agenda

Theatrical visions

Gerald Holtham
Our choice on tax powers

David Marquand
Wales in a two circle Europe

Roger Scully
Best and worst of times for the parties

Nick Bourne
Opening a window on Welsh politics

Jane Davidson
A central organising principle

Prys Morgan
Land of the chapel

Huw Bowen
Swansea's Copperopolis

Ron Jones
We need broadcasting new deal

Trevor Fishlock
Survival of an invented tradition

David Melding
When nationalism trumps socialism

Peter Stead
Fifty year stint

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agenda

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Connectivity priority for capital city region

The nature and the scope of the relationship that should prevail between Cardiff and its hinterland is one of the great unresolved issues of Welsh public life. It involves at one level the physical boundaries of the various local government and other authorities governing the area. Is Greater Cardiff, to use that taboo term, Cardiff and the Valleys, Cardiff and the Vale, or Cardiff, the Vale and the Valleys? At another level what should be their responsibilities and at which tiers should they be vested? Even more importantly, where within a more co-ordinated region should scarce resources be best directed to ensure the greatest prosperity for all?

These are all important issues open to debate. However, as the *Getting Ahead Together: Connecting Cardiff and the Valleys* IWA conference held this autumn made clear, the time has now come to resolve matters and take action. Old boundaries have become completely permeable. Previously vibrant communities are no longer self-sufficient as they once were when jobs were close at hand. Large numbers travel daily across the region to where the employment, housing, retail and leisure facilities are. More than 70,000 people commute into Cardiff from surrounding areas to work each day, mainly by car. In practice, if not in an organised and efficient form, the city region is already here.

How much better therefore to plan for the allocation of resources on this much wider basis, so that important decisions can be made on how most effectively to deal with public transport provision, new housing, tourism, waste management, and to ensure the region as a whole is a strong contender for economic development projects.

This is already being done in Scotland where the reality of city regions has been recognised. Across the world, too, some of the most successful cities such as Manchester, Stuttgart, and Vancouver – all of which were highlighted at the conference – are those that have managed to put aside local rivalries and work and plan together, bringing tangible economic benefits to a wider population.

Yet if Wales is to go down this route – in the Cardiff region first but potentially in other parts of the country later – there has to be buy-in from all concerned and not a residual feeling that this is just the capital on another aggrandising trip. In Manchester this has happened. The spokesman for the Manchester 'brand' is now as likely to come from Wigan or Bury as from the city itself. We need to reach the same degree of consensus in south east Wales so that someone from Nantymoel or Abertysswg can feel as confident about projecting the Cardiff region as a Cardiff *&* Co ambassador. For this to happen everyone in the region must feel – and see tangible evidence – that they, too, will benefit from promoting the Cardiff brand which, after all, is the only one to hand that has a chance of international recognition.

The problems in parts of the region, especially the Heads of the Valleys, are chronic and have responded only partially to countless previous initiatives. So this is no time to get bogged down in the displacement activity of creating new local government structures. Instead, solutions must be practical and capable of swift introduction. This is the challenge facing the City Region Task and Finish Group set up by Business and Enterprise Minister Edwina Hart and chaired by Elizabeth Haywood who is also Director of the South East Wales Economic Forum.

Fortunately, there is one project on which there is already widespread agreement and around which the city region as a whole could coalesce to make a strong case to the UK Government. Electrification of the Cardiff suburban railway network – from Ebbw Vale in the east to Maesteg in the west –would help invigorate the region in a way no previous public expenditure has managed. Local authorities, the Welsh Government, transport groups, and business organisations should come together now to create a new overarching structure, a passenger transport authority, that will have the sole task of making this goal a reality.

Cover: Photo of National Theatre Wales' production of *The Dark Philosophers*, based on the stories of Rhondda writer Gwyn Thomas. Angela Davies' set "conjures up the teeming miners' terraces of a small Valley town, crawling up the side of a looming mountain, with a great heap of old wooden wardrobes and tallboys, reflecting both the intense respectability and the heavy, Victorian morality of domestic life in the Valleys." See pages 4-7.

Agenda 45
Winter 2011

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1 Economy
with PricewaterhouseCoopers

2 Politics

3 Environment

4 Heritage

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Newsflash

Coming Up

- **Launch of IWA Inspire Wales Awards**
  Monday 23 January 2012, 11.00am, City Hall, Cardiff
  Official launch of the 2012 competition (Entry free)

- **Developing Newport's City Centre**
  Tuesday, 24 January 2012, 9.30am – 1.30pm,
  Riverfront Theatre, Newport
  This conference addresses strategies for improving Newport's urban environment, focusing on the Masterplan being developed by Newport Unlimited and how this can build on the strengths of the city's cultural heritage.
  Keynote speakers: Gareth Beer, Newport Unlimited; Sheila Davies, Corporate Director, Regeneration and Environment, Newport City Council.

- **Wales' Central Organising Principle: Legislating for Sustainable Development**
  Friday 27 January 2012 10am – 5.00pm,
  Swansea Metropolitan University, Swansea
  A Sustainable Development White Paper will appear in the autumn of 2012, with a Bill will be laid before the National Assembly in the autumn of 2013. This conference addresses what the proposals should contain, how they should be implemented and their likely impact.
  Keynote speakers: Jane Davidson, Director Inspire, Trinity St David's University; Clive Bates, Director General, Sustainable Futures, Welsh Government; Peter Davies, Sustainable Development Commissioner for Wales; Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas, Chair, Environment and Sustainability Committee, National Assembly; Emyr Lewis, Partner, Morgan Cole; Peter Roderick, public interest environmental lawyer.
  £70 (£56 IWA members)

- *IWA National Education Conference*
  Vocational Pathways for 14 to 18 year olds in Wales
  Tuesday 21 February 2012, 10.00am – 4.00pm,
  WJEC, Llandaf, Cardiff
  In the debate over educational attainment there is evidence that Wales compares well with other parts of the UK in academic GCSEs, but underperforms with vocational qualifications. This conference addresses this critically important policy area. How can we improve the curriculum offer in vocational pathways for 14 to 18 year olds, and how can we enhance the esteem of vocational subjects? Can the Welsh baccalaureate be developed to square the circle of this acute Welsh problem?
  £70 (£56 IWA members)

- *IWA National Economy Conference*
  Getting Wales and Britain Moving
  Friday 9 March 2012, 9.30am – 4.00pm, Cardiff
  This conference will have sessions on a growth strategy for the UK and reviving manufacturing industry. It will explore what a national infrastructure plan for Wales would look like and examine the Welsh Government's sectoral approach to economic development.
  £90 (£72 IWA members)

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  Report available free on the IWA's website www.iwa.org.uk
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- **Taking responsibility for our media**
  IWA response to National Assembly task and finish group into the future of the media in Wales
  Report available free on the IWA's website www.iwa.org.uk

- **Work-life balance for men in Wales – capturing the benefits of flexible working**
  by Stevie Upton, IWA Research Officer
  £10 in hard copy publication but free to download free from the IWA website. *Published in association with Chwarae Teg, the Welsh women's economic development agency.*

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—Essay

A 21st Century theatrical vision for Wales

John Osmond explores how National Theatre Wales has dealt with the metropolitan and the provincial in its first year

The way National Theatre Wales chose to operate during its first year said something very specific about the nature of Wales. It declared that it did not want to be metropolitan and, in a traditional sense, a national theatre. It did not want a national headquarters, a grand building, in Cardiff presumably, with which it would be associated and in and out of which its reputation would be made. No, it wanted to get out in the sticks and meet its audience on the ground, across the country. And in its first year it put on 13 productions – one a month – plus one for luck, in Port Talbot. Artistic Director John McGrath, explained to me what they were trying to do in the following way:

> "We wanted to create a different model of theatrical production, a decentralised one if you like, reflecting that Wales is a place made up of towns and villages. It was an exploration of the nation through theatre and of the theatre through nation. It was important for us take on the question of nation and nationhood in some way. It would have been too easy for us to simply say we were just going to aim to put on good theatre in Wales."

In this deliberate eschewing of a metropolitan way of looking at things did John McGrath and his team come up with a truly national rather than a merely provincial vision for Welsh theatre in the 21st Century? My question was prompted by a declaration by Saunders Lewis who, in his *Banned wireless talk on Welsh Nationalism* in 1930, said:

> "If a nation that has lost its political machinery becomes content to express its nationality thenceforward only in the sphere of literature and the arts, then that literature and those arts will very quickly become provincial and unimportant, mere echoes of the ideas and artistic movements of the neighbouring and dominant nation. If they (the Welsh people) decide that the literary revival shall not broaden out into political and economic life and the whole of Welsh life, then inevitably Welsh literature in our generation will cease to be living and viable."

Of course, Saunders was making a claim for Plaid Cymru, for the need for a nationalist party to lead the nation towards creating its own political institutions. But the interesting thing here, from the perspective of the first year of National Theatre Wales, is that he was building his claim on the need for the arts in Wales - and particularly Welsh theatre - to continue to be, as he put it, "living and viable" rather than "provincial and unimportant, mere echoes of the neighbouring and dominant nation."

National Theatre Wales kicked off their season in what, on the face of it, was about as provincial a location you could find, the Blackwood Miners Institute. However, the venue was brilliantly suited to Alan Harris' play *A Good Night Out in the Valleys*, which is about a crumbling miners' institute in a crumbling Valleys town. The play is a mix of stand-up comedy and soap. Cabaret blends with stories as if we were watching a raucous version of *Under Milk Wood*. The host is Con – played by Boyd Clack - a joke-cracking MC and manager of the 'stute', as it's affectionately known. He paints a vivid picture of a struggling town where the carpet shop is also the taxi office, the

Michael Sheen takes the leading role in National Theatre Wales' most high profile production this year, *The Passion* at Port Talbot over Easter – "72 hours in theatre heaven".

butcher's is also a massage parlour, and the café doubles as the undertaker's.

The principal storyline stems from the return of an ex-pat London Welshman, Kyle, as a mineral prospector, on behalf of an international firm, for gold deposits. His plans would involve demolishing the 'stute'. Moreover, his miner father was once ostracised as a scab in the town, so Kyle's presence stirs up ancient hostilities as well. 'The past is a trap' is the play's message. The Valley towns, it argues, have to move on, bury the mining myths and redefine themselves.

Being National Theatre Wales' inaugural production, the play received a lot of attention from the London press. Paul Taylor, writing in the *Independent,* said:

> "I'm ashamed to say that, up to and including the preliminaries (some rehearsed argy-bargy on the Institute steps where it was hard to differentiate the audience from the 'plants'), I thought that *A Good Night Out in the Valleys* was not going to be a good piece to programme for the opening shot. Rather than sending forth an eloquent statement of intent, wouldn't this piece just deafen you with the roar of instant feedback? But, thanks to the excellent acting, the canny production values, and my growing appreciation of the ulterior motives, I was, by the interval, entirely won over by the piece… the show does what it says on the tin – it offers a good night out in the Valleys (there's a band, bingo, likeably icky gags from a has-been compère) while examining why the culture that gave rise to such community japes and jollities is endangered and perhaps rightly so."

In the *Guardian* Michael Billington judged:

> "For all the unresolved tensions between past and future, the tone of John McGrath's production is festive. Bingo, booze and songs blend with social issues, and the cast of six swaps roles with furious and sometimes bewildering speed. Boyd Clack holds the show together as the MC, and there are striking contributions from Siwan Morris as the pugilist, Amy Starling as a mutinous cake factory worker and Sharon Morgan as a dog-toting senior who is into heavy metal. The show is torn between populism and preaching, but it gets the company off to an ebullient start and whets one's appetite for its upcoming programme."

In the *Daily Mail* Quentin Letts was equally enthusiastic:

> "Alan Harris catches the lingering wounds of the Scargill-Thatcher years, all wrapped up in a Welsh mix of melancholy and humour. This cracking show moves on to four further community venues in March - and after that, surely, it will be made into a hit film."

A good night out in the Valleys was followed by *Shelf Life*, set in the reading room of Swansea's old library, a collaboration with Volcano Theatre and the Welsh National Opera. It follows a choir of librarians, literally exploring the noises that people make when they are told to be quiet. In complete contrast *For mountain, sand and sea* was an exploration of unusual people who have populated the seaside town of Barmouth, curated by performance artist Marc Rees. Audiences who joined this production were treated to a walking tour encountering such characters as the Savile Row tailor Tommy Nutter, who dressed the Beatles

for their famous Abbey Road album cover, and philanthropist Fanny Talbot, who donated the National Trust's first piece of land in Barmouth.

Meanwhile, *The Beach*, another outdoor production, was this time set on the seafront in Prestatyn. It asked audiences to get in touch with their inner child and recreate the games of yesteryear. *Love steals us from loneliness*, by playwright Gary Owen who was brought up in Bridgend was set in the back room of Hobo's Rock Club in the town, partly because there was no conventional theatre to hand. But the company wanted to set a play dealing with the outbreak of suicides amongst teenagers in the area in a place where they would naturally congregate. The Telegraph reported that the production was saturated with a "boozy authenticity and clubby vivacity".

A number of other productions in the course of the year were set in more conventional theatrical locations. *The Devil Inside Him* was an early John Osborne play, put on in the New Theatre in Cardiff in May last year. It was originally performed in Huddersfield in 1950 and then lost. Miraculously it was discovered in the archives of the Lord Chamberlain in the British Library in 2008.

On one level the play points the way forward to *Look Back in Anger,* having at its centre a young male in a state of thwarted rebellion against all around him. Huw, the son of the viciously religious Prossers, who run a humble boarding house in a Welsh village, is Jimmy Porter in embryo - with all the rawness and vulnerability that implies. Where Jimmy, in *Look Back in Anger*, directs his rage and frustration outwards, Huw in *The Devil Inside Him* is an adolescent malcontent turned in on himself. The play unpicks the repressed society of early 20th Century religious Wales.

In his review of the play the Guardian's Michael Billington remarked that Osborne hones in on "the fatal consequences of a repressive religion that turns the God of love into a figure of hate". No more quintessential Welsh theme could be found than this. Billington concludes:

Sian Thomas as Queen Atossa in National Theatre Wales' production of *The Persians*, staged in the lost village of Cilieni, high in the Epynt mountain range. Tracked by a TV cameraman, the audience could see in close-up her every flicker of emotion as news came in of the Persians' disastrous defeat.

> "I can imagine a more hospitable venue than the cavernous New theatre, but Elen Bowman's production captures precisely the work's mix of naturalistic convention and poetic strangeness."

Another revival in a sense was a production of *The Dark Philosophers* based on the stories of Gwyn Thomas. This was first shown at Newport's Riverfront Theatre in November 2010, but reprised at this year's Edinburgh Festival. Here is how the Scottish theatre critic Joyce Macmillan described her impressions:

> "In a sense, in *The Dark Philosophers* – co-produced with the London-based physical theatre group *Told By An Idiot* – National Theatre Wales is carrying out one of the most traditional tasks of a national theatre, exploring and restoring the reputation of a neglected writer, whose short stories expressed a sharp, surreal vision of life in the Rhondda in the middle years of the 20th Century.
>
> "They do it, though, in a style that defies dusty convention. Angela Davies's superb set conjures up the teeming miners' terraces of a small Valley town, crawling up the side of a looming mountain, with a great heap of old wooden wardrobes and tallboys, reflecting both the intense respectability and the heavy, Victorian morality of domestic life in the Valleys…
>
> "And just occasionally, in best post-modern style, the event is punctuated by re-enactments of an appearance Thomas made on the Michael Parkinson show in the 1970s. It's a salutary reminder that the world Thomas describes is not so far from us in time as it now seems; a time when working-class people in Britain both endured the dramatic horror of a life at the coal-face, and yet had the self-respect, the organisation, and the hope, to educate a son like Thomas to the point where he became a mighty and eccentric voice for the Valley of his birth, wry, experimental, bold, and true."

Undoubtedly, National Theatre Wales's highest profile production was the *Passion*, played out in Port Talbot over Easter weekend this year and starring the town's celebrity actor Michael Sheen. This production, which involved an amateur army of over a thousand volunteers with brass bands, choirs and street-dancing youngsters, put Port Talbot, literally on the world stage. The critical reception was extraordinary. The headline on a piece by the Guardian's theatre critic Lyn Gardner was: "72 hours in theatre heaven" This is how she opened her piece:

> "When *The Passion* finally drew to a close on Aberavon seafront in Port Talbot on Sunday evening, there was a sense not just that the town of Port Talbot had been transformed by the experience, but also the future of large-scale participatory theatre. Aside from its mix of tenderness and

> mucky grandeur, its majestic sweep and careful attention to small, everyday details, one of the most thrilling things about National Theatre Wales' and Wildworks' production was the way that it operated in so many spaces simultaneously. It raised not just the ghosts and future hopes of the town, but the spectre of how and where theatre happens – and how it might connect with a hyper-connected 21st-century audience, particularly those who seldom go anywhere near a theatre building."

The most extraordinary location for a performance in National Theatre Wales' first year was the lost village of Cilieni, high in the Epynt mountain range north of Sennybridge. Here in August last year the company staged the world's oldest surviving play Aeschylus's 2,480-year-old *The Persians*.

Over a period of ten days around 180 people every night gathered in the car park at the Sennybridge military camp to be driven by coach into the heart of the Mynydd Epynt training area. Apart from the location and the play itself, what was also remarkable was that it was a sell out. Indeed, John McGrath told me they could have sold 600 seats for each performance if they had had the capacity. And again, the critical response was positive. Charles Spencer in the Telegraph wrote:

> "This is extraordinary, one of the most imaginative, powerful and haunting theatrical events of the year ... This is great theatre – and a thrilling mystery tour for its audience."

In the Guardian Michael Billington declared:

> "This is site-specific theatre with a vengeance. High up in the Brecon Beacons, in a mock-up village used by the military as a training-base, National Theatre Wales is recreating the oldest extant play in western drama: Aeschylus's *The Persians*. The combination of the story and the setting, with the sun slowly disappearing over the hills, is overwhelming."

So, to return to my opening question, in the terms set by Saunders Lewis, in its first year did National Theatre Wales achieve an output that was "living and viable" rather than "provincial and unimportant".

On the basis of the critical response to these productions there can be no doubt that the answer has to be yes. It is worth noting, too, that National Theatre Wales would not have come into existence without devolution. Its £3 million Welsh Government grant over three years has surely been a good investment. Certainly in its short existence the theatre has put Wales on the theatrical map of the UK, if not the world. This is how the Guardian's theatre critic Michael Billington put it:

> "One of their achievements is to have raised our consciousness about their country. A young Welsh critic asked me how I, as someone based in London, reacted to the theatre company. I said, truthfully, that it had opened my somewhat blinkered metropolitan eyes. In the past, I've paid random visits to Cardiff for Welsh National Opera and to north Wales to see the work of Theatr Clwyd. I'm belatedly waking up to the rich potential of Welsh theatre and the variety of the land itself. Driving to Blackwood to see the company's opening show *A Good Night Out in the Valleys*, I saw for the first time a Wales I knew only from books, movies and TV programmes… National Theatre Wales, like its Scottish counterpart, is a consciously peripatetic company that is using theatre as a way of opening up the territory. In redefining what a national theatre means in this day and age, it is raising our awareness of Wales itself."

It has also demonstrated, of course, that we do, indeed, need a national theatre in Wales. It seems to me that the challenge now facing National Theatre Wales is to help us understand and nurture what our nation means to us. John McGrath acknowledged this himself, in an interview he gave in March 2010:

> "If you're going to have national theatres, theatres that enable countries to think about themselves, then Wales needs one. You could just put more money into touring, but that wouldn't have the same effect. The word national focuses everyone's minds. With Wales, there's an added complexity surrounding language. There was a feeling that Welsh-language theatre needed a scale it hadn't had the opportunity to work on before. After that the question was: what about English language theatre, given that English is a language virtually everyone in Wales shares?"

His reference to Welsh language theatre was, of course, to Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru that was launched in 2003. A question for the future is whether we can or, indeed, should sustain two separate national theatre companies operating separately in the two languages. Wouldn't there be an opportunity for greater communication and cross-fertilisation if the operations were combined, much in the same way that the Academi, now Literature Wales, combined its English and Welsh Language Sections a decade ago?

Then there's the related challenge of bringing together our urban and rural cultures in Wales. This, it seems to me is closely associated with the emergence of Cardiff as a capital city with a real metropolitan feel in the past few decades – an emergence that has been built on the back of the creation of the political nation with the coming of the National Assembly. Although I hope that National Theatre Wales never loses its vocation to put down roots in communities across the whole of Wales, it needs also to reflect and be part of the continuing creation of Welsh metropolitan culture as well.

John Osmond is Director of the IWA. This article is based on a presentation he gave to the annual conference of *Creu Cymru*, the development agency for theatres and arts centres in Wales, in Caersws in October.

Leipzigers bid for their freedom in the Augustusplatz during the 1989 East German revolution. They were demonstrating in the shadow of the Kroch Hochhau, Leipzig's first tower block, built by Henry Kroch's Uncle Hans in 1928 as the banking family's headquarters.

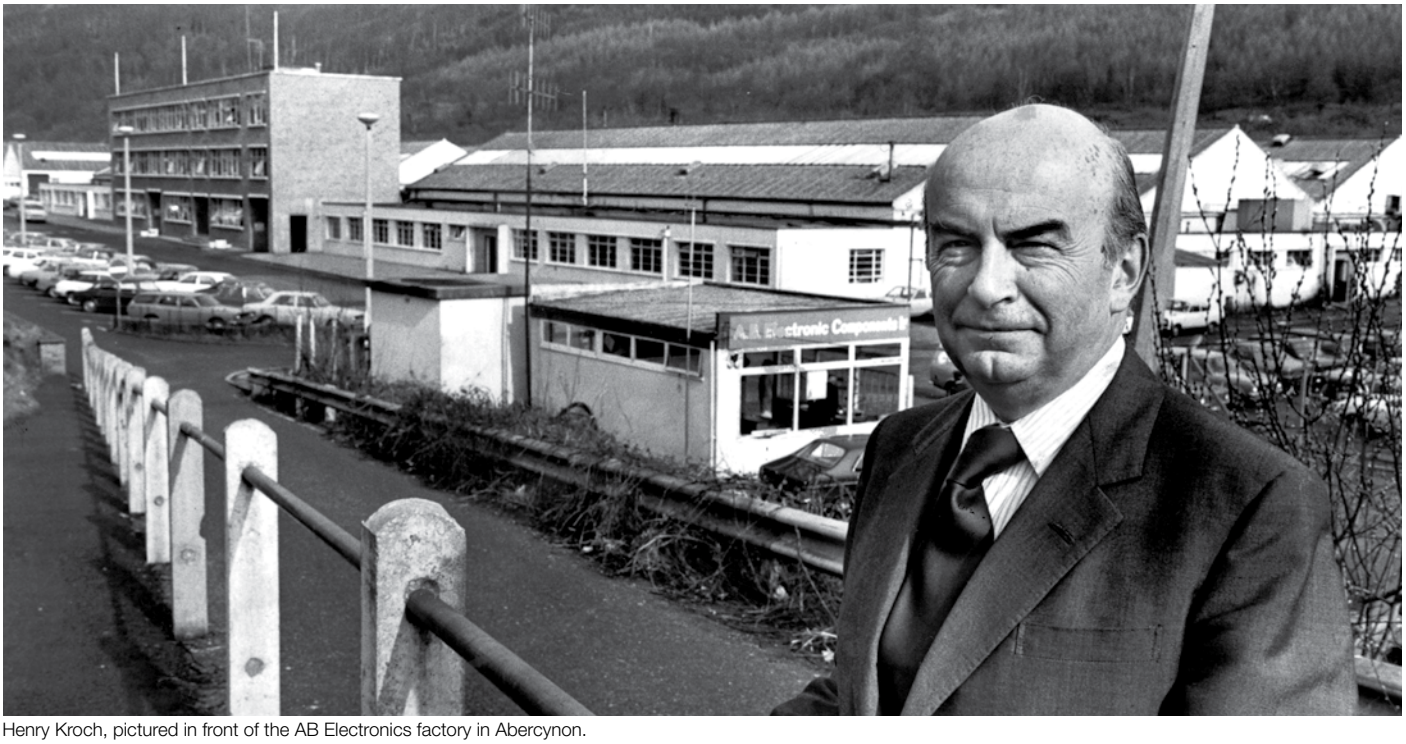
From Leipzig to Abercynon

Mike Joseph offers a personal memoir of an influential industrialist

The German revolution of November 9th 1989 which brought down the Berlin Wall was forged in Leipzig, East Germany's second city. Augustusplatz, the great city square named after Saxony's first king, framed by the Leipzig Opera House and the Gewandhaus, became the Tahrir Square of its day. Every Monday night during that revolutionary autumn, Leipzigers streamed out of their homes in their tens of thousands, parading around the city, demonstrating for freedom and gathering in Augustusplatz, which the GDR in 1953 renamed Karl-Marx-Platz. Here in 1989, half a million demonstrators dared the Stasi to use violence on them as China had done months earlier on demonstrators in Tiananmen Square. But Gorbachev warned GDR General Secretary Honecker that there would be no Soviet tanks this time. Leipzig would not follow Budapest, Prague or Beijing. And so the tide of demands for freedom engulfed the Stasi state and brought down the second 20th Century German dictatorship.

So it was that a few months later in 1990, I found myself visiting Henry Kroch, an old friend of my mother, for his advice on a question of plunder.

I remembered Henry from my Cardiff childhood in the 1950s, when our families lived in the north of the city, and both were closely involved with the new wave of high-tech industries in Cardiff and the Valleys. I recalled a kind and patient man, whose generosity extended to inviting me and my young brother to stay with



Henry Kroch, pictured in front of the AB Electronics factory in Abercynon.

them while our parents had to find a new home in Newcastle. But the family relationship went much further back.

Henry Kroch and my mother were both born in Leipzig in 1920. They might have expected successful, middle class lives and careers in that great city of Bach, Mendelssohn and the Trade Fairs. Henry was a son of one of Germany's wealthiest banking families; Lilli, my mother, became a bacteriologist, the first in her family to gain university admission, winning a medical studentship at Bologna University.

However, 1920 was a bad year to be born in Leipzig if you happened to be Jewish. Instead of proceeding to Bologna, on 28 October 1938 (Henry's 18th birthday), Lilli and her entire family were deported to Poland. Henry was fortunate to find his way to Switzerland to study mechanical engineering. But his uncle, the banker Hans Kroch ended 1938 in Buchenwald, from where he gained his freedom in 1939 only by relinquishing his bank's assets. I would soon learn the true scale of that loss.

Shortly before the outbreak of war, the young Leipzigers left Poland and Switzerland for England, my mother arriving in Wales in 1944. Henry came to England in 1939 and first found work in Manchester before moving to Wales in 1951. That they remained in regular contact throughout the post-war years is perhaps as much a sign of their joint involvement in changing the 'face of south Wales', as of their shared pre-war childhood. Both were involved in bringing the new wave of high technology industries to a Wales that was dangerously dependent on coal and steel. My father, also a refugee from Germany, was technical director at Gnome Photographic, one of Wales' few optical enterprises, built with expertise gained in the pre-war German optical industry.

The December 1947 edition of the literary journal *Wales* has a photograph of the Gnome factory on Cardiff's Caerphilly Road. A building of functional, clean lines reminiscent of the German Bauhaus school, the factory was designed (as she always proudly asserted) by my mother. The photo accompanies a piece by Dennis Morgan on *The Changing Face of South Wales*. Morgan was a Board of Trade officer responsible for new factory building in the South Wales Development Area. He wrote,

> "Wales had come to realise the disastrous consequences of dependance upon a few heavy industries – depression which brought in its train a complete collapse in our social structure, represented by distress and poverty... It was not merely a case of a revival of former peace-time industry... it called... for the creation of new and hitherto locally unknown industry."

Only two years after the war, 292 factories had already been completed or approved in the Development Area, supporting 149,000 new jobs. "My colleagues feel that we are engaged in a real crusade", Morgan wrote, asking almost as an afterthought, "And whence were to come the employers to occupy the factories and to offer work?" The answer, to a significant extent, came in the form of refugees from Germany.

Of all these enterprises, AB Electronics was perhaps the most prominent and most successful. Henry Kroch joined what was a small engineering company in Abercynon in 1951, transforming it into one of Wales'

largest manufacturing companies, employing over 5,000 staff in its heyday, to become a major supplier to the radio, television and computer industries. Henry became Managing Director and then Chairman. On his retirement in 1986 he was appointed President of the company, and Freeman of the Borough of Cynon Valley, having already been awarded the OBE and CBE.

In 1990 Germany was suddenly and unexpectedly speeding towards reunification. After half a century of denial, the moment had come to address a historical injustice. Since the 1950s, West Germany had acknowledged its historic responsibility to make reparations for genocide. But East Germany had denied all responsibility, and continued to enjoy the benefits of Nazi plunder. Having lost most of her family, my mother had tried in vain to recover her childhood home in Leipzig – not just a home, but a whole apartment block in the suburb of Gohlis. East Germany knew she had inherited her murdered family's property, but she could not own property in a communist state as she had chosen to live in capitalist Wales. Remarkably, in 1951 the GDR regime tidied up this problem by handing the apartments back to the same Nazi who plundered them in 1943 and who still lived in Leipzig. Being a Nazi was less of a problem to the 'anti-Fascist' GDR than being a capitalist.

Forty years later it was my turn to challenge the new German authorities about unfinished business, and I badly needed advice. Coming from a family of former Leipzig bankers, Henry Kroch was surely the man to ask. One Sunday in August 1990 I visited him at home, explained my purpose, and was startled by his immediate reply, "There is no place for us Jews in Germany. What will you do if you do get the house back?"

Consider how shocking his words were. If Henry Kroch was celebrated in Wales, his name was even more prominent in Leipzig. The 1989 revolution had taken place in front of the banking family's former headquarters, the Kroch Hochhaus, Leipzig's first tower block on Augustusplatz, built by Hans Kroch in 1928. The Kroch Hochhaus image had circled the globe as the backdrop to revolution. One of these photos was taken from the twelfth floor of the banking tower, extorted from Hans Kroch in 1939 to gain his release from Buchenwald. And half a century later, Henry Kroch CBE could still say, "There is no place for us Jews in Germany".

Yet Henry Kroch's was not the only voice warning against pursuing restitution. Hinrich Lehmann-Grube, Leipzig's SPD Oberbürgermeister (Social Democratic Lord Mayor) condemned the principle of restitution as "a cul-de-sac for Leipzig". His Economic Counsellor, Christian Jacke elaborated, "The Jews have had plenty of compensation in the last fifty years, and should not now make more claims". He forgot that in fifty years East Germany had paid no compensation and made no restitution. It seemed that Henry Kroch was absolutely right.

As the senior representative of the Kroch family, Henry had a claim for restitution which dwarfed my mother's. His family had owned not only the Kroch Bank, but an entire suburb of Leipzig – Neu-Gohlis. Completed in 1930, this was a development of 1,018 flats with central heating, running hot water, bathrooms, children's playgrounds and green spaces – altogether the most modern planned development of its day. But that was sixty years earlier. How would the estate be after a half century of Nazi plunder and GDR neglect? Henry told me how he had just returned from a company trip to West Berlin, and had then driven to Leipzig. Arriving in the city, he asked how to find his way to the Neu-Gohlis estate? He was told to "ask any old person for directions to the Kroch Siedlung" (Kroch suburb). His name was still on the lips of Leipzigers.

He found Neu-Gohlis "in a terrible state of repair". Tenants' rents had been collected but repairs had been neglected for decades. Occupiers included tenants with good title and squatters with none, with mortgages further complicating the picture:

"The city is bankrupt. They can't afford to pay compensation. So they will hand back the property, with a huge backlog of repairs and improvements that the GDR failed to do. You take on the existing tenants, and they will demand action. Instead of gaining you lose. Some owners will be forced to part with newly-restored property below market price if they can't afford improvements."

The situation was ripe for conflict between occupiers, the state and newly restored Jewish owners. And indeed The Guardian was reporting Kathrin from Leipzig saying,

> "… they come over here and start photographing people's homes, saying it's their property and they're getting it back. They just shrug their shoulders if you ask what will happen to the tenants."

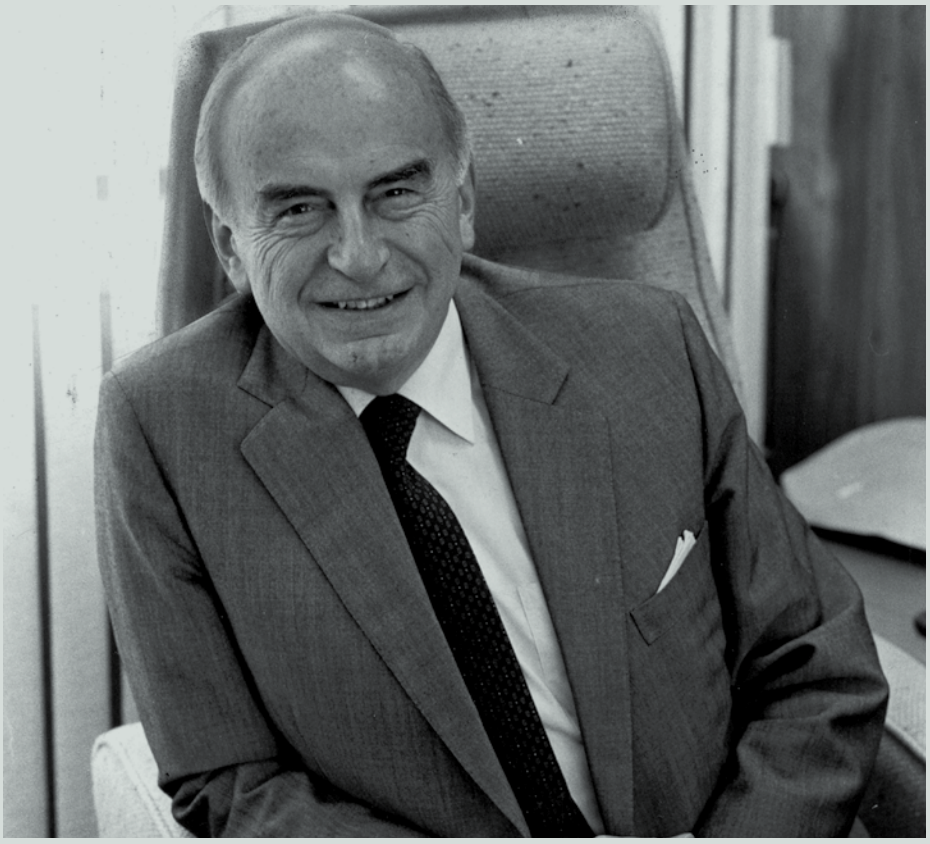
"Unrest", concluded Henry, "is unavoidable". It had not occurred to me that recovering my mother's house might be bad news. I had much to learn, and Henry Kroch had started to open my eyes. The learning curve would become even steeper when, some months later, I sat facing the Nazi who had taken my mother's home in 1943, and was now scheming to take it from me in 1991. But that is another story.

