of the agenda of every country. In Wales we could derive a comparative economic advantage for rural communities by taking full advantage of our current position and in selling low greenhouse gas footprint products, including meat. Do we have the tools, and more importantly, the will to do the job?

---

**Professor Gareth Wyn Jones** is Chair of the Welsh Government's Land Use and Climate Change Group.

# Cymraeg Ar Waith

## Welsh At Work

***This scheme promotes the Welsh Language as a skill with commercial benefits for employers.***

**Cymraeg Ar Waith** gives organisations the choice to develop and enhance the skills and knowledge of their workforce bilingually. The high quality training in IT, Business Administration and Customer Service is delivered entirely through the medium of Welsh, English or bilingually.

**Welsh At Work** assists organisations in developing a bilingual culture in the workplace by encouraging all employees to use the Welsh language in their working day to day activities and to be confident to communicate with their customers in English and Welsh. It assists organisations to motivate and develop a workforce which is bilingually multi-skilled.

**Prentisiaethau.. Sgiliau.. Hyfforddiant..**

**Apprentices.. Skills.. Training..**

**The CADCentre** is an independent national, bilingual provider delivering work-based training and skills schemes in Wales and England since 1989.

The Scheme is fully funded by The **Welsh Assembly Government, DCELLS** the under the Apprenticeships and Skillbuild training schemes subject to meeting the eligibility criteria.

**RHADFFÔN / FREEPHONE 0808 2000 129**

[james.moroney@cadcentreuk.com](mailto:james.moroney@cadcentreuk.com)

[ymholiadau@cadcentreuk.com](mailto:ymholiadau@cadcentreuk.com)

**Training is available in;**

**Swansea, Cardiff, Newport, Aberystwyth and Bangor**





# Cutting back on hypermobility

James Shorten and Roger Levett say we should pay more attention to the low carbon transition challenge facing rural Wales

About a third of the people of Wales live in settlements under 10,000, the statistical cut-off between rural and urban, compared with only 20 per cent in England. Wales only has ten towns and cities with a population greater than 50,000 and just 19 greater than 30,000 (see map on page 64). Across most of the country, away from the larger towns and cities, life is rural.

Yet the *UK Low Carbon Transition Plan*, which reflects a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 34 per cent by 2020 and 80 per cent by 2050, is emphatically urban in perspective and solutions. It may be sensible to focus effort on urban areas first, as more can be done faster there by virtue of greater population density. However, transition in rural areas needs to happen too. We need all the savings we can get. It's not 'either/or' but 'everything and then more'. If rural areas do not 'do their bit', urban ones will need to do even more. Moreover, if rural areas are allowed to lag now, they will face more severe shocks later, such as fossil fuel shortages and runaway price rises as rapid decarbonisation bites.

The difference likely to be felt by many rural communities is that their current use of cars will become virtually impossible by 2050. This will not necessarily be the end of the world. However, it will be the end of the world we have known since the 1970s. Since then rural residents have increasingly chosen to work, shop, and seek their

leisure further away from home. The cost of motoring has roughly halved in real terms every two decades, prompting and facilitating a transformation in the nature of life in rural areas. Without a substitute for this hypermobility there will have to be a re-localisation of rural life. Rural communities will become better connected than ever before, via ICT, but residents and businesses will

the system dynamics of what has happened. For example, when a few village residents decide to start driving to an edge-of-town superstore, the village shop loses a bit of custom, and can offer slightly less variety, freshness and competitive prices. In turn this tips a few more residents to driving to the superstore, and so on until the village shop closes. This may only be a small

The difference likely to be felt by the most rural communities is that their current use of cars will become virtually impossible by 2050. This will not necessarily be the end of the world. However, it will be the end of the world we have known since the 1970s.

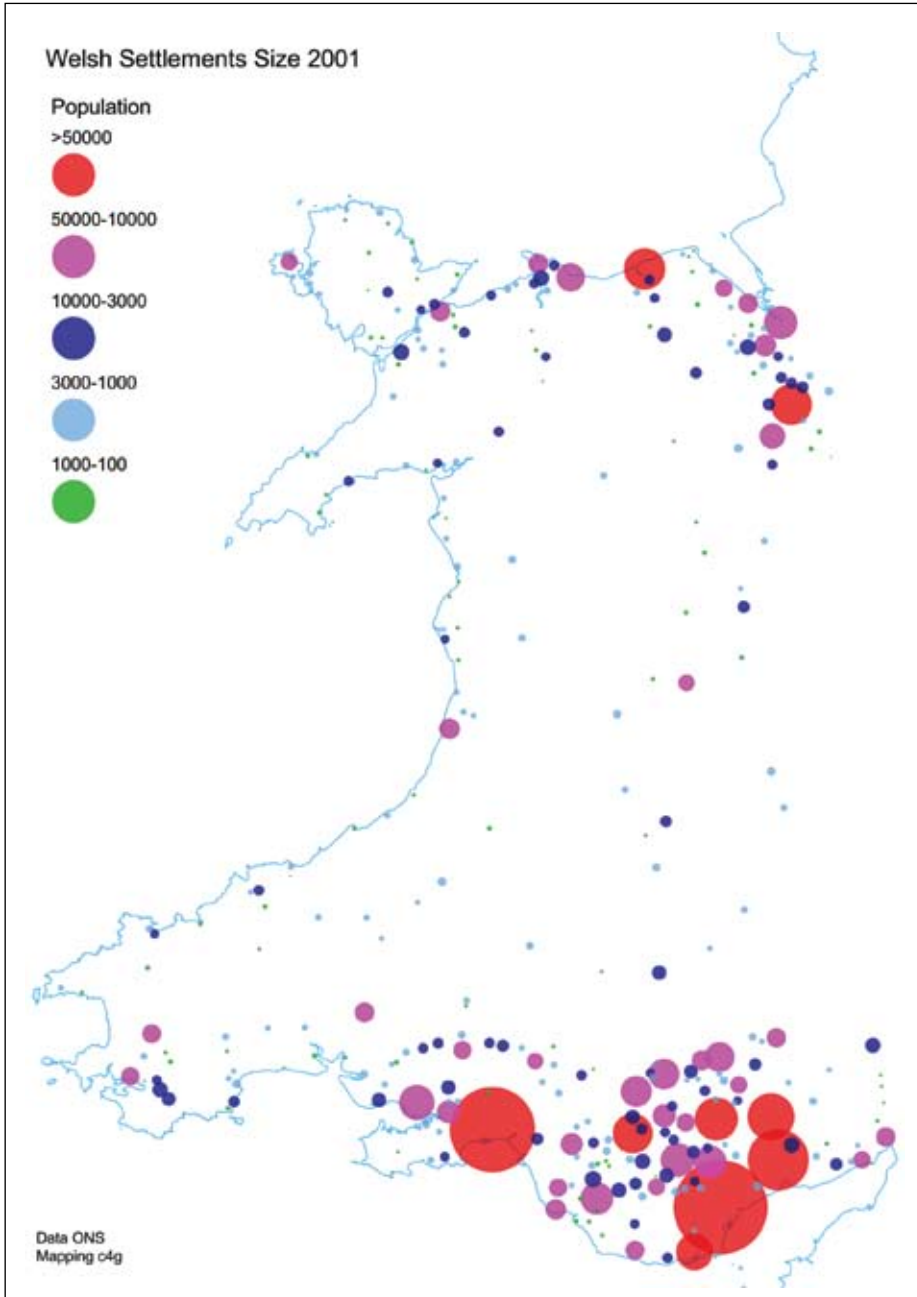
have to focus their physical lives much more on their home settlement and near neighbours.

How is this to come about? Public policy, especially planning, has been trying to encourage us to be more localised for decades. At best it has slightly slowed the trend in the opposite direction. How can public policy have any hope of altering this? How can it even be legitimate to try to thwart what people so clearly choose to do?

Part of the answer lies in recognising

loss of convenience to many, but it will be a calamity for those unable to jump into a car. It will also be a nasty fillip to the bigger vicious circle of loss of local public spaces, leaching the sense of community and social capital, and leading to people do less with and for each other and rely ever more on commercially traded services accessed or delivered by more driving.

Nobody making their perfectly sensible individual shopping choices wanted these results. Probably most of



them would have wanted the village shop to stay open. But this was a result nobody can achieve by the exercise of individual choice. Grimly continuing to pay over the odds for inferior goods won't achieve it if too many others still drive to the supermarket. It can only be achieved by collective actions – for

example tax reforms, local sourcing requirements or parking levies to make small local shops more attractive.

Planning restrictions could stop out of town shopping centres being built in the first place. This can be viewed as interfering in personal choice, but it can be justified because, as we have seen,

the exercise of choice can give us results that we don't want and that jeopardise our future.

Reducing private motoring and re-localisation will clearly interfere with personal choice, but will it be bad for rural communities as a whole? Local markets for food and a wide range of other everyday goods and services will grow, and local economies will get stronger. Public services can be justified with greater certainty for smaller communities. House prices will become better aligned with local wages, and so more affordable. These are all existing policy goals, directly undermined over recent decades by rural hypermobility.

A fruitful approach to planning areas of more scattered population would be to join groups of settlements into 'sustainable clusters', sharing services and facilities, giving a broader foundation for the local economy, and capable of being joined up by low-carbon transport. There is also a place for highly sustainable, 'One Planet' land-based development in the countryside.

Both rural and urban areas face systemic change in the coming decades. There are signs that the rural answers to low carbon transition are not getting the same attention as the urban ones. This is something Wales cannot let continue. So much of the population and identity of the country is rural and faces sustainability challenges as much as urban Wales does. Working out the detail of how to do this offers an important opportunity for Wales to assert its distinctiveness, but we cannot afford delay.

**James Shorten** runs a rural consultancy while **Roger Levett** specialises in sustainable development policy. [www.c4g.me.uk](http://www.c4g.me.uk)

# Learning by design

Haf Roberts examines the design principles behind Rogiet's new primary school in Monmouthshire

Rogiet Primary School near Caldicot in Monmouthshire, which opened a year ago, has been awarded the highest Environment Assessment score for new buildings. Designed by Bristol-based White Design Associates, it is not only an exemplar building, but a teaching and learning tool for sustainability.

The sustainability features were integrated into the children's education from the start. Pupils were heavily involved throughout the planning and construction process, coming up with different colour schemes for public and private entry areas within the building, colour-coding incoming and outgoing air vents, and taking part in newspaper collections for the Warmcel recycled insulation used in the walls of their school.

The building accommodates 260 pupils and staff, with courtyards, landscaped grounds and external play and sport areas. The landscaping includes a nature garden, cultivation areas and a pond with platform access for wildlife study. The school library has an eco wall which displays energy and recycled water use and a section of exposed wall showing the recycled paper insulation. A video production illustrating the lifecycle of the recycled cellulose insulation was used as a learning tool for the children, who also took part in its production.

A result of the schools partnership framework agreement between contractor Willmott Dixon and Monmouthshire County Council, Rogiet Primary School is the sixth school in the programme which required the contractor to put together a supply chain and an experienced team of designers and engineers to turn the Council's sustainability drive into practice.

Monmouthshire set the Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) 'Excellent' objective in line with its targets and Welsh Government guidance on the sustainable development of public buildings. This sustainability measuring tool encourages consultation and close collaboration between designers, builders and users of buildings. Rogiet was awarded the highest BREEAM rated education project in the UK with a score of 78.18 per cent, thus highlighting the high awareness of sustainability during the project management. This includes bringing in the sustainability assessors early enough in the process, to influence the design and the operation of the school.

The school comprises two wings laid out in a 'U' shape around a courtyard.

The north wing accommodates the classrooms with large windows for natural light, while the south wing accommodates the school offices, entrance and community hall. The approach refutes the conventional wisdom that classrooms should face south. North-facing classrooms help provide consistent light without overheating in summer, and the rooflights allow daylight to penetrate the teaching and circulation spaces.