My memoir of Henry Kroch ends not in the smog-laden atmosphere of communist Leipzig, but in the clear air of a tiny bay on the north Pembrokeshire coast. Like my parents, David and Mary Edwards were among Henry Kroch's close friends when they lived in north Cardiff. Their son Phillip Edwards told me "They would meet in Cwm yr Eglwys where Henry could relax. A gentle man in every sense."

And that is my memory of the man too. When the country of his birth had no use for him, he took another country – Wales – to his heart, and it honoured him. A gentle man.

Henry Kroch's contribution to Wales

Keith James and **Rhys David** look back at the life of the IWA's founding chairman



Henry Kroch, the industrialist, who died in July at the age of 90, made a major contribution to the life of Wales, not least as founder chairman of the Institute of Welsh Affairs. German-born, he came to Britain in 1939, and helped to create AB Electronics. He transformed this small engineering business in Abercynon into one of Wales' largest manufacturing companies, employing more than 5,000 staff in its heyday.

When the IWA was launched in 1987 by a group of leading Welsh business people, Henry agreed to be its first chairman. He provided inspirational leadership and ensured that firm foundations were laid during the think tank's first five years. At the outset, weekly early morning meetings were held in Cardiff to get the fledgling institution on its feet. These occasions may have marked the first time power breakfasts came to Wales.

Very early in its life the IWA recognised that revitalisation of the Valleys of south Wales was a major priority. In 1988 it produced its first report *The South Wales Valleys: An Agenda for Action*. Henry chaired the Steering Group and became a passionate advocate for the report's recommendations. As he said in the report's foreward: "Most of my working life has been spent in the Valleys and nowhere is now closer to my heart".

The report was well received and he took great satisfaction from the fact that many of its suggestions were adopted by the then Secretary of State for Wales, Peter Walker, in his *Valleys Initiative* of the late 1980s.

Henry Kroch had become managing director of AB Electronics in 1964 and chairman in 1978. By then electronics was a booming industry and his company built up an enviable reputation as a reliable source of components, with a particular emphasis on the then thriving UK consumer electronics industries - radio, television, and record players. The company later expanded into other sectors to reduce the dependence on consumer electronics, supplying Acorn and Sinclair in the nascent computer industry, and later becoming a major contractor to the instrumentation and control gear, and defence industries. At its height, the company employed 5,500 people in Wales and across the rest of Europe but an earlier period of defence cuts in the 1980s and 1990s saw the stock market quoted company's fortunes falter. It was acquired in 1993 by Surrey-based TT electronics but retains a substantial manufacturing presence in Wales.

Henry was also behind the company's move into exporting which was seen to offer a counter to the fluctuations in demand in Britain as a result of economic downturns, hire purchase restrictions and tax changes. Expansion into Germany followed with the setting up of an AB subsidiary to assemble components sent from Wales and new sites were opened in other parts of south Wales including Cardiff.

Henry Kroch was one of the first businessmen in Wales to champion entry into the European Economic Community, the forerunner of the European Union. At AB Metal Products he had begun to recognise the need for much larger markets to justify the heavy capital expenditure required to automate processes and remain competitive. "We do many things by hand which it would be better to do by machine but we could not pay for the machines if they ran for only half-an-hour, for example on Monday," he told the Western Mail in an interview in 1967.

As well as chairing the IWA, Henry Kroch also served on the boards of the Welsh National Opera, the Welsh Chamber Orchestra and the Welsh Council.

Keith James is a former Vice Chair and a Life Fellow of the IWA.
Rhys David is a Trustee and also a Life Fellow of the IWA.

Cymdeithas yr Iaith at Fifty

Half a century ago

John Davies

It is difficult to remember how invisible the Welsh language was in the Wales of the early 1960s. It was seen on chapel notice boards, on gravestones and at the Folk Museum in St Fagans, but virtually nowhere else. Gwynfor Evans, who had been elected to the Carmarthenshire County Council in 1949, persuaded the council to erect bilingual welcoming signs on the county's borders. Signs bearing Sir Gaerfyrddin caused much hilarity. 'Why'. asked one commentator, 'have they knighted the county?'

In the late 1930s, there had been a massive petition in favour of official status for Welsh, but it resulted in litte beyond the Welsh Courts Act of 1942 which allowed dependents and witnesses to use Welsh in courts if they declared on oath that they would be disadvantaged if they were obliged to use English. A new militancy became apparent in the 1950s, particularly through the efforts of Eileen and Trefor Beasley who in 1952 began to refuse to pay rates to the Llanelli Rural District Council until they received the rate demand in Welsh. Their victory in 1960 infused new energy into the debate about the status of Welsh.

The Beasleys' campaign coincided with the struggle to thwart the Liverpool Corporation's plan to turn the Tryweryn Valley into a reservoir, with the erosion of the Welsh language in many of its heartlands and with a feeling that the constitutional path followed by Plaid Cymru was yielding few results. On 13 February 1962, Saunders Lewis, who had not publicly intervened in Welsh politics since 1943, delivered his radio address *Tynged yr Iaith* ('The Fate of the Language'), in which he foresaw that, if current trends continued, Welsh would cease to be a community language by the early 21st Century.

The restoration of the language, Lewis argued, would only come about through revolutionary methods. "This is not," he stated, "a haphazard policy for isolated individuals. It is a policy for a movement, a movement rooted in those areas where Welsh is an everyday spoken language." The movement he had in mind was Plaid Cymru, and the lecture gave him an opportunity to pour contempt upon Gwynfor Evans's leadership, particularly the primacy Evans gave to parliamentary elections and his alleged pusillanimity over Tryweryn. As the party's leaders were wedded to the principle of advancement through the ballot box and had high hopes of winning support among Wales' non-Welsh-speaking majority, they rejected the role Lewis had sought to thrust upon them, because they could not, as Gwynfor Evans put it "combine an effective fight for the Welsh language with being a political party".

Among the activities Lewis urged militants to undertake was the rejection of English summonses to court. Before the end of February 1962, Gareth Miles, then a student at Aberystwyth, refused to attend court to answer for a trivial offence; he refused to pay the fine and suffered imprisonment. Gareth argued that the only way to secure summonses in Welsh was to ensure that a considerable body of people jointly committed trivial offences and then insisted upon being summoned to court in Welsh.

I told him I would seek to get the Aberystwyth branch of Plaid Cymru to send a motion to the party's annual conference to organise direct action to compel recognition of the language. The branch did so, and at the 1962 conference, which was held at Pontarddulais, I proposed the motion which was eloquently seconded by Tedi Millward, then a lecturer at the University College of Wales. Conference enthusiastically endorsed the motion, but as many of us agreed with Gwynfor Evans and did not want to be members of a party that had strayed from the constitutional path, we invited those who were prepared to be summons-refusniks to discuss ways of fulfilling Gareth Miles's plan.

From the beginning, therefore, a separate organisation was envisaged. Indeed, Saunders Lewis, in his intemperate attacks on the Plaid Cymru leaders, ensured that his hopes of turning the party into a militant language movement were doomed. As early discussions were about summonses, lawbreaking was built into the movement from its inception. To some extent, that was accidental, for a wide range of wholly legal activities were under consideration.

About a dozen people came to the summons-refusniks' meeting. When it became clear that law-breaking was under discussion, a few left. The majority stayed. Almost all of them were students. Indeed, students were central to the whole story.

The early 1960s was a period of considerable expansion in higher education, and full employment for students – even for those who had been involved in nefarious activities – was the norm. Many of them had travelled in countries such as Belgium and Switzerland where recognition of more than one language was wholly acceptable. With access to cars a possibility for large numbers, students were more mobile than they had ever been before. Indeed, it could be argued that it was not until the early 1960s that a mass language protest movement involving young people was practicable in Wales.

Tedi and I devoted much of the following months to planning. The title Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg was adopted, largely because of our respect

for the Welsh Language Society of the late 19th Century, which had ensured at least a toehold for the Welsh language in elementary schools. Huw T. Edwards agreed to be honarary president and sent us a cheque for £5, all of which was quickly swallowed up by stamp purchases.

Discussions were held with members of the Law Deprtment at Aberystwyth, in particular with Graham Hughes and Hywel Moseley, both of whom believed that the current legal arrangements did not preclude the issuing of summonses in Welsh. We wrote to all the magistrates' benches in Wales asking for their views and began to work out how many summons-refusniks could reasonably be recruited.

By the end of the autumn term of 1962, it seemed likely that there would be some 25 volunteers at Aberystwyth, and an equal number in Bangor, where Robert Gruffudd, later of the Lolfa, proved an effective recruiter. Names were collected at Swansea, Cardiff, and Carmarthen, and by January 1963 we thought we might have as many as a hundred protesters.

Gareth Miles suggested that we should all plaster public buildings with posters bearing suitable slogans. Posters were ordered, buckets of paste produced and 2 February 1963 was chosen as the day of action. I was then delving into the Bute archives at the Cardiff Central Library and staying with the Tucker family in Grangetown. It was from Cornwall Road, Grangetown, that the call went out for protestors to gather at Aberystwyth on two/two/six-three.

February 1963 proved to be one of the coldest months of the 2oth Century. Glaciers were forming in the upper Dyfi Valley, small iceberrgs were floating in the sea near Clarach and the townspeople of Aberystwyth were reliant on stand-pipes for their domestic water. Nevertheless, the law-breaking did occur. Buildings – the Post Office, the Police Station, the Town Hall and the County Council Offices – were all plastered.

The police took no notice at all, for Aberystwyth's magistrates had decided that the entire protest should be ignored. We had contacted a number of newpapers and I remember a reporter from the *Daily Mail* telling me that if nothing more exciting was going to happen, his paper would give no coverage to the event. We all met in the upstairs room in the Home Café in Pier Street, and it became apparent that a more enthusiastic element wanted further action.

Members of that element went to Pont Trefechan and sat down to block the traffic, a protest that was in no sense part of the original plan. That produced some dramatic pictures, especially that of Rhiannon Silyn Roberts knocked out by a car driver and lying supine in the snow. Some of the drivers who were stuck on the bridge began dragging the protesters away. Those dragged lay supine; the possibility of punch-ups was avoided, for the principle of non-violence was built into the movement from the beginning. Virtually all the leading British newspapers gave extensive coverage to the events, with the *Guardian* providing a headline exulting in the fact that 'A Whole Town was Welshed On'. Saunders Lewis was delighted and sent a cheque for two guineas to the movements' nonexistent account.

The following months were quieter. Organisation was necessary. A meeting in Aberystwyth in May 1963 led to the formal establishment of the society. Membership cards were printed, a membership fee of half a crown was decided upon and John Daniel, a lecturer in philosophy at Aberystwyth, was elected chairman. Cardiff magistrates were the first to issue summonses in Welsh, and within a very short time they became available on demand virtually everywhere in Wales.

The establishment of a network of branches proved more difficult, largely because almost all the society's members were living away from the areas in which they were brought up. However, at Bangor, a very effective branch was established by Owain Owain, who was also responsible for the launching of the society's periodical *Tafod y Ddraig*.

With a general election due to be held in 1964, leaders of Plaid Cymru urged the society's members to avoid militant action. Activist members were annoyed by the decision to postpone a protest at the post office at Dolgellau because of fears that it would harm Elystan Morgan's bid to win Meirionnydd for Plaid Cymru. Instead, much was done on issues such as persuading banks to issue bilingual cheques, providing Welsh–language notice boards to post offices, ensuring that new-born babies could be registered in Welsh and checking claims by local authorities that letters in Welsh were answered in Welsh. (The clerk of the Llanidloes Urban District returned the letter I sent him with the note that correspondence with the council was only accepted in English. A friend in Paris sent him a letter in French which was courteously answered.)

A plan was launched to Cymricise public houses, but a scheme urging large numbers of society members to sit for three hours slowly drinking half a pint of Hancocks bitter gained little support. The Hancocks brewery did however emblazon their pubs with splendid welcoming notices in Welsh. The absence of militant activity was increasingly criticised by the membership, criticism which was somewhat stilled by the launching in August 1964 of the roadsigns campaign. The first venture was the replacement in Pembrokeshire of signs bearing the word Trevine on the borders of the village of Tre-fin.

The election of a Labour government in October 1964 and the subsequent establishment of the Welsh Office were widely welcomed. Indeed, some of the society's leaders urged a further lull in lawbreaking activities in order to allow the Labour government to show that it was far more sympathetic to Welsh aspirations than the outgoing Conservative government had been. However, approaches to the Post-Master General (Tony Benn) on the use of Welsh in post offices brought a wholly negative response. It became generally accepted that further lulls were pointless. The post office, car licensing and roadsigns campaigns became increasingly vigorous and by 1965 the society had entered a new phase.

John Davies is author of the Penguin *History of Wales* and *Hanes Cymru*.

A lifetime of campaigning

Angharad Tomos

I didn't see prison as a sacrifice. It was a Monopoly card that was an inevitable part of direct action. It suspended the campaigning, but only for a while. Once you'd done your time, it was a matter of taking up from where you'd left off. It was something you had to do, for Wales. And it was much more exciting than attending lectures...

I smile as I remember the difficulties, and the frustation. This was the neolithic age before photocopying machines, computers, e-mails, mobiles, and texts. You got by with typewriters, kiosks and stamps, and it all took so much more time. Just that was the one thing we didn't have – or the Welsh language would die.

We'd done the research on the mast, we'd rustled up the money to pay for some gear, we'd even got the activists – or, rather, we carried on re-cycling them. The one thing we did not have was a driver to take us to our destination, a TV transmitter north of Manchester. It was easy enough to hire a car, but you had to have a 21-year-old person to drive one. This was a mythological character, a figment of the imagination. I remember agonising one night, if only I'd been born two years earlier...

Thinking of that, my one great fear was that it would all be over too soon. That we'd achieve our aims, and that I would have missed out on the fun. I'd missed the Sixties by being a child, and I'd been too young to take an active part in the roadsigns campaign. I didn't want it all settled before I'd played my part. Maybe this was how the fifteen-year-old lads felt before running off to war.

I needn't have worried. The great debacle of 1979 came, just before my 21st birthday. We were back to square one. The campaign for a Welsh TV channel still hadn't been won. I was now eligible to hire a car – just that I had not passed my test. Whitelaw had decided that the Fourth TV channel would not be allocated to the Welsh language. We went back to the drawing board and threw ourselves back into campaigning. In the end, Gwynfor Evans put the trump card down.

Suddenly, everything was dead serious. For the first time ever, there was no shortage of activists. I started a list of people who refused to pay the licence. I called a meeting of activists in my parents living room. Twenty four people turned up, and we hadn't enough chairs for them all. We went down to London to protest, and after failing to get arrested, two of us went to Trafalgar Square and painted a slogan on Nelson's Column. My main problem was spelling – how did you spell 'Tory Betrayal' with Japanese tourists taking your photo? In the end the police came and took us away. They took it personal, and asked me how would I like it if they came to Wales and destroyed the most precious thing we had. "You already have" we replied. I was given a three month prison sentence for my artwork, and I missed the summer of saving Gwynfor.

One Novemeber night, we went next door to see the magic words on the TV screen – Sianel 4 Cymru - we didn't have a TV ourselves. I remember my feeling at the time. Direct action really does work. It's not all idealism. Slogans **can** become a reality...

But the Eighties weren't so idealistic. Mines were closed, workers lost their jobs, men went to war, women went to Greenham, policemen got tougher, and hunger strikers died in jail. We carried on. The needs of the language created a long list that kept growing – a new Welsh Language Act, a body to develop Welsh Medium Education, the requirement to consider the Welsh language as a factor in council planning decisions. I attended more council meetings than a councillor! We gained experience, we were known to people in power, but the situation got no better. However hard we tried, the Welsh speaking communites kept rapidly declining.

"Every time we give you a concession, you just want more," said Wyn Roberts, then Minister of State at the Welsh Office. That's right we agreed. Rhaid i Bopeth Newid er mwyn i'r Gymraeg fyw.

In the end, another dream became a reality, Thatcher left 10 Downing Street. We celebrated the much anticipated event by catching a boat to Britanny. However bad it was in Wales, it was always worse in Britanny. By the mid-nineties, we'd got rid of the Tories as well, and a mood of optimism spread through the land. We marched for a Senedd i Gymru, and by the Autumn, we'd won the referendum (by a hair's breadth).

It actually did come, not some old offices given a new lease of life. We had a brand new building to house the National Assembly. It didn't have the powers Wales needed, but we felt that we'd achieved something historic. It was high time that I settled down; I got married. By 2003, I'd produced my finest work – a Welshman.

Maybe this is the hard bit. Bringing up a child and hearing him talking after coming from school. This wasn't the standard of Welsh that I'd spoken. If this is how it is in the most Welsh parts of Wales, God help us. Maybe this is the sacrifice that they spoke about. Living in 21st Century Wales and pretending that things are improving. Knowing that tens of thousands of people are leaving Wales every year because of unemployment. A new nuclear power station is on the horizon. A developer wanting to build six thousand houses in one go. In whatever part of Wales I go I see the gradual decline of Welsh. This is not the new Wales I'd envisaged.

Then I look in the mirror and tell myself off for being so downhearted. Things have been this bad before. It's a Welsh past-time to think that you're the last generation. We've been doing it since 1282.

Time I got into gear. I went to the Cymdeithas AGM. We'll be 50 next year.

There were difficulties and frustation, wild dreams and impossible demands. There were visions in plenty and not enough workers. Unexpectedly, someone came up to me, a fresh young face, and asked if would I come on a protest. Me? A middle aged lady with responsibilities? "Maybe I'm a bit old for that kind of thing" I explained, tactfully, then felt the familiar surge of guilt. "But tell you what, I would be willing to help. If you're stuck, I'm willing to help out with my car."

The fresh young face looked up at me. "We're going by bus," she said. "Are you coming or not?"

Angharad Tomos is a novelist.

Non-violent direct action

Menna Machreth

In its most conservative sense non-violent direct action means withdrawing from using violence in any form and also taking full responsibility for one's actions. All members of Cymdeithas yr Iaith know they must adhere to this principle if they wish to take part in any activity on behalf of the society. As a strategy it has proved the best way to yield concessions from the authorities since the 1960s. It has been very successful in drawing people together, and should be praised for ensuring that the only valid forms of activity for the Welsh language organisation were peaceful ones. It succeeded in preventing violent strategies from gaining credence.

Non-violent direct action is usually associated with peaceful civil disobedience - sit-ins, painting road signs and so on. However, Cymdeithas also considers the other 99 per cent of its work - lobbying, petitioning, writing letters and policies, organizing gigs - as non-violent direct action. I view it not only as a method of campaigning, but more importantly as an attitude of life. In its more open sense it is making a stand for justice in every situation. Sometimes, that means deciding to take part in a sit-in as part of a strategic campaign. Most of the time, however, it means doing the little things, working together for change.

The hypocrisy of governments and big business has wrecked communities throughout Wales and has tied people to the system. People of all ages and backgrounds have joined Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg over the years because it encourages questioning the system around us. Cymdeithas offers an alternative viewpoint based on freeing oneself psychologically from fear and selfishness.

I learned this lesson when I realised that campaigning was not something I could be self-righteous about. Why campaign in the first place? The answer, simply, is love. As clichéd as it sounds, longstanding active members of Cymdeithas yr Iaith, like Siân Howys and Ffred Ffransis and many more, have exemplified that their campaigning is driven by a love to see justice and freedom in this world - by equipping each other with active peace. Their integrity is powerful. *Dwi wedi penderfynu bod yn rhydd* (I've decided to be free), as the song says, is a state of mind, an alternative to the violence exemplified by the powers of this world, and an attitude which can be adopted now to bring change to society.

Whether I'm writing e-mails to AMs or holding a sit-in at a phone shop, non-violent direct action is a way of life. Organising gigs and raising money are also important contributions from people who aren't able to campaign publicly. After devolution, Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg has gradually gained more access to politicians, enabling us to convey our view on matters concerning the Welsh language and communities. Naturally, having our own government means there has been a substantial decrease in civil disobedience. Even so, the last year has seen Cymdeithas return to these methods as Westminster and the BBC in London took decisions on S4C's future undemocratically.

Since the 1970s, we have produced a great deal detailed policy papers as part of our campaign. These days I can present a new policy proposal we've developed as part of a campaign directly into the hands of a Welsh Government minister, which is a very different experience to previous leaders of Cymdeithas. The campaign for the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol was a good example of how we, as a group of students within Cymdeithas, made a difference to public policy in Wales. It was a joy to see all our campaigning come to fruition and seeing some of our suggestions being adopted. Without campaigning by many groups in Wales, there would be no institution dedicated to securing Welsh medium higher education in the country.

Some people may think that the only future for Cymdeithas is inside the establishment. I believe Cymdeithas has an important role in setting expectations for the place of the Welsh language within Wales, but we need to be in a position where we can constantly re-evaluate the campaigns and call for a radical vision. Cymdeithas needs to increase its work on policy and lobbying, but it also needs to be in a position to make radical calls for change. Civil disobedience must be an option for a campaign. If it is deployed it is a sign of the severity of the situation.

Although there is a new context following the creation of the National Assembly in 1999, members of Cymdeithas yr Iaith do not see devolution as an end in itself. The struggle for the language and our communities since 1997 has only confirmed this. It has become clear that we are still striving for freedom, mainly to free the new Wales from the old British bureaucratic way of thinking. We have devolution on paper, in constitutional terms, but not in the mind-set of the people of Wales. If we are to fully realise devolution we

need to release our nation from forever mimicking Westminster.

Our main campaign from now on is to encourage communities to free themselves from being controlled and shaped by the desires of the market. In north Wales we are re-visiting an old slogan *Tai, Gwaith, Iaith* (Housing, Work, Language) to try and envisage how sustainable communities can be realised and stop the building of thousands of unwanted houses. In order to re-think Wales and free ourselves from hypocrisy, non-violent direct action as a way of life is as relevant as ever to get to grips with the task in front of us.

Menna Machreth is Chair of Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg in north Wales.

Language needs constitutional pressure group

Simon Brooks

Any organisation celebrating its anniversary should be self-critical. Cymdeithas yr Iaith has not saved the Welsh language - the continued decline of Welsh-speaking communities attests to this. Yet it remains the most energetic and historically important part of the language movement. Despite this, it faces enormous challenges.

Cymdeithas is synonymous in the public imagination with direct action. This has played a significant and honourable role in recent Welsh history. Men and women with a Cymdeithas yr Iaith track record are prominent in public life. They include a serving Minister in the Welsh Government, several AMs, former heads of BBC departments, senior civil servants and the Wales Director of Ofcom, jailed for conspiracy in 1978. To this might be added innumerable councillors, ministers of religion, academics, company directors, school teachers, journalists and literary figures. If, as Mao said, revolutionaries need to swim among the people as fish swim in the sea, then Cymdeithas yr Iaith fits the bill. It has been a revolutionary movement of and for the people.

Notwithstanding this, if not in crisis, the Welsh language movement is at least in need of an overhaul. The reason is clear. The language movement has fundamentally misread its founding text, Saunders Lewis' seminal 1962 lecture, *Tynged yr Iaith* (The Fate of the Language). The lecture is best understood as a treatise on the nature of a future Welsh State. If any future Welsh polity were not to use Welsh in its civic core, wrote Saunders, it would not be worth having. This, by the way, gives the current debate on a bilingual Record of Proceedings its poignancy.

Consequently, Plaid Cymru was the real target of Lewis' infamous appeal that the Welsh language was "the only political matter it is worthwhile for a Welshman to concern himself with today". The belief that politics alone could make the Welsh State Welsh (and that Plaid Cymru might fail to deliver on this) is inherent in *Tynged yr Iaith's* argument that "language is more important than self-government". For a non-parliamentary pressure group like Cymdeithas yr Iaith, the dichotomy has little meaning, at least in any strategic sense.

In practical terms, however, the distinction between political party and pressure group was of marginal significance in late 20th Century Wales. There was no Welsh Parliament, nor much hope of one. Plaid Cymru was itself little more than a pressure group on the Westminster stage. Moreover, the dangers which Saunders Lewis saw of nationalists in Government failing to promote the Welsh language were not immediately apparent. Indeed, it was Plaid Cymru, following Gwynfor Evans' threat to hunger strike, which delivered the language movement's most unexpected success, the establishment of S4C.

However, devolution has made Welsh Government a reality, and turned Plaid Cymru into a party of Government, rather than a body seeking to lobby Government. On the other hand, Cymdeithas yr Iaith has remained at arm's length from the Assembly, still capable earlier this year of the distinctly non-parliamentary wrecking of Conservative Party offices in Whitchurch.

A litany of Welsh-speaking intellectuals, from Cynog Dafis to Richard Wyn Jones, have made something of a cliché of accusing Cymdeithas yr Iaith of failing to adapt to devolution. Whether right or not, the reality is that currently the Welsh language movement has no dedicated and effective constitutional wing. If, as *Tynged yr Iaith* states, it is "by revolutionary means alone" that the Welsh language can be saved, today this must mean direct engagement with the Welsh State. There can be no revolution on the streets in post-devolution Wales. Democracy has done for that. The argument that Cymdeithas yr Iaith should respond to devolution by metamorphosing into a constitutional pressure group is superficially attractive.

Yet it is doubtful whether Cymdeithas yr Iaith is capable of making this shift. It remains a leftist radical organisation with its roots in 1960s protest. There is an emphasis on the innate morality of civil disobedience, driven by Christian and pacifist convictions, which was not part of Saunders Lewis' worldview, and which is peculiarly unsuited to the task of influencing Government. All this makes transformation into a constitutional ginger group extremely difficult. An ideological blood transfusion of this severity carries with it the very high risk that the patient will die on the operating table. Without direct action as its guiding moral compass, the Cymdeithas yr Iaith activist base may simply fade away. The drive for justice and ethics which defines the Cymdeithas vision is not best satisfied by the thought of wining and dining Tory backbenchers in Odettes restaurant in Primrose Hill, as

good as the food may be.

Neverthless, somebody has to do the guinea fowl circuit. Maybe a new group is required. It could exist in addition to, rather than instead of, Cymdeithas yr Iaith. Comparison with other equality campaigns is useful. There's no need to dislike Peter Tatchell to believe that there is a place for Stonewall in the campaign for gay rights. Nor is it necessary to dismiss events like Slutwalk as street theatre to realise that establishment figures like Helen Mary Jones also contribute to Welsh feminism.

There will always be a role for civil disobedience within the counter-culture language movement: the sit-in, the vigil and the non-payment of the BBC licence fee. Protest like this is proportionate and just, especially within the context of non-devolved decision making (such as on broadcasting), where Welsh speakers form only 1 per cent of the electorate and Jeremy Hunt destroys television channels as Henry VIII dissolved monasteries. However, these are not the best ways to influence the Welsh Government, the Welsh civil service and Assembly Members.

We should wish Meri Huws well as the first Language Commissioner, but one individual can never be a replacement for civil society. The ill-conceived abolition of the Welsh Language Board raises the probability that language politics will now be polarised between the Welsh Government and its bureaucracy on the one hand, and a direct action group on the fringes of policy making on the other, and never the twain shall meet. Has Wales won self-government for this? With the ascent of Welsh democracy, the language movement must reinterpret the meaning of the word revolution. We need a constitutional group to put the language centre stage in the nascent Welsh State.

Simon Brooks is is a lecturer at the School of Welsh, Cardiff University.

Three questions

Huw Lewis

Wales is a country that witnessed a range of far-reaching social changes during the second half of the 20th Century - some positive in nature and others negative. On the positive side, there was arguably no greater change than that which occurred in relation to the fortunes of the Welsh language. In linguistic terms, today's Wales is very different from the Wales of the late 1950s and early 1960s.

While it would be a step too far to suggest that this linguistic transformation resulted solely from the efforts of *Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg*, it is certain that the movement's active and persistent a campaigning was a key driving factor, and that a number of positive developments would not have occurred had it not been established back in 1962. Indeed, I believe that it is important that we acknowledge this fact as *Cymdeithas* approaches its fiftieth birthday.

However, despite the progress made over recent decades, it is generally agreed that questions still remain regarding the long-term sustainability of the Welsh language. Given this, it is important that *Cymdeithas* itself does not treat this significant milestone as solely an occasion to acknowledge past achievements. It should also use it as an opportunity to reflect critically on contemporary sociolinguistic and political trends and their implications for the manner in which it organises itself and its campaigns.

Many - including numerous members and supporters - would probably agree that such critical self-reflection has not always been one of the movement's main strengths. Indeed, ironically, a group that has been extremely radical in terms of its political agenda has been characterised by significant internal conservatism.

I should hasten to add that *Cymdeithas* is not alone in this respect. Moreover, having spent a long period acting as a member of its senate, including two years as chair, I know better than most how difficult it can be to find time to stand back and engage in discussions of a more strategic nature in which traditional assumptions and ways of working are questioned. It is easy to get lost in the minutia of particular campaigns - how does one ensure that the next public meeting is a success or that the next publicity stunt receives press attention. This is particularly true when the movement is a relatively small one, which still depends largely on the efforts of volunteers.

Yet, the truth is that any movement that does not take the time to reflect critically on its own performance and to ask itself uncomfortable questions runs the risk of falling into a rut, which, in turn, can mean that important opportunities are missed. Given this, I wish to propose three key questions that I believe need to be considered carefully by *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* as it enters its sixth decade of campaigning:

1. **Organization: How much emphasis should be placed on the task of developing a network of active local branches?**

Over the years *Cymdeithas* has consistently seen the task of developing a network of active local branches as a priority. The importance assigned to this task is reflected in the fact that employment strategies have regularly emphasised the need for a number of full-time field workers who can facilitate activity among grass-roots members.

However, questions need to be raised regarding the extent to which this grass-roots work should still be prioritised. Firstly, despite significant efforts, and also despite the use of a significant amount of financial resources, attempts to develop an active and sustainable local network have, thus far, proved

largely unsuccessful. Secondly, and more importantly, it could be argued that developing a stronger central structure, and in particular, employing a handful of individuals who can develop real expertise in relevant policy areas, would be a better use of resources and would allow for tangible gains in relation to the movement's current campaigns.

In raising this issue, I am not suggesting that there is no need at all for a pool of local supporters. What I do ask, however, is whether the focus should always be on the local level when it comes to questions regarding how the movement is to be structured.

2. Methods: What role, if any, should direct action play in efforts to advance the movement's campaigns?

There is no question that the willingness of *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* to make use direct action techniques has led, over the years, to a number of significant gains. And yet, despite this, it would be a mistake to treat the movement's campaigning methods as an issue that is beyond any critical evaluation.

At the very least, the particular direct action techniques that are employed are surely due for revision. Over the years, these techniques have remained relatively consistent, mainly comprising painting slogans, occupying offices and, at times, breaking in to certain buildings. However, all this seems to have become rather stale. It might be time to take a leaf out of the book of a group such as Greenpeace, where the actions prioritised seem to be ones that have the potential for visual impact, rather than material damage.

It might even be time to go even further and ask whether direct action - in any form - still represents an effective means of promoting the movement's goals. Back in the days when all we had was a Welsh Office run by a succession 'Conservative Viceroys', the opportunities for constructive discussion regarding the nature of language policy were extremely rare, and as a result, direct action served as a means of ensuring that the issue could not be pushed off the agenda completely.

Put simply, while in the days of the Welsh Office direct action served as a means to force open doors that were tightly shut, today it possibly only serves to close doors that are already open.

However, the establishment of the National Assembly has led to new opportunities. It is now possible to engage on a regular basis, not only with government Ministers and opposition AMs, but also with various civil servants, and by doing so, ensure that informed debate on language related matters takes place. Yet, it must be questioned whether such opportunities can be exploited fully if one is also engaging in direct action against the offices occupied by these same individuals. Put simply, while in the days of the Welsh Office direct action served as a means to force open doors that were tightly shut, today it possibly only serves to close doors that are already open.

3. Policy: What are the implications of recent changes in patterns of social interaction for traditional arguments regarding the importance of 'Welsh-speaking communities'?

This final question is one that should not only concern members of *Cymdeithas yr Iaith*, but also those of the wider Welsh language movement. Over the years many have argued that when assessing the language's prospects we need to look beyond national figures regarding the numbers of individuals across Wales who report that they are able to speak Welsh, and focus in more detail on the situation at the community level.

In particular, it has been emphasised that a proper assessment of the language's health needs to include an analysis of the number of communities in which it is spoken by between 60 and 70 per cent of the population. Moreover, it is argued that any effort to ensure that the language can flourish into the future must include efforts to sustain such 'Welsh-speaking communities'. This is deemed vital, as it is only in these areas where we can say that there is a sufficient density of Welsh speakers for the language to be used on a daily basis as the normal language of interaction.

It is striking that in recent years these claims regarding the centrality of community sustainability for the future of the Welsh language have been advanced without any serious consideration of the manner in which structural changes have transformed the manner in which people live their lives and interact with one another. By today, the idea of a defined territorial community - rural or urban - that acts as the main locus for the lives of individuals is one that does not hold the same significance as it did a decade or so ago. Without a doubt, this is an issue that has serious implications for the arguments traditionally advanced by members of the Welsh language movement, and as a result, it calls for much greater consideration than it has received thus far. Given recent changes, is the traditional local community (defined in most cases by either parish or council ward boundaries) still a meaningful unit on which to base the majority of our revitalization strategies? If not, how should we seek to ensure that the Welsh language possesses the kind of territorial base that will allow it to flourish?

Unfortunately, there is nowhere near enough space here to begin the process of considering appropriate answers to these questions. In many ways this is fortunate. At present I have nothing close to fully formed answers, particularly in relation to the third question. I am, nevertheless, certain that engaging with such questions should be seen as a priority by *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* if it wishes its contribution over the next fifty years to be as significant as it was during the preceding fifty.