The entire building is made from wood, with an exposed frame and cedar cladding which helps to maintain a healthy environment within the school. The high score achieved, six categories achieving over 70 per cent, came about through a combination of passive building strategies, attention to



First Minister Carwyn Jones with head teacher Kathryn Evans and Rogiet pupils at the opening of the new school in April 2010.



## Want to cut fleet costs and reduce carbon emissions?

For free, expert, tailored fleet advice contact the Energy Saving Trust on 0845 602 1425 or visit [energysavingtrust.org.uk/fleet](http://energysavingtrust.org.uk/fleet)

## Am gwtogi ar gostau fflyd a lleihau allyriannau carbon?

Am gyngor di-dâl, arbenigol ar fflydoedd cysylltwch â'r Ymddiriedolaeth Arbed Ynni ar 0845 602 1425 neu ymweld ag [energysavingtrust.org.uk/fleet](http://energysavingtrust.org.uk/fleet)



energy saving trust®  
ymddiriedolaeth arbed ynni



Helpu Cymru i leihau  
ei Hôl Troed Carbon  
Help Wales reduce  
its Carbon Footprint



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government



The old Rogiet school (above) and the new.

#### Box 1: Key environmental features at Rogiet school

- Single storey plan and high levels of natural daylight.
- Responsibly sourced timber-frame construction and timber elements.
- Natural ventilation: windows, rooflights and vents open manually and automatically.
- Efficient building envelope: high levels of recycled newspaper insulation and passive measures to minimise energy consumption.
- Landscape design and planting provide educational benefits and enhance site biodiversity.
- Rainwater collected from sloping ‘gull-wing’ roof and reused for toilet flushing.
- Renewable energy : solar panels for hot water, wind turbine for electricity.
- Best practice environmental management and procurement by the contractor.

the materials used and their sourcing, and a focused approach from client and contractor. This integrated approach resulted in a building that both educates its users and respects the environment.

There were some challenges to overcome. Rogiet is sandwiched between the M4 to the south and the M48 to the north, and is close to the Severn Tunnel Junction train station. This meant careful consideration was needed to avoid unacceptable noise levels when opening windows. Natural ventilation and cooling is used in all occupied areas by incorporating acoustic attenuation measures inside the teaching areas. The ventilation system is controlled by the Building Management System which responds to the temperature and carbon dioxide sensors in the classrooms. The windows can open in tiny increments which ensure a constant airflow and still control the noise levels from the nearby motorways. This provides the best possible learning and teaching environment.

From the outset client, contractor and the design team worked in partnership to achieve the best possible outcomes for the school, introducing sustainable design principles at an early stage. Some

of the features were a response to the landscape and site conditions, others were integrated as part of the design itself, such as the inverted roof which allows rainwater harvesting and rooflights, and the north-facing classrooms, both notable White Design features. The stringent requirements of the target for the building performance included:

- Installation of sub-meters to identify different electrical loads.
- Early deployment of ecological reports on the site, using specified ‘A’-rated materials especially in landscaping.
- Carrying out a renewable and low emissions energy feasibility study.
- Using a low carbon renewable energy system.

**Box 1** illustrates the features deployed at Rogiet. It is no easy task to align the various requirements of a new build, let alone live up to the expectations of the client, staff, pupils and local community. Key facets of building design, its space, light, comfort, security, efficiency, maintenance, use of IT, flexibility, environment and community

have been successfully integrated into the new school, at better value than preceding projects, and to the delight of the school users. A cost analysis of the last three school framework projects illustrates how the cost per square metre has come down, while the quality of the spaces provided increased.

Research points to evidence of improved staff retention and educational performance in green school buildings, which suggests they offer not only the green sustainability points, but benefits to the pupil and teacher alike. As Rogiet’s head teacher Kathryn Evans put it:

*“What normally happens is that a building is designed and the school fits into it as an afterthought. This was not the case at Rogiet. The whole community was involved from the start. We are privileged to have such a fantastic facility in which to learn”.*

**Haf Roberts** is a qualified BREEAM assessor and was recently appointed Timber Supply Chain Manager with Coed Cymru, based in Cardiff.

**Articles**

*Fishlock's File:*  
Bringing Ryan  
and Ronnie  
back to life

The intimate  
circle of a  
writer's life

When he wore  
a cloth of gold

**Book reviews:**

*How to be a  
Welshman*

*A poet of loud  
desperation*

*L.G. as viewed  
through the  
prism of high  
Westminster  
politics*

*A penchant for  
bad news*



*Fishlock's File*

## Bringing Ryan and Ronnie back to life

Trevor Fishlock talks to Hywel Gwynfryn

That tall man over there, quarrying the library shelves and scribbling his notes, is Hywel Gwynfryn. He loves a good library. "Recently," he said, "I had a week in Aberystwyth - the town plus the library made the perfect holiday."

Fossicking in bookshelves is part of the joy of the turn in his life, the branching of a distinguished broadcasting career into authorship. In more than 40 years he has written countless sketches, songs and scripts for radio and television shows; and he's as energetic as ever in front of the microphone and camera. But as far as writing was concerned, he hankered for years to tackle something bigger.

A publisher started him off, persuading him to commit autobiography and to experience the sweat of sustained writing. Next he wrote a biography, published last year, of the actor Hugh Griffith, one of his heroes and an Anglesey compatriot. "I had a real kick out of that."

Now he is working on a third book, written in Welsh like the others. It tells the story of Ryan Davies and Ronnie Williams, the entertainment phenomenon of a remarkable era. As a performing duo they were a brilliant comet of stage and screen and played a key part in the advance of broadcasting in Wales.

Hywel knew Ryan and Ronnie well. "I joined the BBC in 1964 when I was 22, working on the magazine programme *Heddiw* and doing light ent. as well. I watched Ryan and Ronnie from the wings. They taught me a lot."

Entertainers in England generally started in music hall and variety. Ryan and Ronnie sprang

from the unique Welsh language background, the amateur tradition of the noson lawen and eisteddfod, of songs, comic verses and witty word play. They were both from Carmarthenshire, Ryan from Glanamau and Ronnie from Cefneithin. They met at a national eisteddfod in the 1950s, Ryan a trainee teacher in Bangor and Ronnie already attracting attention as an actor and BBC Wales announcer.

Ryan studied drama in London and taught in Croydon for six years. In his spare time he bloomed as a versatile performer - singer, pianist, harpist, mime artist and natural clown. His malleable face and aquiline nose served his drollery. So did his agile and skinny frame. "There's more meat," he used to say, "on a jockey's whip."

Meredydd Evans, creator of the light entertainment section of BBC Wales in the 1960s, had noted Ryan's burgeoning home-grown talent and hired him as his department's first contracted performer. He also cast Ronnie as the other half of a double



Hywel Gwynfryn - 'loves a good library'.

act. Ronnie said later that this was against his will. But Meredydd Evans had seen how the pair hit it off on stage. He was determined that Wales should enjoy professional entertainment through the Welsh language. Part of that, he insisted, was a high-class comedy duo.

"Ryan and Ronnie certainly brought professionalism to what they did," Hywel said. "And Ryan came with a London gloss. Their act had class and Wales was proud of them. They filled every hall. People gathered at venues unable to get tickets. They seemed to be everywhere, on the road, on television. They were very funny. They did cerdd dant, singing to the harp, and gave it a twist."

They were the backbone of Welsh comedy. Many people who did not speak Welsh followed their television shows. And their English series, particularly the *Our House* sketches with a pinaforesd Mam, were as popular as they were hilarious.

"One thing I want to do in this book," said Hywel, "is to give Ronnie his due. Both men were full of ideas. Ronnie wrote the material. Ryan wrote the songs. But Ryan's light was so bright that people naturally looked to him. Ronnie said rather ruefully, 'People ask me how Ryan is.' He was not bitter, but he felt he deserved more attention.

"They didn't quarrel. They argued, but argued professionally about the shows and the material. And after that they both agreed. 'Right, time for a pint.' There was nothing personal there, Ronnie greatly admired Ryan's talent. He said: 'Ryan was a better ping-pong player than me, and a better singer, but I was the better actor.' People talk of Ryan's performance, not about the actor. Ronnie was the actor. Ryan's heroes were Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton. He played the harp and piano and composed songs. He loved singing, but Ronnie hated it.

"Ryan and Ronnie were stars, two guys driving white Jags, and Ryan, especially, revelled in all that. Ryan pushed forward. Ronnie was afraid they might push too far. They were working hard. Ryan burned with nervous energy and could take the pace. Ronnie couldn't. During their cabaret week at the Double Diamond club in 1974 he saw a doctor who ordered him to stop. The partnership ended. There was no rancour. It was a breakdown. Later Ronnie took over the White Lion at Cerrigydrudion. Ryan went up to see him and they staged informal concerts in the bar. But Ronnie was too generous a landlord and went bankrupt."

Ryan's energy and commitment fired his career



Ryan and Ronnie - working through two languages they got two lots of laughter for one joke.

as a solo performer and song writer. He famously starred in the television comedy *Fo a Fê*, written by Rhydderch Jones and Gwenlyn Parry, which mined the humour of the north-south difference in Wales.

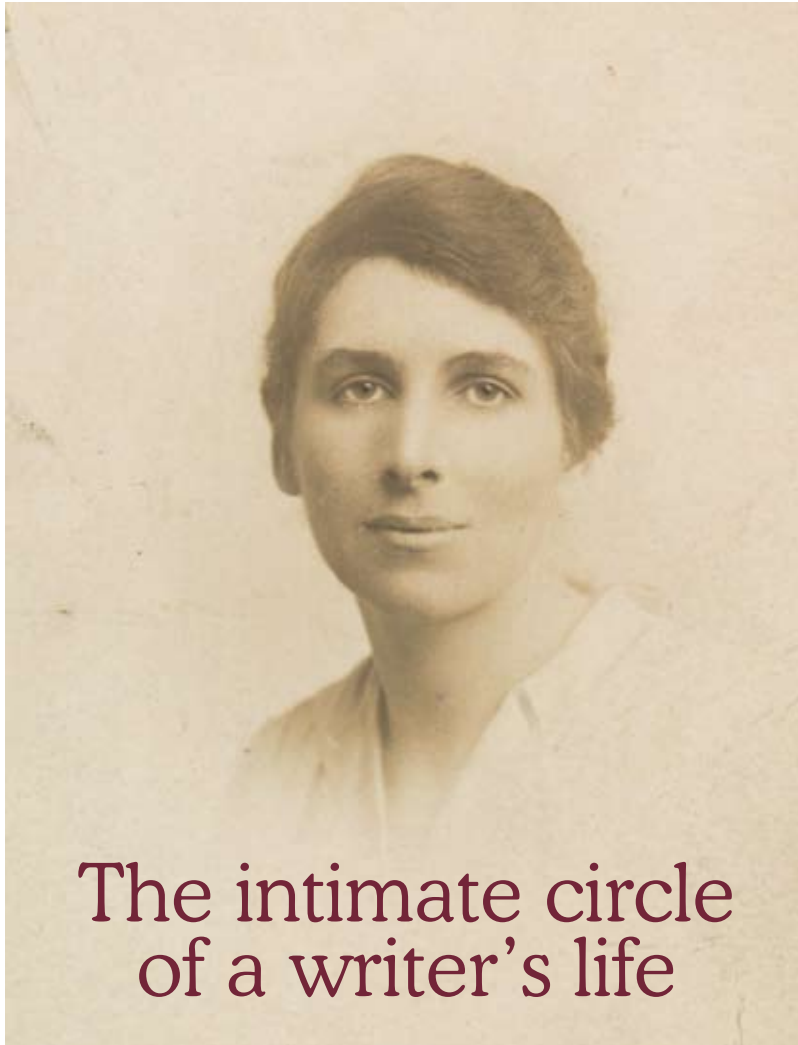
He was at the height of his powers when he died suddenly after a heart attack in Buffalo, New York, in 1977. He was only 40. In Wales the shock was profound. Ronnie slipped into decline and eventually took his own life.