Huw Lewis is a lecturer at Aberystwyth University's Department of International Politics. He is a former chair of Cymdeithas yr Iaith.

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Economy

Wales faces choice between Northern Ireland and Scotland on tax powers

Gerald Holtham finds the Silk Commission has a wider canvas than was envisaged when it was first proposed

Big decisions lie ahead for the nations of the United Kingdom. The extent and direction of devolution and the shape of the United Kingdom itself are likely to be determined for a long time in the next few years. In Wales, the Silk Commission has been set up to consider these matters - financial devolution first and constitutional matters next. It faces a bigger task than the Coalition government imagined when they promised to create it, as the ground moves under our feet.

I am sometimes asked how the first part of its mandate differs from the work of the Independent Commission on Funding and Finance for Wales that I chaired and which reported last year. The most obvious difference is that Silk is reporting to the British government and is a representative political body. My Commission, as the name implies was an independent group of specialists reporting to the Welsh Government. We could examine the technical arguments, set out alternatives and make some proposals but then it was up to the politicians to act or not as they saw fit. There was complete consensus in Wales on a number of our proposals: replacing of Barnett with a succinct formula based on relative needs and limited borrowing powers for Wales. There was some agreement but certainly less than complete consensus on our findings about tax devolution.

The things on which Welsh politicians agree – reform of Barnett and borrowing –are being pursued separately in inter-governmental talks, and Barnett reform has been explicitly excluded from Silk's terms of reference. The first objective for the Silk Commission must therefore be to reach as full a consensus as possible among the Welsh parties and the UK government about tax devolution. That will not be straightforward. While Plaid Cymru and the Lib Dems will presumably favour as much tax devolution as can be obtained, Labour in Wales is intensely suspicious of government motives and inclined to rule out substantial tax devolution unless there is an ironclad agreement to reform Barnett first.

The Conservatives' position is the most opaque at present. The Secretary of State has been talking about accountability, suggesting she is in favour of the Welsh Assembly having responsibility for setting some taxes rather than being funded entirely by a block grant. The accountability argument was the one that the Calman Commission used in Scotland to justify more tax-varying powers there and our Welsh Commission also found the argument convincing. It is a general argument – a body spending public money should be responsible for raising at least some of it - and if that applies in Scotland it applies in Wales as well.

If accountability requires a government to raise a reasonable proportion of its revenue, the options in Wales are limited. Only three taxes raise really big revenues: VAT, national insurance and income tax. VAT cannot easily be devolved. It would lead to cross-border smuggling and, anyway, it is contrary to EU law to have different VAT rates within a single country.

National insurance is seen as part of the welfare system, what people pay in to earn benefits. The benefit system is not

Paul Silk, photographed on the stairway in Gwydyr House, the Wales Office's headquarters in Whitehall - his Commission will no doubt strive to rise to what Nye Bevan called "the imperious needs of the times".

devolved so it seems coherent to leave NI un-devolved too. That only leaves income tax as a big revenue source although there are other smaller taxes that could be devolved to give the Welsh government some more policy levers. It is quite likely that Conservative AMs would be content to back the Secretary of State and call for income tax devolution but they will surely be cautious since the policy will not be attractive to many of their rank and file supporters.

So last year it looked as if the Silk Commission would have the essentially political task of hammering out a deal among those various points of view, helped, we hope, by the analysis in the earlier Commission's report. However, it now it begins to look as if some bigger issues will have to be addressed. The political situation has changed radically and is throwing up some wider questions.

Both the Calman report in Scotland and our Commission's report in Wales were expressly unionist documents. They asked what fiscal arrangements made sense in a union state. In our report we were quite explicit:

> "As an apolitical Commission independent from the Welsh Government, it would be inappropriate for us to make recommendations for the funding model for Wales that are grounded in our political preferences. Instead, we take the current constitutional position of Wales as given. Our recommendations are intended to be appropriate for devolution as it currently operates in Wales... For that reason we have not attempted to trace what a consistent scheme for fiscal federalism would look like in Wales."

The Calman Commission approach was not very different and it represented a consensus among the UK government and the three unionist parties in Scotland which controlled the Scottish Parliament at the time. That, in the words of the poet Yeats, has now "changed, changed utterly". The current Scottish Parliament has a large SNP majority that rejects the Calman report and is demanding changes to the Scotland Bill, currently before the Westminster Parliament, that was based on its findings. If it cannot have independence, the SNP wants something called 'devo-max'. Essentially that means full fiscal autonomy for Scotland, which would levy its own taxes and keep all the revenue. That would, indeed, be a form of fiscal federalism.

Alex Salmond's plan is to hold a referendum offering three choices to the Scots: status quo, independence or devo-max. At present, the betting is the electorate will opt for devo-max. That raises the question: what then would the fiscal framework be for the other devolved territories and what, in particular, would become of the Barnett formula?

In considering this it might be helpful to consider the difference between a union arrangement and a federal arrangement. In a union state nearly all taxes are centralised and raised by a single government agency. Once an allocation has been made to different departments, the geographical distribution of that spending within departments is decided by formulae, usually based on estimates of relative need. No one asks where the revenue comes from and, indeed, those data are not collated. Needs, not revenue-raising, determines relative expenditure.

Devolution modified that but did not change its essence. Westminster asked which departments or functions were devolved and allocated a block grant to the territories based on English expenditure on those departments. To be sure the block grant was anomalous because it was set historically to grow by the same per capita amount each year as expenditure in England. That meant as functions were devolved, their allocation ceased to be determined by relative need. This anomaly is at the heart of the case for Barnett reform.

Note that tax devolution, too, need make only a moderate change to this system and our report, like Calman, worked out how to devolve taxes keeping upheaval to a minimum. Some taxes are devolved and the revenues, assuming a standard UK rate is levied, are deducted from the block grant. Assuming the

If it cannot have independence, the SNP wants something called 'devo-max'. Essentially that means full fiscal autonomy for Scotland, which would levy its own taxes and keep all the revenue.

standard rate is important, that fixes the deduction which does not change then if the devolved authority varies tax rates. Therefore any change in tax rates has an effect on the total revenues at the disposal of the devolved government – an absolutely necessary condition; otherwise the tax devolution would not be 'real'.

The system still means that if taxes are kept at the standard UK level, a territory has similar expenditure possibilities to the rest of the UK, irrespective of its own tax-raising capacity. If the grant were on a proper needs basis each area would have potentially the same public services as the rest of the UK. Devolution means they could opt to have more or less of public services but only by raising or lowering taxes.

On the other hand, in a federal system people are not blind to the geographical origin of taxes. A record is kept of tax collected in each region and that region keeps its own revenue to spend. Since most federations have some areas more prosperous than others there are usually some compensating transfers for poorer regions. However, these are usually modest, doing no more than equalise revenue per head.

Consider what that would mean for Wales. We currently have public expenditure in Wales at about 112 per cent of the English average. A needs-based formula based on those in use within England would give us about 115 or 116 per cent, an increase of some £400 million a year. But if we just had revenue equalisation, that could mean we would have the same spending per head as England, a drop of some 12 per cent from the current level, or about £1.6 billion a year. In principle, a federation could have more generous transfers, but it is unusual. Only Australia attempts equalisation based on expenditure needs rather than revenue and that involves a substantial public body independent of government to carry it out. There is no British precedent for such a body and you can bet your last penny the Treasury would fight it to the death.

Why, then, do the Scots want devo-max? And if it's good enough for them, should we want it too?

In union terms Scotland gets a very good deal from the Barnett formula. We calculated that a needs-based formula would give them expenditure of around £105 a head for every £100 spent in England. Barnett gives them £120 a head, a 15 per cent premium of about £4 billion a year. No English government wants to tackle that excess allocation, fearing that to do so would increase support for the SNP.

Nonetheless, the grumbling in England and Wales is getting louder and that is uncomfortable for the Scots. Get well-informed Scots in private and you don't need to ply them with too many whiskies before they admit that they are doing relatively very well. They justify it by saying, "you get what you negotiate", but they know there is no principled basis for their position. With devo-max they would be able to justify matters on a principled basis though, to be sure, a different principle from "to each according to his need".

Yet would they really be no worse off? The SNP believe that the mere fact of getting so much autonomy would enable them to release new energies in Scotland that would drive the economy and make current calculations irrelevant.

Let's assume Scotland gets its geographical share of North Sea oil. According to the Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland statistics, in 2009-10 the country had a net fiscal deficit of nearly £14 billion, 10.6 per cent of its GDP. However, that reflects the economic downturn and the fact that the UK as a whole had a similar deficit. So look instead at 2007-8, the last year before recession when revenues were at a peak. In that year the statistics show a deficit of £3.7 billion (2.6 per cent of GDP). So in a good year, with high oil prices, Scotland would be in much the same boat as it would under the present system if Barnett was reformed and it lost £4 billion.

However, revenue per head in Scotland is a little below that for the UK as a whole. In 2007-8 its revenue was a shade over £52 billion. The UK's revenue was £549 billion. So if Scotland's population is about 10 per cent of the UK and it got a revenue equalisation grant, it might get another £2-3 billion. That would mean its position was little different from the current one or only slightly worse - and no-one would be moaning about it.

In practice, if recession is prolonged and the oil price goes down, Scotland could be very much worse off. Its balanced budget could go the same way as Alex Salmond's notorious "arc of prosperity". But then if you believe that more autonomy would confer extra policy levers and enable the Scots to stimulate growth, you might be prepared to run that risk. At the moment many Scots seem ready to do so.

What of Wales? The situation here is more obscure because we do not have the data we need for careful assessment. Comprehensive figures for Wales do not exist and what follows are estimates. In the same pre-recession year, my Commission estimated that total identifiable expenditure in Wales was about £25 billion, exceeding Welsh tax receipts by £6 billion. This was a fiscal deficit above 10 per cent of Welsh GDP. On the face of it a revenue equalisation grant would boost Welsh revenues to some 5 per cent of the UK, some £27.5 billion for the year in question, which would have more than made up the gap. But Wales would presumably have to pay extra contributions towards UK-wide expenditures, on defence, foreign policy and debt service. And the comparison between 112 and 100 per cent of English expenditure per head suggests Wales could lose out compared with the current situation.

So if Scotland gets devo-max, what should Wales do? Should it ask for the same arrangement, with revenue equalisation or insist on remaining within a union system with a block grant? With Scotland federated and not receiving a Barnett-based grant, there could be even less resistance to replacing Barnett with a

needs-based formula. It is possible Wales would thereby benefit from Scotland getting devo-max. However, I would not bet on it. The Treasury will still resist and Welsh bargaining power would still be pitifully small.

In my opinion, the Silk Commission should liaise with the Scottish government and other interested parties to try and understand exactly how they think devo-max would operate. Then it should demand some detailed work on the Welsh expenditure and revenue accounts. That would allow an informed comparison to be made among the different possibilities.

Some people are worried that Wales will not get a choice. If English politicians see it as a way to save money, could they not insist that Wales has the same federal arrangement as Scotland and look to reduce the scale of subsidies from the centre? I do not think that is a risk for one reason – Northern Ireland. The Irish unionists will fiercely resist anything that makes it look as if the ties with Great Britain are being weakened. English politicians will not disturb the fragile equilibrium in Northern Ireland. If they do not push the Irish into federalism it would surely be impossible to push the Welsh. We can be in a federation, like Scotland, or a union, like Northern Ireland. Our future is surely in our own hands.

The probability that Wales would indeed be initially worse off under its own version of devo-max, plus the innate conservatism of Welsh politicians and the electorate will presumably mean Wales opts to stick with union arrangements.

Nonetheless, the situation remains open-ended and is not easily predictable, as with constitutional developments in the UK more widely. We live in an interesting period. The Silk Commission will no doubt strive to rise to what Nye Bevan called "the imperious needs of the times".

Gerald Holtham was Chair of the Independent Commission on Funding and Finance for Wales.

Recession deepens north-south divide

Rob Lewis on why Wales is performing worst in the UK according to a new household financial index

The historic north-south divide has widened further since the start of the recession. This pattern is likely to continue against a backdrop of continued very modest UK average growth of only around 1 per cent in both 2011 and 2012, according to a new regional household financial stress index published in the PwC's latest UK Economic Outlook report.

Wales and the North East have suffered the greatest increases in household financial stress since the recession began, followed by the West Midlands. A mixture of relatively large increases in unemployment and economic inactivity rates, marked falls in house prices, and significant increases in personal insolvencies have all contributed to these results.

In contrast, the South East, the East and particularly London have suffered less since the onset of recession. This pattern echoes the long term trend in UK regional development of a widening north–south divide that has existed for a period extending well before the recession (although London continues

Figure 1: Regional Household Financial Stress Index
Source: PwC index calculations using data from ONS, Nationwide and Insolvency Service

Note: lower index value indicates lower stress level
(average index value across all UK regions set to zero)

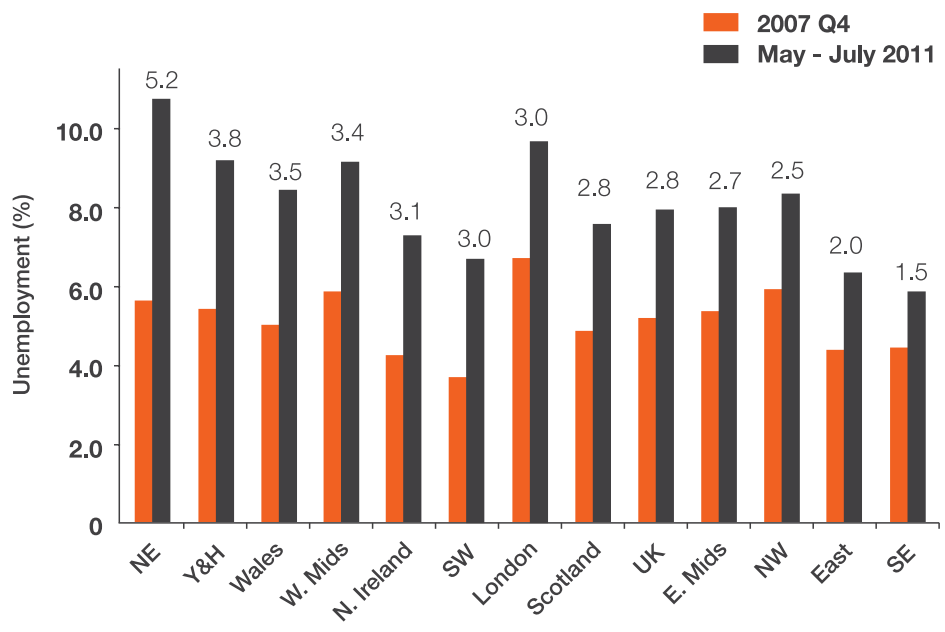


Figure 2: Unemployment rates in 2007 and May-July 2011, with numbers showing percentage changes between those periods

to score badly on some measures such as relative unemployment rates).

Straddling this geographical divide, the East Midlands region has performed more strongly than the West Midlands on these measures of household financial stress since the start of the recession.

Unemployment in the UK stood at 8 per cent in the second quarter of 2011, up by 2.8 percentage points from the end of 2007. UK house prices have fallen by 9.4 per cent on average since their peak in the third quarter of 2007. This year the public sector, which currently accounts for around 20 per cent of total UK employment, started to cut back severely on jobs. Wage growth has been subdued for some years relative to price inflation, while taxes have risen. All of these things mean that households are facing increased uncertainty and stress about how they will meet their future financial obligations.

To measure how these recessionary pressures have varied across UK regions, PwC's new household financial stress index combines publicly available data on key drivers of regional household financial stress such as unemployment and economic inactivity, earnings growth and personal insolvency rates, house prices and public sector employment. It focuses primarily on changes since late 2007, just prior to the onset of recession. Figure 1 summarises the resulting regional rankings.

Increases in unemployment and personal insolvency rates were the greatest contributing factors to Wales' relatively poor performance compared with the other economic regions across the UK. The unemployment rate, as measured by the Labour Force Survey, increased across the whole of the UK regions between the fourth quarter of 2007 and the second quarter of 2011. Figure 2 shows the unemployment rates in the two periods, ranked from left to right decreasing in the percentage point change in unemployment. The North East suffered the greatest increases; the unemployment rate has almost doubled, now surpassing London, which had the highest unemployment rate in 2007. Yorkshire and Humberside, Wales and the West Midlands have also seen relatively large increases.

The number of personal insolvencies

Increases in unemployment and personal insolvency rates were the greatest contributing factors to Wales' relatively poor performance compared with the other economic regions across the UK.

was increasing year on year for some time before the recession. The change between 2005 and 2009 (the latest year for which regional data is available) reflects the impact of the recession on the financial health of individuals. We use 2005 as a reference point to ensure that for both England and the devolved regions we take a point before the step change in insolvency that accompanied the recession. In England the significant increase in insolvencies happened in 2006, preceding the economy entering recession, perhaps because household debt levels were already high by that time. Figure 3 shows Wales and the North East experiencing the greatest increases in insolvencies and, as Figure 2 also shows, these two regions also saw relatively large rises in unemployment rates. London and Northern Ireland have experienced the lowest increases in personal insolvencies, despite having relatively high increases in unemployment rates.

Increased financial stress caused by the recession is a concern for households, government and business. Uncertainty about money leads people to stop spending, reducing overall demand and growth. In general, the regions of the South East and the East of England fare better on the index compared to those of the North, the Midlands and the devolved territories. This is consistent with the general pattern of regional development that existed before the recession.

Increased financial stress caused by the recession is a concern for households, government and business.

Uncertainty about money leads people to stop spending, reducing overall demand and growth.

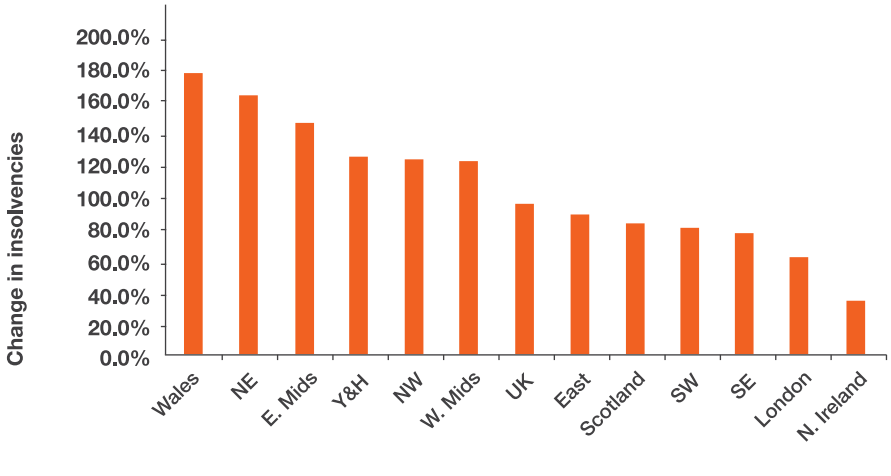
Our research also highlights how different London's experience of the recession has been from the rest of the economy. London performs worse than many other regions on measures such as unemployment rates. However, our index demonstrates that the impact of the recession on household financial stress has been less in London than in other regions, although it remains a region with high unemployment.

We expect UK GDP growth to remain subdued at only around 1 per cent in 2012, with consumer spending flat in real terms next year and unemployment likely to edge up as public sector job cuts outweigh private sector job gains. Unfortunately there will therefore be no early end to the financial pressures on households across the country, while our regional growth estimates suggest some further widening of the north-south divide next year.

Closing the north-south divide is becoming ever more difficult for government. Money is tight and the scope for significant transfers to more highly stressed regions is therefore limited. Businesses selling to households need to consider how their strategies can be tailored to these regional differences in financial stress, which look set to persist for some time to come.

Rob Lewis is Chairman of PwC in Wales.

Figure 3:
Change in number of personal insolvencies 2005-2009



Skills gaps revealed in Welsh workforce

Kevin Thomas reports on a new survey of the food and drinks industry in Wales

Service at the Chandlery restaurant in Newport – creating a 'sense of place' when promoting Welsh food and drink is an important element of enhancing the customer experience.

Food and drink is the biggest industry in Wales. From farming through to food and drink manufacturing, hospitality and retail, it employs 226,900 people - 18 per cent of the Welsh workforce - and generates about £6.5 billion in sales a year (see Figure 1). Little wonder therefore that Business Minister Edwina Hart has identified food and drink as a key priority for her Economic Renewal policy.

The results of a major new survey of the sector, revealing skills gaps at key strategic business levels, are of some consequence for the Welsh economy as a whole. The *Delivering Skills for Future Growth 2011* report, which surveyed 2,000 businesses in the food and drink sector across Wales is the largest ever research study undertaken to investigate employers' perceptions of current and future skills needs.

The survey demonstrated skills gaps in a number of key areas. Forty-five per cent of the businesses surveyed stated that there was a technical skills gap among their workforce, mainly relating to business, sales and merchandising skills, food technology, and operating and maintaining equipment.

A further 22 per cent indicated that there had been an occasion when their workforce did not have the necessary skills to satisfy the needs of their business. This equates to 14,000 workers with skills deficiencies across the sector in Wales.

The survey demonstrates that sales and merchandising skills, including branding and promotion, will grow in importance over the next three years. An additional 8,000 workers will need sales and merchandising skills training to meet the growing demand. Currently, the number of learners undertaking comparable skills training in Wales stands at about 3,000.

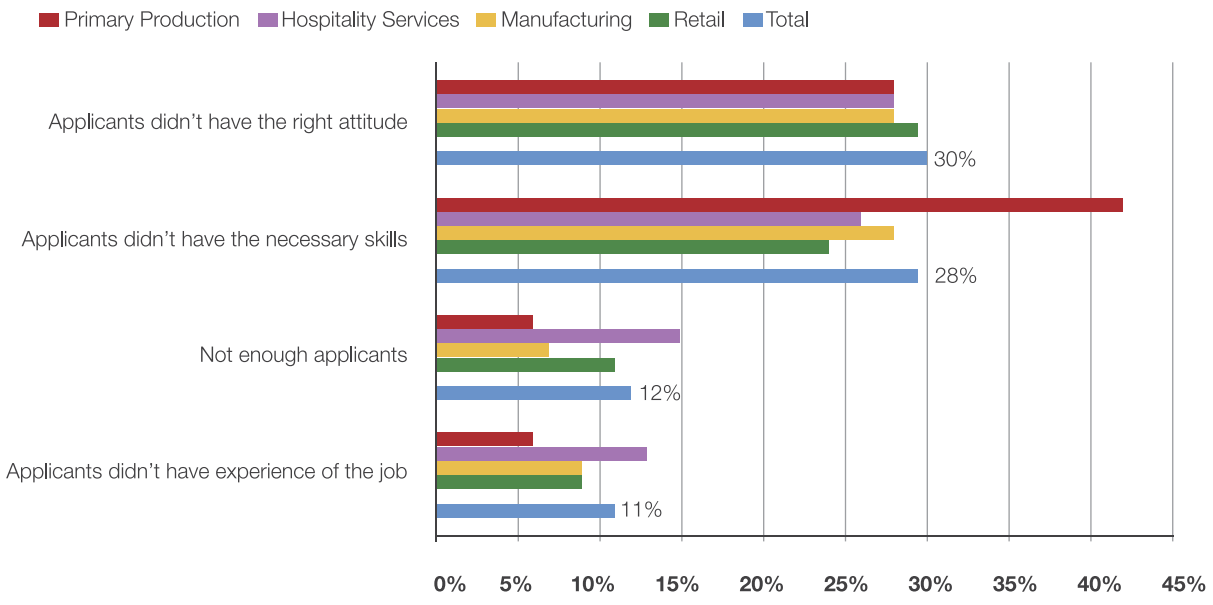
Recruitment was another problem with the report noting that the sector suffered from 'poor career perception' exacerbated by short term seasonal employment, mainly undertaken by higher and further education students as a stepping stone to other employment.

This was especially the case in the hospitality sector where more than 40 per cent of respondents noted other problems, including 'a lack of right attitude' amongst job seekers, leading to unemployability and unfilled vacancies. In many cases, poor standards of basic literacy and numeracy skills were issues among job candidates. Figure 2 summarises the

Figure 1: Employees, business and turnover in the Welsh food and drink sector

Sector	No. of employees[3]	No. of businesses[3]	Turnover (£millions)[5]
Primary Production	56,600	13,790	1,752
Manufacturing	21,200	560	467
Wholesale	8,800	695	567
Retail	62,500	3,805	1,440
Hospitality	77,800	8,665	2,292
Total	**226,900**	**27,515**	**6,518**

Figure 2: Reasons for recruitment difficulties in the Welsh food and drink sector



difficulties employers experience in recruiting appropriate staff.

The research found that training levels varied greatly across the sector. Some managers suffered from 'widespread apathy' toward training amonst their workforce. Others felt that further education was failing to equip students with the necessary skills needed by their businesses, while information regarding private training providers was difficult to come by. A number of commentators reported reluctance amongst managers to organise staff training because it was not remunerated or staff were not provided with time-off to undertake it.

The *Delivering Skills for Future Growth* report highlights the importance of producing greater added value within the sector for it to compete with the rest of the UK. This points to greater emphasis being given to training and business development. The report has five key recommendations:

1. Raise awareness and develop greater understanding of cross-sectoral skills within the Welsh food and drinks industry.
2. Increase the profile and understanding of careers within the sector
3. Develop a greater understanding of non-accredited training
4. Improve links between education and industry.
5. Enhance conditions that enable cross-sectoral business to take place.

The research provides a robust evidence base from which to develop strategies and secure the necessary funding needed to achieve these objectives.

Teifi Davies, farmer and owner of Llwynhelyg Farm Shop in Ceredigion. Adding value to primary production, such as diversifying into farm retail is one of the recommendations in the *Delivering Skills for Future Growth* report.

Kevin Thomas is National Director Wales of Lantra which provides training and skills development in the land-based and environmental sector. *Delivering Skills for Future Growth* can be accessed at www.foodanddrinkskills.co.uk

How we reproduce gender disparities

Alison Parken highlights the pitfalls of sidelining the contribution women can make to the knowledge economy

At present, a narrow focus on gaining intellectual property rights for technological innovation misses much that women do, and could do, in universities, the professions, management and businesses to contribute to economic growth. The *Economic Renewal Strategy's* focus on innovation in the STEM subjects - science, engineering and technology - where few women are employed, is also likely to have the effect of increasing gender income disparity.

The result will be continuing and reinforcing gender divisions of traditional labour markets in the emerging knowledge economy. Employment growth data for the last decade shows the gendering of occupations is moving into new economy areas. Men have obtained the majority of new 'quality' jobs in knowledge economy sectors, whilst the majority of the 15,000 new low-hours, low paid personal services jobs in Wales have gone to women.

Higher Education Statistics Agency full-person equivalent figures for staff in Welsh universities in 2007-08 show that women were just 11.7 per cent of the professoriate. In addition to vertical segregation, there are clear patterns of horizontal gender segregation by academic discipline. There are fewer than three women professors of physics, and no women professors recorded in mathematics, electronic and electrical engineering, pharmacology or microbiology - even though women predominate at undergraduate level in the latter two subject areas.

Fewer women professors than men in economics, management studies, accountancy, law and marketing suggest their lower participation in establishing new Knowledge Intensive Businesses. Nursing was the only academic subject in which women professors outnumbered men.

The result is that men receive a disproportionate share of Knowledge Transfer Partnership funding. An analysis of named lead researchers awarded funding in this area in Wales between 2003-2007 reveals that only 11 per cent (£413,000) went to women. Men in lead research positions received the remainder which amounted to £3.5 million. There was no funding for women in ICT, design or high value manufacturing, and just one woman in bioscience.

More women need to be enabled to reach lead positions so that they can make funding applications in STEM subjects. There needs to be more interaction between women in the research teams and business owners who tend to focus attention on lead researchers. We should also consider why economic renewal and innovation is not associated with the sectors and occupations where women currently lead.

Outside the academy, the 'knowledge workers' in the other two parts of the economic renewal mix will be professionals, senior managers and officials, and associate professional and technical staff, in business and government. **Table 1** shows that management and

Table 1: Gender and Occupation in Wales, 2008

	Men	Women	Total	Women as % of total
Managers and Senior Officials – All industries	111,400	62,800	174,600	35%
Managers and Senior Officials – Agriculture, fishing; energy and water; manufacturing; construction	39,200	8,000	47,400	17%
Managers and Senior Officials - Distribution, hotels, restaurants; transport and communication; banking finance and insurance etc.; public administration, education and health and other services.	72,300	54,800	127,200	43%
Professionals – All industries	87,800	70,500	158,300	45%
Professionals – Agriculture etc.	20,500	2,300	23,100	10%
Professionals – Distribution etc.	67,400	67,700	135,100	51%
Associate Professional and Technical – All industries	79,300	93,500	172,800	54%
Associate Professional and Technical – Agriculture etc.	16,200	6,500	22,600	29%
Associate Professional and Technical – Distribution etc.	63,100	87,000	150,200	58%

Source: Annual Population Survey, January to December 2008.

Table 2: Gender Balance in Public Bodies, October 2011

Body	Men	Women	Women Total
Ministerial Advisory Group for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills	3	3	6
Economic Research Advisory Panel	5	1	6
Wales Employment and Skills Board	10	2	12
Economy and Transport Ministerial Advisory Group	4	0	4
Design Commission for Wales	4	1	5
Enterprise Ministerial Advisory Group	5	2	7
Social Enterprise Ministerial Advisory Group	5	2	7
Total	**36**	**11**	**47**

Source: Public Appointments Division, Welsh Government

professional occupations in agriculture, manufacturing and construction are largely a male domain. No women were recorded as senior managers in the sub-category 'energy and water'.

Although there is gender balance of professionals in the Distribution sector, 82 per cent of women professionals in this category work in occupations in public administration, education, health and other services. A similar pattern is observable within the associated professional category.

Women are also under-represented on government advisory boards where decisions are made regarding economic strategy (see **Table 2**). Is this perhaps why women's innovation work in customer facing businesses, health, education, and service industries is less considered for investment funds?

The *Economic Renewal Strategy* must be responsive to the impact of social and economic divisions on its plans, and the effects of its policy decisions on reducing or further exacerbating existing disparities. Such divisions can be cemented by narrow definitions of 'innovation'. Indeed, in the Spring 2010 issue of Agenda, John Ball suggests the current approach is 'overly associated with technology'. He helpfully notes that much of the *added value* in innovation is achieved at the *exploitation* phase of new knowledge. He also says that innovation means the application of existing knowledge to new contexts, in either different places or different business sectors from their origin.

If government investment in economic renewal is to be wider than the six sectors originally identified, to now include food and tourism, and innovation in management and services is also recognised, then many more women could be brought within the funding frame – particularly in their considerable numbers in the value-adding areas of brand building and marketing in the *exploitation* phases. Women's businesses operate across the industry spectrum but, as with those of men, choice of business enterprise is influenced by employment experience. Given the extreme patterns of gender segregation, and the influence of anticipating the need to mix paid work with caring on choice of business start-up, women are much more likely to run consumer-orientated businesses. These are sometimes pejoratively termed 'lifestyle' businesses. Although they accounted for £8.6billion in UK sales in 2009 they are not considered to be in the frame for research, development and investment funding under economic renewal.

An evidence-based approach to funding innovation and knowledge transfer is needed. It should be one that includes customer-facing public, voluntary and market services. Policy needs a more sophisticated approach that recognises the different kinds of knowledge in play in the route from universities to markets. It should also do more to equitably serve Wales' diverse populations.

Here the legal requirement, which behoves the Assembly to 'promote equality', applies. Equality impact assessments are intended to acknowledge and analyse data such as that presented here, and use it to produce inclusive growth policies. This means we need policies to prevent gender disparities in the distribution of low and high quality jobs from continuing. Businesses recognise that the 'who' in innovation is significant as they attempt, through diversity management policies, to apply tacit and professional knowledge to products, services and markets. Public policy needs this kind of flexibility too.

Alison Parken is Senior Research Fellow at Cardiff University School of Social Sciences for the EURODITE research programme on knowledge transfer, and is a freelance equalities consultant.

Wales in a two circle Europe

David Marquand queries what the non-English nations will do if the UK opts to stay outside a newly integrating European Union

According to the pundits, Britain is not going through a 'constitutional moment' and is not about do so. For the foreseeable future, they conclude sagely, there is no chance of a comprehensive change in the constitutional architecture of the United Kingdom. More small-scale, piecemeal changes can be expected, but a constitutional Big Bang of the sort Charter 88 once dreamed of is for the birds. And what is true of Britain is, by definition, true of Wales.

I am not so sure. Two crucial developments have called the pundits' conventional wisdom into question. The first is the SNP's staggering success in the recent elections to the Scottish Parliament; the second is the current crisis of the Eurozone. Whatever may be true of England, Scotland is most certainly approaching a constitutional moment of some sort, and no matter what happens the rest of Britain, including Wales, is bound to be affected.

It is now virtually certain that the Scottish Government will hold a referendum on independence before the end of the current UK Parliament, and only slightly less likely that the Scottish people will be able to vote, not just on full-scale independence, but on 'independence lite' or 'devolution max' – in other words on fiscal autonomy within the United Kingdom. If the Scots vote for full-scale independence, the constitution of the rest of Great Britain will be up for grabs, with results that no one can foresee. But even if they reject full-scale independence and settle for independence-lite, the structure of the British state will be transformed – far more drastically than it was by the devolution statutes of the 1990s. Less obviously, a vote for the status quo would be equally portentous. It would be a vote against more powers, not just for Scotland, but for Wales and Northern Ireland too.

The long-term constitutional implications of the crisis of the Eurozone are harder to read, but they, too, are likely to be more portentous than most people on the British side of the English Channel yet realise. Built into the very structure of the Euro was a deadly flaw. Monetary union without fiscal union was always a nonsense. As far back as mid-1970s, when what is now the EU was still the European Community, the authoritative MacDougall Report showed that monetary union would be unfeasible over the long term without fiscal transfers from the more to the less advanced and competitive parts of the Community. This is what happens more or less automatically in modern nation-states by way of the national budget. I suspect that Helmut Kohl, the chief political architect of the Euro, knew this perfectly well. He didn't say so because he didn't want to frighten the horses, and thought monetary union would in any case evolve into fiscal union as time went on.

Unfortunately, he didn't anticipate the heady boom of the late 1990s and early 2000s, or the frenzied euphoria that accompanied it. While the boom lasted, complacency reigned. Everyone (notably including the British political class) thought the cycle of boom and bust, which has been intrinsic to capitalism for more than 400 years, had miraculously come to an

Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond's "staggering success" in this year's May election has changed the terms of the constitutional debate in Britain – "Scotland is certainly approaching a constitutional moment of some sort."

end. The Eurozone seemed to be in robust health, and it would have seemed indelicate to point to its in-built flaw.

Then came the crash and the flaw was exposed. Another flaw came into view as well: the yawning economic and fiscal gulf between weaker, largely Mediterranean countries on the southern periphery of the EU, and the stronger, more competitive heartland. Whatever may be in doubt about the current crisis, it is clear that it won't be resolved without significant transfers from the richer heartland to the poorer periphery. And in a crisis when everyone feels poorer and more vulnerable, voters in the heartland jib at that suggestion.

That is where we are now. Assuming Europe's rulers don't want to plunge the continent, and perhaps the world, into a crisis of mammoth proportions, they have two choices. The first is a two-circle Europe, with a much more tightly integrated inner circle and a less integrated outer one. The tight inner circle would consist of the original 'Six', minus Italy, but plus Austria, probably Poland and conceivably the Czech Republic and even Spain. There, the always inherent political logic of monetary union would finally prevail. Fiscal union would accompany monetary union; for all practical purposes so would political union.

The loose outer circle would consist of the rest of the current EU. Moderate euro-sceptics in the outer-circle countries would probably rejoice at first. They would look forward to a future of continent-wide free trade without tiresome Brussels rules or supranational institutions. But the rejoicing would not last. The tight inner circle would necessarily determine the fate of the entire internal market, *including the loose outer circle*. To protect themselves outer-circle countries would almost certainly engage in competitive devaluations and resort to *de facto* protectionism. An impoverished, resentful and fragmented group of countries in Europe's periphery would contemplate a tight group of rich neighbours across a gulf of jealousy and incomprehension. In the outer circle, the dynamic of the European project would go into reverse. The miracle of 60 years of peace in what had previously been a blood-soaked continent would be in jeopardy. It would be an unmitigated tragedy for the whole of Europe, and perhaps the world.

An impoverished, resentful and fragmented group of countries in Europe's periphery would contemplate a tight group of rich neighbours across a gulf of jealousy and incomprehension.

The other choice is to use the opportunity created by the second

most shattering crisis in the history of capitalism to launch a European New Deal, based on the principles of solidarity and justice, covering the entire territory of the enlarged EU. It would be designed to combat the deepening depression through an enlarged European budget, on Keynesian lines, and to replace the depression-fostering fiscal orthodoxy that now reigns almost everywhere. At the moment, all the main European capitals are dominated by latter-day incarnations of Herbert Hoover. It's time for European Franklin Roosevelts to take over.

Sceptics will say this is impossible. Sceptics thought the American New Deal was impossible before it got going. Sceptics in Europe thought the same before Monnet and Schuman launched their plan for what became the Coal and Steel Community and later the Economic Community. Such a New Deal offers the only real opportunity to create a social Europe able to counter the toxic mix of euro-scepticism and racism that now threatens to tear the Union apart.

At the moment, all the main European capitals are dominated by latter-day incarnations of Herbert Hoover. It's time for European Franklin Roosevelts to take over.

It would obviously necessitate fiscal union, governed and legitimised by democratic institutions in place of the technocratic ones that run the EU at present. That, in turn, would involve a giant step towards European federalism in place of the present uneasy half way house between federalism and confederalism. Probably the UK would stay out.

The great question is what the non-English nations of the Kingdom would do. Would they allow England to exclude them from the European destiny to which their histories and cultures entitle them? Or would they embrace Europe and escape from the decaying hulk known as the British state? These questions are not on the political agenda now, but the odds are that they will sooner or later reach it. It is time they figured in the conversations of all the nations of the Britannic Isles.

Professor David Marquand is a political writer and historian. His latest book is *The End of the West: The Once and Future Europe*, published by Princeton University Press earlier this year.

The best and worst of times

Roger Scully asseses the impact of the May Assembly election on the fortunes of the four main parties

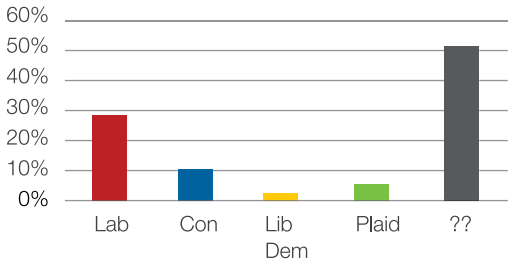
For two of Wales' main parties, May 2011 witnessed their strongest ever performance in a National Assembly election. Labour won their highest vote share yet on both the constituency and regional ballots, while equalling their 2003 performance in winning 30 seats. The Conservatives also gained their largest ever vote share, and reached a new high of 14 AMs. On the other hand, both Plaid Cymru and the Liberal Democrats experienced their worst devolved election yet. Both sunk to new lows in terms of vote share and seats won – Plaid Cymru 11 seats (down 4) and Liberal Democrats 5 seats (down 1). How can we explain these contrasting fortunes? Elections are complex things, inherently difficult to understand. However, there are some valuable insights in the 2011 Welsh Election Study, the most detailed examination of a devolved election so far. For Labour, 2011 was the election where they had just about everything going for them. They were no longer tarnished by association with an unpopular Labour UK government. Indeed, they were able to run largely in opposition to a deeply unpopular London government.

Yet Labour was not simply the beneficiary of an anti-UK government protest vote. In Carwyn Jones, the party had by far the most popular leader, someone whose standing in Wales was much stronger than any of the other UK or Welsh party leaders. The party also ran the most visible campaign – more voters recalled being contacted by Labour party workers than those from any of the other parties. Moreover, the party ran the most effective campaign. It did better than any other in converting positive sentiments about itself into actual votes in the ballot box.

With all these strengths behind it, Labour enhanced its position as by far Wales' leading political force. Possibly the

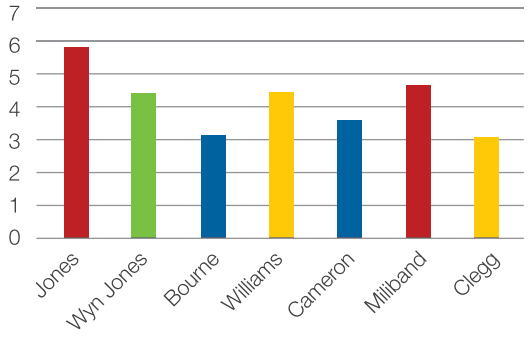
Q1

Which party ran best campaign?



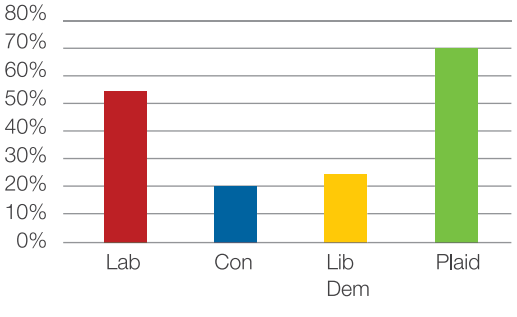
Q2

Party Leaders: Popularity
(Average rating /10, among those offering view)



Q3

How much does each of these parties look after the interests of Wales in general…?
(% 'great deal'/'fair amount')



only dark cloud on it's horizon is this: if they can't win outright majority in circumstances as favourable as those of May 2011, then when might they ever do so?

The Conservatives' strong performance in the election might be taken as proof that Cameronite 'decontamination', and Nick Bourne's long-term Welsh strategy, had reduced traditional hostility to the party in Wales. Yet our evidence suggests that the Tories' success in 2011 came despite considerable – indeed, in some respects growing – hostile sentiment towards the party persisting among much of the Welsh public. The blue tide also flowed despite rather negative evaluations by most people of the party's performance in government in London, and despite neither David Cameron nor Nick Bourne winning much affection from the voters.

The Conservatives' success this year speaks to some very effective on-the-ground campaigning – possibly helped by the simultaneous AV referendum motivating Conservative grass-roots supporters to get out to the polls. This made the most of the Conservatives' rather limited potential support base in Wales. For most of the public, voting Tory still appears to be not a serious option, limiting the party's potential future growth. With austerity likely to bite ever harder over the next few years, 2011 may be as good as a devolved election gets for the Conservatives for some time to come.

In many respects, Plaid Cymru's election performance is the most difficult to reconcile with much of the evidence produced by the our survey. This shows substantial positive sentiment towards the party, and very little hostility. Most voters think that Plaid is focussed on the concerns of Welsh people, and react positively to this. They also believed that the party had performed capably in government. Yet, very few make the step from having broadly positive attitudes to actually thinking of themselves as a Plaid supporter, or going out and voting for the party.

A number of factors explain this. Perhaps in part because it had expended much of its limited resources on the March referendum, Plaid was out-campaigned by Labour in the following election. But there also remained a problem of leadership. Whatever his other strengths, in 2011 Ieuan Wyn Jones was no great electoral asset to his party, as throughout his leadership. The substantial well of positive attitudes to the party that now exist offer significant potential for Plaid's new leader who will be elected in the New Year to increase the party's level of support. However, in 2011, Plaid Cymru's campaign offered voters no convincing reason to convert positive sentiments into votes.

Whatever his other strengths, in 2011 Ieuan Wyn Jones was no great electoral asset to his party, as throughout his leadership. The substantial well of positive attitudes to the party that now exist offer significant potential for Plaid's new leader who will be elected in the New Year to increase the party's level of support.

On paper the 2011 election result looks a considerable disappointment for the Liberal Democrats. In fact, it should be a substantial relief. Public attitudes towards the party had become substantially more negative in the year since the UK general election, while evaluations of the performance of its Ministers in the London coalition government were scathing.

While the net loss of one seat was hardly a triumph, things could easily have been much worse. Two factors saved the result from being a total disaster. The first was sheer luck. The party won four of its five seats through the regional lists. In all four cases, they won the final list seat allocated in that region. In two of them the marin was exceedingly close – in Mid and West Wales they won by 198 votes, and in and South-West Wales by just 54 votes.

It was bad, but it was so nearly very much worse. That it was not so should be credited, at least in part, to the party's Welsh leader, Kirsty Williams. Amid a tide of ill-will towards her party, Williams' relative leadership ratings – running ahead of those for both Nick Bourne and Ieuan Wyn Jones – stand out as virtually the only positive feature for the Liberal Democrats. Leadership, and luck, limited the damage suffered by the Lib Dems, and have created the opportunity for the party to re-build in better times.

Roger Scully is Director of the Institute of Welsh Politics at Aberystwyth University.

Opening a window on Welsh politics

Nick Bourne reflects how over the past decade Welsh Conservatives have come to terms with devolution

"The past is a foreign country, they do things differently there" says Leo Colston in the *Go Between*, and certainly the 1999 Assembly election campaign seems many continents away. David Melding, William Graham and I had been tasked by Rod Richards with writing the manifesto for the campaign. We duly did so. We formed a harmonious triumvirate and any differences were fairly easily ironed out. We spent some considerable time working on a detailed prospectus to put forward to the electorate. This was no easy task after the rout of the Conservative Party in 1997 and the unsuccessful 'Just Say No' campaign, largely but not exclusively Conservative-led, of the same year.

The manifesto was duly handed to the Leader and summarily consigned to the waste paper bin of what may have been. It was a moderate manifesto, but given the difficult circumstances of 1999, it could have given us more of a bridgehead than the nine seats that we ultimately secured on a very different manifesto which certainly did not 'Spare the Rod' even if it did spoil our chance. This was the low watermark of our performance electorally in the National Assembly. Nine members and no women delivered on a manifesto and an approach which the other political parties could easily hang round our necks as being out of touch, reactionary and unpopular. They duly did so.

Discussion was heated. I said I was unable to support a manifesto that referred to linguistic apartheid and which sought to make the Welsh language a divisive issue. Glyn Davies did similarly. The manifesto had sadly closed the windows and drawn the curtains on the new world of Welsh politics.

A few weeks later, and against a backdrop of criminal charges and a court case, Rod Richards resigned, making way momentarily for David Davies who he had made Deputy Leader. Ultimately, however, after a membership election I took over the reins.

It was clear to me that we needed not just to accept the new topography of Welsh politics but to embrace the new settlement. We duly did so. We played a full part in the politics of devolution. There was no talk of putting devolution into reverse gear or scrapping the Assembly. That didn't, frankly, make any sense politically, not in terms of the needs and aspirations of people in Wales.

At the same time it was clear to me that we needed, in that dreaded word, to 'Welshify' the Conservative Party. The Party was still the Conservative Party 'in Wales'. Less than a generation before it had regularly held its Welsh conferences

The Conservative Group, pictured in the Senedd during the Third Assembly 2007-11 – back row (left to right): Mark Isherwood (North Wales), the late Brynle Williams (North Wales), Darren Millar (Clwyd West), Paul Davies (Preseli), and Andrew R.T. Davies (South Wales Central); front row (left to right): Nick Ramsay (Monmouth), Alan Cairns (South Wales West), David Melding (South Wales Central), Angela Burns (Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire), Mohammed Asghar (South East Wales), Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales), Jonathan Morgan (Cardiff North), and Williams Graham (South East Wales).

in Ludlow.

Although it would be impossible to identify a birth date, during this period the Welsh Conservative Party was born. The wider Party accepted this fairly readily. Perhaps all of this was more easiily achieved by an adopted son of Wales from the other side of Offa's Dyke. We also changed our tone and our approach towards the Welsh language and Welsh culture in particular. It has always astounded me why a Conservative Party would not want to protect and enhance the language of Wales. We duly sought to do so and crafted policies for a Welsh National Gallery, a separate Welsh Archive in Aberystwyth, and generally strong Welsh institutions within a strong United Kingdom.

Through all this time I should say that I always enjoyed strong support and encouragement from a succession of Party Leaders. William Hague understood Wales. He had fallen in love with Wales as Secretary of State, and then fallen in love with Ffion, and his interest remained constant and unswerving. Iain Duncan Smith ensured that I attended Shadow Cabinet to raise and discuss Welsh issues. He also regularly held meetings with the Leaders of Scotland, Wales, the Lords and European Parliament to discuss how things were going.

Indeed, it was when Iain was Leader that we made our first advance electorally, gaining two extra seats and returning with two women members in the 2003 election. We were now in serious danger of becoming the second Party of Wales rather than the third. It was proof that our strategy was delivering for the Conservatives and for Wales.

The next four years represented solid progress and much joint working. The transforming nature of the new seating plan that Labour had proposed to the opposition parties, and initially fought against, can scarcely be overstated. I cannot now recall why the opposition parties were so against sitting together. It seems very obvious now, but sit together we did and from this stage co-operation became real. Familiarity did not breed contempt, instead it bred respect and joint working on many areas.

Moreover, beneath the mask of co-operation, there was much talk of a stronger formal alliance between the parties, and also with Peter Law and John Marek, during this period. There was the chance of a non-Labour alliance in government in Wales within eight years of the Assembly being created, something which would have been unthinkable under a Conservative Party that had not moved with the times.

Alas it was not to happen, although I can confidently say, and I don't think anyone would disagree, that this was not through any failing of the Welsh Conservative Party.

The Welsh Management Board unanimously backed a 'Rainbow' alliance and discussions were held at Westminster with David Cameron, and difficult issues were thrashed out. If it had been down to us it would have happened. Nothing that has happened since makes me believe that this is not the way forward. In the short term a broadly based alliance of parties other than Labour is the only realistic way of achieving a different and more beneficial approach in Wales.

During this period Michael Howard had become Leader with his Welsh roots in Llanelli and strong family and friendship ties with Wales. Michael needed no instruction in Welsh concerns. He was similarly supportive and helpful. However, by late 2005, a transforming event had happened to make life easier for Conservatives throughout the United Kingdom – the emergence of David Cameron.

At an early stage I declared my support for him. He visited the Assembly and it was clear that we could work well together on the Welsh approach that was needed. Indeed, his approach at Westminster chimed readily with me and my Assembly colleagues. David visited regularly and was always ready with support and encouragement. In 2007 we advanced electorally once more, this time going up to twelve seats.

Throughout this period we had been attracting people from other parties to our cause, both as voters and as politicians. We had real and demonstrable appeal. Familiar names on the Welsh political scene rallied to our standard – Guto Bebb and Mohammad (Oscar) Asghar from Plaid, Alison Halford from Labour, Rene Kinzett from the Liberal Democrats, and John Marek as well.

We had become a Party on the move. This was true of our entire period in the third Assembly. Although the chances to defeat the government were few and far between following the Labour-Plaid alliance, Conservatives remained a relevant and combative force in the Assembly. The energy and drive of our five new Assembly Members contributed significantly to this.

We had become a Party on the move. This was true of our entire period in the third Assembly. Although the chances to defeat the government were few and far between following the Labour-Plaid alliance, Conservatives remained a relevant and combative force in the Assembly.

In the 2011 devolution referendum the entire Party in the Assembly supported a 'Yes' vote for additional powers and many of the team vociferously so. Wisely, the Party itself took a neutral stance, strongly backed by myself and Cheryl Gillan, the supportive Secretary of State. Tolerance within the Party was to cause little or no problem during the campaign.

So arrived the 2011 Welsh Assembly campaign. On this occasion we emerged as the second party in Wales, increasing our seats to fourteen, this time with a swathe of talented women as well. Admittedly it didn't all go to plan and my own seat in Mid and West Wales, as well as Jonathan Morgan's in Cardiff Central, were a casualty in this campaign.

The history of this period demonstrates to me the importance for my successor keeping his foot on the accelerator within the Party to ensure we continue to embrace a Welsh agenda and make necessary changes to address the concerns of the electorate. There will always be a few dissentient voices, though thankfully fewer now. There will always be those who having seen the verdict from the electorate in successive elections at Westminster that they didn't want 'ham and eggs', believe that 'double ham and eggs' will be attractive for the electorate. Of course, this is neither a recipe for electoral success, nor sensible for the Welsh electorate. Such posturing is self-indulgent nonsense.

The approach pursued by our Group over the last twelve years has been correct. A mixed economy, progressive social policies, embracing the green agenda and generally putting forward a moderate centre-right alternative to the credo that has failed to deliver for Wales is the right approach.

The Welsh Conservative Group in the Assembly is talented, energetic and pragmatic enough to know this. We have amongst the ranks of our members an extremely talented team, with virtually every member considered to have credentials strong enough to be leading the Group. This all augurs well for the future.

A key feature of the recent leadership election between Andrew R.T. Davies and Nick Ramsay was the good natured tenor of the campaign, particularly given the closeness of the result. Both will play a key part in the future of the Party in the Assembly and more widely. They now have the opportunity to make the next decade of the Welsh Conservative Party even brighter and better than the last.

Nick Bourne was leader of the Welsh Conservatives in the National Assembly from 1999 to 2011.

Boundary obsessions

Paul Griffiths says we should put away our local government reorganisation maps

When we are at a loose end we turn to a Welsh pastime at least as old as the 13th Century Statute of Rhuddlan - we debate our boundaries. Sometimes we argue about the regions of the Welsh Rugby Union, sometimes the federations of the Women's Institute. As often as not we debate the boundaries of our local authorities. I have no doubt that the Welsh passengers on the Titanic debated the appropriate number and location of lifeboats even as the vessel tilted markedly.

This national pastime was given much impetus last July when the Minister for Local Government, Carl Sergeant, published a paper entitled *Approaches to regional collaboration: promoting coherence*. It was not a title likely to disturb the deluge of wood pulp that emanates from all governments. However, because it contained it a map with boundaries the paper was marked out as different from others of its kind.

When it appeared the map triggered a series of debates at the National Assembly and no doubt in every common room of the Welsh crachach. Was the Minister reorganising local government? Should he do so? What should the new boundaries be? Yet the paper's title indicates that the map is about promoting collaboration between local authorities rather than changing their boundaries. Repeatedly the Minister has insisted that this is his intention.

The 22 unitary local authorities have been exhorted to work together ever since they were created in 1994. It has long been argued by some that they are too small by the standards of metropolitan England. Others have said they could only justify their size and accompanying closeness to their communities if they combined active community engagement with a capacity to share scarce and specialist resources. This was the argument made in *Making the Connections* the Welsh Government's first foray into public service reform in 2004. It was also a major recommendation in the 2006 Beecham Report *Beyond Boundaries*. In each case we were being told that we should stop obsessing about boundaries and learn to make the connections across them.

Judged by the reactions to Carl Sergeant's map, these erudite and well considered reports appear to have had as much impact on the psyche of Wales' chattering classes as a fresh fruit stall in an alcoholics' convention. Notwithstanding everything the Minister says in explanation of his map, it has led to both an assumption and a clamour that local democracy in Wales should now be diminished and made more detached from local communities through a substantial reduction in the number of local authorities.

A deeper background to this turn of events lies in the different positions taken to the various reorganisations of Welsh local government across the 19th and 20th Centuries. Democratic local government first arrived for the whole of Wales in 1888 when the fabric of county administration was made subject to the control of 13 elected county councils. This was supplemented in 1894 by the creation of 165 municipal councils.

The great radical Liberal MP for Meirionnydd, Tom Ellis, saw these two Acts as the means whereby the common people of Wales could wrest control from the unelected 'Anglican Establishment'. Ever since, that 'Establishment' and its successors have continuously sought to emasculate local democracy and return political control to professional men of substance. The 1972 Local Government Act reduced the number of Welsh councils from 178 to 45. The 1994 Local Government (Wales) Act reduced the number still further, to 22. If the enthusiasts for the Sergeant map were to have their way then the number will soon be reduced to a mere six.

Those who present the Sergeant map as the precursor of six local authorities are queuing up to argue that the creation of 22 local authorities was the personal aberration of the notably aberrant John Redwood. This is a remarkable rewriting of history as Redwood inherited the

reorganisation bill from his predecessor David Hunt with no enthusiasm. Insofar as there was any Parliamentary enthusiasm for the Bill it came from his Labour shadow, Ron Davies.

The declared policy of the Wales Labour Party at the time was to create between 20 and 24 unitary authorities alongside a new National Assembly. Davies saw the passing of the Redwood Bill as a means of clearing the decks for a Devolution Bill as soon as Labour won the next general election. In his mind the merger of county and district was necessary to avoid the well rehearsed argument that an Assembly would introduce too many tiers of government. Crucially Davies conceded a committee guillotine to this Bill in return for Conservative support for a Labour amendment which created separate local authorities for Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil.

Welsh local government continues to be deeply divided over the last reorganisation. Many of the members and officers of the eight former counties have never been reconciled to the current arrangement. They continue to conspire for the return of the counties of that short period, 1974 to 1996, just as part of the populations of all the Turkic 'Stahns' have a continued nostalgia for the Soviet Union. They suggested to Carl Sergeant that a map would be useful and whatever he might say about its intended purpose they see it as a precursor to the return of those counties. There are also many in the Assembly and the Welsh Government who see collaboration as a messy interim, pending the money becoming available for the inevitably expensive business of reconstructing the counties.

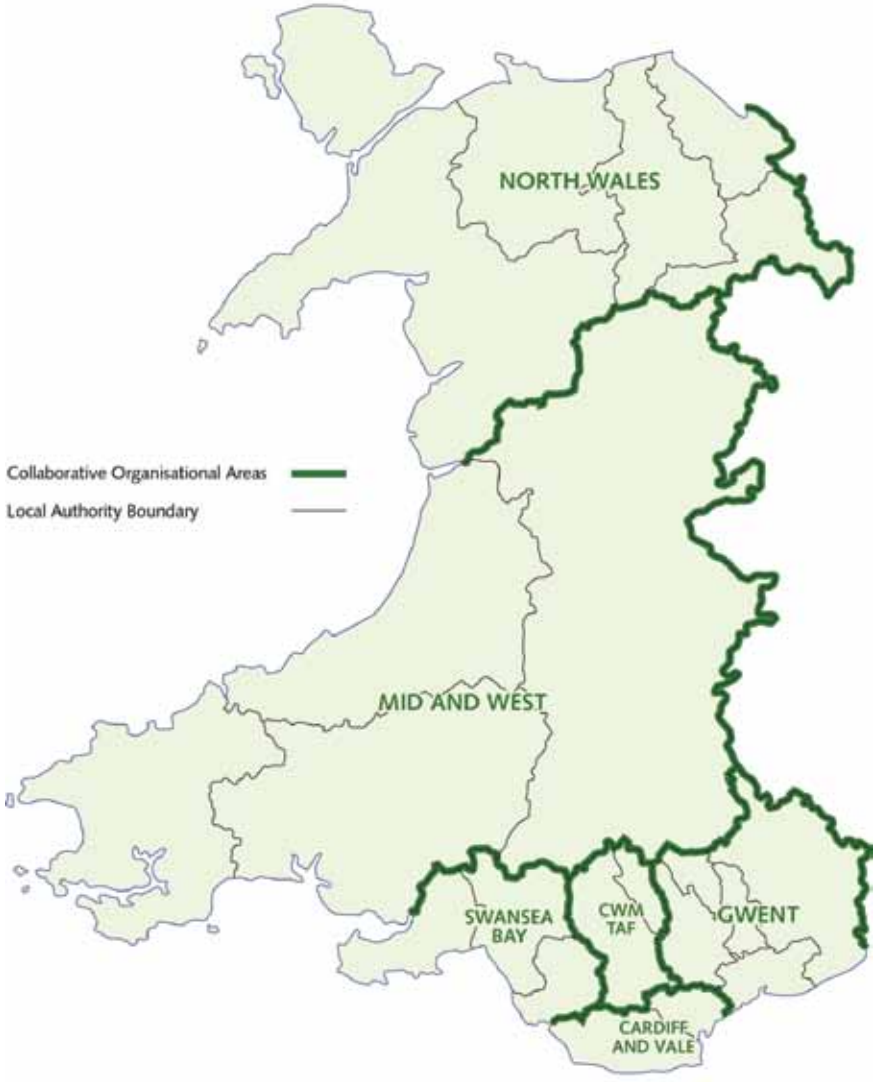
The refrain is that Wales has too much local government, too many directors and chief executives, and above all too many councillors. The assertion is that Wales is too small for such a fabric of local government. It is all too expensive and could be done better with fewer local authorities. But this assertion, so regularly repeated, is not backed by any evidence.

In fact, there is no evidence from across the world that larger scale local government is better or cheaper government. Finland, for example, has local authorities with an average population size of 15,000. These deliver an education and health care system of higher performance than anywhere else in Europe and they do this because they are able to engage with local people in shaping and delivering local services. Finnish local authorities work together in sharing specialisms as a matter of course - it is not regarded as exceptional or difficult.

The Welsh Government claims that its map is not a precursor to reorganisation but is an aid to achieving cohesion and accountability in the collaborative networks that Wales

Wales

Proposed alignment of collaborative organisational areas



Local Government Minister Carl Sargeant has any number of preoccupations to take his mind off local government reorganisation. Here he is pictured campaigning against speeding in the village of Higher Kinnerton near Chester, a stone's throw from the Welsh border, in his Alyn and Deeside constituency.

needs. It would have been good if this claim had been tested in public debate before the map was produced. We have already in place effective collaborative networks for transport planning, waste facility and social care procurement, and school improvement services. None of these networks conform to the map and all would be less effective if they were made to conform.

We do not make these networks accountable by fitting them into a map. We achieve public accountability by making sure that each collaborative enterprise has a clear agreement with each local authority. They should specify the service that will be provided at what cost. Such service specifications allow responsible officers and members in each local authority to hold the shared enterprise to account. The citizen continues to engage with the local councillor and the local authority, knowing that it is they who continue to be responsible for the delivery of any shared specialist service. We achieve cohesion at the front line in communities by ensuring that the police officer is connected to the school which is connected to the social worker who is connected to the GP and health visitor. We do not achieve cohesion in the strategies of distant bureaucracies.

Local authorities need to change. They need to be far more engaged with their citizens, supporting them to share responsibility for their health, their learning and their environment. They need to be far more engaged with business to develop the jobs that local people need. They need to be far more engaged with their staff helping them to re-shape their own workplace as they face difficult times. They need to improve their performance, matching and learning from the best. Inevitably, they will have to achieve more with less. Making these changes happen is not helped by another boundary debate.

Local authorities need to change. They need to be far more engaged with their citizens, supporting them to share responsibility for their health, their learning and their environment.

It is time that we in Wales put away our maps and boundaries and other childish things. We should seek to learn not so much from metropolitan England but rather from the smaller countries of mainland Europe. There we will find a wonderful diversity and complexity of municipal democracy, large and small councils adapting organically as they use their traditions and local roots to engage with local people in shaping services and communities whilst always looking for collaborative advantage in working with their neighbours. This is what the Minister says he wants to achieve and we should support him. I am just not sure that another map helped.

Paul Griffiths is a Public Service Consultant and a former Senior Special Adviser to the Welsh Government.

Assembly denies international role

Francesca Dickson queries the National Assembly's abandonment of its European and External Affairs Committee

In 2009 the Welsh Government published its first strategy for Europe, emphasising the need for increasing levels of engagement and recognising that "the European Union is integral to our policy ambitions". Meanwhile, through its European and External Affairs Committee, the Assembly has also 'reached out' beyond its borders, undertaking substantive enquiries into European policy, most notably the subsidiarity protocol, structural funds and cohesion policy. The Committee has also been a forum for working closely with Welsh MEPs and members of the Committee of the Regions. According to the Committee's 2011 Legacy Report, this approach allowed for the "early intervention" and "high visibility" required in order to exert influence on policy at the European level.

It is therefore perplexing that following the May election the National Assembly has abandoned European and international affairs as a distinct policy and scrutiny area. Instead, in the Fourth Assembly they are to be "mainstreamed into the work of the Constitutional Affairs Committee and the five 'thematic' committees". But is this simply a veiled diminution of the Assembly's European and international vocation?

The new Constitutional and Legal Affairs Committee's remit in ensuring the legality of all Assembly legislation is already so extensive that it calls into question its ability to develop the required expertise on European issues. It is indicative that in Standing Order 21, which sets out the Committee's functions, the specifically European aspects of its role, particularly subsidiarity monitoring, are given a minor weighting. Moreover, nowhere in the description of the Constitutional and Legal Affairs Committees' functions is *external affairs* even mentioned.

As for how coherent the attempt to 'mainstream' European issues is likely to be, a comparison with Scotland raises serious doubts. There the Scottish Parliament's European and External Relations Committee remains in being and a more robust approach to EU affairs is being developed. The Parliament is also improving its capacity for both scrutinising and engaging with European policy by formally designating EU 'reporters' on its subject committees to complement the work of the European and External Relations Committee. The job of the Committee is described as "horizon-scanning on behalf of the Parliament, acting as an informed and competent conduit for the subject committees". In addition it is responsible for "developing, monitoring, reviewing and updating the Scottish Parliament's European strategy".

In Wales, on the other hand, this job of coordination and rallying the Assembly in its approach to Europe is not clearly assigned to anyone. Rather, it is the responsibility of all members of the five 'thematic' committees to ensure that they are aware of any developments in European policy that might impact on their field, and to be part of communicating Welsh policy preferences to the EU level.

Although the Assembly's research service has launched a series of helpful 'EU policy-updates', the lack of a more systematic on-going review of wider trends and potential challenges in European policy by a dedicated Committee leaves open the possibility that important issues will simply pass the Assembly by.

There was a clear need to redress the Assembly's unwieldy committee structure, but this particular change may well prove a false economy. With the Assembly's enhanced law making powers, following the March referendum, the role of the European and External Affairs Committee was becoming more and not less important for Wales.

Not only is the Assembly adopting a divergent stance to the Welsh Government, which shows no sign of minimizing its external profile, but it is also swimming against the swelling tide of opinion in other European legislatures, which are seeking more engagement beyond their own territories.

In the void created by the Committee's dissolution, who is going to be scrutinising the Welsh Government's European and international policies? Who is ultimately responsible for the Assembly's external engagement? The answer is 'everyone'. The danger is that in practice that will mean no one at all.

Christine Chapman, Labour's AM for Cynon Valley (second from right) in Brussels earlier this year in her role as the Committee of the Region's rapporteur on the EU budget.

Francesca Dickson is a PhD Candidate at the Wales Governance Centre, Cardiff University.

Our central organising principle

Jane Davidson describes the legislative journey that is putting sustainable development at the heart of the Welsh Government

When the National Assembly for Wales came into being in 1999 it had a new and unique duty to make a Scheme on how it proposed to promote sustainable development in the exercise of its functions. This was seen as an extremely innovative and exciting duty, representing a new kind of democracy.

However, there was no definition of sustainable development to limit members' interpretation of the duty. Although the 1987 'Brundtland' definition was a starting point – that sustainable development should meet "the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" - it took a decade for successive Welsh Governments to develop a greater understanding of how this should be recognised in the Welsh context. Over that time the Bruntland general definition gave way to the development of high level indicators on the economy, social justice, environment, the ecological footprint and wellbeing. We recognised that we needed metrics against which real performance could be measured.

The journey was helped by the work of the well regarded and sadly now defunct Sustainable Development Commission. Its chair, Jonathan Porritt, suggested that Wales and Scotland might well be close to the *Goldilocks* (just right) scale for achieving sustainable development. This was because, as he put it, they could:

> "… bring all the relevant stakeholders round the table, and grasp the linkages between production, consumption and wellbeing that are at the heart of a rigorous understanding of unsustainable and sustainable forms of development."

It wasn't till 2009, with the publication of the Government's current *One Wales One Planet* scheme, that there was a specific attempt to explicitly bind the whole government into the duty. In that Scheme, a more sustainable Wales was being described as a country which:

- **Lives within its environmental limits**, using only its fair share of the earth's resources so that our ecological footprint is reduced to the global average availability of resources, and we are resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- **Has healthy, biologically diverse and productive ecosystems** that are managed sustainably.
- **Has a resilient and sustainable economy** that is able to develop whilst stabilising, then reducing, its use of natural resources and reducing its contribution to climate change.
- **Has communities which are safe, sustainable, and attractive** places for people to live and work, where people have access to services, and enjoy good health.
- **Is a fair, just and bilingual nation**, in which citizens of all ages and backgrounds are empowered to determine their own lives, shape their communities and achieve their full potential.