Ryan and Ronnie prospered as entertainers at a time when the future of the Welsh language was the subject of strong campaigning, of civil disobedience and trials in the courts. The growth of broadcasting and bilingual education helped to give it a more vigorous life.

"Ryan and Ronnie were entertainers who were there at the right time," Hywel said. "Entertainment was growing. BBC Wales had just started. In 1968 I presented the first BBC Wales pop show - and there were plenty of Welsh records to support it.

"Ryan and Ronnie were not in any way political. Being Welsh was not about performing in the Welsh language, but performing in English as well. No matter what the language, they appealed to Wales. The laughter they created transcended everything. But they were much more than a comedy pair."

In 1975 I interviewed Ryan Davies for *The Times* at the Grand Theatre in Swansea where he was starring in pantomime. "If a show is in Welsh," he said, "it has to be first class. No one puts up with rubbish out of loyalty. I want to contribute to Welsh-language entertainment and to keep my identity. It is a more intimate experience to work in my first language, but I love doing cabaret in English. The audiences are very different. Working in two languages is bound to be fulfilling for a comedian. For one thing you get two lots of laughter for one joke. And whatever the language the laughter sounds the same. That's what counts."



## The intimate circle of a writer's life

**Katie Gramich** takes a look at the unknown, glamorous Kate Roberts

As every Welsh schoolchild knows, Kate Roberts (1891-1985) was the 'Queen of Our Literature'. She was indisputably the most important Welsh female novelist and short story writer of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, producing a large and various oeuvre extending over a period of more than half a century. In addition to being a creative writer, she was an influential critic, journalist, editor and publisher, not to mention a political activist and one of the earliest members of Plaid Cymru, or the BB (Bloody Blaid) as she affectionately referred to it.

And yet today, a quarter of a century after her death, her work is critically neglected within Wales and she remains little known outside the country. This is despite the fact that much of her fiction has been translated into English. It is shocking to find that while the British Library integrated catalogue lists no fewer than 777 items with 'Virginia Woolf'

in the title, there are only 19 items on Kate Roberts, four of which are reprints of the same text by Derec Llwyd Morgan. It is high time we invited Kate Roberts down from her inaccessibly respectable enthronement. In particular, we should reconsider the very beginnings of her long literary career.

Katherine Roberts was born on 13 February 1891, the eldest of what would be the four children of Catrin and Owen Roberts, a quarryman and smallholder. She spent most of her childhood living in a cottage called Cae'r Gors, in the village of Rhosgadfan in Caernarfonshire, today an arts and community centre. She had three younger brothers - Richard, Evan, and David. They were brought up close to the land, helping their parents with the smallholding, feeding animals, cleaning their pens, milking cows, gathering heather from the hillsides for fuel, making and carrying hay to feed the animals over the long, severe winters.

The hard work and constant anxiety of the subsistence farmer's life is continually evoked in Roberts's early fiction. At the same time she brings home to her readers the close intimacy between the smallholders and their animals. In the 1972 volume *Atgofion* (Memories), Kate Roberts gives an account of her life to date. She begins with an extraordinarily detailed description of the interior of her childhood home, Cae'r Gors. She remembers, it seems, every single tiny detail, from the red tiles of the kitchen floor, which she would wash every Saturday, to the strange hearthstone made out of an old grave, with the carved words still legible upon it.

That Roberts should begin with an intimate delineation of this domestic space is entirely characteristic of her work. Most of her stories and novels have domestic settings, and it is in these constrained interior spaces that the drama of her plots takes its course. Like Jane Austen's, Kate Roberts's fictional world tends to be small, domestic, and dominated by women.

The four little fields around Cae'r Gors formed part of her childhood world. She speaks of them affectionately and intimately, naming them and remembering her childhood game of keeping house on the flat stone in Cae Bach. Further off, the heather-covered slopes of the mountain, Moel Smythaw, was also part of her known map of the world. She and her brothers would gather heather there together, an activity remembered with affection and described for example towards the end of her novel, *Traed mewn Cyffion* (Feet in Chains).





The Ystalyfera drama group in 1917 - Kate Roberts is bottom left, with her two collaborators, Betty Eynon Davies and Margaret Price, to the right. They were known locally as 'Y tair BAs'.

More ambivalent is her memory of the centrality of the chapel in the family's life, and yet they spent a large proportion of their time there as children, learning and reciting Bible verses, attending Sunday School, Seïats, and literary events. 'Dyna gylch ein bywyd, y tŷ, y capel, y caeau, y ffyrdd, y mynydd', she concludes (That was the circle of our life: the house, the chapel, the fields, the lanes, the mountain).

She began to move away from this tight circle of family life when she won a scholarship from Rhostryfan Primary School to the County School in Caernarfon in 1904. In line with the educational policies of the time, the lessons she received there were entirely in English. She remembers the sense of disorientation she felt as a thirteen-year-old moving from a virtually monoglot Welsh community to a regime of Englishness. Later in life she would be one of the first campaigners for Welsh-medium education, asserting in 1973 that she considered her greatest achievement in life to be not her literary

work but her role in the establishment of the Welsh-medium secondary school Ysgol Twm o'r Nant, in Denbigh.

However, back in her own youth her English-medium education continued when, in 1910 she went to University College, Bangor. There she was one of a small number of female students at University at that time. She was acutely aware of her privilege and of the financial sacrifice her education meant for her parents. She studied Welsh under the charismatic John Morris-Jones and the formidable scholar, Ifor Williams. Again, as in the County School, all the lectures were through the medium of English. The Welsh Society at Bangor was vibrant, and there was much literary and cultural activity - eisteddfodau, debates, and student newspapers. The bright, industrious, and strikingly good-looking young Kate Roberts was at the heart of it all. As she concludes in *Atgofion*, 'dyma amser hapusaf fy mywyd' (this was the happiest time of my life).

She left Bangor in 1913 with a

second-class honours degree in Welsh and a teacher's certificate. Perhaps because she had not gained the First that her lecturers had expected, she took a post as a teacher in Ysgol Elfennol Dolbadarn (a primary school) in Llanberis for a year. In February 1915 she moved to Ystalyfera in the Swansea Valley as a secondary school teacher, taking over the post of a male teacher who had joined up.

The move to 'y Sowth' was quite a wrench for the home-loving young woman and at first she found it hard to understand the unfamiliar dialect. But her memoirs show that she soon overcame that obstacle and began to relish the rich cultural life of the area, as well as teaching at a higher level, and the pleasure of having able pupils in her classes such as the boy who would later become the poet, Gwenallt.

It was during her time in Ystalyfera that the first inklings of her future life as a writer manifested themselves. She threw herself enthusiastically into the literary

Of course, she and her collaborators were aware that in order to achieve an audience they had to entertain and, perhaps particularly in the sombre time of war, the way to attract an audience was by offering the release and distraction of laughter.

and dramatic activities of the area, both co-writing and acting in short plays. She formed a close friendship with two other young women, Betty Eynon Davies and Margaret Price. These were the two collaborators with her on the plays which the 'Red Dragon Society' performed in the Tawe valley during the war.

They were well-known locally as 'y tair BA' ('the three BAs') which indicates the unusualness in those days and in that place of university-educated women. Intriguingly, given that Roberts' subsequent writing has occasionally been criticised for being too unremittingly sad or humourless, this early dramatic work was largely comic. Of course, she and her collaborators were aware that in order to achieve an audience they had to entertain and, perhaps particularly in the sombre time of war, the way to attract an audience was by offering the release and distraction of laughter. Indeed, perhaps the distraction was partly for their own benefit too, since Kate Roberts' own brothers were by now soldiers in the British Army, their lives in imminent danger.

Roberts' dramatic work remains largely unknown and out of print, although some of these early collaborative plays are genuinely funny and deserve to be rediscovered. One example is *Y Canpunt* (The Hundred Pounds), subtitled 'a comedy from Cwm Tawe'. It was written by Margaret Price, Kate Roberts, and Betty Eynon Davies, who were listed in that order on the title page of the play when it

was published in a 6d edition by the Welsh Outlook Press in Newtown in 1923.

The one-act play has five characters: Mrs Davies, a rich widow; Adelina, her daughter; Jim Davies, her nephew; Mari Myfanwy, Jim Davies's girlfriend; and Sam Price, owner of a coalmine. The play opens unexpectedly, in English, since Adelina is showing off

her command of the language, before she is taken to task unceremoniously by her cousin, Jim, who says 'Siaradwch Gymraeg, ferch!' (Speak Welsh, girl!). The Welsh spoken by the characters is in the dialect of the Swansea Valley and is authentic and fluent. Although one might suspect that Margaret Price, a native of the area, could take credit for that, it is worth recalling that Kate Roberts had an excellent ear for dialect herself, and was able to reproduce south Walian speech convincingly in early stories such as *Buddugoliaeth Alaw Jim* (Alaw Jim's Victory).

The opening exchange between Jim and his girlfriend, Mari, focuses on dress (a trope which would become central in many of Roberts' later short stories). Jim is afraid that Mari is dressed too 'flightily' to make a good impression on his aunt, from whom he hopes to extract £100 to enable himself and Mari to get married. His aunt owes Jim the £100, which his deceased uncle promised him on his deathbed. However, instead of giving him the money, she has a tendency to give him presents, such as a watch, a satin handkerchief, and a picture of Queen Victoria!

Mari is contemptuous of these gifts, which she calls "a lot of old rubbish bought in Woolworth's". Jim's plan is to invest the money in a new cinema that his friend from Cwmllynfell is about to open. Mari suspects that the aunt might want Jim to marry her daughter, Adelina, but Jim assures her that their sights are on Sam Price, owner of Gors-y-Bryniau colliery, now that he is beginning to make a large profit from it. The name of the colliery is interesting, since it foreshadows the place name in the title of Roberts' first book of short stories, *O Gors y Bryniau* (From the Marsh of the Hills), which would be published two years later. Such a detail offers a glimpse of the collaborative processes of the three women writers. Roberts' north Wales is transposed onto a south Wales landscape.

The play is undeniably amusing. Mari is a feisty and admirable heroine, nicely juxtaposed with the snobbish,

#### Selected Translations of Kate Roberts' work

- Clancy, Joseph P., *The world of Kate Roberts: selected stories 1925-1981* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991).
- *A Summer Day and Other Stories* (Cardiff: Penmark Press, 1946) Various translators. Introduction by Storm Jameson.
- *Tea in the Heather*, trans. Wyn Griffith (Ruthin: John Jones, 1968).
- *Feet in Chains*, trans. Idwal Walters and John Idris Jones (Cardiff: John Jones, 1977).
- *The Living Sleep*, trans. Wyn Griffith (Cardiff: John Jones, 1976).
- *The Awakening*, trans. Siân James (Bridgend: Seren, 2006).
- *One Bright Morning*, trans. Gillian Clarke (Llandysul: Gomer, 2008).
- *The White Lane*, trans. Gillian Clarke (Llandysul: Gomer, 2009).

Anglicised Adelina and her mother. There is a pointed contrast between Mari's lively dialect and the aunt's macaronic, Anglicised Welsh ('Mae Adelina yn paento yn splendid'/Adelina paints splendidly). Mari manages to extract the £100 from the aunt by flirting outrageously with Sam Price. The aunt finally gives them the £100 in order to get rid of them and clear the path for her daughter to catch the marriageable Mr. Price. The play, as its title indicates, and in spite of its broad comedy, turns on economic realities and class differences, and is in that regard reminiscent of the work of the pioneering Anglo-Welsh dramatist, J. O. Francis. Its comic tone and structure, though, ensure that the characters are not ground down by poverty and hardship but triumph over

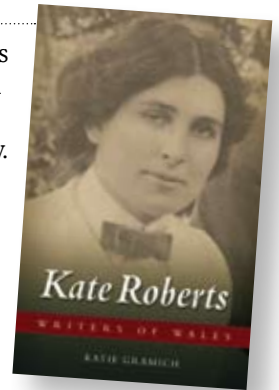
it through their down-to-earth wit.

Before she became the 'Queen of Our Literature', then, Kate Roberts and her female collaborators wrote a number of plays during the First World War which entertained their local community at a time of exceptional anxiety and uncertainty. This was an important apprenticeship for Roberts the budding writer. The discipline of writing vivid dialogue for her dramatic characters undoubtedly helped her in the manipulation of direct speech in her later stories and novels.

At the same time the shared experience of crafting a central conflict as a pivot for the brief structure of a one-act play must have been useful training for the rigorous structural discipline of the short story genre. Above all, this

glimpse of the young Kate Roberts, glamorous, confident, and acutely aware of class and sexual politics, makes us rethink radically our inherited image of the elderly Kate Roberts, the 'stiff, indomitable Queen of our Literature'.

Katie Gramich is reader in English Literature at Cardiff University. Her monograph *Kate Roberts* has just been published by the University of Wales Press



## IWA Legacy

For nearly quarter of a century the Institute of Welsh Affairs has helped raise the level of public debate on issues affecting Wales, by placing quality information in the public domain.

If the IWA and what it represents are important to you, please consider remembering the IWA in your will. Your generosity will allow us to continue promoting the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales for our future generations.

Whether large or small, a gift of this kind can have an important practical impact on our work as well as motivating others. It is also a way of extending your own generosity beyond your lifetime. If, therefore, you decide to remember a charity in your will, please consider us.

Naturally, a decision of this kind is one that you will wish to consider carefully, and even to take professional advice. It is always important for you and your family and for any other recipient that the wording of a will expresses accurately your own wishes.

We would be pleased to help you, should you wish to discuss options with our own staff. But if you have already decided to make a bequest to the IWA in your will, please let us know, so that we can express our thanks to you in your own lifetime.

If you would like to speak to us about any of the above, please contact our Director, John Osmond [johnosmond@iwa.org.uk](mailto:johnosmond@iwa.org.uk) or our Deputy Director, Kirsty Davies [kirstydavies@iwa.org.uk](mailto:kirstydavies@iwa.org.uk).

Institute of Welsh Affairs  
4 Cathedral Road, Cardiff CF11 9LJ  
Tel: 029 2066 0820

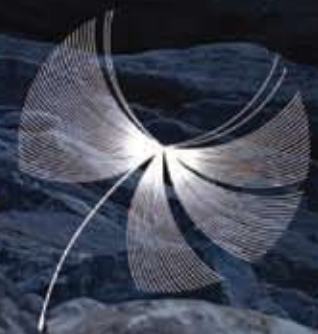
**iwa**

# Sleep... ...as nature intended

Abaca Beds and Organic Mattresses

We now have a selection of hardwood beds to complement our wonderful range of organic mattresses. Everything is hand made in Wales, so see our website [www.abacaorganic.co.uk](http://www.abacaorganic.co.uk) for details or ring 01269 598 491

Quote 'IWA' to claim a 10% discount on any wooden bed or mattress



**Abaca**  
organic living

Abaca make the only Soil Association certified organic mattresses in the UK

Please contact us for further information  
01269 598491 | Ty Croes Business Park, SA18 3RD | [www.abacaorganic.co.uk](http://www.abacaorganic.co.uk)



## When he wore a cloth of gold

**Rhian Davies** chronicles the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century adventures of Orlando Parry and Franz Liszt

This June the Gregynog Festival throws a spotlight on the life and work of the London Welshman John Orlando Parry (1810-79). Despite crippling attacks of stage fright which he was never able fully to conquer, the multi-talented Parry worked professionally as a composer, singer, pianist, harpist and organist, actor, artist and cartoonist. He was also an inveterate diarist and scrapbooker and his surviving manuscripts, many of which are deposited in the National Library at Aberystwyth, chart all the ups and downs of a 19th-century performer's life on the road.

Parry was scrupulous in logging the audience figures and box office returns for each of the venues he played, the encores his performances prompted, the temperamental pianos, dodgy catering and travel glitches with which he had frequently to contend. He illustrated his diary entries with exquisite ink sketches of the people

whom he met in the course of his travels, and also preserved memorabilia such as concert handbills, reviews and advertisements for emporia which took his fancy such as D. Clegg & Co's Clan Tartan Warehouse in Princes Street, Edinburgh.

During his teenage years, Parry gained platform experience at concerts arranged by his father, John Parry (*Bardd Alaw*, 1776-1851), at the Powys Eisteddfodau held in Welshpool in 1824, Brecon in 1826 and Denbigh, where the family had its roots, in 1828. He then took voice lessons from Luigi Lablache (1794-1858) in Naples before developing the speciality act which would become the linchpin of his long and lucrative career. This was declaiming in a *buffo* baritone and, to his own piano accompaniment, the comic vocal monologues that he composed on topical themes such as *Berlin Wool*, *Country Commissions*, *Mamma is so very particular and Wanted – a Governess!*



Changing lives  
Creating futures  
Newid bywydau  
Creu dyfodol



# Working Links Wales

## Changing Lives Creating Futures

Working Links Wales supports people who face significant challenges and barriers in getting into work, such as those who have been unemployed for a long time, former offenders, young people, lone parents, people with disabilities and older workers.

We operate across Wales providing services tailored to individual communities, already helping over 21,000 people from Wales' most deprived areas into employment. We work closely with employers to meet local labour market demand and ensure the support we provide to our customers reflects the needs of businesses.

Our objectives are to:

- Promote and support the Welsh economy and local labour markets.
- Help raise the social and economic welfare of Wales through increased employment rates, lower economic inactivity, and a reduction in child poverty.
- Improve the progression of people in work through skills development, particularly those from disadvantaged groups.
- Transform the lives of individuals and communities.

# Working Links Cymru

## Newid Bywydau Creu Dyfodol

Mae Working Links Cymru yn cefnogi pobl sy'n wynebu heriau sylweddol a rhwystrau o ran cael i mewn i waith, megis y rhai hynny sydd wedi bod yn ddi-waith am amser hir, cyn-droseddwyr, pobl ifanc, rhieni sengl, pobl ag anableddau a gweithwyr hŷn.

Rydym yn gweithredu ar draws Cymru gan ddarparu gwasanaethau wedi'u teilwra i gymunedau unigol, eisioes yn helpu dros 21,000 o bobl o ardaloedd mwyaf difreintiedig Cymru i mewn i gyflogaeth. Rydym yn gweithio'n agos gyda chyflogwyr i gwrrd â galw yn y farchnad lafur leol a sicrhau bod y gefnogaeth a ddarparwn i'n cwsmeriaid yn adlewyrchu anghenion busnesau.

Ein hamcanion yw:

- Hyrwyddo a chefnogi economi Cymru a marchnadoedd llafur lleol.
- Helpu i hybu lles cymdeithasol ac economaidd Cymru drwy gynyddu cyfraddau cyflogaeth, lleihau anweithgarwch economaidd, a lleihau tiodi plant.
- Gwella dilyniant o bobl mewn gwaith drwy ddatblygu sgiliau, yn enwedig y rhai o grwpiau difreintiedig.
- Trawsnewid bywydau unigolion a chymunedau.

Parry starred at leading London venues such as the Hanover Square Rooms, Store Street Music Hall and the Olympic, St James and Gaiety Theatres. He also toured south Wales and the west of England in 1844. In 1848 he fulfilled 14 engagements in 18 days across the length and breadth of north Wales. A press review of Parry's performance before an audience of 150 in the Albion Rooms, Bangor, on 11 August 1848, commented that he was "beyond comparison the most original, talented,

and Birkenhead ("Everybody thinking he was a little touched – great Fun tho!"). This was probably the same garment which Parry immortalised in his diary entry for 25 November 1840, written while he and Liszt trundled the 46 miles from Oxford to Leamington Spa by carriage:

"M. Liszt brought his great Hungarian coat with him – composed of Skins - & ornamented with different coloured leathers – it is a most enormous concern - & weights [sic] at least as heavy as three great coats."

**“We gave ourselves for lost & lay resigned to the will of our Maker – I never thought to see land or home again.”**

Parry also toured in 1842 and 1845 with one of Liszt's great rivals on the concert platform, the Swiss-born pianist Sigismond Thalberg (1812-71). Indeed, Thalberg's Op. 70, an arrangement of *Dafydd y Garrey* [sic] *Wen* for solo piano, published by Addison & Lucas in London circa 1860 and subtitled *David sur le Rocher Blanc: Ancien Air de Barde (du Pays de Galles)*, may well have stemmed from his collaboration with Parry. Thalberg and Parry were barely a week into their second tour when a sea crossing from Liverpool almost ended in catastrophe for them both, as described in this press cutting of 27 January 1845:

and extraordinary man of his age and century." Parry's diary also expressed his delight that the cumulative box office takings for the tour should have amounted to £216. 17. 9, a sum which he considered "wonderful for Wales".

Prior to these performances, Parry had shared a bill with one of the leading musical personalities of his day, the pianist-composer Franz Liszt (1811-86). Parry's diaries teem with statistics about their travels together between August 1840 and January 1841. The first leg of their tour required them to cover 1,167 miles by road, rail and sea, giving 50 concerts en route, while the second ran to 2,222 miles and 44 concerts. Parry's fly-on-the-wall accounts of Liszt's performances, repertoire selections and extemporisations are invaluable, as are his vivid vignettes of the virtuoso's flamboyant wardrobe, including the "two waistcoats of gold cloth!!" to which he treated himself in Dublin.

Liszt also had a "Hungarian great bear skin cloak" which astonished the good people of Chester

"On Saturday evening the Athlone steamer sailed for Belfast, and had amongst her passengers the celebrated pianist, M. Thalberg, and the equally celebrated vocalists, Miss Birch, Miss Dolby, Mr John Parry, and Mr Calkin... It appears that they had succeeded in steaming in the teeth of the gale as far as the Isle of Man, but that they found it impossible to proceed further, and for four hours the captain considered the safety of the vessel in imminent peril. The party seemed to have given up all hopes of ever seeing land again, and expected every moment to go to the bottom. Their joy at reaching their comfortable quarters in the Adelphi Hotel last night was unbounded. They congratulated each other on their truly providential escape, and immediately despatched letters to their friends in London and on the continent to acquaint them of their safety."

## Marc Jennings, Graphic Design.

- Branding, design for print and web.
- Independent graphic designer working with a variety of public and private sector clients, based in Cardiff Bay.

Visit [www.theundercard.co.uk](http://www.theundercard.co.uk)  
for recent work and further information.

To discuss a project, call 07970 029185 / 029 2049 9566  
or email [marc@theundercard.co.uk](mailto:marc@theundercard.co.uk)

## Business law advice

Businesses need first class legal advice delivered promptly, clearly and at a fair price by lawyers who understand their market. That is exactly what we at Hugh James deliver.

We will guide you through the complicated legal mazes and can advise you on how to use the law to maximize your business potential ensuring a smooth and efficient delivery of your objectives.

*"Hugh James has a determinedly commercial focus and impressive corporate and banking expertise."*

The Legal 500 2010

[www.hughjames.com](http://www.hughjames.com) Hodge House  
114 - 116 St Marys St  
Cardiff  
CF10 1DY  
[info@hughjames.com](mailto:info@hughjames.com)



"The IWA occupies a unique place in welsh public life. Its analysis of current issues is always professional and extremely helpful."

Lord Richard of Ammanford  
Chairman of the Richard Commission

"In a time of transition for wales, politically, the Institute of Welsh Affairs provides a vital forum for all sides to come together over both strategically important and contentious issues."