One Wales One Planet was a seminal document. Since the introduction of the duty ten years earlier, it was the

Jane Davidson promoting the Welsh Government's *One Wales One Planet* scheme in 2009 when she was Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing.

first scheme that articulated a collective commitment from all Ministers to use sustainable development as the central organising principle of government. Framing the debate in sustainability terms certainly assisted the cross-party, cross-sector Climate Change Commission as it wrestled with the all-party commitment on how to deliver 3 per cent annual greenhouse gas emission reductions. A similar focus also assisted the making of legislation around recycling.

To make sustainable development real, it must focus on outcomes. The Assembly's Sustainability Committee investigated the Government's delivery on two occasions. In addition, two external investigations tested both the practices and the policies:

1. The Welsh Auditor General investigated whether the concept was adequately embedded in the Government's own business practices.
2. WWF Cymru commissioned a piece of independent research looking at whether Ministers' policy commitments were actively delivering on the overarching agenda.

Both reviews found a mixed picture, although for the first time, key policy decisions taken in Wales on waste, climate change, retro-fitting housing, planning, education, and health were directly linked to sustainable development and were inherently different from decisions being taken elsewhere in the UK.

Two key lessons came out of the first decade on delivering the duty. First, that the existence of the duty was supported across all parties and seen as beneficial, as were the regular reporting arrangements which kept the issues in front of Members. Secondly, although innovative, the existing legislation from the Government of Wales Acts was inadequate. Effectively, there is no duty on the government to have a 'good' Scheme. As a result, in its manifesto for the last election, Welsh Labour outlined its vision for:

> "A sustainable Wales to become a 'one planet' nation by putting sustainable development at the heart of government; creating a resilient and sustainable economy that lives within its environmental limits and only using our fair share of the earth's resources to sustain our lifestyles."

That commitment is now being taken forward. In June the First Minister announced that the Government of Wales would, "Legislate to embed sustainable development as the central organising principle in all our actions across government and all public bodies". Further, there was a commitment for the legislation to "be monitored externally by a new independent sustainable development body for Wales following the demise of the UK wide Sustainable Development Commission."

We're now at the beginning of the next stage of the journey, which has the potential to completely transform the way the public sector operates in Wales. This will put the focus clearly onto taking actions which contribute to wider community well being. A decade of learning and review has brought Wales to a new understanding. First, defining sustainable development in law will make it real. Secondly, by also defining the necessary indicators to track progress in law we will create an effective process for managing conflicting priorities. Above all, we need to make a reality of sustainable development being the Welsh Government's central organising principle by:

- Introducing a legal framework for a sustainable development strategy which requires specified public bodies to refer to it in the context of their sustainable development objectives.
- Auditing its delivery through the usual audit mechanisms.
- Establishing the office of a Commissioner for Sustainable Futures as a strong and independent champion of the environment and future generations with significant powers and duties.

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Using a sustainability lens improves decision-making and provides the moral compass linking our activities with our effects across the world. Committing to sustainability as the Welsh Government's 'central organising principle' can underpin a new Welsh identity based on clear underlying values. Wales may be a small country but it has strong community values. It is the first Fair Trade nation in the world. It has a strong notion of fair play.

Wales has led the way on sustainable development to date. Its journey can help others. A Sustainable Development Bill will be produced next year with legislation delivered in 2013. When the world meets in Rio for the Earth Summit in 2012, a summit specifically focused on developing a global framework for sustainable development and promoting the green economy, the Welsh experience can set an example to the world.

Jane Davidson is Director of INSPIRE at Trinity Saint David University.
She will be speaking at the IWA's sustainable development conference *Wales' Central Organising Principle* in Swansea on 27 January 2012.

Glancing back to look forward

Meirion Thomas and **Martin Rhisiart** argue that today's era of economic difficulty should prompt some fresh blue sky thinking

We did it once… almost 20 years ago in fact. That's when the Institute of Welsh Affairs published a report titled *Wales 2010: Creating our future*, one of its earliest publications. Many people from different parts of Welsh society, organisations and businesses contributed to the development of the report. *Wales 2010* did not seek to forecast the future. Rather it sought to provide answers to the challenging question:

> "What should we, the people of Wales, do to enable Wales to be one of the most prosperous regions in Europe by the year 2010?"

That year came and went without a considered retrospective on the recommendations of the report and how Wales has fared over the intervening years. This article is intended both as an initial assessment of the report and a critique of recent and current approaches.

As that 2010 horizon passed from view, we were commissioned by Forfás, Ireland's main economic policy body, to develop a 'catalogue' of materials summarising the global drivers and trends that the Irish economy will need to react to over the next 10 to 15 years. The catalogue's scope is wide, covering potential global political, economic, demographic, technological and environmental changes. Its purpose is to stimulate and inform debate and discussion under the auspices of a Ministerial 'strategy group' tasked with prioritising investment in science, technology and innovation research where commercial and social returns can best be achieved over the next 10 years.

A particularly rich irony was not lost on us in all of this. Here we were, Welsh consultants and advisers working in a country that, at the time, in late 2010, was on a day-by-day basis collapsing into economic and financial turmoil. Not only that, but we were sitting down every day with politicians, civil servants and business leaders discussing medium to long term futures and getting active and engaged inputs and ideas while all around us things seemed to be increasingly hopeless for the country and its people.

Meanwhile, back Wales our conversations with similar senior people were dominated by worries about internal re-organisations, the loss of economic development funding and doubts about whether European Convergence money could be spent and if it could be, would it be worthwhile.

Surely, something was wrong here. Who had the correct sense of their priorities? This got us thinking. Why were our Celtic cousins engaged in long-range, long term thinking while back in Wales we were are not at all similarly engaged?

The IWA coordinated the *Wales 2010* report in the pre-devolution age, a time of the Whitehall-respectful Welsh Office. In today's age of Welsh democratic politics and policy-making, surely the time should be ripe for a little blue sky thinking, some gentle horizon scanning or at least some creative and open dialogue about the future direction of and priorities for our economy and society?

Sadly, the opposite seems to have been the case. Dialogue, discussion and openness to new ideas seem to have almost totally closed down. It probably will be argued by some that long-term thinking is an expensive luxury. However, compared with much of the research and analysis commissioned by Government, the costs of Foresight exercises, which use a range of materials published internationally, are quite reasonable.

Others might say that Ministers need

Why were our Celtic cousins engaged in long-range, long term thinking while back in Wales we were are not at all similarly engaged?

We don't have a lot of natural economic assets any more but we do have lively and creative minds.

The Welsh Baccalaureate was a major innovation stemming from the IWA's *Wales 2010* report – "a ground-breaking initiative… which has received good results and international acclaim."

to focus on the short-term needs of the economy at a time of financial constraint. Whilst Governments need to react to current events, they also need to instil clear, strategic thinking into their decision-making, and take account of the long view. While 'short termism' is apparently unacceptable when applied to bankers, plc's and their shareholders, it is an acceptable defence in policy making.

Yet, as the Old Testament prophesised, 'Where there is no vision, the people perish' (Proverbs 29:18). We cannot not think and debate our future.

The *Wales 2010* report called for a Wales technology and innovation strategy to help decide on priorities and to establish innovation as a key driver of growth and prosperity. The outcome was the Wales Regional Technology Plan which has since been emulated all over the EU. Following the development of that Plan, Wales' performance in innovation and R&D improved until the millennium. However, since then it has fallen away. The response? There has been no sign of a Wales Innovation Plan since 2003.

Another major innovation emanating from the 2010 report was the Welsh Baccalaureate, a ground breaking initiative that many people in the education and political world got behind and which has received good results and international acclaim.

Two other significant long term strategic initiatives and exercises also began their progress within the pages and discussions around *Wales 2010*, the Wales Information Society Programme and the Entrepreneurship Plan. Both were regarded almost universally as bold activities and followed the Regional Technology Plan format of open discussion, debate and consensus building before being put into action. Sadly both initiatives faded in the period up to 2005 and have largely been left behind by the current Welsh Economic Renewal Programme.

The point here is not that these initiatives, plans or strategies were perfect and that we should revive them, far from it. They had their day and the world has moved on. The real point is that the *Wales 2010* exercise engaged many people without vested interests, spawned widespread debate and enthusiasm for thinking about our collective long term future as a country. As a result it achieved a great deal.

If the Irish can still recognise that they need to revitalise their thinking as a key part of revitalising their economy, how much more is it vital for Wales at this time. We don't have a lot of natural economic assets any more but we do have lively and creative minds. Let's try and get back to a position where we can engage them in the art of thinking about the future openly and honestly. We did it once.

Meirion Thomas is the Cardiff-based Director and UK partner of the CM International Group, a European strategy consultancy.

Martin Rhisiart is the Director of the Centre for Research in Futures and Innovation at the Glamorgan Business School, University of Glamorgan, and Chair of the UK Node of the Millennium Project, a global futures think-tank.

Welsh forestry could become collateral damage

Jon Owen Jones questions the projected merger of the Forestry Commission with Environment Agency and Countryside Council for Wales

There are considerable risks with merging the cultures, pensions, estates, IT and branding of three organisations into one. There are dangers that that costs will not be controlled, that cultures will clash rather than meld, that focus and purpose will become blurred and that a new identity will be slow to form whilst the old brands wither. For these reasons restructuring should not be considered lightly.

In the Treasury's cautionary warning, there needs to be a 'compelling case'. You have to be convinced that the new organisation will be better and more efficient than the old ones. This could be because you know that the new system will work superbly or because you know that the existing one is broken.

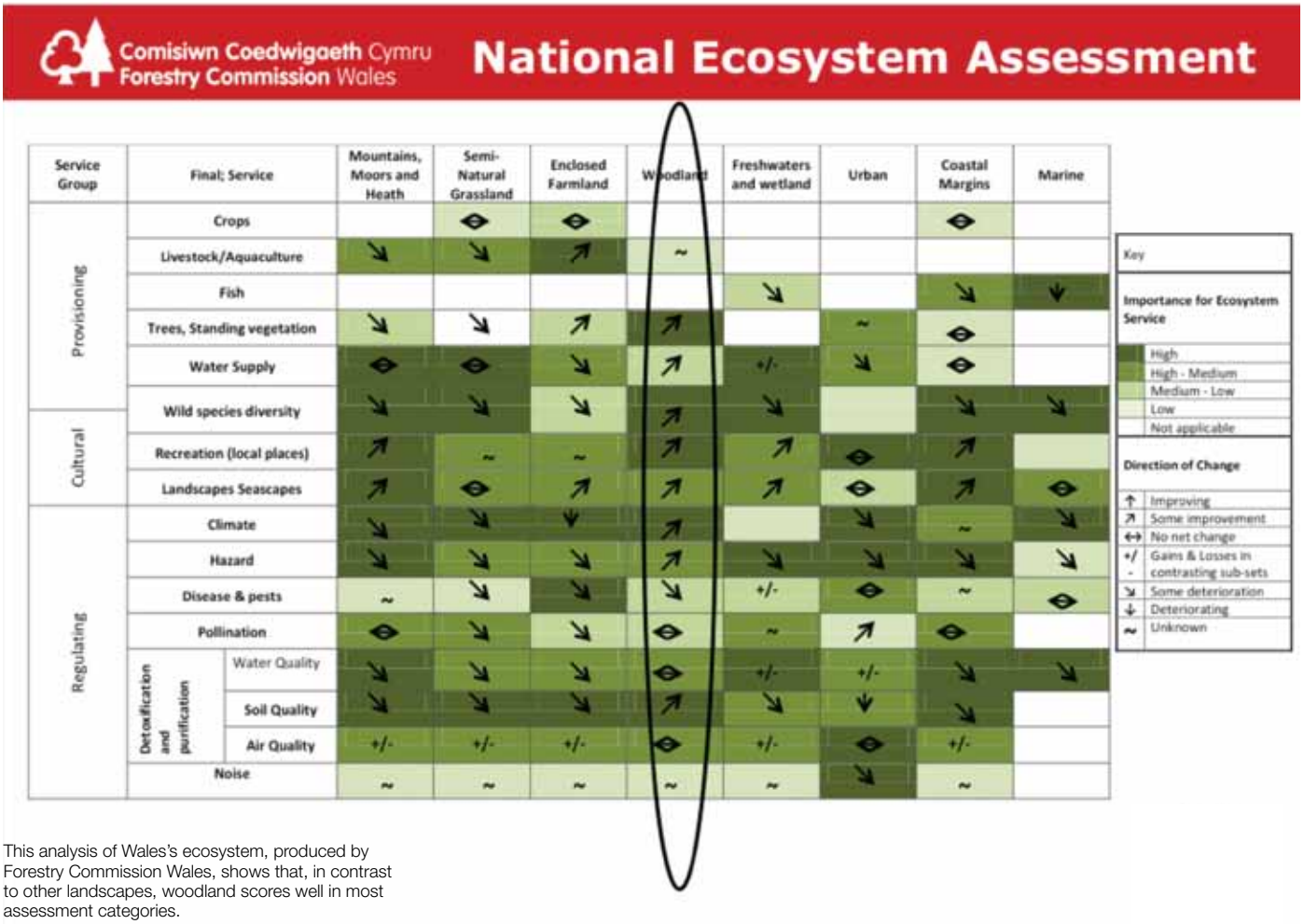
So far the team responsible for making the case for a merger between the Environment Agency, Countryside Council for Wales and the Welsh Forestry Commission is afraid to publically base their argument on the idea that the current system is broken. Instead they are forced to take a heroically optimistic view of the new body's future. In doing so, they hope to construct a solution to a problem that they are loath to acknowledge.

That problem is that environmental regulation in Wales does not work well. In general it finds it difficult to balance wider benefit against specific threat. This is partially the result of European legislation but it is also magnified by our institutional structures.

Let me illustrate this with two examples. The Welsh Forestry Commission has spent five years getting an agreement with the Countryside Council for Wales over the appropriate extent of Pine Forest as opposed to open sand dunes on the Anglesey coast. I am not alone in thinking that an agreement could and should have been reached in a speedier and less costly fashion. This dispute had little or nothing to do with the economy. Rather, it was about trying to balance the interests of local people who were largely in favour of the trees, red squirrels (I think you can guess whose side they are on) and European directives on restoring sand dunes.

My second example is current and has great economic importance and you may find it passing strange that it is never mentioned in any documents on the merger proposal. The largest power station built in the UK in 25 years is almost completed in Milford Haven. It is due to open next year but that is now in doubt because the Countryside Council for Wales opposes its cooling system. Our other regulatory body, the Environment Agency gave the developers a green light some time ago. However, the Countryside Council is firmly signalling red.

Now, there may be some who regard a disagreement between the Countryside Council for Wales and the Environment Agency as constructive tension. However, that would not be the view of anyone in the Welsh Government who had



This analysis of Wales's ecosystem, produced by Forestry Commission Wales, shows that, in contrast to other landscapes, woodland scores well in most assessment categories.

responsibility for infrastructure planning or inward investment. By the way, the company involved - RWE - has not only invested £800 million in this project, it is also considering spending billions on new nuclear power at Wylfa.

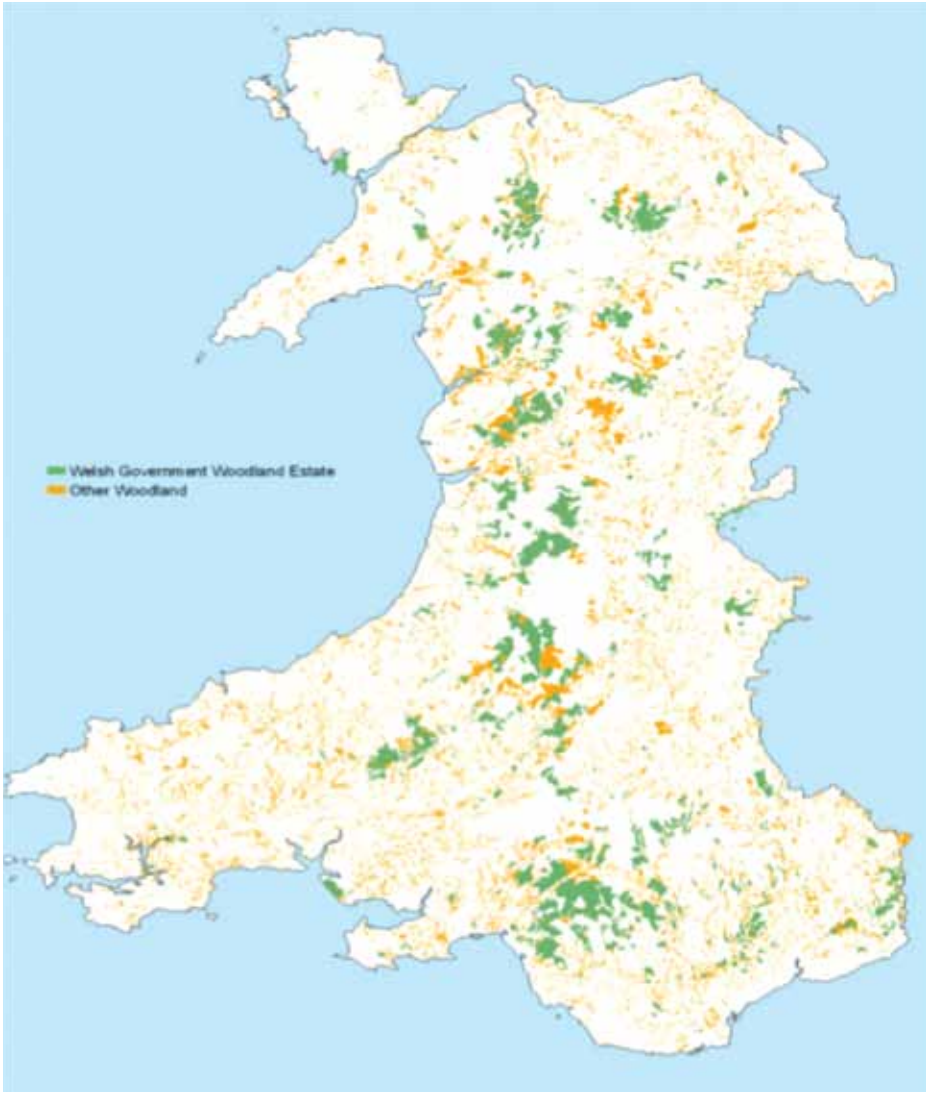
Whatever your view of these developments it is not difficult to understand why the Welsh Government would prefer a different system of regulation. A merger between the Countryside Council and the Environment Agency would result in a single voice. Its governance would be crucial. How will it balance economic, social and environmental pressures whilst gaining and keeping the confidence of the Welsh Government in its decisions?

Even without a merger there are two strong arguments in favour of breaking up the England and Wales Environment Agency. Financially, Wales appears to get a poor deal. As things stand we make little use of the services for which we pay. Also it makes sense to devolve control of water resources to Wales, a power that is likely to be of increasing importance in future.

> The board of the Forestry Commission in Wales finds the case for its inclusion in the merged body a very optimistic assessment of the benefits and risks.

But why include the Welsh Forestry Commission in this merger? Control over our estate is entirely devolved and the costs shared across the rest of the UK are good value and in any case are entirely voluntary. We play no part in wider Environmental Regulation so why are we included? What do we bring to the table? I heard a senior civil servant answer this by saying "forestry is collateral damage in a wider cause". Perhaps it would be more accurate to think of us as a dowry to sweeten the merger for the weaker partner.

What makes us desirable is our land, six per cent of Wales. This land asset is already managed on behalf of the Welsh Government and its foresters are answerable to the Minister for the care of that estate. Where is the benefit in transferring the land to a new body? The board of the Welsh Forestry Commission finds the case for its inclusion in the merged body a very optimistic assessment



Woodlands are generally improving. Why would anyone therefore conclude that the body responsible for the management of woodlands needs to be abolished?

of the benefits and risks.

In particular, there are risks to the estate itself. Unless the IT, Pensions, and VAT costs all prove to be as optimistic as hoped, the new body will quickly find it has a difficult decision to make. It will have to cut back its services or sell some assets - the main asset of course being the forests.

In addition to the possibility that we may need to underwrite revenue costs, there are also significant capital costs in the new body. It would be responsible for flood prevention. What happens if, as is quite likely, a major flooding incident occurs in the next few years? There could then be a call for a flood prevention scheme for which there would be insufficient capital. It could be in a marginal seat in an election year. Imagine the clamour for action. Moreover, the merged body would have the capital assets to get the work done. All it would have to do would be to sell some forests.

Set against these risks are the alleged benefits to environmental stewardship gained by having one environmental regulatory body for Wales. The objective case for this is that measured by results, as opposed to aspirations, our environment has supported a declining biodiversity over recent years. However, a closer analysis of these results shows an exception to this adverse trend. Woodlands are generally improving. Why would anyone therefore conclude that the body responsible for the management of woodlands needs to be abolished?

Space doesn't allow me to detail other arguments against our inclusion, save to mention that the Commission is an unusual public body in that it trades in the market place. We sell wood and always have. As a result there is, in part, a commercial culture in the Forestry Commission. In my view this is a considerable strength. It helps us gain the trust and respect of the wood industry and of farmers and landowners in general. It is the base on which we develop our increasing interest in renewable energy. It reminds us that the countryside is not only a place to visit, it also needs to generate an income for those who live there.

The Forestry Commission isn't perfect and I am not complacent. There is far more we can do, especially in helping to develop employment opportunities. However, I cannot see how this merger would help. In fact, I think it is likely to do the opposite.

Jon Owen Jones is Chair of the Welsh Forestry Commission.

Environment Agency and Countryside Council in planning collision

Gordon James says a nearly built power station in Pembrokeshire is testing the Welsh Government's commitment to sustainable development

The Milford Haven waterway has been granted one of the highest forms of international legal protection as the Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation under the European Union's Habitats Directive. Yet, a major gas-fired 2000MW power station, near Pembroke on the Haven's southern shore, is being allowed to use a water cooling system that will threaten millions of fish and other species.

This is the view of the Countryside Council for Wales which is opposing the development. The almost completed power station's 'once through' water-cooling system would extract 3,456,000 cubic metres of water from the Milford Haven waterway each day. This is equivalent to three times the combined average flow of the two Cleddau rivers draining into the estuary. The (often bleached) water would then be discharged back into the Haven at 8oC above ambient temperature. A court ruling in the USA has concluded, "The environmental impact of these systems is staggering."

While the US Environmental Protection Agency no longer regards once-through cooling as Best Available Technology for coastal power stations, the Environment Agency in Wales is willing to permit it in this magnificent location. It appears that the Environment Agency made a major error when, in 2008, it rejected the advice of the Countryside Council for Wales and granted the company an abstraction licence for the power station's cooling system. By doing this, it impaled itself on a bad decision that set it on a disastrous course.

The substantial harm to aquatic life that the power station will cause has been a major factor in the dogged disagreements between the Countryside Council for Wales and the Environment Agency over the project.

Despite its protected status, the Milford Haven waterway already has a sub-standard conservation record, with just a third of the fifteen "protected" habitats and species in a favourable condition. Friends of the Earth Cymru has become increasingly concerned over recent years that significant industrial developments which affect the Haven have been approved by various authorities without adequate appropriate environmental assessments being undertaken, as required by the European Directive.

When Friends of the Earth Cymru first opposed the power station, its main complaint was that the waste heat being dumped into the Haven should and could have been used in a combined heat and power system. The quantity of waste heat is vast, equivalent to 40 per cent of Wales' electricity demand. There is a ready demand for the heat on the shores of Milford Haven where the imported Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) has to be heated from minus 162oC to return it to its gasified state.

The power station should have been sited close to the LNG terminals on the other side of the Haven and suitably sized to generate electricity for the grid and provide heat for the terminals. It seems that the only reason we now have an over-large power station in the wrong location is that the site, which used to be an oil-fired power station, was already owned by the power company, RWE npower.

RWE npower's almost completed Pembroke power station which was allowed an environmental permit by the Welsh Government in November 2011.

When it is up and running the new Pembroke power station will extract 3,456,000 cubic metres of water from the Milford Haven waterway each day – equivalent to three times the combined flow of the two Cleddau rivers.

If we look east to Kent, which cannot boast a marine environment comparable to Milford Haven, we can see how things should be done. At the new gas-fired 1275MW Isle of Grain power station, waste heat is piped almost four kilometres to re-gasify LNG at the importing terminals. This reduces emissions of carbon dioxide by 350,000 tonnes a year, increases the efficiency of the power station by around 20 per cent, and avoids harmful impacts to the local marine environment. It will also provide many long-term jobs.

Yet here in Wales, where we pride ourselves on being a world leader in sustainable development, a wasteful and environmentally harmful power station has received considerable political backing. The previous local MP, Labour's Nick Ainger, and the present incumbent, Conservative Simon Hart, have both supported its construction. Disappointingly, when he was former First Minister, Rhodri Morgan, with echoes of his backing of the grotesque Ffos-y-Fran opencast site just 35 metres from homes in Merthyr Tydfil, also gave the decision to build the power station a warm welcome.

It seems sustainable solutions to our energy needs are overlooked by politicians dazzled by the gleam of corporate promises in the new not-so-green Wales. While the lure of 'jobs' is understandable, it's hugely embarrassing that 'sustainable' Wales has been eclipsed by Kent in the use of a basic combined heat and power technology that brings environmental and economic benefits.

Permission to construct and operate Pembroke power station was granted by David Miliband, when he was Minister for Energy and Climate Change, on 5 February 2009. He did this without ensuring an Appropriate Assessment of the impact of the project on the Milford Haven's Special Conservation Area, which Friends of the Earth Cymru believes is required, by the Habitats Directive. Indeed, this was also advocated by both the Countryside Council for Wales and the Welsh Government.

In April 2010, the Environment Agency announced a public consultation on an application by RWE npower for an environmental permit to operate the power station. Friends of the Earth Cymru was so appalled by what the consultation revealed it was compelled to submit a complaint to the European Commission, prepared by environmental barrister Peter Roderick, pointing to apparent breaches of European environmental law. The main points of the complaint related to:

- The failure by the Department of Energy and Climate Change to undertake an Appropriate Assessment of the impact of power station on the Milford Haven waterway.
- Benefit of doubt under the Habitats Directive must legally be given in favour of 'protection', and not in favour of 'operation'.
- Cogent reasons had not been given by the Environment Agency for rejecting Countryside Council for Wales' advice.
- Direct once-through cooling is not the 'Best Available Technique'.

Friends of the Earth Cymru also wrote to Wales' then Environment Minister, Jane Davidson, asking her to call-in RWE npower's application to determine compliance with European law.

The response of the Pembrokeshire press to the complaint was predictable, with both the Western Telegraph and the Milford Mercury leading with 'Threat to Jobs' headlines. Little attention was given to the threat to fishing, to the economic value of a healthy natural environment, or to the fact that combined heat and power systems create more jobs per unit of energy generated than conventional power stations.

The complaint was backed by Jill Evans MEP, triggering angry responses from Alun Davies AM and the deputy leader of Pembrokeshire County Council, Cllr John Allen-Mirehouse. Friends of the Earth Cymru hit back by accusing the county councillor of supporting a second-rate technology for Pembrokeshire.

On 21st February this year, the European Commission announced that it had taken up Friends of the Earth Cymru's complaint and will be conducting a rigorous inquiry. The group responded by calling on the Environment Agency to put on hold the approval process and by asking the Welsh Government's Environment Minister

to direct it to do so. Both requests were refused. However, the Minister made it clear that the Welsh Government would "keep under consideration its powers to recover the RWE npower application for decision by the Welsh Ministers and to issue directions to the Agency".

> Commission and the courts to intervene."

Within a few days, the Minister intervened, directing the Agency to suspend determination of the environmental permit and raising two pages of questions in relation to the assessment. The Agency has, as a result, undertaken an extensive re-write of its assessment and, although this has addressed some of the many concerns raised, the main grounds for objection remain.

This case is proving to be a huge embarrassment for the Environment Agency in Wales and will be a stain on its reputation for many years to come.

Despite continuous strong opposition to the proposal from the Government's environmental advisers at the Countryside Council for Wales, the Environment Agency announced that "it was minded" to issue an environmental permit but that it would submit its draft response to a public consultation process beginning on 17th May. The Countryside Council remained unimpressed. In a letter to the Agency on 15t July, it stated:

> "The Countryside Council for Wales objects to, and continues to oppose, this development in its present form. Our main concern continues to be the use of once-through direct cooling and its consequential adverse impacts. We therefore object to the granting of this permit."

Friends of the Earth Cymru's response to the consultation was scathing. Its legal adviser Peter Roderick stated:

> "The Environment Agency's assessment of the power station's impact on the fragile Pembrokeshire coast is inadequate, incoherent and unlawful. It accepts that there will be more negative impacts on the Haven, but is trying to wriggle out of the legal consequences. Welsh Minister John Griffiths must step in to protect this precious part of Wales for future generations - if he won't, we may have to rely on the European

We were not surprised to learn that this 're-write' has been sufficient to persuade the Welsh Government, once it had given the appearance of flexing its muscles, to revoke its blocking of the environmental permit. Allowing the power station to go ahead in this manner will surely further antagonise the Countryside Council for Wales.

This case is proving to be a huge embarrassment for the Environment Agency in Wales and will be a stain on its reputation for many years to come. Unfortunately, this is not the first time the Agency has rejected, with some arrogance, the advice of the Countryside Council for Wales on environmental matters. The Council's calls for stricter controls on nitrogen oxide emissions, which fuel acid rain and climate change at Aberthaw power station, have been ignored. As a consequence, Aberthaw is one of the largest emitters of nitrogen oxides in Europe. The German owners of Aberthaw, RWE npower, would not be allowed to get away with such environmental negligence in their own country.

These disagreements raise serious concerns about the effectiveness of the proposed body that will emerge from the amalgamation of the Countryside Council for Wales, the Environment Agency in Wales and the Welsh Forestry Commission. In a unified body, it is difficult to see how the independent voice of the Countryside Council would be heard. Strong objections from the government's environmental scientists might have to quietly acquiesce within office walls to the regulatory priorities of the Agency.

Under the heading 'Standing up for the Environment and Sustainability', the Welsh Labour Party's Manifesto for the Assembly election in May stated:

> "Welsh Labour's vision is for a sustainable Wales to become a 'one planet' nation by putting sustainable development at the heart of government; creating a resilient and sustainable economy that lives within its environmental limits and only using our fair share of the earth's resources to sustain our lifestyles."

The Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation is already in an 'unfavourable' conservation status, despite many years of supposed strict legal protection. The Welsh Government's failure to 'call-in' the power station application, and possibly force a re-engineering of the cooling system, will make its on-going degradation more likely and the achievement of a sustainable Wales even more remote.

When tough decisions are needed to deliver sustainable solutions, 'Aberthaw', 'Ffos-y-Fran' and 'Pembroke' show that actions in Wales are falling well short of the rhetoric. The proposed Sustainable Development Act must ensure that shameful episodes such as these are a thing of the past and that Wales reaps the economic and environmental benefits of embracing the cleanest and most efficient technologies.

Gordon James, former Director of Friends of the Earth Cymru, now campaigns with Pembrokeshire Friends of the Earth.

When Wales was imagined as one gigantic chapel

Prys Morgan looks back at a 19th Century figure who gave Welsh Nonconformity its national personality

When Dr Thomas Rees died in Swansea in 1885 aged seventy, his funeral was the largest ever seen in the town. Shops were shut, streets draped with black crape, mayors and MPs, secular and religious bigwigs from across Wales, and from academic and nonconformist circles in England, wound their way from Walter Road Chapel, where there was special music composed and played by Joseph Parry, all the way to Bethel, Sketty, the main nonconformist cemetery.

The bier was arriving at Sketty just as the last of the hundreds of mourners were leaving Walter Road. Although Swansea, led by Rees, had lost the battle to Cardiff to found a university college in 1883, Cardiff sent a delegation to the funeral. The late Dr Tudur Jones said that the great Welsh Victorian preachers needed to have the constitution of an ox. Rees, a pulpit giant in an age of pulpit giants was indefatigable as lecturer, writer, translator, journalist, historian, member of innumerable committees, twice president of the Union of Welsh Independents, and as he died, president-elect of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. He was the subject of a massive but highly readable (and often surprisingly critical) biography by his friend John Thomas of Liverpool in 1888. And today he's wholly and totally forgotten.

Rees, though born to a background of mid-Carmarthenshire rural craftsmen - makers of straw ropes and beehives - spent his ministry in industrial towns, Aberdare, Aberbargoed, Beaufort, Llanelli and, from 1862 for the rest of his life, Swansea. Part of his appeal to his listeners was that they came from this background too, and had moved from country to industrial ports or valleys. A local evengelical revival in 1828 seems to have triggered a desire in him and other teenagers to preach, and by the age of eighteen he was working as an assistant to the famous David Rees of Capel Als, Llanelli. His role was to warm up the congregation before the pulpit celeb was ready to utter.

Thomas Rees' family persuaded him to go to work in the mines in Aberdare. He loved the buzz and liveliness of Aberdare and Merthyr, but hated the hard slog of work underground. Although he had had little formal schooling, and had had to learn English from Gypsies passing by, he went to Craigybargod in 1836 to open a school. This was a period when chapels large and small were opening at a rate of at least one a fortnight all over Wales, and Rees was offered a part-time ministry by twelve members for ten shillings a month.

In 1838 he married in Tredegar the daughter of a local farmer who persuaded the young couple to run a general stores at Aberbargoed which the family owned. It turned out to be a disaster. This was a period of economic crisis in south Wales, and the village was one of the centres of Chartists who took part in the Newport Rising of 1839. Rees complained that Chartists thought they were above needing to pay shopkeeper's bills. Creditors closed in quickly, Rees was arrested for debt, and ended up in Cardiff jail.

He was bailed out by his in-laws, and then invited to take up a ministry in Aberdare. In 1842 he was called by his old friend David Rees to take on the ministry of Siloh, Llanelli, and help with his journal *Y Diwygiwr* (The Reformer). Rees's bad tangle with the Chartists in 1839 made him a lifelong believer in constitutional Liberalism. In the 1840s he became deeply worried about the disorganised nature of Welsh nonconformity in general and his own denomination, the Welsh Independents, in particular.

Rees envied England which had much richer Independent causes and already a Congregational Union by 1833. He had a Victorian concern for efficiency, and began a lifelong struggle to build up a central organisation for the Independents. This was to make him many enemies among his fellow ministers, but it culminated in the Union of Welsh Independents in 1872.

Image of Thomas Rees, as shown on the cover of John Thomas's 1888 biography *Cofiant y Parch T. Rees DD, Abertawy.*

In the 1840s Rees also became a busy journalist, pamphleteer, and historian. He wrote several biographies of preachers, and discovering manuscripts of the 17th and 18th Centuries in the process, gave him a real taste for history. He realised that only by studying manuscripts could he sort out the early history of the Independents from that of the Baptists and Presbyterians in Wales, and only by reading church history in general could he sharpen his arrows in his fight with Anglican journalism. He needed to define the cause he was fighting for, as well as the ' cause' in the religious sense, by defining its origins, sufferings and progress.

He returned to the industrial hills in 1849 becoming minister of Beaufort. It was now he began to display his sympathetic concern for the vast hordes of English workers pouring across the industrial Valleys of eastern Wales, estimating that they formed about one in ten of the population of Wales. Not only were they unlikely to attend Welsh chapels, they might (horror of horrors) attend an Anglican church. He organised two conferences on 'The English Cause' in 1853 and 1860. He also visited rich cigarette manufacturers such as the Wills brothers of Bristol and the owners of the huge Crossley carpet factories in Leeds, to elicit funds for building English-language chapels and to support ministers' widows and children.

Hobnobbing with the Nonconformist 'Rich List' allowed Rees a chance to work in the archives in London, Oxford and Cambridge on his great work *The History of Protestant Nonconformity in Wales* (London, 1861). Written in English, it was meant to impress English nonconformists, and British Liberal opinion in general, with the amazing history of the immense recent growth of Nonconformity. The religious census of 1851 had shown that the great majority of worshippers in Wales went to nonconformist chapels of one sort or another, and Rees was sure there had been great advances in the 'chapel cause' in the years fom 1851 to 1861. Rees' book was unrivalled, had great success, and he was given a doctorate from Ohio University in 1862. There had been sectarian histories before, and one or two histories of religion, but this was the first attempt to define Nonconformity as a whole, and in a national Welsh context. When he published a second, augmented edition of the history of Nonconformity in 1883 he added towards the end a wonderful picture of the working class of Wales, civilized and educated by schooling and chapels.

In 1861 Rees answered a call to take up the ministry of Ebenezer Chapel, Swansea. His energy made Swansea the centre for the Welsh celebrations in 1862 of the 200th anniversary of Nonconformity – it was considered to have started with the ejection of Puritans from the Church of England in 1662.

He became active in Swansea Liberal circles and worked to get his friend, the Swansea builder Evan Matthew Richards, elected as MP for Cardiganshire in the election of 1868. He imitated Henry Richard (another minister, elected MP for Merthyr in that election) by publishing, one year after Richard had published a collection of essays seeking to define Wales as a nonconformist nation, his own *Essays on the Social and Moral Condition of Wales* (1867).

These essays, based on lectures he gave the length and breadth of Wales, and on letters sent to friends and adversaries, offer a real insight into the Welsh Victorian mind. Rees argued that reports of Welsh indiscipline and anarchy had been greatly exaggerated. Unfortunate violent movements such as Chartism were all vile imports from England. The true Welsh working class being entirely lamblike and respectable. The essays include a remarkable lecture on 'The alleged unchastity of Wales', the allegations coming from the Blue Books of 1847. Rees was able to show how much more unchaste the women of many English counties were. There are essays, too, on education and revivals and, of course, 'The English Cause'.

When I first came to Swansea fifty

years ago, the older generation told me their parents remembered Rees very well. Above all, they recalled his regular commercial breaks in the sermons when he would admit to being a heavy smoker himself, and add, "You young lads on the gallery, I've seen you smoking after chapel, well, always remember to smoke Wills' tobacco". Of course, Wills brothers financed many of Rees's pet schemes.

He never lost sight of his aim of welding the separate local churches of the Independents into a Union, which was founded in Swansea in 1872, in the teeth of opposition from many of the traditionalists. From 1870 to 1875 Rees and his friend Dr John Thomas of Liverpool (great-uncle of Saunders Lewis) published four volumes in Welsh on the histories of each Independent cause in Wales. This great work, which is still indispensable for historians, arose from Rees's desire to publish all the material he had gleaned from manuscript collections, and from Thomas's good knowledge of recent developments. Was this perhaps a well- timed sop to the old guard of Welsh Independency, since it was written in Welsh and concentrated on the minute details of each local church?

John Thomas himself brought out a fifth volume some ten years later, providing further statistics about the apparently unstoppable advance of Nonconformity. Thomas said that he always feared an excess of chapel building, and rather doubted whether so many resources should be given to the reduplication of chapels by the 'English Cause'.

The Welsh Victorian press published enormous numbers of biographies of ministers, the celebebrities of that period, and of histories of dissenting causes in areas and counties in Wales. What is so striking about Thomas Rees is that he wrote a history of the whole of Welsh Nonconformity, and backed it up by a series of polemical essays, all in English, to argue the importance of Nonconformity in Welsh society.

There were many causes for Rees' view of Welsh history, in which Welsh nationhood is expressed through Nonconformity. There were the needs of the sects themselves. Sects needed to be told about each other, so as to be readier to present a united front in the battles that lay ahead. Although their numbers had rapidly expanded, until that period they were people of little or no status in society. In the early 19th Century the Anglicans had often been the leaders of Welsh culture, and that position needed to be usurped. There was a serious need to show the Welsh themselves as well as outsiders, that they were no longer violent, like the previous generations disturbed by Scotch Cattle, Chartists or Rebecca Rioters.

There were the needs of Welsh Liberalism, and the need to put pressure on future MPs from Wales to attend to Nonconformist demands. There were the needs of the Welsh themselves, to find a more modern and progressive self-image to replace the outdated Romantic picture created by wrirers and artists in the 18th Century. Rightly or wrongly, the Welsh Nonconformists imagined that the Blue Books of 1847 attacked not only the nation, but Welsh Nonconformity for causing the backwardness of Welsh society described so unflatteringly in the commissioners' reports.

The generation of nonconformist leaders of the 1860s such as Thomas Rees, David Rees, Henry Richard and others, wished to create a new image of a businesslike, disciplined, progressive Wales led by the Nonconformists and their Liberal allies. Thomas Rees was well aware that for their aims to succeed they would need the help of Nonconformists and Liberals in England. Writing these works in English was a canny gesture, carefully designed to appeal to them for generosity and cooperation.

Rees's biographer John Thomas says that he was a great man, and yet confesses that he cannot exactly put his finger on his greatness. I should think that it must be something to do with being such a symbol of an age when Nonconformity and Liberalism were coming to a peak of success. His part in the success was to define Welsh Nonconformity, to give it a 'national' personality, and to create an image of Wales the Welsh felt they could identify with and fight for.

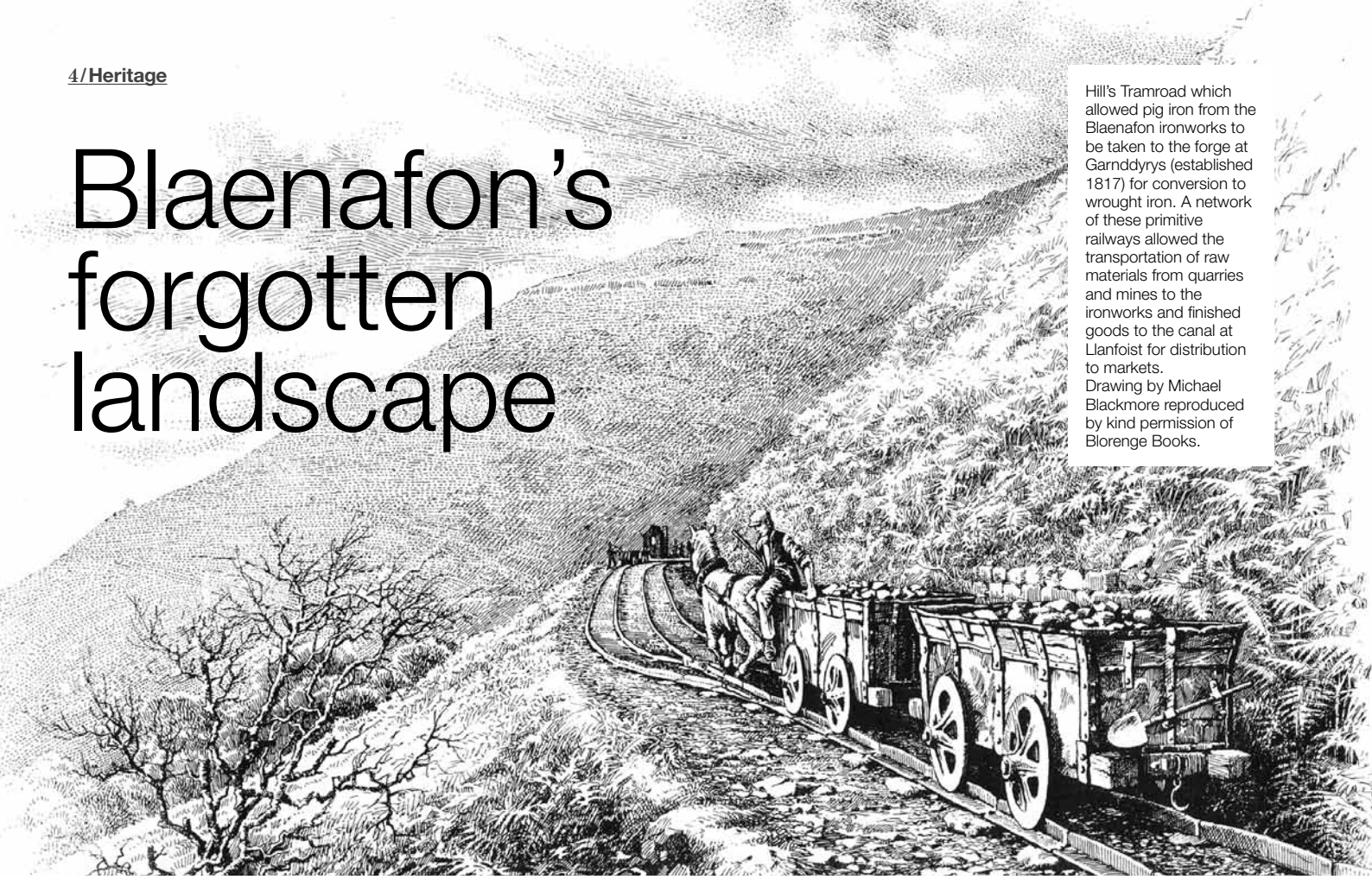
To some extent Nonconformity went on expanding until the First World War but, according to Dr Tudur Jones, it was seriously challenged from the 1880s onwards. The modernising forces of popular culture, entertainment and sports, joined with the secular educational system to confront the ethos and mores of the Nonconformist outlook. Then, like all religious movements at the time, it found it difficult to meet the crisis of faith presented by the cataclysm of the Great War.

Many will argue that religion has taken all sorts of new pathways since 1914-18, but most of them have led away from the world of Thomas Rees and made his image of Welsh history seem more alien and irrelevant. His part of Victorian Wales has probably become the most unrecognisable for modern Welsh people.

However, I feel strongly that he needs to be rescued from the ignorance and condescention of posterity. Thomas Rees was a very clever practitioner of history, and in his own times one of the most successful. When I came to Swansea fifty years ago, the novelist Penelope Lively was the wife of a University colleague of mine. In her superb novel *The Treasures of Time* she remarks, "Private distortion we all indulge in, in our private lives. Collective distortion must be left to the professionals". In his day writers like Rees were in many ways the nearest thing that Wales had to professional academic historians. With the benefit of hindsight we can see that he distorted Wales' image for his own purposes, turning the whole of the country into one gigantic chapel. He made a remarkable contribution in his day to Welsh historiography. And, collective distortions or no, we forget people like him at our peril.

Prys Morgan is Emeritus professof History at Swansea University. This essay is based on a presentation he gave at a Bangor University event in July: *Writing Welsh History, 1850-1950* - a conference to mark the centenary of J.E. Lloyd's *History of Wales* (1911).

Blaenafon's forgotten landscape



Hill's Tramroad which allowed pig iron from the Blaenafon ironworks to be taken to the forge at Garnddyrys (established 1817) for conversion to wrought iron. A network of these primitive railways allowed the transportation of raw materials from quarries and mines to the ironworks and finished goods to the canal at Llanfoist for distribution to markets. Drawing by Michael Blackmore reproduced by kind permission of Blorenge Books.

Steven Rogers explains how sustainability has been built into a three-year heritage project

Nature is slowly re-greening Blaenafon's previously barren, black and disfigured uplands, while the common land is gradually reverting to agricultural use. Yet during the 18th Century Blaenafon was one of the most productive ironworks anywhere in the world. Mines were sunk, tram roads, tunnels and canals were built, vast areas of spoil appeared and slowly the 'iron mountain' was transformed into a 'man made' industrial landscape.

Nearly a century after mining came to an end it is easy to forget just how important Blaenafon was as an iron making and coal producing town. Fortunately, in the late 1980s, a few visionaries realised that the ironworks provided the most complete example of early mining technology anywhere in the world. Moreover, the landscape had not been significantly altered by land reclamation as had happened across most of industrial south Wales.

Much of the site's industrial archaeology, including mine shafts, buildings, water features and transport routes had survived. It was this which made the case for Blaenafon being designated as an industrial landscape World Heritage Site in 2000 so compelling. It was designated by UNESCO as a 'cultural landscape', a relatively new concept at the time that acknowledged the Site's largely man-made character.

In 2010 a three-year £2.5 million Forgotten Landscapes scheme was launched to conserve and promote this heritage. Funded principally by the Heritage Lottery Fund this is delivering the following projects:

- Conservation of the many industrial artefacts in the landscape.
- Restoration of the upland grouse moors to conserve valuable habitats, encourage the recovery of species such as the red grouse, and bring about sustainable grazing.
- Tackling illegal off roading, fly tipping and arson by a police officer seconded from Gwent Constabulary.
- Family friendly trails with high quality interpretation focusing on the area's heritage.
- Education programmes targeted at local schools to support the National Curriculum and raise awareness of the global importance of the heritage landscape.
- An outreach campaign to raise awareness of the project.
- A volunteer ranger group to continue delivery of the scheme when the three year programme ends.

By 2020 it is envisaged that Blaenafon will have become an internationally recognised visitor attraction. In addition visitor numbers will have increased significantly; the commoners will

have achieved a level of sustainable commons management, the scourge of bracken encroachment will have been addressed and the heather moor land will be well on the way to recovery.

The plan is for local community groups to be involved in developing and maintaining their own heritage projects and for the volunteer ranger group to be operating as a not for profit company. To support the ongoing management a £200,000 micro hydro system is being installed on the Afon Lwyd. This is projected to earn £30,000 a year from green energy payments. Other renewable energy technologies are being explored with the aim of making the Blaenafon World Heritage Site financially self sustaining.

The budget for archaeological and geological work is £109,000. One of the key projects is the unearthing of the two-and-a-quarter mile Pwll Du tramroad tunnel which was a vital element in the transportation of raw materials to the ironworks and exporting iron to the outside world. This important feature has been buried under spoil for over half a century. The work is now near completion and the site will soon be open to visitors.

Coal spoil is another example of industrial archaeology with great heritage value. However, it is difficult to manage and interpret. Not only is it inherently unstable, it is also an unwelcoming environment. Big Pit's Coity Tip has been chosen to present coal spoil as a heritage feature. At a cost of £37,000 this will include improved access, a nature trail and research into restoration methods. Other big budget projects include:

- Access and interpretation, £450,000.
- Education, £168,000.
- Commons management and wildlife conservation, £641,000.
- Developing the volunteer workforce, £148,000.

In addition, many of the low cost projects will also have a significant impact on the conservation and development of the area as a heritage tourism destination. Several community groups intend to develop their own heritage trails, publish and sell books on local history and conduct archaeological research.

This holistic approach also extends to the relationship between the World Heritage Site's principal partners. Blaenafon Ironworks (Cadw), Big Pit Mining Museum (National Museum Wales), Torfaen County Borough Council and the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. Together they have developed ideas collectively, share responsibility for maintenance of new facilities such as access improvements, reprinting trail guides and the like.

Grant aid for ambitious projects often results in short term and dramatic gain followed by gradual decline as the money and motivation dissipates. The underpinning vision of the Blaenafon Forgotten Landscape scheme is to build in sustainability beyond the three-year life of the funded project. So, for example, the continuation of the 'heritage labour force' will be resourced by income generated by the micro hydro scheme. Through forward planning all of the interventions initiated by Blaenafon Forgotten Landscapes project will be underpinned by the ongoing work of the volunteer rangers.

Bracken management on Coity Mountain using tractor pulled bracken bruisers.

Remains of Blaenafon ironworks, photographed during last winter's snow.

Steven Rogers is Partnership Scheme Manager for the Blaenafon Forgotten Landscapes project
www.visitblaenavon.co.uk

View of the site of White Rock copper works established at Pentrechwyth in the Lower Swansea Valley in 1737.

Heritage and the new experience economy

Huw Bowen explains how the Lower Swansea Valley's industrial past is providing a catalyst for inward investment and new jobs

The Lower Swansea Valley Project was a remarkable achievement. Begun exactly fifty years ago, it transformed Europe's largest post-industrial wasteland, and made the Swansea Valley green again. Where once copper slag heaps and mile-after-mile of derelict buildings had littered a moonscape, there is now an environment that is fit for people to live, work, and play in. Swansea can rightly be proud of the partnership between its University and local authority that first drove this unique experiment in landscape engineering. But what happens next?

This question raises interesting issues about what happens to regenerated areas in their post-project phases, which in the case of the Lower Swansea Valley now extend for some thirty years or more. Of course, good regeneration schemes become self-sustaining, with growth and further development occurring as a result of conditions created by a particular project. But only rarely is there no further need at all for further intervention from external agencies, especially during periods when entirely new forms of regeneration are developed to address redefined economic and social agendas.

As an economic historian I stumbled almost by accident into the Lower Swansea Valley through an academic interest in the historic copper industry and the impact that it had on the development of Asia. Around Swansea was located the first globally integrated heavy industry, which from 1720 onwards served to place Copperopolis at the heart of a world-wide network of commercial connections. As an early crucible of innovative economic activity, the Lower Swansea Valley was as important to Britain's industrialisation as Coalbrookdale, and by 1880 the Valley was one of the most intensively industrialised parts of Britain.

However, with the decline of the copper, coal, lead, zinc, silver and tinplate industries came rapid de-industrialisation. By 1960 the Valley was left in a poisoned, polluted, and deeply scarred state, with little remaining of the heavy industrial activity that had shaped its development. At this point, the Lower Swansea Valley Project intervened.

To those aware of the international significance of the history of the Lower Swansea Valley, today's primary challenge arises from the uncomfortable fact that most of the historic environment has been destroyed during the course of successive regeneration projects. In a sense, this wholesale destruction is quite understandable. During the 1960s regeneration the primary aim was to create an environment that was fit once more for economic and social activity. Consequently, the most urgent priority was to clear away waste tips and abandoned works, which was done in vigorous and systematic fashion. Indeed, the Territorial Army was used to blow up industrial buildings, which to many people symbolised the excesses of unregulated industrial capitalism.

Such extensive destruction of 'heritage assets' is also understandable because during the 1960s there were only sketchy notions of what is now routinely described as 'heritage-led' regeneration. Indeed, at that time the word 'heritage' had not yet come into usage in the way that it is widely used today. No protection of important industrial buildings was offered by any listing procedures or protection policies. The valley floor was cleared along the stretch of the River Tawe that extends from St Thomas near the present-day SA1 development up as far as the M4 at Llansamlet. So complete was this clearing, reshaping, and greening of the landscape little is left today to indicate that the Valley was once an industrial hotspot.

It is only by accident that 179 copper-related sites or structures of international significance have survived in and around Swansea, and the situation is particularly bad in the Valley itself. There, shamefully, there isn't even any basic signage pointing to the scattered and often hidden remains of copper works and other industrial sites. Nothing explains the importance of the Valley to the development of the modern world economy.

So, in the absence of historic buildings to see and visit, an important first step has been to create a virtual historic environment through the use of computer models and animations. This work lies at the core of a project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council to facilitate a better understanding of the historic environment. In partnership with the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales and other project partners, Swansea University has been developing a digital reconstruction of the Hafod copper works. This will soon be available for viewing and use online, and ultimately via hand-held mobile technology.

In a sense, therefore, this is a project whose initial phase has not been defined by traditional forms of property-led regeneration but by an approach that uses new technologies to raise awareness of a sense of distinctive place and identity for the Valley.

View of the Liberty Stadium from the Hafod copper works whose bicentenary is being celebrated this year.

However, a sudden and unexpected broadening of the project beyond its virtual dimensions has occurred. Last year the City and County of Swansea issued a marketing brief aimed at attracting commercial developers to the former Hafod works. With an attractive river frontage, the site lies just to the south of the Liberty Stadium. It is 12.5 acres in size, and contains 14 listed historic structures, including the iconic Vivian engine houses, one of which contains the ruined remains of a rare Musgrave engine that once powered the rolling mills.

Swansea University emerged as the City's preferred development partner and we are now engaged in a 12-month feasibility study to create a restored and sustainable historic environment that will be fit for people to live and work in, and visit. At the core of the project lies the restoration of the site's historic structures, but also the embedded use of digital technologies.

One key aim is to create a digital arts/humanities/science hub in what might be described as a 'Living History Laboratory', conceptually connected with the existing Laboratory Building on the site. Here a range of digital, virtual reality, and hand-held mobile technologies will be applied to the interpretation and clearer understanding of Swansea's multiple contributions to Britain's Industrial Revolution. The research and associated educational possibilities are very considerable indeed. However, the project is more than about the use of new technologies. It also has the potential to:

- Bring the River Tawe back into regular use as a key transport route, connecting the maritime quarter with the area around the Liberty Stadium, and providing a location for water-based leisure and sporting activity.
- Facilitate the development of an imaginative programme of building and environmental restoration.
- Attract incoming commercial investment for housing, businesses, and social amenities.
- Provide an integrated site for the development of traditional industrial and craft skills, as well as new 'green skills' centred on a land and marine environment that is slowly coming back to life.
- Attract cultural tourists and promote the social, cultural, and educational regeneration of the local community.
- Help to create a stronger sense of 'place', local-global identity, and civic consciousness among those who live and work in Swansea.
- Provide the city with a unique marketing tool, using the Cu@ Swansea! brand.

As we move towards the emergence of what is now being described as an 'experience economy' in Britain, it is clear that, even in a recession, heritage can act as a powerful catalyst for inward investment, the creation of jobs, and the development of old and new skills. Of course, the pump usually has to be primed through grant income. The challenge we are facing in Swansea is to see if a major heritage-led regeneration project can breathe new forms of economic life into the Lower Swansea Valley.

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Telling Cardiff's story

Neil Evans finds the capital's new museum rejects a comfort zone of the distant past and is not afraid to raise controversial issues

Replicas from the Cardiff Castle's Animal Wall, designed by William Burgess in 1866 but not built until 1890. The original nine animal figures were the hyena, wolf, apes, seal, bear, lioness, lynx, and two different lions. In 1931 six further animals were added - the pelican, ant-eater, racoons, leopard, beaver and vulture.

No aspiring town in the 19th Century would be without a museum if it wanted to prove its civic respectability and cultural credentials. However, Cardiff's museum was the victim of the town's success when it won the contest to be the location for Wales' National Museum in 1905. Its collections and even its director, John Ward, a notable if untrained archaeologist, moved across to Cathays Park. This was to the infinite benefit of the new national institution, but to the sad impoverishment of popular appreciation of the way the city itself had developed. However, after a century Cardiff now has a museum again and it is a spectacular one - *The Cardiff Story,* located in what was the old library in the city centre.

Cardiff has a relationship with Wales which presents both a gift and a challenge to those who want to tell its story. The gift is the drama of its 19th Century growth from 1,870 people in 1801, to roughly 18,000 in 1851, to roughly 180,000 in 1911. The figures are easy to remember as they simply mean the addition of noughts. The reality was of course a hundred-fold increase in population in a century. There was much diversity, conflict and achievement in that century and soon after its end Cardiff became a city in 1905.

Everything before 1800 might be written off as the story of an insignificant village. Of course, this was not true as the new museum demonstrates. It was probably the biggest town in Wales in the early 14th Century (2,000 people in 1307), and it had an international trade even before its great take-off in the industrial era. Its position within Wales varied considerably pre-industrialisation but sometimes showed signs of the dominance which it would later achieve.

On the other side of the great Victorian boom is the problem that the story of Cardiff's development as a regional centre and capital of Wales might seem like an anti climax after what had gone before. The current population level is around 336,000 meaning it hasn't quite doubled in size in the present century. Professional historians have paid a good deal of attention to its 19th Century growth but have neglected to chart its more recent development.

Then there is the issue of Cardiff's relationship with Wales. In the first place the town was the creation of conquerors – the Romans and the Normans - and also landlords who have usually had a bad press in Wales. It was burned down by Owain Glyndŵr. Sometimes it was dismissed in racist terms in rural Wales - a fitter capital of China

according to one comment - and still suffers from image problems in the north and west of the country. The uneven development of contemporary Wales, with investment heavily loaded on to the southeast compounds the problem. *The Cardiff Story* has to confront such issues as well as celebrate civic virtues and achievements.

Cardiff's *Story* is located in a darkened room penetrated by multiple bright lights from exhibits and displays. It takes you into a world removed from the Hayes Island outside and back through multiple paths into the city's past. First of all the visitor sees an array of storyboards, which form a kind of vestibule. Each deals with a different period in the city's history:

- **Down to 1794** - when the Glamorgan Canal was constructed.
- **1794-1850** - by which time the first dock and railways had arrived.
- **1851-1913** - the boom years as 'coal metropolis of the world'.
- **1914-1955** - an era of wars and depression but ending with recognition of capital of Wales.
- **1956 to 1999** - becoming the seat of devolved government while losing much of its industrial base.

Each of these panels has a time line for its period and a changing screen showing individuals and a sequence of events. So if you want to start at the beginning and work through to the present that can be done. But equally the visitor can chose a period of interest to them and start there.

To the left of this is an interactive screen showing locations in the city offering a trip though time at each of them. I chose the River Taff and St Mary Street (there are several others) and was treated to five views of each from a series of different times. These showed the changes at particular parts of the cityscape, which will be known, to all locals and many visitors. The technology can be stunning. I particularly liked seeing the River Taff snake as rapidly as a Sidewinder to show just how much

The storyboards with datelines that greet the visitor to *Cardiff's Story.*

Brunel had diverted it. In the process he created the space for the Arms Park and later, today's Millennium Stadium. On the right of this entrance are exhibits showing the present position of Cardiff.

The visitor can take their own paths and these lead in many different directions. Aiming for my areas of greatest ignorance I went for the archaeological exhibits and found them not only well displayed but also beautifully explained in accompanying folders by people I recognise as experts in the field. Some street names are explained, though (rightly) with variant attributions given prominence. To an outsider in this field it seems that scholars never agree on this!

Going to areas I knew rather more about I was just an impressed. There is an interesting section called 'Fight for your Rights' with many photographs of the often bitter strikes and conflicts which marked the modern history of the city. These tend to be eclipsed by the even more turbulent history of the Valleys.

Behind the introductory screens the structure of the museum becomes more apparent. The exhibits are dominated by a huge model of the docks at their height, which vividly communicates their scale and importance. Behind this is a massive reproduction of Lionel Walden's painting of the docks animated by steam power in 1896, taking us back into 'the awful sublimity of the Victorian city', the world of Atkinson Grimshaw's art. It pulses with the steam power of the coal Cardiff exported to the four corners of the world. Even those who knew the docks at ground level will better grasp their immensity from this representation, which is rather more tangible than an aerial photograph.

It is right to make the docks so central since they are the reason Cardiff became such a big place in so short a time. Today, of course, they have been more-or-less obliterated by Cardiff Bay. Nevertheless, the docks will always be central to Cardiff's story. It is capital of Wales simply because it was the largest town when the 19th and early 20th Century processes of nation-building took place. The docks underpin Cardiff's recent history.

I have a rather old-fashioned approach to museums in general. I like them to be structured and can find the leaving of visitors to fend for themselves something of a postmodern cop out. There is a danger of dissolution into the solipsism of individual stories. One museum I visited (not in Wales) had won an award for its interactive displays. I decided I'd add 'interactive'

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to my Thesaurus under 'witless'. But this museum shows the virtues of recent approaches. People can genuinely find their own way without being confused or lost and left to fend for themselves. There is a genuine sense of a search for involvement which breaks the barrier between visitor and professional. People are encouraged to leave their own memories, artefacts and comments.

Did I have any regrets? Only that I wished I'd been able to take my grandchildren. The museum has an excellent educational facility to encourage children to see history as a process of detection and set them on the path with magnifying glass in hand. I might have had difficulty prising them away from the giant doll's house used to show the changes in usage of a house in Cathedral Road and persuading them it was not possible to buy it so it could be taken home. But adults will find this equally revealing.

Otherwise there is a slight regret because we currently see about half the museum as it is intended to be. Its completion could be delayed by the savagery being inflicted on the public sector. The downstairs portion which is now open deals with the tangible parts of the city's experience while the projected displays for upstairs will deal with intangibles – notably culture and communities. In what exists at present and in what is projected a decision has been made to integrate ethnic diversity into the story rather than to place minorities into a corner where they may be forgotten. This is laudable, though I hope some space is found for the distinctively diverse people-scape of Butetown - perhaps pointing visitors to the admirable Butetown History and Arts Centre.

Museums were established as ways in which civic, regional and national pride could be fostered and developed. How does this one serve its community? Very well, I think. It displays a changing and vibrant place, gives some prominence to the struggles for freedom and justice which have been so much a part of its history, and offers an overall vision which encourages people to act in the future: "Cardiff never stands still. It is constantly reinventing itself to fulfil the needs of a wide range of people that use the city".

That final verb is significant. Cardiff matters to more people than live within its boundaries and it always has: as a market town taking the produce of the eastern Vale, as a coal port and now as both a regional centre for south east Wales and as the national capital. The museum enables people to understand the city and its hinterland as a part of Wales, but also with its own narratives, which are worthy of respect, and not simply subsumed into Wales.

It is not afraid to raise controversial issues and rejects a comfort zone of the distant past. "Has Cardiff used the Valleys?" asks the welcome acknowledgement of the symbiotic relationship – and further, "Do the Valleys need Cardiff?" Museums should promote civic belonging and citizenship, and active citizenship at that. When the museum comes to engage with the intangibles of the city's experience it is to be hoped there will be some prolonged engagement with its relationship with the rest of Wales. After all, for more than a century this is what has given the place its meaning and place in the world.

Memory plays tricks but I remember no great emphasis on the Butes as creators of Cardiff. I mean this as no criticism. Rightly this is a people's museum and gives us less pampered stories. This is appropriate in the building which houses it – the old Central Library which was built in defiant opposition to the Third Marquess who was a considerable scholar but no believer in the republic of letters. It was intended to have a tower high enough to rival that on Cardiff Castle and thereby cock a snook at it. Sadly the council couldn't afford it.

But one imagines that John Batchelor, who still stands (in Milo Griffith's statue) outside the building, would have been pleased with its current use and to see local government, to which he devoted so much of his life, being so imaginative. He and his supporters always said the Bute Estate ruined both his business and his life in revenge for his fight for civic freedom. The museum continues the tradition in the much-changed city.

A huge model of the docks at their height dominates the exhibits: "It is right to make the docks so central since they are the reason Cardiff became such a big place in so short a time."

Neil Evans is an honorary research fellow in history at Cardiff University. He was an (unpaid) advisor to the *Cardiff Story* but played no role in the design and presentation of the museum.

Needed – a broadcasting new deal

Ron Jones calls for a wide-ranging review of television provision for Wales

Broadcasting is not a devolved issue. Parliament guards this responsibility and in Westminster there is no appetite for change. However, there is pressure for new structures to accommodate post-devolution Britain, especially in Scotland. In practice the lack of accountability to Wales is unsustainable and new structures that accommodate the needs of the UK and Wales have to be found.

Regardless of whether broadcasting should be devolved, there is a compelling case that the interests of all involved - Welsh Government, the Assembly, broadcasters and the audience - require better local engagement. After all, culture, education, heritage and language are all devolved matters, and all are at the heart of public service television.

Sir Jeremy Beecham's report *Making the Connections: Delivering Beyond Boundaries* talks about the role of the Welsh Government in non-devolved services. Broadcasting seems a prime candidate for this approach. Clear lines for democratic accountability need to be put in place, to be open to public consultation, reviewed by elected politicians and transparent to all.

It is widely accepted that Wales suffers a worrying lack of plurality in media. This extends to media outlets, ownership and control as well as an imbalance between media generated in Wales and provided from elsewhere in the UK. Since devolution the lack of coverage of our politics has become a danger to our democracy.

Cuts in ITV and BBC news provision for Wales and the lack of consultation on the Department of Culture Media and Sport's proposals for local news are clear warnings. Coverage of the Assembly and of Welsh affairs in Parliament has diminished in range and depth. ITV's financially driven cuts are well understood, so its recent announcement that local news is to be given a higher priority is welcome.

The BBC provides S4C news. Our newspapers continue to weaken, leaving the BBC as the primary provider of political coverage. This is an unhealthy trend.

Meanwhile, the BBC has reduced

BBC Wales's £10 million Drama Village in Cardiff Bay - an 180,000 square foot building stretching along the Roath basin. *Casualty* moved across from Bristol in September and *Dr Who* will start production next spring. Other productions will include *The Sarah Jane Adventures*, *Pobol y Cwm*, *Sherlock* and *Upstairs, Downstairs*. Nevertheless, compared with the BBC's investment of £150 million in its relocation to Salford, the outlay is modest.

its commitment to Wales as a matter of choice. Despite the corporation receiving favourable licence fee settlements well ahead of inflation in recent years, it has chosen to reduce its spending on English and Welsh programmes for Wales quite significantly. Although the cuts for BBC Wales and S4C to 2017 are now known, discussions on the new Charter will be starting soon. Dangerous times are ahead.

There is a consensus that Wales is not getting the television it needs. Not since the days of the last ITV licence award has there been a coherent attempt to assess what Wales needs. The Ofcom UK review of local services some two years ago was useless.