Baroness Ilora Finlay of Llandaff  
Professor of Palliative Medicine,  
Cardiff University

"The IWA is a quite extraordinarily valuable body, and I am very proud to be a member of it."

Lord (Kenneth) Morgan  
One of Wales's leading historians

## Join the IWA and support our work.

The work of the IWA depends on the support and contribution of individual members across Wales and beyond who share our determination to mobilise the nation's human and social resources in order to face the challenges ahead. By bringing together partners in business, academia, and the public and voluntary sectors, the IWA is helping to shape economic, social, educational, environmental and cultural policy across Wales.

I wish to become a member and enclose a cheque for £40.

I wish to become a member and pay by credit/debit card the sum of £

Account Number  
\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Expiry date \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

I wish to pay by Direct Debit  
(This will help us keep our costs down)

Please send me a Direct Debit application form.

Please send me details about becoming an IWA Fellow.

Name: .....

Title: .....

Address: .....

Post Code: .....

Tel: ..... Fax: .....

E-mail: .....

Return to: Freepost  
INSTITUTE OF WELSH AFFAIRS  
Institute of Welsh Affairs, 4 Cathedral Road,  
Cardiff CF11 9LJ





The music room at Gregynog Hall.

The Swiss pianist Sigismond Thalberg (above)  
Franz Liszt in 1832 (below)

Parry's diary entry for 26 January 1845 gives a little more detail:

"I little thought when writing the last page – the dreadful dangers I was to encounter . . . About 2 – the Sea broke over our Vessel & the Helmsman said at 3 the waves passed by above the Funnel! ... We gave up ourselves for lost & lay resigned to the will of our Maker – I never thought to see land or home again – At ½ 4 or 5 the Captain did not know where he was! ... The helmsman had lost the cap of his knee in endeavouring to stop the wheel from turning round! – Oh! it was frightful ... To me it was the most impressive lesson I ever rec[eiv]e[d] – I shall never forget it."

Small wonder, then, that Parry and other concert-party colleagues declined to set sail again but holed up in Shrewsbury until Thalberg could rejoin them, he having had the pluck to embark and fulfil the performances

which they should all have given in Ireland!

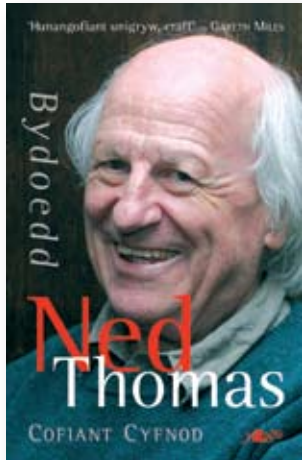
To highlight the life and career of John Orlando Parry and to celebrate the bicentenary of Franz Liszt's birth in 2011, Gregynog Festival's *Liszt Day* welcomes 19<sup>th</sup> Century specialist Daniel Grimwood on 2 July to perform Liszt, Thalberg and Parry on an Erard piano which is known to have been played by Liszt himself. The outstanding Welsh pianist Llŷr Williams also includes repertoire by Liszt in his recital on a modern Steinway the same evening.

**Rhian Davies** is a music historian and broadcaster and Artistic Director of the Gregynog Festival in her native Montgomeryshire. For further information about the Gregynog Festival events, visit [www.gwylgregynogfestival.org](http://www.gwylgregynogfestival.org), where you can book online, or telephone the information line on 01686 207100.

# Reviews

## How to be a Welshman

Daniel G. Williams



*Bydoedd* (Worlds)

Ned Thomas

Y Lolfa, £9.95

Ned Thomas' autobiography is something of a wolf in sheep's clothing. Hidden among the tens of generally tedious Welsh language autobiographies that hit the shelves with a resounding thud each year, *Bydoedd* is a strikingly different volume. Ned's own story, from a childhood in Germany to periods spent in Salamanca and in Moscow, ensures that we're spared idealised reminiscences of the Welsh 'gwerin' of Pontrhydfendigaid / Croesor / Maenclochog (delete as applicable).

But beyond that, autobiographical writing itself undergoes something of a revision in *Bydoedd* as contexts and social forces become the focus of the author's history, as opposed to the usual attention given to individuals, friends, wives, parents and lovers. Where personal motivations are explored they relate to political and cultural views and values, not personalities

and relationships. Indeed, whether he's discussing the paranoia of the Soviet government in Moscow, or of Emyr Llywelyn in Llangeitho, the 'worlds' of this autobiography are often somewhat austere places where social and historical forces impact on individuals, governing their reactions to one another. Ned Thomas was the editor of the journal *Planet*, was one of the founders of *Arcade*, was a language campaigner and author of *The Welsh Extremist*, is a past director of the University of Wales Press, and is President of the Mercator Centre Wales. These activities are all covered in *Bydoedd*, and offer a useful basis from which to consider the thought of one of Wales' leading public intellectuals.

The philosopher Agnes Heller described history as being "about what happens seen from outside", while memoirs are "about what happens seen from within". Ned Thomas succeeds in combining these two forms of writing, and of knowledge, in his book. In places he draws on intensely remembered moments or scenes in his life – a childhood view of the Alps for instance – and follows it up with detailed research into the history of places, people and movements. His family moved to Germany during his formative years during which his father (a native of Aberdare) was a lawyer in the British Sector of Nordrhein-Westfalen and was actively involved in the process of 'de-Natification'.

In an autobiography that ranges widely across time and space two worlds function as the primary frames within which Ned Thomas narrates his story: Welsh speaking Wales, and Europe. Reviewing the book at this moment in time is therefore something of a sobering experience. On the one hand, the coalition government in London, through a lethal combination of ideological commitment and callous indifference, is unpicking the fabric of the Welsh language culture that Ned, amongst others, has done so much to weave in the last 25 years. On the other, the European Union seems to have hardened into an

oligarchic structure, in which the contempt of the elementary principles of democracy shown by the elites of the Council and Commission and their subordinates is reciprocated by the disdain of the majority of European citizens for the Parliament that supposedly represents them. Ned Thomas's poetic observation in his introduction that it is not only individuals who disappear over time's horizon but whole worlds, seems to carry a particularly charged resonance at the present juncture.

In the autobiography's first chapter we're told that Thomas's mother (a native of Anglesey) had little German when the family were living in Elperweg, but in time her son was able to translate on her behalf. Later, while editing the British Council's journal in Moscow, Thomas receives a letter from a Scot complaining that the journal's title *Anglia* means England, not Britain. Ned notes that *Velikobritania* was used in the subtitle, but that sounded too grandiose. *Bolshoi*, as in the theatre, is the common term for 'large in size', but that wasn't right for 'Great Britain' either. It was, he states, an early indication of the problems of translating 'British realities in a language that had developed in a completely different system'.

In both scenes Thomas is a cultural mediator, and the pitfalls and problems of translation is a thematic thread throughout the volume. These scenes reflect the broader fact that 'culture' is primarily linguistic for Thomas. Throughout *Bydoedd* he sees the knowledge of languages – he speaks at least half a dozen – as the key to opening the doors of distinctive cultures. His political and social beliefs derive from this.

For many in Wales, Thomas's emphasis on language as the basis of identity will smack of an outmoded essentialism based on a romantic attachment to a minority language. But the Welsh language is rarely romanticised as a repository of pre-industrial values in Thomas's writings. Indeed, in his diverse lectures and writings

on Matthew Arnold and Celticism he has interrogated the roots of that disabling conflation of the Celtic languages with a romantic, poetic, rural consciousness.

Ned Thomas' commitment to language difference is firmly materialist. It lies at the root of his admiration for Raymond Williams, for instance, who in volumes such as *Keywords* explored the strata of historical meanings embodied in the etymological development of certain central terms in cultural studies, and in *Marxism and Literature* offered a wholesale critique of historical and economic determinism in order to place the emphasis, in Ned Thomas' words, "on human creativity and self-creation".

For Thomas, language is the endlessly evolving basis for human creativity and identity. This linguistic emphasis forms the basis for two of the most interesting aspects of *Bydoedd*: the scrutinising of the values and assumptions informing the culture and politics of Welsh speaking Wales; and the placing of the Welsh experience in relation to other European linguistic minorities.

The analysis of the Welsh speaking cultural psyche is given a particular edge due to the failure of Thomas's recent attempts at establishing *Y Byd* - the daily Welsh language newspaper. Thomas puts that failure down to a toxic combination of moral passion and political fear that he has encountered among minorities elsewhere, and at several junctures in Welsh cultural history. Jennie Eirian's opposition to civil disobedience as a response to William Whitelaw's u-turn on the establishment of a Welsh language television channel in 1979 is seen in these terms, as is the Welsh Government's unwillingness to support a Welsh language newspaper:

"We're dealing here with a cultural phenomenon, which possibly derives from the same background of fear that I discussed in relation to the television channel. Was this lack of confidence also there in the Welsh Government, contributing to the failure? It's very possible. The danger then is that their decision contributes to the weight of hopelessness that

the next communal struggle has to carry, and contributes to a lack of confidence in the political process."

Ned Thomas's own clarity of thought and expression (as manifested here, though in translation) makes him somewhat baffled by those who do not share his views. In the egalitarian world of the 'Institut auf dem Rosenberg' in St Gallen, which he attended from the age of ten, a perceptive French teacher berated the young Ned for being impatient with the weaker members in the class. And that impatience can be detected above. He characteristically reads the failure of his attempts at creating a Welsh language newspaper in terms of social attitudes. There's no real analysis of individual failures.

During the 2007 assembly elections the blogosphere was alive with commentary. *Y Byd* had its own blog, which was unfortunately one of the least interesting on the web. The illustrative issue of *Y Byd* prepared for the Swansea Eisteddfod of 2007 failed to convince people that the daily paper would contribute anything particularly fresh to Welsh language journalism.

Ned claims that he doesn't remember anyone speaking against the initiative, which suggests a certain distance from the debate on the ground. It's a reflection of the respect in which he's held that no one would say so to his face. However, Ned was himself interviewed in the kind of unflattering close ups reserved for criminals on the current affairs programme *Y Byd ar Bedwar*. While it is the then culture minister Alun Pugh who gets it in the neck in *Bydoedd*, figures such as Gwilym Owen and Aled Eirug had been openly sceptical of the initiative and, with some exceptions, the Welsh speaking middle class proved unwilling to reach very deeply into their pockets.

In *Bydoedd* the successes and defeats of the Welsh language movement are placed consistently in comparative contexts. Thomas recounts his meetings with figures such as the Scots Gaelic poet Sorley MacLean, and linguistic activists from Quebec, Brittany and Ireland.

This comparative linguistic emphasis was reflected in the European materials published in the early editions of *Planet*. Ned Thomas' translation of Morvan Lebesque's *Comment peut-on être Breton* (How to be a Breton) appeared in English for the first time in *Planet*, as did Sartre's important essay on the Burgos trials, where the French philosopher emphasised the rights of minority language speakers.

Perhaps it is the Basque experience that lies at the centre of Thomas's comparative consciousness, but it is never a matter of simple equivalences. Between 1971 and Franco's death in 1975 Thomas visited the Basque country many times. It was no longer illegal to use *Euskera* in the fields of education and culture. Nevertheless, anyone associated with linguistic activities were suspected of being members of ETA, "Many of the most moderate people were arrested, and tortured":

"The difference between minorities is great, and that is how it should be. Other minorities are not versions of Wales. Every linguistic minority has its own history and culture. That is what makes the community a home. That is also what makes it a trap from which there is no escape."

The Basque example is a model of resilience for Thomas, of the ability to create a future in the most dispiriting of contexts. "The survival of a minority", he notes "is predicated on the group's ability to transform its situation". There is little that is romantic about this belief, for his commitment to minorities and dedication to social change has its roots in late 1940s Germany. The Second World War casts its shadow over Ned Thomas's worlds. "I could never embrace any nationalism that did not also assume a co-operative, international framework," he notes.

Wales, for Thomas, is primarily a linguistic community that forms part of the European cultural mosaic. The question that arises is where does that leave non Welsh speaking Welshmen, the vast majority of the actual Welsh people? Ned Thomas admits that his chapter on

the 'Anglo-Welsh' may well have been the weakest in his *The Welsh Extremist*. The book's purpose was to argue the case for Welsh speakers in the terms of the English New Left, and he says it was to be expected that the Anglophone Welsh would respond by drawing attention to their own existence. Dai Smith fulminated against the "breathtaking dismissiveness and historical ignorance" of Thomas's view that the "English speaking culture that is Welsh" in south Wales "has shown little sign of dynamism except in connection with a political nationalism which is attached to the notion of a resurgent Welsh language".

"The production of Wales," continued Smith, "that was proceeding apace in the Cymricizing suburbs of Cardiff, in academic and journalistic circles on the subsidised pages of a Welsh language press," and in journals such as *Planet*, "had no real need to take account of those who did not fit the picture". Smith would later note in 1991 how relieved he was that "*Planet* has almost moved on from its Basque of the Month feature and Catalonian Centrefolds but you only have to scan the contents page and note the list of Patrons and Advisers to stand back in amazement at the thought that this house journal for a Welsh-language centred world is the Literature Committee's flagship in Wales".

Alun Richards made the same point more succinctly in one of his letters, sent from Mumbles, to Ron Berry in Treherbert and recently published in Dai Smith's *In the Frame: Wales 1910 – 2010*. Richards noted that the acceptance of a story in *Planet* would not lead him to "renew my subscription – fuck Basque nationalism!"

Yet *Planet*, from its inception under Ned's editorship, did pay considerable heed to the English language culture of Wales, publishing works by Jack Jones, Malcolm Parr, John Tripp, Alun Richards, Ron Berry and others in its early editions. Indeed, Ned Thomas's role in establishing Welsh writing in English as a viable field of study in English departments has been overlooked. *Bydoedd* offers an account of his struggles to include Anglophone

Welsh texts in the syllabus at Aberystwyth University. The emergence of the field of 'Commonwealth Literature' in English Universities offered a potentially enabling context in this respect and Ned pioneered what we would now recognise as the 'postcolonial' approach to the literatures of Wales. Writing in 1971 he noted:

"We have been seen, and when we have climbed into education it has been to see ourselves with [English] eyes. This must be the attraction of the Welsh-speaking culture for any English-speaking Welshman who gets within hailing distance of it – that it is unequivocally our account of things and places, and what happened: Cymru not Wales, y werin not the Welsh peasant-farmers or whatever.

"Does this mean that there is no way to become the seer not the seen other than through a separate language? In the ex-British West Indies, especially Jamaica where the African element in the population is large, there is quite an interest in African languages and rather wild notions of relearning them and of going back to Africa. But equally there is successful writing in English, as there is in countries where other languages are strong, for example Nigeria or India. English can be wrenched to belong to us."



For Ned Thomas 'a genuine multiculturalism in contemporary Europe must register the reality of multilingualism'.

Thomas is speaking from a cultural moment when many Anglophone Welsh writers desired to carve out their own distinctive space, both in relation to Welsh language literature and to English language literature more broadly. But if

Thomas would see the expression of a Welsh identity via the English language as a process of 'wrenching', others would argue that expressing Welshness in English had been as natural as breathing for the majority of the Welsh people for the best part of a hundred years. While the comparisons with Jamaica, Nigeria or India that Ned Thomas innovated would be fascinating and illuminating for some, others would see little more than a 'self-aggrandising self victimisation'.

For Thomas, Anglophone Welsh culture was best seen in the context of other parts of the world that had witnessed significant cultural struggles. *Planet* proved a significant vehicle for the voices of Chinua Achebe, Jean Rhys, Ngugi wa' Thiongo, Derek Walcott and others. The 'worlds' in which Anglophone Welsh culture could be most appropriately placed was thus different to the emphasis on European minorities characteristic of his work on Welsh language culture. For Thomas, it seems, identity is primarily relational and a people's sense of selfhood derives from analogies and comparisons.

At a key moment in his autobiography Thomas refers to the observation, which he ascribes to the French feminist Colette Guillaumin, that dominant cultures fail to see themselves as one among many other cultures, but as 'The Culture' that renders all other cultures peripheral. The comparative impulse in Thomas's work may then be seen to derive from a minority consciousness. It follows that, for Thomas, a genuine multiculturalism in contemporary Europe must register the reality of multilingualism. Anglophone multiculturalism is, for example, different from Welsh '*aml-ddiwyllianaeth*', a point he made forcefully a few years ago in arguing that we must ask "what is the meaning of multiculturalism within a particular discourse, and within a given language and culture":

"What is often meant within English-language discourse in Britain is tolerance and even encouragement of a number of background cultures and languages within a society which has

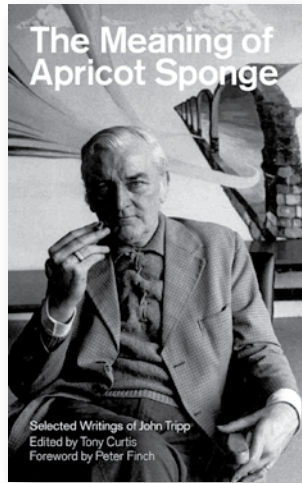
English as the foreground language – or to be plain, the dominant language. Many speakers of immigrant languages are happy to accept such a place for themselves, always providing that sufficient resources are made available to support their background culture and that it is respected. Welsh speakers on the other hand, like other European territorial minorities, claim a historic space in which their culture too can be a foreground culture, allowing people of different backgrounds to participate. This yields a more European view of Britain, like continental Europe, as a mosaic rather than a melting pot, and requires a rather different account of multiculturalism.”

This is an example of Ned Thomas at his best: clear in expression, persuasive in argument and forensic in his ability to see the main areas of tension and possible ways ahead.

The monolingual, Anglophone, form of multiculturalism informing much cultural debate in Britain today is rooted in the belief that the English language is the only legitimate bearer of all civic-democratic nationality, and that those lying beyond its generously catholic embrace are little better than atavistic racists. Breton and Basque face exactly this same problem in relation to the ‘universalist’ assumptions of French and/or Spanish language cultures. If the Welsh language is to have a meaningful future, it will inevitably be a multicultural future. It is to be hoped that Ned has many years of cultural activity ahead of him for in this emergent context his role as our leading cultural mediator and translator –which he describes and analyses vividly in *Bydoedd* - continues to be utterly indispensable.

**Daniel G. Williams** is a senior lecturer in English and Director of the Centre for Research into the English literature and Language of Wales at Swansea University.

## A poet of loud desperation Peter Read



*The Meaning of Apricot Sponge – Selected writings of John Tripp*  
Edited by Tony Curtis with a Foreword by Peter Finch  
Parthian, £9.99

The title for this collection comes from a short story, *Apricot Sponge with a Sage*, published in Planet in 1973. The sage is glued to the TV set, watching westerns. When questioned about the meaning of life, the man of wisdom, “sitting under his three china ducks, frozen on the wall, can only respond with, ‘What’s the meaning of Apricot Sponge?’” which he shouts out loud.

After a foreword by Peter Finch and introduction by Tony Curtis, we are introduced to John Tripp’s work through *Farewell to a Shambles*, a selection of autobiographical writings, many of which were first published in Planet in the 1970’s. In the essay, which shares the title of the section, Tripp describes his boredom during his national service at Brecon:

“It was always like that, preparing for a war we never went to. Not that we were particularly keen to see foreign parts where bullets were flying. We weren’t professionals and it had nothing to do with us.”

In this opening section there are also essays in which Tripp describes his work for HTV and some of his poetry readings. For the late night arts show, *Screws*, he created a character called Viriamu Jones, a penniless poet dying of malnutrition, sitting in his garret waiting for a grant from the Welsh Arts Council. So successful was the spoof, that many viewers contacted the channel to ask where they could buy copies of Viriamu’s work. In *Border Run*, after readings at Abergavenny and Hereford, both of which went well, Tripp confesses:

“I just wanted to get back to my bed. I could feel the reaction coming, a blue mood, the melancholic post reading deflation, when all I wanted was to be alone”.

The second section, *Radical Passing*, contains unpublished poems, many of which have come from the collections of the two main women in Tripp’s life, Fay Cornes and Jean Henderson. The latter’s collection was given to the National Library in Aberystwyth. Four of his eighteen erotic poems, which Tripp called *Intervals of Heat*, are published here. He failed to get the collection published, trying *Y Lolfa* and Curtis’ own press *The Edge*. The poems bristle with laddish descriptions and are reports of his sexual conquests, or as in *Conceit of Power*, details of his failure:

“Unbuckling before the collision/ I trimmed her for my sword ... my tom on the potent punch/ was soft as mallow/ and flopped at her door.”

A prose sequence in the collection, *The Rainbow’s End*, puts together a selection of his writing from a variety of sources, including Planet, New Welsh Review, Arcade and a fascinating report of the Welsh Union of Writers’ conference at Coleg Harlech in 1985. Characteristically, Tripp enjoys the free whisky and the camaraderie with other writers. In *The English at the Eisteddfod* he laments the treatment English journalists give this annual festival of Wales and bemoans the fact that one English newspaper headlined

the event with the memorable typo *Crowned Bird is a Parson*.

Tripp's literary criticism and his reviews are collected in *Fringe Diversions*. He reviews a whole galaxy of poets, including Raymond Garlick whom he predicts will "write a masterpiece" and Jeremy Hooker of whom he says, "would that there were more Jeremy Hookers crossing our battered border." Whilst he acknowledges Gillian Clarke as a polished and one of the most interesting poets to emerge in Wales, he admits that he approaches her "touch of motherhood, her sub Lawrentian union of love and blood in family relationships with a shiver of misgiving."

Having enjoyed B. S. Johnson's prose immensely, he lambastes his poetry. There is a distinct feeling of payback in Tripp's invective, at Johnson's dismissal of Anglo Welsh poetry for employing traditional forms to "deadening effect". Tripp claims Johnson's poems are "hardly worked on" and "transmit a feeling of having been caught in mid air on their way to the waste bin".

This section also contains reviews of a biography on Richard Burton, Ray Milland's autobiography, a novel by Goronwy Rees and a non fiction book by Herbert Williams on the escape of 67 German officers from a camp near Bridgend. The penultimate section of Tripp's writings, *No Peace For Dando*, contains seven short stories while the final section is a play for radio, *The Seed of Dismemberment*. The book concludes with poems by Peter Finch and Tony Curtis in honour of Tripp.

Parthian has done us a great service by publishing such a book. The autobiographical articles give us insights into his family life, his time as a soldier and responses he received while giving readings. It is also good to see many poems for the first time such as *Jet to Palma*. The 80 pages devoted to literary reviews are a delight. They show a poet with a huge interest in, and knowledge of, the modern poetry scene.

All the other sections possess literary gems and moments of genius. However, for me, the prose section has too much

unsubstantiated assessment. The essay, *At The Rainbow's End*, describes a day trip to Tenby. What purports to be an analysis of the modern tripper, seems to be based entirely on what a landlady tells him. Similarly, in *The English at the Eisteddfod*, the English reporters are lashed for coming into the country. There are no examples to support his dismissive views.

Amongst the seven short stories, *The Casualty* stands out and in other stories Tripp creates wonderful characters such as Dando and Dic Tidy. At times the pieces read more like works of prose than short stories, lacking, as they do, any sense of crisis or character development.

In his warm and excellent Foreword Peter Finch captures the duality of Tripp when he states that although he made radical political noises throughout his life, he talked more of poetry than politics and in Faye Cornes and Jean Henderson, had two Tory girlfriends. Tony Curtis is surely right in his Introduction when he says John Tripp finds it harder to stay fresh, to find in his language and his rhythms the means to jolt himself and his reader into the expression of feelings which are undoubtedly there under the skin.