There are new challenges as well. There is a shortage of on-line content and services for Wales. The BBC has become the most popular provider of on-line services in the UK. In Wales, not only are there very few services but also we know there is permanent market failure. These services can only be provided by the public purse and no institutions other than broadcasters have the money or the opportunity to fill this void.

Children are even more promiscuous than their parents in their choice of content. For them language and whether it's Welsh are secondary considerations. Meanwhile, there is a shortage of modern educational provision in Wales, both in television programmes and on-line content. Our new Welsh curriculum is a huge leap forward but it needs materials using the new technologies. As a matter of policy, our broadcasters do not match their output to our education system. As well as being politically naïve, this has also been a betrayal of Welsh children's needs.

Our broadcasters have not risen to these challenges to the extent needed. Despite its recent announcement to continue its regional news service, ITV Wales is a shadow of what was envisaged by the original licence. The commercial radio licence holders in Wales are all in financial retreat and Ofcom has gradually eased their licence commitments. BBC Wales has cut the hours of television for Wales in English, and also significantly cut the allocation of money to Radio Cymru, Radio Wales, its online services and programmes produced for S4C under its statutory obligations.

Wales has not done well from the BBC's devolution of services. Under pressure from the Labour government the BBC announced a large-scale restructuring of its activities to the nations and regions. There has been massive spending on its two major projects outside London, at Pacific Quay in Glasgow and Media City in Salford. Despite the developments in Cardiff Bay, Wales has had nothing similar in scope or value.

Wales also has a weak television and film industry. The natural dynamics of the industry are in London. This is true of all English language broadcasters and of all distributors and agencies. Market conditions are not going to change this and only the BBC and S4C are in a position by social engineering to help create and sustain the industry.

S4C's priorities will rightly be to service the needs of Welsh-speakers, and not pretend to be a global or commercial player. This role provides an invaluable

underpinning of the business models of producers working in a protected market. However, there is little evidence that the companies are able to compete, other than occasionally, outside Wales. The BBC could use its commissioning muscle in Wales and its route to market to operate more effectively than at present.

Wales is poorly served for news and current affairs. Uniquely amongst the devolved nations, Wales has neither an indigenous news industry nor significant coverage in the UK media. We are now over-dependent on the BBC that is looking at 20 per cent cuts for its news coverage.

Public scrutiny will prioritise needs. It will not be a guarantee that everything we want can be delivered.

Whilst many of the criticisms of BBC Wales news coverage concern its quality and focus, it is unlikely that these issues can be addressed at a time of significant cuts. S4C is a high risk organisation for Wales. Whatever its recent failings, S4C is an important part of Welsh national life and is a key driver in safeguarding the language and the television industry in Wales. Over the next months discussions will continue between the BBC and S4C that will define its future.

Until *Doctor Who*, *Torchwood* and now *Casualty* arrived in Cardiff, little network production was made in Wales. The target has traditionally been to achieve a level of five per cent of UK network programming and at first sight the BBC is well on its way. However, the BBC's approach has not been to our advantage. Firstly, they have chosen high cost drama that produces few hours and little network portrayal of Wales. Secondly, the absence of most other genres creates an industrial monoculture that precludes a balanced television economy.

A side effect will be largely to exclude local production companies and local talent. The companies do not have the scale and the experience to meet the BBC's requirements and few of the workers have the necessary skills. The BBC's view is that going native with the drama village in Cardiff Bay is a long-term project to which they are committed. Experience suggests this is not going to be easy.

As a country we need to identify those elements of television that we need for specifically Welsh cultural, linguistic, social or democratic reasons. Public service broadcasters should make explicit commitments defining their responsibilities and commitments to Wales. Then we need to ensure that these are developed through an open and public discussion of the issues involved.

Such a review should be agreed after full public consultation and involve all the key stakeholders. Ideally these would include the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, the BBC Trust, S4C, the Welsh Government and its agencies with relevant responsibilities, as well as the Assembly and Welsh MPs. In practice some will elect not to play but the politics would be against them.

The result of such a review should inform our policy for public service broadcasting. In addition we should ensure that it is structured to provide the maximum economic benefit. A needs-based analysis will prioritise news and news-based programmes, current affairs, events and sport. When you add a range of public service programmes from history to culture, many genres as well as some sport and entertainment may have to go. Public scrutiny will prioritise needs. It will not be a guarantee that everything we want can be delivered.

This needs-based approach should not be tainted by a search for simple viewing numbers. We will need to develop an appraisal system based on public service purpose. What can we ask for and what can the broadcasters deliver?

Our priority for ITV should be to ensure that the new licence or licences for ITV from 2014 are Wales-friendly. An aim might be to ensure that:

- There is an all Wales licence. This was the case under the present regime but was lost through corporate takeovers.
- Wales has appropriate service levels consistent with the industry-wide review of needs I envisage.
- The Welsh licence is protected from takeover, maybe by creating an ownership structure for it such as Glas Cymru. The service could then be sub-contracted to suitable operators more tightly than the existing DCMS/Ofcom/ITV arrangements.
- The economic impact is maximised.

The present DCMS proposals for local TV are not a good fit for Wales and are probably unsustainable financially. However, public money is being made available, and Wales must make the best of what is on offer and make it work for us. We need to find ways to engage in local TV developments and search for innovative ways to do so. If local television and the important web-delivered elements are not a commercial proposition can they be made to work by integrating local television with the government's commitment to delivering public services and education over the Internet?

Devolution means the BBC is now one of Wales' most important public service institutions. Economically, journalistically and culturally the BBC is the biggest beast and in its refocusing is the potential for the biggest wins for Wales. The BBC plays a significant role in providing the television, radio, on-line and learning content that conventional markets cannot supply. It also develops creative talent and underpins the creative economy of the nation.

This role has been made even more important by the UK government's decision that S4C is a UK service priority funded from the television licence.

One way forward would be the

creation of a BBC Trust Service Licence Agreement for Wales. The BBC Trust authorises and monitors services through a series of Service Licences. There is one for each channel and service. These Service Commitments need to comply with the BBC's Public Purposes under Article 3 of its Royal Charter - although there is public consultation the Trust basically decides.

In the case of S4C the new partnership arrangements will almost certainly follow the Service Licence approach. In that case the present thinking is that this will be agreed by discussion between S4C, the BBC Trust and DCMS after consultation with the Welsh Government in recognition of its statutory obligation to support and develop the Welsh language.

This opens the door to a similar approach being taken with English language services, with the devolved governments assessing national needs. Service Licences that describes the responsibility of the BBC Trust to Wales and to S4C could include:

- The number of hours to be broadcast on television and radio.
- The types of programmes to be made, potentially defining the news services required.
- An on-line service.
- The portrayal of Welsh people and life on network.
- Commitments relating to the relationship between the services and the education system in Wales.
- Commitments relating to the relationship between the S4C services and Welsh Government policy on promoting and safeguarding the Welsh language, plus the UK's international legal obligations.
- Value for money in terms of producing affordable quality content.
- Contribution to the economy of Wales.

Before the next Charter is granted to the BBC, there would need to be an independent external impact assessment of how these services have measured up.

So there it is, the timeless problem of non-devolved matters and the need to find a way through the constitutional morass. Fans of the American constitution will be aware of the concept that express responsibilities bring with them implied powers. Under the Crown this is an alien concept. As subjects we only have those rights that are granted to us.

In the real world we have to make the best of our constitutional arrangements. In the case of broadcasting there is a way forward that is democratic, sensible and in the best interests of our people, and the governments in Cardiff and London – oh, and in the long term interests of our broadcasters as well.

Ron Jones is Executive Chairman of Llanelli-based Tinopolis, one of the UK's largest independent television production companies. This article is based on the presentation he gave at the IWA's national broadcasting conference *An agenda for the coming decade,* in October.

News aggregator hits Port Talbot

Rachel Howells explores the aftermath of the death of a town's local newspaper

Although the Port Talbot Guardian had been in business since the 1920s, declining circulations had made it a target for cutbacks by owner Trinity Mirror, eventually leading to its closure in 2009. For the first time in more than 80 years, Port Talbot was without a dedicated newspaper.

The population of Port Talbot is around 35,000. It boasts many famous sons and daughters – Michael Sheen, Richard Burton, Anthony Hopkins, Rob Brydon and Di Botcher amongst others. It is Wales' most polluted town, having lived cheek by jowl with heavy industry for more than three centuries. Today it is home to a large steelworks, a gas plant, and a power station. Now permission has been given for Europe's largest biomass plant to be built here. These are good indicators that this town is prospering, and so a newspaper should be a natural part of the mix.

Why, then, did it close? And what does the story of this town, and its experiences of life without a newspaper, tell us about the future of the media? Does Port Talbot's fate await more towns and cities in Wales? Should we be worried?

These are the questions I am attempting to answer as part of a European-funded research project at Cardiff University - funded by the European social fund distributed by the Welsh Government, Cardiff University and the Media Standards Trust. It fits into a wide jigsaw of other research that reflects deep concern with declines in newspaper circulations and the number of journalists employed by the local press, and what this might mean for the way news and democracy work together.

I am attempting to answer these questions by carrying out four different pieces of research. The first is an analysis of printed news provision in the town since the 1970s, looking at how journalism has served the local community, and examining indicators of 'localness'. The second will apply the same measures to a modern day sample, which will include television, radio and Internet news alongside the press. The third will be a large survey of local people, examining their news consumption habits. Lastly I will carry out focus groups and interviews.

The population of Port Talbot is around 35,000. It boasts many famous sons and daughters – Michael Sheen, Richard Burton, Anthony Hopkins, Rob Brydon and Di Botcher amongst others.

The first two of these pieces of research are underway. It is too early to draw any firm conclusions, but a few things we probably all suspect are observable. Across the Western world, newspapers are in serious decline:

Some of the team at Port Talbot's Magnet co-operative news service, from left to right: Simon Davies, a former sub-editor on the South Wales Evening Post who is now a Policy Officer for Rathbone; Ken Smith, a former sub-editor on the South Wales Evening Post who is now a communications officer with the National Trust; Andy Pearson, a former editor of the Llanelli Star and Features Editor of the South Wales Evening Post who now works for the PR agency Effective Communication; Rachel Howells; and Mike Witchell, a former sub-editor and columnist at the South Wales Evening Post who now writes humourous sketches and plays.

Circulations are falling, as they have been for decades, far longer than the current economic troubles. In Wales, the picture is as bad, if not worse, than elsewhere in the UK.

On the ground in Port Talbot, the Guardian's closure has made it much harder for local people to publicise their events and find out what's going on. On the other hand, social media is expanding and to some extent filling the gap in community life. In place of a news vacuum, there has been a flowering of independence, experimentation and innovation on the Internet.

The news aggregator porttalbot.co.uk was quick to move in, but two other professional-led projects also arrived after the closure. The first was Port Talbot News [port-talbot-news.co.uk], run by a former Guardian photographer. A second project, Port Talbot Magnet, started shortly after.

I have an interest here, because as well as being a PhD student at Cardiff University, I am also a journalist and a director of the Magnet co-operative news service, porttalbotmagnet.com. In fact, both projects feed into one another, meaning research and the real world are both benefiting.

The news service was started in 2009, back when the Guardian was bidding farewell to its readers. A group of us, all journalists, had come together via our National Union of Journalists' branch to find a new way to make a living out of our profession. Most of us had been made redundant, many from the Northcliffe-owned South Wales Evening Post. Others were finding it difficult to sustain themselves as freelancers or struggling to get work as the industry tightened its belt.

We realised we had to do something. Starting a co-operative seemed an obvious move, and the seven of us, with the help of the Wales Co-operative Centre, established a limited company. The company is also a co-operative and social enterprise.

We have had several boosts along the way, not least becoming community partners of the National Theatre Wales production, *The Passion*, starring Michael Sheen. We have a working partnership with local community radio station XS, which sells some of our advertising. We have also been supported by a community development organisation, NSA, which has been generous with advice as well as giving us an office space in Port Talbot.

We have applied for funding, but have not, so far, been successful. Instead we have run the service with goodwill, volunteers, partnerships with other organisations and cash donations, mainly from the directors. We have sold a limited amount of advertising, and some of our video footage has been sold to outside organisations.

These are heartening commercial steps forward. But we do not yet have a working business model. The Magnet is not sustainable in its current form, and

we know it will be difficult to fulfill our ambitions to provide dedicated, hard news for Port Talbot without a serious injection of cash or a decent, steady income stream, or even better, both. We know that, in common with many other social enterprises and charities, we will need to be flexible and innovative in bringing in revenue from many different sources.

In September, we launched an appeal for the site *Pitch-in!* which uses crowdsourcing and crowd-funding models. The appeal asks local people to pitch in to help the news service by offering cash donations, volunteering, or by telling us about what's going on in the local area. But it goes a step further than this, by breaking down editorial objectives into micro-targets and offering people the chance to sponsor journalists or pitch in towards a story they are interested in seeing a journalist write. The appeal also asks freelance journalists and members of the co-operative to suggest stories that can be made into a target on the site, and then help raise money for it. A similar model has been tried in America with the website *Spot.Us*.

Crucially, this model puts payment for journalists at the heart of the enterprise. We provide a framework, a mechanism for news to be produced and supplied for the community. In theory, too, we will see what kind of editorial local people are willing to pay for – if any. That aside, there are, of course, other problems with this kind of model. Bias is one – where those with the deepest pockets can afford to push forward their own agendas. Rigorous, transparent processes about how stories are agreed and paid for and an adherence to the usual journalistic mantras of balance and independence will be essential, as well as the Board's willingness to divert advertising revenue into neglected areas where crowd-funding is not bringing investment. There are of course practical concerns that readers will not pay for news in this way, and only marketing and time will answer this question.

Is this the future of journalism? It would be nice to think so. To think that people will take up the challenge we have set, involving themselves actively in collaborating with the news, and thereby in the processes of democracy. Surely this fulfills journalism's prime, fourth estate, function. It is early days to talk about how likely *Pitch-in!* is to make this a reality in Port Talbot. Nonetheless, simply by framing the question in this way, we have received donations and help that we would not otherwise have received.

A network of media hubs where journalists could collaborate with colleagues from across the industry to produce news for all outlets is a suggestion made by a team of academics at Goldsmiths University – and we would support this kind of solution.

After a few weeks of posting *Pitch-in!* on our website, during which time we have not publicised it in Port Talbot, we have had £32 in donations from readers and we have sold three adverts. This feels like a positive move forward, and though these are very modest gains, there is enormous potential for growth.

Innovation, goodwill and journalists committed to promoting local news for no pay are what got our project off the ground. We always hoped we could find a blueprint for local news production that would help fill news gaps in other areas as well, and bring services or plurality to a sector where the larger media corporations are withdrawing investment. In time, we would like to take a functioning *Magnet* model to other communities where there is no local newspaper.

There are some things we believe government could do to make this easier for us. A crack squad of media experts, employed centrally by government or paid for out of the public purse, who could travel to new projects and provide them with intensive support and expertise to get them up and running would be top of our list. The developed world often sends media experts to help establish independent media where new democracies are flourishing – why not start a similar scheme in the UK, where our own democracy is now under threat because of media cutbacks?

We have other suggestions as well. A central fund rewarding media innovation would be of enormous benefit. An effective way of putting philanthropists in touch with grass roots projects would be fantastic. Affordable legal and financial advice and access to affordable insurance would be gratefully received – perhaps using the benefit of the wisdom of procurement officers in government. A network of media hubs where journalists could collaborate with colleagues from across the industry to produce news for all outlets is a suggestion made by a team of academics at Goldsmiths University – and we would support this kind of solution. An understanding and promotion of the wider benefits good journalism can bring to society would also improve our chances of gaining funding. An accreditation system for quality local news websites would be a valuable service to quality hyperlocal sites, and help new projects gain traction in a world where content written for the internet is, in our experience, viewed with suspicion by companies and public bodies.

If government is serious about addressing the problems facing the media industry the answer is simple. We need a national debate about why the media is important for democracy, and real, tangible support for the organisations at the coal face. Port Talbot is already offering lessons from which we can all learn.

Rachel Howells has worked as a current affairs journalist for more than ten years and is a former editor of *Big Issue Wales*.

Fishlock's File

How heraldry prospers in today's Wales

Trevor Fishlock on the extraordinary survival of an invented tradition

As genial as he is erudite, Tom Lloyd of Pembrokeshire is one of the five men in England and Wales officially classed as extraordinary. In the hierarchy of heraldry the senior officers of the College of Arms in London work full-time and their status is classed as ordinary. Others are consultants appointed as honorary and unpaid heralds - that is, as extraordinaries.

Since August of last year Tom Lloyd has been the Wales Herald Extraordinary. You may have glimpsed him in the flesh, or on television at the royal opening of the Senedd. On such ceremonial occasions he walks in procession wearing a black velvet Tudor cap, breeches, elegant black tights and buckled shoes, a white stave of office in his hand.

The distinctive glory of his get-up is the tabard, a short coat of medieval origin. Such is its weight he needs a temporary Jeeves to help him put it on. Front and back it is a dazzle of scarlet, gold and blue, adorned with heraldic lions and richly furnished with gold wire. A story relates that heralds at a state ceremony sat so closely together that their gold-wired tabards tangled and stitched them one to another. They had to shuffle out like a chain gang to be freed.

Few writers resist noting that a herald in his tabard is a playing card on legs. But the presence of the Wales Herald Extraordinary in full fig in the Senedd says something about the remarkable persistence of heraldry. An arcane art, a language, an identity system, a storyteller and a practice with medieval roots, it does more than survive in the 21st Century, it positively flourishes. It is bound to be irritating to some, but it's an old magic.

In the Senedd we see another example of pageantry's power and adaptability. The Queen arrives with the Duke of Edinburgh and the Prince of Wales and opens proceedings with appropriate ritual. The Wales Herald Extraordinary is there to form a bridge between old and new. A tradition is invented before our eyes.

Tom Lloyd's tabard was made originally for the first Wales Herald, Major Francis Jones, who was appointed in 1963 in anticipation of the investiture of the Prince of Wales six years later. That was only the second investiture ever held in Wales. The first was in 1911. Before that, Victorian and Edwardian royalty rarely visited Wales. However, Wales itself, in its growing sense of nationhood, responded to its need for pageantry and ceremony in its own way. The modern eisteddfod became a tradition complete with robes, regalia, crowns and thrones, poet-princes, music and a beloved anthem. University, library and museum were part of the same national flowering.

Tom Lloyd sees modest Senedd ceremony as an expression of pride. "Heraldry helps to preserve a memory of Wales which had a long and independent history," he says. "It tells wonderful stories and is part of our culture and sophistication." At 56 he is a devoted history man, steeped in architecture and the stories of historical buildings, a contributor to the Pevsner Buildings of Wales series, author of *The Lost Houses of Wales*, and currently High Sheriff of Dyfed.

As a storehouse of Welsh history and heraldic knowledge he works closely with

the College of Arms, founded in 1484. Thomas Woodcock, Garter King of Arms, the principal herald, told me, "We are technically part of the royal household but we've not had a pay rise since 1618. We don't cost the country anything because we are self-supporting on the fees from new grants of arms.

"So we have a vested interest in social change. If the same families remained prominent from generation to generation there would be no business for us. But there has always been a tremendous social mobility - as our records show. And we need 120 grants of arms a year to pay our way."

A coat of arms for a male peer costs £4,400. A woman pays just over £3,000 because her arms are simpler. A peer also pays extra for supporters, the heraldic figures or beasts holding his shield. During his consultations with new peers Mr Woodcock tries to steer them away from illustrating their arms with anything that would date quickly, a computer for example.

A coat of arms is unique. Tom Lloyd agrees that it is a bit of showing-off, but believes strongly that it is there to be enjoyed as a part of family history. Heraldry is rooted in the bloody scrums of medieval warfare, in the badges and banners which enabled soldiers to tell friend from foe. Armoured knights adopted brilliant symbols and designs for their shields and clothing as identity cards. Heralds, the messengers and diplomats between opposing armies, identified dead knights by their insignia.

Between wars heralds administered jousting tournaments, the popular and highly dangerous extreme sport of medieval knights. They registered each man's coat of arms and ensured that it was unique. Sir Rhys ap Thomas staged the last great tournament at Carew castle in 1507, a five-day bash and a farewell to the middle ages.

Tournaments passed into history but heraldry prospered. Heralds evolved into genealogists to the gentry and compiled histories and pedigrees of noble families,

Tom Lloyd, Wales herald Extraordinary, pictured at the royal opening of the Senedd in June.
The weight of his tabard, a short coat of medieval origin, means he requires assistance to put on.

important records of descent and land ownership. Tom Lloyd himself has a pedigree considerably longer than his arm. His family history and changing coats of arms are inscribed on a roll of vellum made to last for centuries.

Heraldry in Wales differed from the English brand. Welsh heralds looked back to a golden age of chieftains before Wales was conquered. Those chieftains had no coats of arms, but Welsh heralds later invented arms and awarded them to the chiefs' descendants. The result was that many Welsh families shared coats of arms, unlike the English who never shared. "It drove the London heralds mad," Tom said.

He is currently advising on an amendment to the royal badge of Wales, used by the National Assembly since 2008. It is based on the four-lion arms of Llywelyn the Great and Llywelyn the Last. These date only from the 13th Century. The Red Dragon, the badge of Wales since 1807 and the flag of Wales since 1953, was carried by Henry Tudor. He claimed it as the flag of his supposed 7th Century ancestor Cadwaladr, 'last king of the Britons'. And that was before heraldry was even invented.

Demographics of the language

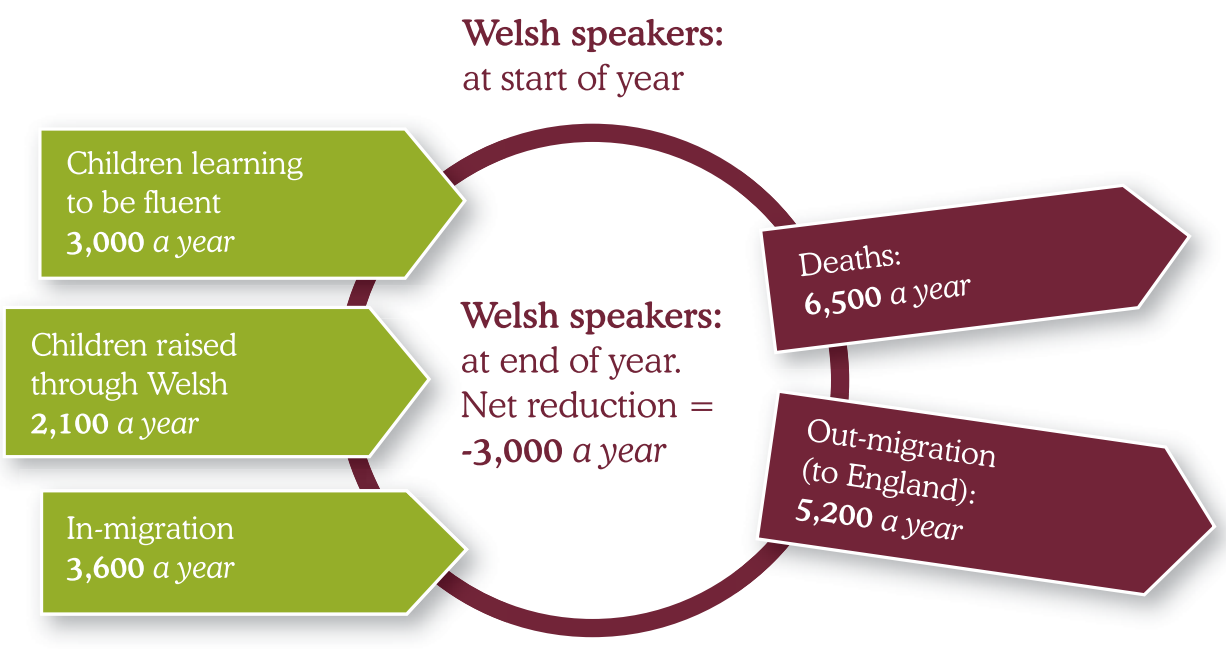
Hywel Jones explains how we are losing 3,000 Welsh speakers a year

At the National Eisteddfod this year Huw Jones, the new chair of S4C and a member of the Welsh Language Board, quoted some work that I produced back in 2004 using the newly released results of the 2001 Census. It suggested that the number of fluent Welsh speakers in Wales was falling by 3,000 a year. A couple of years later another measure of the change in the number of fluent Welsh speakers became available which lent weight to my earlier estimate. Comparing the results of the Board's Welsh Language Use Surveys of 2004-06 with those of the 1992 Welsh Social Survey undertaken by the Welsh Office, showed the numbers of fluent Welsh speakers dropping from 363,000 in 1992 to 317,000 in 2005, equivalent to a loss of 3,500 each year.

The flow chart below illustrates my assessment of the position in 2004 and shows my estimates of the main components of change.

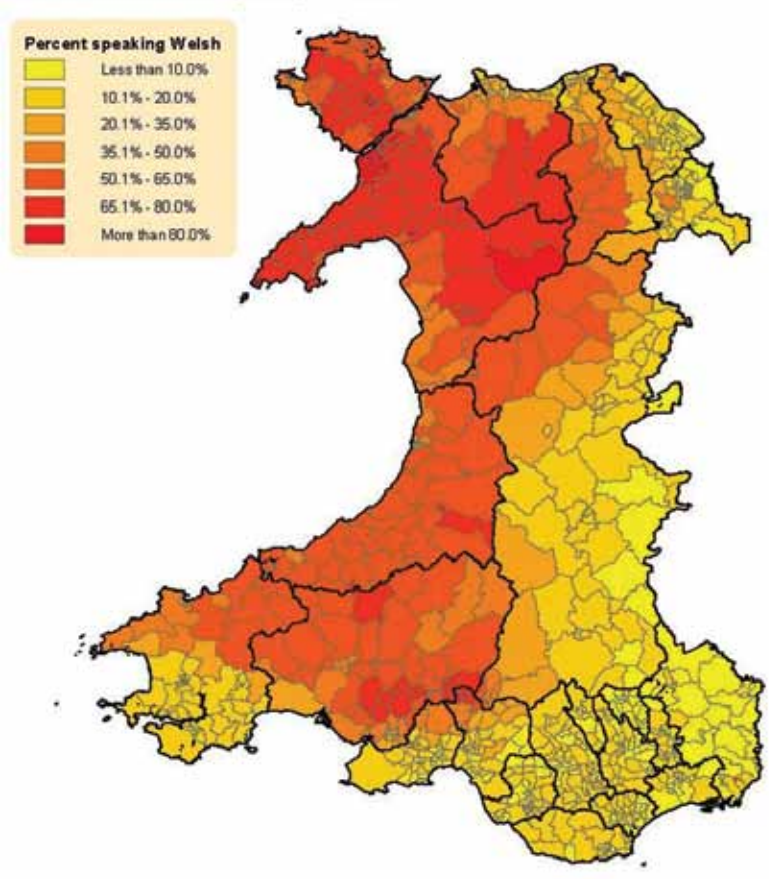
The usual demographic model of total population change distinguishes 'natural change', defined as the difference between the number of deaths and number of births, and change due to migration. A model for change in the numbers of speakers of a language also has to account for intergenerational transmission, that is the extent to which parents who can speak the language transmit it to their offspring, and the effect of education. Crucially too, one has to consider what constitutes 'Welsh speaking'. The flow chart accompanying this article is headed 'Annual change in the number of Welsh speakers'. Subsequently, I have changed this to say fluent Welsh speakers. I think the input

Annual change in the number of Welsh speakers (not to scale)



For natural change, and from education, my figures gave a net loss of 1,400 fluent speakers. In fact, there will also be some adults learning Welsh. Though their contribution can be massive, unfortunately the numbers reaching the stage of fluency in one year are probably very low.

Estimated percentage of people aged 3 and over who said they could speak Welsh 2001 Electoral Divisions (2003) – Wales



figures relating to children make it pretty clear that the concept underlying those calculations was always of fluent Welsh speakers.

The total number of Welsh speakers may include many with a limited capability in the language. Fluency in itself is not a clearly defined concept but we do know that self-assessed fluency is correlated with active use of Welsh. The number of fluent Welsh speakers is in my view therefore likely to be of more significance for the vitality of Welsh than the total number.

So, let me explain how I derived the figures in the illustration, starting with probably the most firmly based considerations. We know how many people die every year. The 2001 Census gave for each age group the percentage able to speak Welsh. In the case of the elderly I assumed that there was little difference between being able to speak Welsh and speaking Welsh fluently. Most of the elderly who could speak Welsh could be assumed to have been brought up within Welsh speaking families, given that Welsh medium education in the more anglicised parts of Wales was not widely available much more than forty or fifty years ago. Out-turn figures for 2002 were the most recent available at that time. 33,200 died in that year. I assumed the percentage speaking Welsh amongst 77-year-olds (19.5%) would be roughly the same percentage found amongst those dying in 2002. That gave 6,500 Welsh speakers dying.

Next in terms of reliability are the input figures of children speaking Welsh. The Census told me that of the three to four-year-olds able to speak Welsh, 46 per cent were living in households where both parents, or the sole parent in single-parent households, were able to speak Welsh. I assumed the percentage would be the same amongst just three-year-olds. In 2001 14.9 per cent of them could speak Welsh, so I took 46 per cent of them, giving 6.9 per cent in the population. Taking that percentage of the Government's projection for the number of three-year-olds in 2002 (30,200) gave me 2,100. Explicit figures for three-year-olds which came available from the Census after this derivation was made showed that the actual figure for 2001 was in fact 2,300.

In 2002, 6,563 pupils were assessed in as having Welsh as their first language for the national curriculum assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 (aged about 7). They represented 18.9 per cent of pupils, but only 16.9 per cent were considered to be fluent according to the Schools Census's figures. That would equate to some 5,900. In the same year, only 5,389 were assessed as having Welsh as their

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first language at the end of Key Stage 3 (aged about 14).

Trying to form a view of what the situation was in an 'average' year and bearing in mind that births were projected to fall, I concluded that it was reasonable to assume an inflow of some 5,100 a year to the total number of 'fluent' Welsh speakers.

For natural change, and from education, my figures gave a net loss of 1,400 fluent speakers. In fact, there will also be some adults learning Welsh. Though their contribution can be massive, unfortunately the numbers reaching the stage of fluency in one year are probably very low. They will in any case be balanced to some degree by some people previously fluent becoming less so. My sums assume the balance is exact and the net effect of both is zero.

The estimates of the migration flows are much less reliable. However, in 2004 I had at least the figures from the 2001 Census relating to flows in 2000-2001. Those moving into Wales were asked about their Welsh language ability by the Census in Wales. Those moving to England weren't asked so I had to make some brave assumptions about the percentage speaking Welsh amongst those aged 15 to 29, most of whom were likely to be students who came to Wales to study and were returning to England after their studies. The assumptions needed concerning the in-migrants were only slightly more firmly based. These workings gave me 5,200 out-migrating Welsh speakers and 3,600 in-migrating and so a net outflow of 1,600.

The situation will have changed since 2004. The number of people dying per year is lower now: only 30,600 in the year to mid-2011 compared with 33,200 in 2002, so maybe only 6,000 Welsh speakers died compared to the 6,500 I showed. And more were born - 35,300 - but that is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in the number of children raised at home to be fluent. Not only is the number of homes where both parents, or the sole parent, speak Welsh, almost certainly on a long-term downward trend (again a result of demographic change) but the growth in the proportion of births to mothers born outside the UK accounts for the largest part of the increase. In 2010 10.4 per cent of births were to mothers born outside the UK, around twice the level at the start of the decade.

The education system is ensuring a slightly larger proportion of children are becoming fluent speakers though actual numbers are not substantially different.

The education system is ensuring a slightly larger proportion of children are becoming fluent speakers though actual numbers are not substantially different. At the end of Key Stage 1, 6,728 were assessed in 2011 compared with 6,563 in 2002 while at Key Stage 3 5,862 were assessed in 2011 compared with 5,389 in 2002. So maybe my input figure of 5,100 would be more like 5,600 now. Thus, natural change (and education) may give a net loss now of -400.

Whether the total number of fluent Welsh speakers in Wales is increasing or decreasing at the moment may depend therefore on the balance of in and out-migration. Unfortunately, there is little data available on which to base a new estimate. I think it reasonable to assume that there will usually be a net outflow. There is a substantial population of Welsh speakers in England - I've estimated them to number 110,000, ignoring fluency considerations. But given that the number in Wales is several times larger, and given a similar propensity to migrate, one would always expect the outflow to exceed the inflow.

The only real question is the size of the loss. I think it unlikely to be less than at least a few hundred, a figure which gains support from the results of the Higher Education Statistics Agency's *Destinations of 2006-07 Leavers from Higher Education Longitudinal Survey*, published at the end of August. They showed that 32.6 per cent of students from Wales who graduated with a first degree in 2006-07 and who were employed in November 2010 were working (and presumably usually living) outside Wales. Given 5,640 Welsh students started on first degrees in England in 2009-10, and assuming 15 per cent could speak Welsh this would suggest a net annual outflow approaching 300 of Welsh speaking first degree students alone.

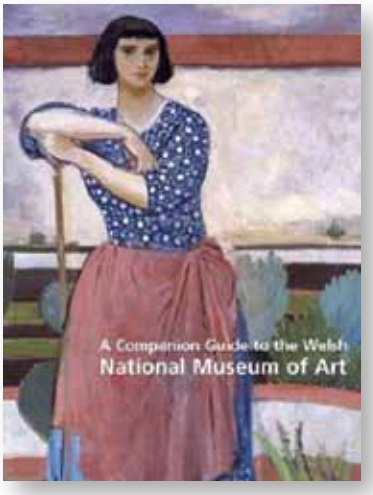
I conclude that the number of fluent Welsh speakers in Wales is still falling. The older speakers, raised to speak Welsh at home, are being partially replaced, mainly by speakers produced by the education system. Annual net migration to Wales has been positive for decades. Even stable numbers of fluent Welsh speakers in these circumstances means that as a percentage of the entire population they are decreasing. The effect of teaching Welsh as a second language in schools may mask that when the simple percentages from the 2011 Census are reported.

Hywel Jones is a statistician at the Welsh Language Board.