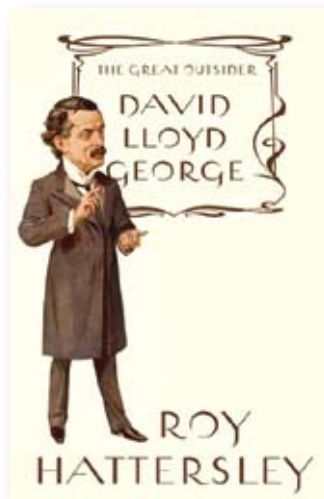
As this is a collection of work which has not been collated before perhaps Curtis' introduction could have offered more insights into how the material was found and the criteria for arranging the book in such a way. On the other hand, he does give us a stimulating essay on Tripp's work, through the writer's attitudes to food, war and sex, plus notes on the individual pieces of writing.

*The Meaning of Apricot Sponge* is a good read, and an excellent introduction for readers new to the Tripp's work and idiosyncratic outlook. For those already familiar, it is a fascinating treasure trove.

**Peter Read is a poet, playwright and ghost writer. His one man show, *John Tripp's Tragic Cabaret*, which he wrote and performed, was premiered in Cardiff in 2009.**

## L.G. as viewed through the prism of high Westminster politics

J. Graham Jones



*David Lloyd George, the Great Outsider*  
Roy Hattersley  
Little Brown, £25

This is Roy Hattersley's seventeenth published monograph. His previous publications include highly regarded biographies of Methodist leader John Wesley and of Catherine and William Booth, the founders of the Salvation Army. A new biography of Lloyd George is certainly to be welcomed. No full-length biography in a single volume has seen the light of day since Peter Rowland's massive tome, published in 1975.

Lord Hattersley is a sympathetic, although not idolatrous, biographer, portraying Lloyd George throughout his text as a worthy radical. At the same time he regards him as a man who put ambition, and a determination to succeed, above all things. Hattersley declares in his opening words that Roy Jenkins suggested the idea of this biography of Lloyd George, "a politician he disliked so heartily that he could not contemplate writing the book himself."

Roy Hattersley has certainly immersed himself eagerly in his subject. His

enthusiasm for his task is very much apparent as one turns the pages of this highly readable book. He has read voraciously all the many biographies and other works devoted to Lloyd George. He has even made use of relevant works published as recently as 2009 and 2010 when the writing of this biography must have been well advanced.

His wide knowledge of the general and the political history of the period under consideration are very much apparent as the author flits between various historical periods with an effortless ease. Moreover, the volume is notably well paced. All the important themes of Lloyd George's quite unique life and career are well covered and always placed in the context of their times. Especially helpful are the asterisked footnotes which provide extra snippets of information, often comparing different historical periods, which parallel the main text.

However, the use of manuscript sources is always rather marginal throughout the book. Although Hattersley has clearly made some use of the extensive Lloyd George archives both at the Parliamentary Archive at the House of Lords and the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, their use is always subordinated to that of printed sources. Indeed, it is possible to detect the influence of the biographies of W. R. P. George, Bentley B. Gilbert, John Grigg, Kenneth O. Morgan and Peter Rowland as one turns the pages of this book.

Hattersley's heavy dependence on the work of previous scholars can make his own volume appear somewhat episodic at times. To give just one example, the account of the Abdication crisis of December 1936, and Lloyd George's highly disapproving attitude towards it, is left rather suspended in mid-air as the author moves on to discuss Lloyd George's unofficial visit to Paris, in the company of Frances and Jennifer Stevenson, in January 1938.

The focus throughout the book is firmly on Lloyd George's political career and public life. His family relationships and his bizarre personal life are certainly considered at certain points, but they are firmly subordinated to the political

themes and often outlined just briefly at the beginning or the end of the chapters. An example is the beginning of chapter 16, which discusses the death of Lloyd George's only sister Mary Ellen Davies in August 1909, and the building of the new expansive family home at Criccieth, fittingly to be called Brynawelon, at around the same time that LG became the Chancellor of the Exchequer under Asquith.

It is certainly unfortunate for us that the Welsh and family dimensions are rather lacking and marked by a certain lack of attention to detail. Dame Margaret is described as Lloyd George's "junior by almost four years", whereas in fact just 22 short months separated husband and wife. Samuel T. Evans, the Liberal MP for Mid-Glamorgan, twice becomes 'Sam Ellis', while there is sometimes confusion between 'Northwich' and 'Norwich'. One would have liked more detail of the course and nature of the political ethos

**Roy Hattersley has certainly immersed himself eagerly in this project. His enthusiasm for his task is very much apparent as one turns the pages of this highly readable book.**

and life of the Caernarfon Boroughs, Lloyd George's constituency base for nigh-on fifty-five years. In this book the focus is kept mainly on the course of high politics centred on Westminster.

Hattersley's lack of understanding of the Cymru Fydd movement is especially striking. In his account of the famous meeting at Newport on 16 January 1896, we are told, "The obstructive South Wales Liberal Federation would be superseded and engulfed by the Rhondda Liberal Association which would then amalgamate with the North. At first, the plan seemed to be working". Not all historians would endorse Hattersley's outspokenly harsh view of Lloyd George's attitude towards the Cymru Fydd movement: "When there was serious work to do, he abandoned the trivial role that had helped to establish his reputation as a national politician."

To describe Mabon, the generally patriotic Lib-Lab MP for the Rhondda, as "an implacable opponent of Welsh Nationalism" is also well wide of the

mark. Lloyd George's Welsh secretary during the period of his old age was Ann Parry, not Ann Perry. Given that the third draft of the book was allegedly read and carefully scrutinised by Lord Kenneth O. Morgan, one of our foremost authorities on Lloyd George, it is amazing that such serious errors of fact and interpretation have been allowed to remain in the final published volume. They detract so much from the potential value of the book

The volume sports a detailed index, a useful bibliography of the printed volumes quarried by the author, and most fascinating appendices listing the many successive homes which Lloyd George occupied at various times and a list of the trips overseas which he undertook. These will save the eager Lloyd George enthusiast a great deal of frustrating searching in the many biographies. The illustrations are well chosen and admirably complement the text of the

book. But it is most unfortunate that the footnote references abound with glaring errors. Sources in the custody of the National Library are attributed to the Parliamentary Archive and vice versa. Some of the call numbers are misprinted or are incomplete. This could well lead to problems for scholars and archivists alike in the future. There are also far too many typographical errors.

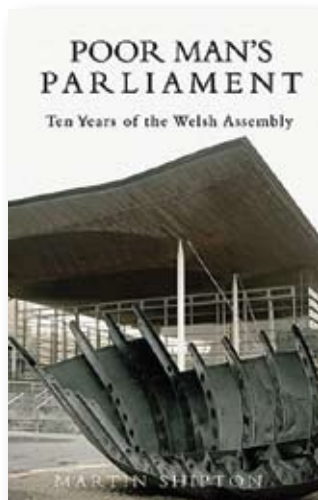
In short, this is a real 'curate's egg' of a book, good in parts. It is an unfailingly enjoyable read, with a racy writing style which makes the reader anxious to read ahead. But there are telltale signs of haste and a lack of attention to detail. More care, thought and less rush to publish would undoubtedly have produced a more rewarding and more accurate biography.

---

**J. Graham Jones** is Senior Archivist and Head of the Welsh Political Archive at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

## A penchant for bad news

John Osmond



*Poor Man's Parliament –  
Ten Years of the Welsh Assembly*  
Martin Shipton  
Seren, £14.99

Martin Shipton has been an indispensable participant in the melodrama he relates in his history of devolution's first decade. As the *Western Mail's* chief reporter his role has been to explain and interpret what's happening in our fledgling democracy. For him it's been a rollercoaster ride, from one calamity to another. Nonetheless, he has never wavered in wanting to see the infant institution gain a more mature stature. Despite the uphill struggles and sickening plunges of the Welsh devolution story, he has sustained a decidedly fixed point of view, revealing his hand very early on in this narrative.

At the time of the opening of the National Assembly in May 1999 Shipton was several thousand miles away, a guest of the Canadian Government on a week-long study of its federal arrangements which included visiting Nunavut, the newly created northern territory in the high Arctic. Despite its scale - Nunavut has an area 102 times the size of Wales but a population of only 25,000 – it can make laws about virtually anything it likes apart

from defence. The contrast was not lost on our intrepid reporter. As he listened in on a meeting of the territory's 19-member Parliament, hearing emotional speeches in one of the three versions of the Inuit language Inuktitut, he could not help but reflect on the lack of legislative powers in Cardiff Bay and, moreover:

“...the patronising impertinence of those Labour MPs who advised AMs that they needed to be able to walk before they could run. Whatever the deficiencies of some of the AMs, I firmly believed that the failure to give the Assembly the right to its own laws, unlike its counterpart bodies in Scotland and Northern Ireland, was a snub to Wales as a nation.”

A problem with his book, however, is that the way it is organised it is calculated to assist in making the opposite case to the one the author espouses. Each of the chapters, relating chronologically to the years between 1999 and 2009, are largely built around cuttings from Shipton's manifold contributions to the *Western Mail* in that period. Yet, being a newspaper the stories that get the headlines are those which underscore catastrophe, humiliation, shortcomings, gerrymandering, skulduggery, backstabbing, corruption and much, much more along these lines – in short, the stock in trade of journalism's penchant for bad news.

*Poor Man's Parliament* is full to the hilt with all of them. A page does not go by when some disaster or other befalls our benighted politicians. Turn to page 224, dealing with the year 2008, and you'll read: “As summer approached, two AMs made fools of themselves ...”

Shipton is not afraid to name names. The AMs on this occasion were the Conservative's Alun Cairns who, appearing on Radio Cymru, referred to Italians as “greasy wops”; and Plaid's Culture Minister Rhodri Glyn Thomas who was spotted walking into a pub in

Cardiff smoking a cigar, a few days after he handed out the Wales Book of the Year award to the wrong author, an episode recorded on YouTube and transmitted around the globe.

By comparison with many of the troubles reported in *Poor Man's Parliament*, these were hardly heinous sins. Overall, however, the main impact is in the cumulative effect of the melodramas Shipton describes. The impression given is of a Fawley Towers rather than a poor man's Parliament.

When it was established our National Assembly was hardly blessed. It inherited a country just emerging from third-world dependency on heavy industry. It had a work-force ill equipped for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century knowledge economy, and a people who were sicker and less educated than almost anywhere else in western Europe. All this was confirmed by West Wales and the Valleys qualifying for Objective 1 European status.

To cope with these problems the Assembly has dealt the worst funding deal of all the devolved countries. The Treasury refused to match fund the European money. By 2008 the Labour-leaning IPPR think-tank had published a report that calculated Wales was losing out by £2 billion a year.

To cap it all Wales was given a pig in a poke institution at the beginning, in which a Cabinet system was grafted on to a local authority structure. Consequently, a lot of time during the first decade of devolution was lost straining to put the proper architecture in place, culminating in the referendum that took place in early March this year that resulted in the Assembly gaining primary law-making powers.

Of course, some wounds have been self-inflicted. There was Ron Davies' walk on Clapham Common, Labour's imposition of Alun Michael, Rod Richards' assault charge, Mike German's expenses problem, and Plaid's knifing Dafydd Wigley in the back. Perhaps the biggest cock-up was Jane Hutt's so-called health reform in 2003, in which 22 new local health boards



Of course, some wounds have been self-inflicted. There was Ron Davies' walk on Clapham Common, Labour's imposition of Alun Michael, Rod Richards' assault charge, Mike German's expense problem, and Plaid's knifing Dafydd Wigley in the back. Perhaps the biggest cock-up of all was Jane Hutt's so-called health reform in 2003, in which 22 new local health boards were created.

were created. Famously, in a speech in the House of Commons at the time, Llanelli MP Denzil Davies calculated that this meant 52 different bodies were involved in running the Welsh NHS, and that at a time of alarmingly high waiting lists.