Reviews

National Museum still stranded on the M4

Osi Rhys Osmond



Companion Guide to the Welsh National Museum of Art
Oliver Fairclough
National Museum Wales, £16 99

This publication celebrates exemplary work from our official national collection of art illustrated in colour and discussed with a brief biography, history and provenance by the museum's resident experts and the principle curators of the collection. Published to coincide with the opening of the new modern and contemporary galleries, the re-hang of the latest current acquisitions, and to act as an instrument for the rebranding of the collection as the National Museum of Art, the guide takes us through the collection in a synoptic journey from the 16th Century to the present day.

National Museum Wales is, by its remit, permanently positioned in a difficult expository role. London has official and specific galleries to show historic, modern, contemporary art and craft and design, while in Cardiff one institution has to undertake all of these duties. This a difficult, if not impossible task.

Additionally, Wales is not and never has been in a social economic sense, a wealthy country. When money was being generated on a large enough scale it did not enter the public realm in sufficient amounts to initiate the institutions necessary to display the art produced in, or brought to Wales. Significantly, neither was the authority to create institutions vested in the Welsh cultural community. The question of autonomy is reflected by the invitation to Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas, the National Assembly's first Presiding Officer, to write the introduction, an acknowledgement of the recent relocation of power to Cardiff Bay.

The history of the national collection and of the museum itself is thoroughly described in the first chapter, *Building a National Art Collection*. In it Oliver Fairclough - who makes many of the more lucid contributions to the guide- tells the fascinating, but rather convoluted tale of the museum's difficult and protracted birth, and of its patrons, enthusiasts and benefactors.

In this review I discuss work illustrated in the publication and examine ways in which the collection itself is representative of the history of our visual culture.

The cover has a painting from 1911 by one of our most well-known artists, Augustus John, 1878-1961. His second wife Dorelia, poses dreamily as a domestic bohemian, staring out at the viewer while leaning nonchalantly on a long handled implement in an English garden. This is an interesting choice, somewhere in the middle ground of taste, history and acceptability, although the text published alongside makes rather dubious claims for John having been influenced by French Fauvism. If he was influenced by Fauvism, the evidence is stronger in some of his Arenig landscapes. Here he has reduced the directness of Fauvist colour to the drab tertiary tones of suburban England, rather than the hot hues of southern France.

The choice of this image tells us a great deal about the thinking that prevails at the National Museum of Art, about the target audience for this book, and what is considered a suitably representative image from the national collection.

One of the important questions in the establishing of a national collection is, just how national do the acquisitions need to be? In the case of Cardiff much of the collection has grown in response to art and objects that were gifts. Some of these are extraordinary works, particularly the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings that came in the various Davies bequests. But what these gifts have done, as Peter Lord so ably describes in his writing on Welsh art, is create tensions between scholarship, curatorial ambition and the task of building a truly national collection that still appear to be exerting an influence on acquisition and display.

The publication effectively illustrates the evolution of our visual high culture over the period considered. From work collected, and/or commissioned by noble families, like the Williams-Wynns of Wynnstay, the Mostyns and the Mansel's, to the tastes of a bourgeoning merchant class and later industrialists, steel and shipping magnates, coal-owners and their descendants, of financial and legal wealth as the industrial revolution entered its late stages when collectors and important patrons such as James Pyke Thompson supported the museum's early ambitions.

Each of the five chapters, beginning with the 16th Century, has an instructive descriptive inventory outlining the museum's holdings in art and artefacts from that period, some from private collections in Wales, others purchased between the 1950s and 1980s. In *Virgin and Child* by Giovanni Battisata, c.1500, a typical 16th Century Madonna and child, has a meticulously painted Mary tenderly holding the infant Christ, her left hand gently cupping his naked foot while her right supports his body in a pious and meditative composition.

Applied arts objects enhance our

comprehension of the culture from which the visual art emerged. They include Majolica plates and dishes from Italy, a beautiful silver ewer and basin from Bruges, the latter acquired by the Mostyns during the reign of Elizabeth I. They have a Welsh history and are a part of our story as is the 1568 portrait of Katheryn of Berain by Adriaen van Cronenburgh. A seriously beautiful painting commissioned while she was living in Antwerp with her second husband, the merchant and royal agent, Denbigh born, Sir Richard Clough. Beginning several important dynasties – bearing six children to four different husbands, all prominent Welshmen- hence her soubriquet 'Mam Cymru' (*The Mother of Wales*). She is portrayed showing the hesitant apprehension of someone living in interesting times, her hand on the skull a very obvious reference to mortality, the prayer book offering the promise of salvation by piety. This is an important acquisition affirming a European dimension to Welsh life, the influence of Spain in the Low Countries and the dangerous rivalries between Canterbury and Rome.

The powerfully dramatic double portrait *Sir Thomas Mansell and his wife Jane*, c.1625, is starkly beautiful in its stiff formality. Painted in predominantly black and white it has an almost metallic sheen of immutable propriety. Attributed to the British School the meticulous details of the couples' clothes, the arching geometry of their ruffs, lace trimmings and embroidery create a sense of three dimensionality that goes past mere representation to become physically iconic. This is a very powerful couple indeed, and their descendants remained prominent among the gentry of Wales.

The English topographical artist Francis Place (1647- 1728) drew the ruins of Pembroke Castle in 1678. These drawings - among the earliest Welsh landscape studies - are concurrent with Enlightenment enquiry and a growing ambition to map and record the landscape of Britain for aesthetic, geological, geographic and strategic purposes. As England's nearest piece of exotica, Wales became a popular destination for the artistic tourist. Simultaneously, influential European artists like Claude Lorraine (c1600-1682), *Landscape with St Philip Baptising the Eunuch* (1682) and Nicholas Poussin (1594-1665), *The Finding of Moses* (1651) were referencing classical Rome to locate their religious subject matter.

By now Welsh artists were travelling to England and in the case of Thomas Jones (1742-1803) and others, further afield to the continent, particularly Italy. Most admired for his almost abstract renditions of Neapolitan walls, in *Buildings in Naples* 1782, Jones acknowledges the formal beauty of the regular geometry and pale sun-bleached harmonies of the crumbling masonry and stucco of those ancient walls. His was a prescient aesthetic with an increasing appeal to modern sensibilities. These walls echo the austere forms of the whitewashed farm buildings of his mid-Wales upbringing. This highly restrained approach contrasts with Jones' earlier and highly melodramatic painting *The Bard* (1774), a re-imagining of the legendary story of the last bard, from Thomas Gray's poem. In a wild Welsh landscape a lone figure standing among the slaughtered bards prepares to throw himself from a Snowdonia mountain ledge to his certain death below.

Interestingly, hanging in the new galleries and illustrated later in the book, the work of Bedwyr Williams (b.1974) one of the newest stars in the Welsh arts firmament takes the same subject, although William's bard in *Bard Attitude* (2005) is taken from a copy of Phillipe Jacques Loutherbourg's (1740-1812) version of the same legend. Being photographed, as he says, as "a cursing muppet, fiddling with a harp on a rock" undermines the idea of defiant nobility in the face of immanent death. Williams' work regularly inclines to the cheerfully sardonic as he wittily demolishes cherished stereotypes of Welsh history and identity.

Richard Wilson (1713-82), one of the great figures of Welsh art, often described as the father of English landscape painting, *Pembroke Town and Castle* (c.1765) takes a similar viewpoint to the earlier work of Francis Place. Here, however, accurate topography is secondary to romantic construct, the foregrounded figures converse, and eerily, almost bring the sound of voices to a silent scene. His Italian travels infuse this work with elements of the idealised classical tradition. The dark foreboding cliffs and pale sky conspire to theatrical effect. By identifying the Welsh landscape with the classical values of the Roman Campagna, the Wales of the bourgeoning Celtic revival becomes physically imbued with innate and honourable cultural respectability. J.M.W.Turner (1775-1851) took his Welsh excursions as the century closed. Wales was then safer than Europe and the ruins his *Ewenny Priory* (c.1797), captured in pre-CADW chaos resonate with his famously luminous light.

The 19th Century saw the emergence of a number of Welsh artists who achieved widespread recognition, among them the sculptors John Gibson (1790-1866) and William Goscombe John (1860-1952) who was to become an important patron of the museum. Gibson had studied in Rome, as had a number of Welsh painters, where as Welsh speakers, they became the object of cultural curiosity as bearers of an ancient tongue. Gibson's *Aurora* (1841-48) a carving in marble, a skill for which he was renowned, exhibits that stiff formalism soon to be eclipsed by the more immediate responses that developed as the industrial revolution gathered pace.

Naturally, the new age led to profound changes in the making and appreciation of art, as radical artists reacted to the new experiences and opportunities presented by the advance of steam driven industrialism. Turner embraced these directly in his encounters with nature and the mechanical age, as did David Cox (1783-1839) in his 1850 watercolour, *Train on the coast*. The romantic classicism of Goscombe John and the high academics lasted well into the next century.

However, change was inevitable and the collection contains seminal work by Degas and Rodin, artists who were to profoundly affect the way sculpture would be made. The acceleration of industrial power and consequent increase in wealth allowed patronage to take a more direct role in the

making and accumulation of art in Wales. The Davies bequests form the core of the 19th and early 20th Century collection and the work of artists like Daumier (1808-1879) and Millet (1814-1875) suggest a concern with social issues that were to become the preoccupation of writers as well as artists and patrons as the century unfolded. The pre-Raphaelites are here, as are Manet (1832-1883) and the celebrated Impressionists and post–Impressionist paintings of Monet (1840-1926), Cezanne (1839-1906), van Gogh (1853-90), and Sisley (1839-99) - who painted in Wales - all reproduced in excellent colour.

Work by Lionel Walden (1961-1933) J.M. Whistler (1834-1903) and John Singer Sargent (1856-1925) also substantiate the rich diversity of the collection.

The first half of the 19th Century includes examples of work by Kandinsky (1866-1944), Max Ernst (1891-1976) and Rene Magritte (1898-1967), also a crucial recent acquisition, the obligatory Picasso (1882-1976) *Still Life*, purchased with the assistance of the National Art Fund and the Derek Williams Trust. To be credible every gallery needs its Picasso, and this is ours.

There are large holdings of the discrete, gentle paintings and drawings of Gwen John (1876-1939) and the more flamboyant work of her brother Augustus. Paul Nash (1889-1946), Graham Sutherland (1903-1980) and English romantics like John Piper (1903-1992) hang alongside Cedric Morris (1889-1982) and Stanley Spencer (1891-1959). Ceri Richards links Dylan Thomas's poetry to the visual art of Wales. Josef Herman (1910-2000) and Martin Bloch (1883-1954) represent a powerful and influential group of Jewish refugee artists who found inspiration and a new life in Wales. The book includes illustrations of their work and that of Francis Bacon (1909-1992), Peter Lanyon (1918-1964), and other post-war British painters.

There are images by Philip Jones Griffiths (1936-2008) our most distinguished war photographer, and paintings by David Hockney (b.1937), and Lucien Freud (1922-2011). In the year 2000, British Art Show 5 brought Donald Rodney (1961-1998) to the museum.

Sir Thomas Mansell and his wife Jane, c. 1625, painter unknown: "… the arching geometry of their ruffs, lace trimmings and embroidery create a sense of three dimensionality that goes past mere representation to become physically iconic."

The work he exhibited *In the house of my Father* (1967-7) is a poignant image and an valuable and courageous acquisition.

Strangely, but unsurprisingly, Welsh artists are in the minority in the final chapter, *Art after 1950*. This is a disappointing, though consistent feature of the museum's policy. However, Tim Davies (b.1960), our representative in this year's Venice Biennale is here, with one of his surgically deconstructed postcards, where an absent figure, silhouetted in Welsh national costume questions assumptions of culture and identity in a globalised world.

Perversely, there is no place for Iwan Bala (b.1956) which given his enormous contribution to the development of Welsh art, both critically and materially during the last 20 years is a serious oversight. Validation by London is everything and those included usually pass that test.

Also among the missing are: Anthony Shapland, Ivor Davies, Brendan Burns, Sue Williams, Catrin Webster, Christine Kinsey, John Selway, Phil Nichol, Maggie James and Cerith Wynn Evans, even though he does pass the test. The missing people are augmented by absent artefacts; among them the quilt, carthen and Pontypool Japanware, these wonders of Welsh creativity surely deserving of a place in a survey of our visual culture.

However, all in all this is a valuable and well-produced publication, reflecting an extraordinary collection of art and objects and confirming, contentiously perhaps, the official status of art and artists in Wales. It will be of great practical value to the serious gallery visitor, the student and those interested in Welsh history. The quality of writing varies, generally scholarly and fluent but occasionally sliding into workshop kids-speak.

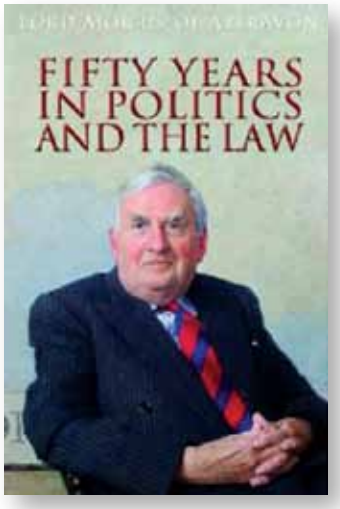
The guide contains enough applied art to sometimes feel like a saleroom catalogue. It faithfully follows the strands of accepted history and official policy. It has its glories, considerable glories, although the brighter they shine the more dramatically they illuminate the vacant spaces in what is meant to be a national collection.

Ultimately the effectiveness of a worthwhile national collection depends on autonomy, an autonomy of mind that comes with the acceptance of the new conditions of engagement. For, although the political power base has shifted to Cardiff Bay, the curatorial philosophy of our newly branded National Museum of Art remains stranded somewhere along the M4, probably, sadly, on the other side of the Bridge.

Osi Rhys Osmond is an artist, writer and cultural activist.

A fifty year shift

Peter Stead



Fifty Years in Politics and the Law
John Morris
University Of Wales Press, £24.99

There is a touching and revealing passage at the end of Lord Morris's autobiography in which he hopes that his grandchildren will read the book and accordingly appreciate the breadth of his interests. He wants them to know that the man who once had to persuade his Glyncorrwg constituents to re-align their rugby pitch to provide space for an advance factory, on another day found himself attending an International Parliamentary Union Conference in Cape Town and having to persuade the delegates of over a hundred nations to support a report condemning torture that he had co-authored. In recommending his recollections to his grandchildren and other readers John Morris, quite appropriately and modestly explains, that his book is essentially a portrait and a record of a working career. With a peerage and double knighthood rounding it off, the former MP for Aberavon became perhaps the most highly decorated of recent Welsh parliamentarians. Primarily Lord Morris is telling the story of how fifty years of hard work culminated in deserved recognition.

Following his election to Parliament in 1959 John Morris had told a Sunday newspaper that he was a barrister first and a politician second. He now admits that from the outset his parliamentary ambition was to be a law officer. His reward finally came 38 years later in 1997. In the meantime he had served as Shadow Attorney General for almost 18 years in Opposition. What those bare facts disguise is the enormous physical effort required in sustaining a political career as a constituency MP, as a junior minister in the 1960s, as a Cabinet minister 1974-79 and as a practitioner at the criminal bar - he had taken silk in 1973. He talks of being a circus artist riding two horses and at times during the reading of this book I found myself exhausted by the sheer logistics of a man running two homes, bringing up a family, forever on the motorway and reading constituency mail and either parliamentary papers or court briefs into the early hours.

The qualities needed to be a good politician are very similar to those needed by a good attorney. An attention to detail and an eye for the salient points are crucial, as is the gift of being able to persuade others of your argument. These skills formed the basis of his career but to them Lord Morris added a consummate ability of being able to use the system. A politician who has mastered the papers then needs to be fully aware of how parliament and the civil service work and must combine that with an awareness of how the Prime Minister of the day is thinking.One note of irony comes with his carefully written and important chapter on Kosovo, for at this time the Prime Minister of the day was not getting the legal advice that he wanted from his Attorney General. This book leaves us in no doubt that earlier in his career the author had been highly adept at using the parliamentary situation and his ministerial links to achieve real benefits for steelworkers, the voters of Aberavon and the people of Wales. He has provided a text-book for all those MPs who feel only their own impotence.

Lord Morris has written a book about being a successful and professional practitioner rather than being a polemicist or ideologue. Nevertheless he helps to explain the rebirth of Wales that has occurred in his political lifetime and, of course, his own role in that story. Without any great fanfares he simply explains that from his student days his aim was to work to establish all-Wales political institutions. From the moment that he took the surprising decision to work for the Farmers Union of Wales, right through to the moment when he stood alongside the Queen as she sanctioned the Welsh Assembly, he was to experience the fulfilment of his ambitions. As he tells it the rebirth of Wales appears almost inexorable and inevitable.

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In 1957 the young John Morris failed to secure the Labour candidature for the Carmarthenshire constituency and he now speculates whether his success in that selection meeting would have meant that the world would have heard

less in later years about Gwynfor Evans. Thereafter, he has little to say about Plaid and its aspirations for the new Wales that John Morris was to experience was overwhelmingly a creation of the Labour Party. He acknowledges Jim Griffiths, Gwylim Prys-Davies, Cledwyn Hughes, Elystan Morgan and Emrys Jones as the Welshmen who made devolution possible.

He expresses some mild displeasure at the manipulations of George Thomas, but sees no need to spend any time analysing the views and tactics of those dissenting Labour colleagues whom he quite rightly implies had failed to interpret the times through which they were living. The truth was that events in Scotland, by-election results and Labour's inability to win effective parliamentary majorities had made some form of devolution inevitable. The major lesson to be learnt from this book is that it was Harold Wilson and Jim Callaghan who made devolution possible. Tony Blair was left to round things off.

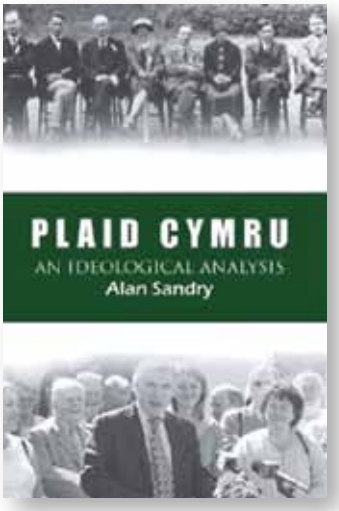
Many readers will be left wanting a political commitment to Wales, and indeed to the Labour Party, to be wrapped up in more ideological terms. However, Lord Morris is not that kind of Welshman - he once described his main interests as fishing and shooting. He has upheld the values of a rural Welshman forced to earn his living in an urban world.

His career reminds us of those heady days when the best talents of a generation presented themselves at Welsh Labour adoption meetings. It also clearly illustrates that politics is a human business in which success goes to the best lobbyists and operators. At one point he explains how informal and fortuitous was the emergence of an expedient that became graced with the title the 'Barnett-Formula'. Everyday politics is rarely about ideology, it's far more about being able to be in the right position at the right time. Lord Morris has written a story for his grandchildren and a text-book for our aspiring politicians.

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

When nationalism trumps socialism

David Melding



Plaid Cymru: An Ideological Analysis
Alan Sandry
Welsh Academic Press, £48.00

Alan Sandry has given new voice to the interesting question: what is Plaid Cymru for? Sandry utilises the concepts of the political theorist Michael Freeden to examine Plaid Cymru's core, peripheral and adjacent beliefs. This leads Sandry to conclude that Welsh nationalism is a thin ideology which, to be politically effective, has been fattened up with policies from the more comprehensive menus of socialism and environmentalism.

So far so good. Few would disagree that the core concept of nationalism (that nations and states should be coterminous) leaves a lot of space for other potentially core beliefs. Nationalist parties in Europe have in the past absorbed hard right wing beliefs (Eastern Europe in the 1920s), or religious practices (Eire until the 1950s). However, since the 1960s and the emergence of liberal nationalism it is socialism that has been most prominent in nationalist parties.

Plaid Cymru's intellectual history itself illustrates this eclecticism, starting with Saunders Lewis' interest in the ideas of key European and often Catholic nationalists and moving on after the War to Gwynfor Evans' more stolid advocacy of decentralised socialism. Sandry is fair and tactful in examining these trends, particularly the question of the authoritarian nationalism that prevailed in many European states between the Wars that inevitably influenced some nationalist thought in Wales.

So has Plaid Cymru gorged or just nibbled on the ideology of socialism? Sandry believes that Plaid's socialist repast has been so complete that it makes more sense to refer to Plaid first and foremost as a socialist party. This is not to say that no eclecticism remains. There are more centralist and even right wing elements in Plaid Cymru, but they are marginal. Sandry makes a bold assertion when he says we can describe "Plaid Cymru's ideology as being akin to socialist ideology". While it does not convince me, he should be thanked for providing such a provocative conclusion.

Classifying nationalism as a 'thin' ideology in need of greater policy substance runs the risk of portraying

Sandry makes a bold assertion when he says we can describe *"Plaid Cymru's ideology as being akin to socialist ideology"*. While it does not convince me, he should be thanked for providing such a provocative conclusion.

modern liberal politics as an aggressive contest where little common ground naturally exists. Surely one of the reasons that nationalism is enjoying a resurgence around the world is because key concepts such as democracy and welfarism are accepted. This has allowed the age of 'small worlds' to develop according to the Canadian thinkers David Elkins and Richard Simeon.

Here the very size of political communities is seen to have a direct impact on the success of public policy in a largely democratic but post ideological world. Many core beliefs in politics are now shared by socialists, liberals, nationalists and even conservatives. It would seem that most political ideologies have slimmed down from the fat and intolerant days of the 1930s.

Even if we accept that a fierce ideological battle continues to rage in modern democracies, why would socialists have wanted to join Plaid Cymru when, for much of its history, it was very distant from power? It seems more plausible to argue that, while socialists have undoubtedly joined Plaid Cymru, they have been more powerfully motivated by the prior idea of nationalism.

The difficulties with Sandry's central thesis are clearly seen in the political character of Plaid Cymru's leaders. Only Dafydd Elis Thomas could be viewed without contortion as a socialist. And, of course, Dafydd Elis Thomas often made himself unpopular with activists by advocating a very nationalist lite but pro-socialist agenda.

Plaid's members seem gripped by the national question above all else. In recent years the neo-nationalism of Dafydd Elis Thomas and Cynog Dafis (which has hinted at a federal option for Britain and an autonomous but not independent Wales) has been repudiated by a new generation of Plaid thinkers. Independence is back in fashion and past attempts to theorise it away find little favour. Does anyone remember 'free association'?

Sandry does not fully address two important developments that surely impinge heavily on Plaid's identity. First, to what extent has Plaid adopted socialist rhetoric principally to compete with Labour? If Plaid has responded to the Welsh political climate in this fashion, and I think it has to some degree, it remains more eclectic than socialist in motivation and, at its core, still a nationalist party. Of course we cannot run a random trial where Plaid would also have to compete in a Wales dominated by a centre-right political culture. However, one has only to look at Ireland to see how nationalist parties respond in more conservative environments. Sandry has not provided enough evidence to convince me that Plaid Cymru is *essentially* a socialist party.

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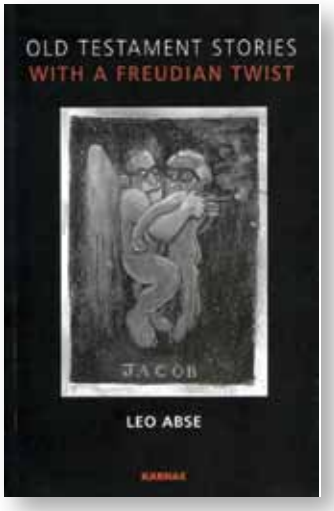
Secondly, this interesting study devotes too little time to the Rainbow coalition that so nearly appeared in 2007. True, those on the left of Plaid were horrified by the prospect of sitting in government with 'the Tories'! Yet Plaid's leadership was ready to do a deal. A party that was dedicated above all else to socialism would surely not have entertained the prospect of working with Conservatives with equanimity.

In the end, this work raises some important questions without quite providing answers of equal substance. However it is a welcome addition to the literature and may inspire others to tackle the question, 'what is Plaid Cymru really for?'

David Melding is Conservative AM for South Wales Central and Deputy Presiding Officer.

Lessons from a secular rabbi

John Osmond



Old Testament stories with a Freudian twist
Leo Abse
Karnac, £20.99

I may be among the last generation in Wales to have been brought up on tales of the Bible, drawn mainly from the New Testament to be sure, but with a fair sprinkling of the Old as well. My early imagination was bound up with stories of Abraham being commanded to kill his only son Isaac, of Moses being placed in a wicker basket and let drift down the Nile, of the tribes of Israel freeing themselves through the parting of the Red Sea, of bushes catching fire, golden idols, graven images, fatted calves, and of the lands of Canaan, Samaria and Judea.

It has often been said that the Welsh know more about the geography and history of Israel than they do of their own country, and that was certainly true when I was growing up in the 1950s. But those days are long gone. And, although our young people today are in many ways more sophisticated and worldly wise, I can't help but feel that they have lost touch with something primordially precious.

A reading of Leo Abse's last book, published posthumously earlier this year, will tell you why. As he was coming towards the end of his long and remarkable life,

the nonogenerian returned to the Talmudic roots of his childhood in early 20th Century south Wales where he was brought up in the orthodox faith. He tells how he would sit at the knee of his grandfather, who had migrated to Wales from Russian Poland, and hear tales from the *Midrash Haggadah*, the rabbinical commentary on the legendary parts of the Scriptures beginning five centuries before Christ. He recalls how "in a grubby ante-room of the local synagogue" he was taught to read Hebrew fluently and to translate the texts of the Pentateuch. "There I discovered for the first time how the dramatic lives of the patriarchs were punctuated by awesome parricides and infanticides."

It is clear that here also began Leo Abse's life-long fascination with the internal psychodramas that determine the development of our personality, our relationships and behaviour. In this endeavour, later in life he was much informed by the insights of Freud and his followers who in turn depended on the texts and myths of the Bible and ancient Greece. For Abse, the autodidact, his reading of Freud only confirmed what he had absorbed unconsciously as a youth from his study of the Book.

The significance of all this for us today is that it provided Abse with a profound understanding of human nature. In turn this explains how he was empowered to take on fearsome opponents and obstacles in his efforts to civilise the way society deals with such matters as divorce, homosexuality, adoption and suicide. As Pontypool's MP from 1958 until 1983, and for Torfaen until he retired from Westminster in 1987, he was extraordinarily successful as a back bencher in putting reforming social legislation on the statute book. Following the 1975 Children's Act that regulated fostering and adoption, Home Secretary Jim Callaghan wrote to him:

"This is another reform that your own activity and zeal has been largely responsible for. You will have a wonderful collection of worthwhile scalps under your belt before you finish. And you do much more good in terms of human happiness than 90 per cent of the work done in Parliament on what are called 'political issues'."

Typically, Abse quotes this accolade in his book – not, he claims, out of conceit, but because it shows that

> "it is possible for a politician to engage in successful counter-cultural assaults in our country and, although within the culture of, in particular England, there are few more undesirable motifs than an indifference to or antagonism to children, it is nevertheless challengeable."

Abse singles out England in this judgement as a place where children are emotionally starved on such a routine basis that the 2007 report of the United Nations Children's Fund found them to be the most neglected and unhappy in the western world. However, he acknowledges a contrast with Wales. As he puts it, when he began his campaign to reform the adoption laws he was confident of a speedy and positive response. However, his optimism was misplaced:

> "I was making incorrect assumptions about England that were based on the warmer and more affectionate family units of the Welsh Valleys when I was a lad, and upon the passionate Jewish family life with which I was so familiar."

Nonetheless, England was to benefit enormously from the impulses that derived from Leo Abse's blend of Jewish and Welsh consciousness. They also profoundly informed his insights into the UK's present political predicaments. These, he judges, are largely the result of Margaret Thatcher's legacy, carefully nurtured by Tony Blair and New Labour. He recorded them at length, in two highly controversial psycho-biographies, *Margaret, Daughter of Beatrice* (1989), and *The Man Behind the Smile: Tony Blair and the Politics of Perversion* (1996).

Thatcher was the more significant in the impact her personal predicaments made upon public policy. Abse believed this to be the consequence of her antagonism towards her mother, Beatrice – so much so that the daughter erased references to her mother in her entry in *Who's Who*, ceased all communication with her when she was a teenager, and in later life only referred to her in deprecatory terms. Abse says the relationship provides a modern illustration of the myth of Demeter and Persephone, of the destructiveness that can be unleashed when mother and daughter struggle unforgivingly with each other, when the resentments and hostility within the dyadic relationship are never assuaged, and when there is never a reconciliation between the two. As he also declares:

> "Thatcher took that battle with her mother into the public arena; traditional 'Old' Labour was a party identifying with the mother, a party whose self-perception and ideals were essentially mother-orientated, even as yesterday's Conservative Party was father-orientated. The Labour Party was the 'welfare party', maternally concerned, the provider, the bountiful caring one, the party that created the tendering National Health Service and gave the protection to the stumbling in our society of the National Insurance Act, the creator of the 1945 welfare state. With great effect, Thatcher displaced all her rage against her mother in an onslaught on what she described as the 'nanny state', stigmatizing it as a cultivator of dependency and a subverter of individual effort and aspiration. Margaret Thatcher was engaged in matricide not politics, and the uncaring Thatcherite society we now have in place proclaims her victory."

This passage is worth quoting at length because it illustrates the insights that can be gained from a lifetime's study of human behaviour, sourced in a culture deeply imbibed with the lessons from millennia of generations recorded in ancient texts such as the Greek myths and the Old Testament. We lose touch with that inheritance at our peril. Leo Abse's bequest, now from beyond the grave, is to warn us of the dangers of the loss. In his later years he seems to me to have become a kind of secular rabbi. I think he would have liked that decription.

The significance of all this for us today is that it provided Abse with a profound understanding of human nature.

John Osmond is Director of the IWA.

Out with our toxic brands

Peter Stead

The new Wales offers rich veins of gossip and rumour. I only have to sit anonymously (it pays to come from Swansea) in a Cardiff wine bar to find myself adjacent to legions of the hangers-on: aides, advisors, consultants, and aspiring candidates, all of whom have stories to tell. This was how I learnt that the First Minister intends to take his Cabinet to the same toughening-up facility in Poland that was deployed so effectively by Warren Gatland. How wonderful that snaps of Cabinet members, dressed only in swimwear and plunging into sub-zero temperatures, will be used to indicate their dedication to the regeneration of Wales. We will soon have the fourth best economy in the world. "If only we can kick-start it", someone cruelly joked.

More worrying was the gossip from the office of Leighton Andrews, the Minister often referred to as the dynamic, hard-tackling midfielder in Labour's team, the Welsh Nobby Stiles or Billy Bremner as it were. What I hear is that, following Sam Warburton's infamous tackle and Gatland's admission that he subsequently contemplated cheating, Leighton now regards the century-old WRU brand as toxic and has recommended its abolition. He firmly believes that Regional Rugby represents Wales's best hope and wants the four Welsh Regions to compete in a new European Nine Nations competition. Regular international fixtures at four Welsh venues will transform the south Wales economy. Moreover, he is pressing for a fifth Welsh region that will bring international rugby to Wrexham.

It was said of Lloyd George that he was the first British Minister to actually search through filing cabinets looking for things to do. Leighton has clearly learnt that lesson for I heard his aides mention that he does not intend to stop at the WRU. He is already looking at the relative toxicity (RT) of the Welsh Baptist Union, the Farmers' Union of Wales and most controversially the National Eisteddfod. Rumour has it that a BBC Wales investigation will reveal that Eisteddfod officials have accepted hospitality packages at the forthcoming London Olympics. Furthermore, at recent eisteddfodau there were cases of individual choristers singing in at least two choirs in the same competition and of cornet players switching bands on the day of competition in transactions in which Swansea City season tickets changed hands.

'Augean stables' comes to mind. Perhaps Wales is in need of an effective toxic detector (TD). But careful reflection might lead us to consider whether it is wise to rush to a demolition of our hard-fought-for national institutions.

This autumn has revealed the fragility of Western post-industrial society. The sheer impotence of the world's leaders in the face of economic crisis has forced all of us who care about our own particular national identity to have a clearer notion of our relative strengths and weaknesses. In that respect the first priority is to ensure the quality, depth, sophistication and absolute honesty of the manner in which we debate major issues. In that respect this has not been an encouraging year in Wales.

Only slowly has the realisation dawned that in post-industrial Wales, education has to be the major priority. During 2011 we have debated education furiously and we always end up listing some real achievements, even as we confess our relative failure compared to other countries. All too often there is more waffle than substance in our education debates. A welter of management-speak and hollow social-science jargon has blunted our educational cutting-edge. Our nurturing of the humanities and science within a national system of schools and colleges had once given the nation a sheen and distinction. Inevitably, the shrinking of industry and financial constraints have created pressures but it is nevertheless a scandal that, given devolution, Wales has not sustained a clear guarantee of an education allowing both individual and national fulfilment.

No recent event has been as saddening as the way in which the University of Wales has been dragged into the public eye. Whatever the cases of mismanagement and negligence by the University, the allegations were never publicly discussed in any kind of context. The original accusatory television programmes were essentially tabloid in nature. There was no attempt to outline the complexity and range of the University's work, nor was there any effort to explain the degree to which all universities now have to trade in the international market place. The paramount need was for a fuller public debate on higher education in Wales. Certainly the University of Wales should have provided fuller explanations but from the outset the BBC, the Press, university leaders and politicians should have ensured the widening of the debate. It became a season of knee-jerk reactions, cheap comments and hasty improvisation.

At times of crisis someone has to identify the fundamental points. We have wasted the advantages a national federal university had offered us. At any time in the last 30 years Wales could have planned a fully integrated system with a variety of different institutions within a clear hierarchy. In the USA several state systems provided the classic models that we should have copied. Having missed that opportunity we were left with a situation in which metaphors like musical chairs and cats in the bag come to mind.

Inevitably, and ironically, our best universities, having gone their own way, will have to work together more closely whilst other institutions will have embarrassing moments looking at the annual league tables. The University of Wales brand still has great potential and we should wish it well. Some will come to regret abandoning it. The great danger now is that we might lose some of the drive to bring business and industry into academe. In the modern era universities are too important to be left to bureaucrats and politicians. We have collectively made fools of ourselves this summer. These are dangerous times to be playing games.

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