From the perspective of the successful referendum on more powers, the most important episode recorded in these pages was Labour's response to the Richard Commission report in March 2003. It'll be recalled that the cross-party Commission, set up in the Assembly's first term by the Labour Liberal Democrat coalition and chaired by the Labour peer Lord Ivor Richard, came up with a remarkably lucid and common sense solution to the constitutional mess. It said the Assembly should become a proper Parliament, and have another 20 members to cope with the increased work load, taking them to 80. Moreover, they should be elected by the STV system of proportional representation.

When it came in out March 2004 the report was widely welcomed, not least by First Minister Rhodri Morgan. He applauded its findings saying how remarkable it was that they were virtually unanimous, barring a jarring caveat made by the Commission's Labour member, former Merthyr MP Ted Rowlands. As Morgan put it:

"Today I am very proud of my country and we all have good reason to be proud at what this signifies as a sign of growing maturity in the political process."

But faced with a backlash from Labour MPs at Westminster, within weeks the First Minister was rowing back from this robust endorsement. Instead, a freshly fudged compromise was reached between Labour's pro and anti-devolution wings, endorsed by a special conference in Cardiff in September 2004, and later enshrined in the 2006 Wales Act. Last March's referendum was about getting rid of the fudge and giving the Assembly straightforward legislative powers in the areas of its competence, without having to go cap in hand to Westminster each time it wants to make a change.

So what led to the fudged compromise in September 2004? It was Labour MPs' compete hostility to the Richard Commission package which, they believed, would lead directly to a reduction in their number. This was stated in terms at the time by the then Secretary of State for Wales, Neath MP Peter Hain. In candid remarks to Martin Shipton ahead of the publication of the Richard Commission's report, and quoted in *Poor Man's Parliament*, he declared:

"My bottom line for change is that I am not willing to countenance anything that alters the number of MPs. It has to remain at 40 and I am not touching with a barge-pole the Scottish nightmare of reductions in numbers of MPs."

The irony, of course, is that is precisely what is now happening as a result of

the Conservative Liberal Democrat Act to redraw constituency boundaries that passed through Westminster earlier this year. Its effect will be to cut Welsh representation in the House of Commons from 40 to 30 by the time of the next election in 2015. And that, combined with being out of power, is the reason most Welsh Labour MPs rooted for a Yes vote in the March referendum to turn the Assembly into a legislative Parliament.

Despite its absorption with the myriad misdemeanours and failures that have taken place in Cardiff Bay over the past ten years, Martin Shipton's book is valuable in providing us with this perspective. His concluding sentence is a comment on the present First Minister Carwyn Jones' view, expressed to him at the end of 2010, that a Yes vote was essential, not only to provide the Assembly with the "the tools for the job" but because the lack of lawmaking powers had led Westminster to take Wales less seriously than Scotland or Northern Ireland:

"After more than a decade of Welsh Labour politicians pretending their were on equal terms with Whitehall, it was good to hear the First Minister assert that this was not the case and that he was prepared to do battle to ensure the Assembly would be a Poor Man's Parliament no longer."

Taken as a whole Shipton's book brings into sharp focus how remarkable the emphatic two to one Yes vote was last March. For despite all the Assembly's inadequacies and shortcomings, and despite the antics of many of its members, the electorate stated clearly and forcefully that they wanted a proper not a 'poor man's' Parliament. In doing so they gave the devolution process a shove that will surely lead on to better days and greater authority for an institution that has had such a shaky start.

---

**John Osmond** is Director of the IWA.

# A few strong men would help



Peter Stead

The minute that Michael Douglas walked into the New York room all eyes were on him. The words aura and charisma immediately came to mind. His quickness of movement and the interrogating intensity of his eyes demanded attention. All two hundred of us relished the moment and waited on him. This, we had no doubt, was stardom in action.

I was in New York to celebrate St. David in the company of the St. David's Society of New York who this year were honouring Catherine Zeta Jones as 'Actress and Humanitarian'. It was doubly a joyous occasion for we had just had the glorious news that not only had Wales voted 'Yes' but, astonishingly, 21 out of 22 local authority areas had come in on the right side. So flushed was I by this particular detail that I straight away suggested that we should now ask for a vote to allow the electors of the Wirral, Shropshire, parts of Herefordshire, the Forest of Dean and Steep Holme to become Welsh. Our requests are always too modest.

Michael Douglas and I drifted into conversation. As we chatted I recalled that on an earlier visit to New York I had gone to a Broadway show and found myself sitting near Kirk Douglas. On that occasion I had explained to Mr Douglas Senior that we had a close connection as, at home, I could see the Mumbles lighthouse from my bedroom window. Now, as I told Michael that I was acquainted with his father, he simply replied, "He's a good man". I was thrilled. It was, of course, a wonderful way to sum up all one's love and admiration for a father, but more than that, it reminded me of how much Kirk Douglas and his Hollywood colleagues had meant to me when I was young.

It is difficult now to convey the enormous authority that Kirk Douglas, Gregory Peck, Jimmy Stewart, Burt Lancaster, Henry Fonda, Gary Cooper and other actors exuded. They were

always referred to as 'stars' but that term does not begin to convey the role that they played in our lives. The relationship was intimate. We were familiar with every pore on those faces to which we were brought so close. We were thrilled by their magnificently modulated enunciation of the English language. We were ethically and morally shaped by the values that allowed them to resolve every social and personal dilemma.

There were strong women too. We would never mess with Barbara Stanwyck, Bette Davis or Rhonda Fleming and the other women who ran saloons or cattle ranches. But it was really the male cowboys, detectives and soldiers who moulded our universe. We imitated their accents and walks as we strode home and we resolved to join them in ensuring that good would triumph.

For those of us who, on that New York evening, found ourselves in the presence of Michael Douglas, there was only one word that kept recurring. Quite simply, we all thought him 'Presidential'. For anyone brought up in the cinemas of the 1950s there was nothing surprising about the subsequent way in which movie stardom and the American presidency have so often been discussed in tandem. For those of us for whom Fonda and Peck had been patriarchs, the 1960 success of J.F.K. was no surprise. From that year on every candidate would be routinely assessed in terms of movie charisma whilst every leading actor was examined to see whether he was fit to play an on-screen president.

It was inevitable that Michael Douglas would one day play a president. In the real world there would never have been an Obama had there not first been Sidney Poitier's Virgil Tibbs. President Obama's magnificent diction and oratory is pure Fonda/Peck. Hitherto, it was only in the classic movies that Americans had spoken so clearly and rationally.

Anthony Hopkins is one of Hollywood's greatest stars and inevitably he has been called upon to play presidents. Hopkins brilliantly recreated Nixon, a president who himself drew on

all the energies of Hollywood villainy. But Hopkins also had the natural authority to play John Quincy Adams. Richard Burton never made it to the celluloid White House but, of course, he was born to be President of Wales. In his work Burton was always happiest and most himself when giving orders and exercising the power of an emperor, king, priest or general. He was displaying authority in the Welsh style and as such was providing a template for all of those entering public life in Wales. Whether in politics, religion, education, broadcasting or sport, attention has to be caught and respect has to be earned.

Now that Wales has voted to confirm its existence we need to take stock off the extent to which our standards have slipped. For a variety of reasons, varying from political correctness to the commercial exploitation of the media, we have generally become sloppy with regard to many aspects of public life. The time has come to raise the bar.

The one aspect of the recent Vote No campaign that I feared might strike a chord with discontented voters was the accusation that Assembly Members looked and behaved like 'glorified local councillors'. On those occasions when I have watched the Assembly on television I have not been impressed. How can one expect TV audiences to remain interested when it appears as if nobody amongst the few in the Chamber is actually listening?

In Hollywood terms one can spot AMs who could be readily cast as saloon-keepers, patent-medicine salesmen, livery stable hands and storekeepers. But certainly the main man stands out. His hair has not always been groomed but dressed in a toga he would appear nothing less than imperial.

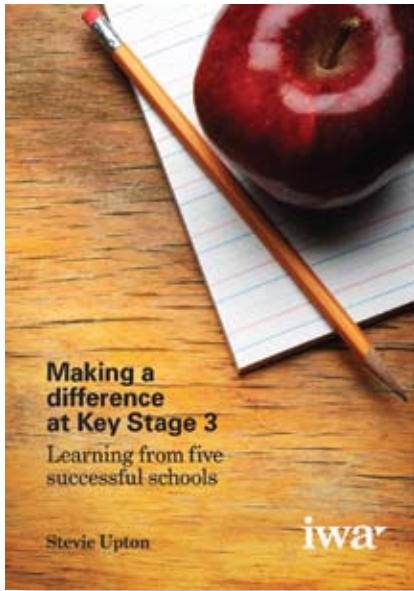
And that is very much the point. Now that we have grown up as a Nation the time has come for a little tone in Welsh life. There is no need for apology, special-pleading or deference. We just need to speak to each other as adults. In terms of language, style and imagination we have been boxing ourselves in. We can be better than this.



*Building  
relationships.  
Creating value.*

**pwc**

Our ambition is to bring real value to our client's business. And we're passionate about understanding what is important to you. Find out more about us at [www.pwc.co.uk/wales](http://www.pwc.co.uk/wales)



## Making a Difference at Key Stage 3 Learning from five successful schools

By Stevie Upton

£10.00 ISBN 978 1 904773 57 3

The major policy challenge of raising attainment in Welsh secondary schools has persisted throughout the past decade. Given that the early years of secondary school lay the foundations for future examination performance, the apparent dip in pupil performance between the ages of 11 (end of Key Stage 2) and 14 (end of Key Stage 3) gives particular cause for concern.

Yet there is hope. This book profiles five Welsh secondary schools that maintain their pupils' progression throughout Key Stage 3. Separately, each case study provides detailed insight into the individualised strategies employed by these schools. Collectively, they reveal five factors common to the schools' success, each of which is characterised by a number of commonalities in its implementation.

The combination of in-depth case studies and synthesis of the key features aims to provide practitioners and policy makers with a new level of information about good practice in Welsh schools.

The findings also have implications for future education policy. Their principal message is that a balance must be struck between central monitoring of targets and autonomy at the school level over how those targets are met.



## Growing Wales's Civil Society

Edited by John Osmond

£10.00 ISBN 978 1 904773 58 0

Civil society is thriving in Wales, as this volume testifies. Defined as occupying the space between the state and the market, civil society's reach extends to the voluntary sector, the co-operative economy, education and broadcasting.

There are more than 30,000 third sector organisations in Wales while more than 1.5 million people volunteer. We have 5,000 town and community councillors. There are 1,809 schools, of which 1,500 are already registered as eco-schools. Meanwhile, the Welsh co-operative economy, which includes everything from farming co-operatives and credit unions to employee-owned businesses and community co-operatives that run village shops and pubs, is worth around £1 billion pounds and employs more than 5,000 people.

This book reports on a Welsh debate around key findings of the Carnegie Trusts' Commission of an Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society in the UK and Ireland, *Making Good Society*, that was published in March 2010. How do the findings relate to the emergence of Welsh civil society following a decade of devolution? The authors address the following themes: growing a more civil economy; (ii) the transition to a low carbon economy; (iii) democratising media ownership and content; and (iv) growing participatory and deliberative democracy.

To order a copy, contact:  
IWA, 4 Cathedral Road, Cardiff CF11 9JZ  
029 2066 0820 or buy online at [www.iwa.org.uk](http://www.iwa.org.uk)  
IWA Members can purchase publications  
at a 25 per cent discount

**forward thinking  
for Wales** **meddwl  
yn flaengar  
dros Gymru**