

the welsh  
agenda

www.iwa.org.uk | Spring/Summer 2014 | No. 52 | £4.95

---

is Wales  
sleepwalking to  
independence?

- ▶ Could the Euro elections set off a chain of events that will lead Wales to the brink of Independence?

---

+

*Gerald Holtham:* WELSH LABOUR SHOULD SUPPLY ITS OWN OPPOSITION | *Rhun ap Iorwerth:* SWITCHING FROM JOURNALISM TO POLITICS  
*Jon Owen Jones:* WILLIAMS COMMISSION WORSE THAN 1974 REORGANISATION | *Adam Price:* SAVING THE LANGUAGE IN THE HEARTLANDS  
*Trevor Fishlock:* 'WITH MALICE TO ONE AND ALL' | *Menna Elfyn:* A POETIC TRIBUTE TO NIGEL JENKINS

iwa



Sefydliad Materion Cymreig  
Institute of Welsh Affairs

The Institute of Welsh Affairs gratefully acknowledges funding support from the the **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation** and the **Waterloo Foundation**.

The following organisations are corporate members:

#### Public Sector

- Aberystwyth University, Hugh Owen Library
- Acas Wales
- Bangor University
- Cardiff & Vale College
- Cardiff County Council
- Cardiff School of Management
- Cardiff University
- Cardiff University Library
- Centre for Regeneration Excellence Wales
- ColegauCymru
- Estyn
- Glandwr Cymru - The Canal & River Trust in Wales
- Harvard College Library
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Higher Education Wales
- Institute of Life Sciences, Swansea
- Law Commission for England and Wales
- Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru
- Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Service
- National Assembly for Wales
- National Assembly for Wales Library
- National Museum Wales
- National Theatre Wales
- North Wales Fire Service
- Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
- Police & Crime Commissioner for South Wales
- Powys County Council
- Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
- S4C
- Sport Wales
- SSE
- The Electoral Commission
- University of Wales Press
- Wales Audit Office
- Welsh Language Commissioner
- WLGA
- Working Links Wales

#### Private Sector

- Acuity Legal
- Arden Kitt Associates Ltd
- Arriva Trains Wales
- Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
- Beaufort Research Ltd
- BT
- Cake Communications
- Cassidian UK
- Castell Howell Foods
- Constructing Excellence Wales
- The Co-operative Cymru/Wales
- Deryn
- DS Smith Recycling
- Elan Valley Trust
- Eversheds LLP
- Grayling
- Historix (R) Editions
- Hydr Limited
- Iaith Cyf
- Julian Hodge Bank
- Media Wales
- MLM Cartwright
- Morgan Cole
- Morgan LaRoche
- New Law
- Newsdirect
- Parker Plant Hire Ltd
- Parthian Books
- PriceWaterhouse Coopers
- Rondo Media
- RWE npower renewables
- S A Brain & Co
- The CAD Centre Ltd
- The means
- The Principality Building Society
- Wales & West Utilities

#### Voluntary Sector

- Alcohol Concern Cymru
- Cardiff University (CAIRD)
- Cartrefi Cymru
- Cartrefi Cymunedol Community Housing
- Citizen Advice Cymru
- Community - the union for life
- Wales Co-operative Centre
- Crossroads Mid & West Wales
- Cynnal Cymru - Sustain Wales
- Cynon Taf Community Housing Group
- Disability Wales
- Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru
- Federation of Small Businesses Wales
- Friends of the Earth Cymru
- Gofal
- Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
- The Learned Society of Wales
- Oxfam Cymru
- Play Wales
- Royal College of Nursing
- RSPB Cymru
- Sustrans Cymru
- Tenovus
- Wales Co-operative Centre
- Wales TUC
- Waterloo Foundation
- WCVA
- WRAP Cymru
- Ymddiriedolaeth Nant Gwrtheyrn

For information on IWA events and publications please visit our website at [www.iwa.org.uk](http://www.iwa.org.uk) or call 02920 484 387.

**Editorial Manager:** John Osmond

**Editorial Board:**

Lee Waters, Geraint Talfan Davies,  
Kirsty Davies, Rhys David, Gerry  
Holtham, Jessica Blair, Marcus  
Longley, Clare Critchley

**Literary Editor:** Peter Finch

**Office Manager:**

Laura Knight

**Design:**

marc@theundercard.co.uk

To advertise, tel: 02920 484 387

The publisher acknowledges the  
financial support of the Welsh  
Books Council.

**Institute of Welsh Affairs**

56 James Street, Cardiff Bay,  
Cardiff, CF10 5EZ

Tel: 02920 484 387

Email: wales@iwa.org.uk

www.iwa.org.uk

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

**Branches**

**North Wales Secretariat**

c/o Huw Lewis

6 Maes yr Haul, Mold,  
Flintshire CH7 1NS

Tel: 01352 758311

**Gwent Secretariat**

c/o Rob Southall

University of Wales, Newport,  
Caerleon Campus

PO Box 179, Newport NP18 3YG

Tel: 01633 432005

**West Wales Secretariat**

c/o Margaret Davies

Principal's Office,  
Trinity University College,

Carmarthen SA31 3EP

Tel: 01267 237971

**Swansea Bay Secretariat**

c/o Delith Thorpe

38 Southlands Drive,

Swansea SA3 5RA

Tel: 01792 404315

**IWA Women**

c/o Jess Blair

Tel: 02920 484 387

## All change at the IWA



The new look for the *Welsh Agenda* is just one reflection of the change that has taken place at the IWA in the last year. A new Chair, a new board, a completely new staff team and a new office are just some of the ways we have refreshed ourselves following our strategic review.

Our pilot project applying digital crowdsourcing to policy debates helped influence the Silk Commission report on the devolution of policing and justice; The new Senedd Papers series has had a strong start in generating ideas for the political parties to consider as they begin drawing together their manifestos; and the new The IWA Debates series, sponsored by Aberystwyth University, hit the ground running with an impressive event examining one of the thorniest issues facing policy makers - the future of student tuition fees.

We've also listened to member feedback in improving our communications: our weekly e-newsletter makes sure that our members are kept up to date with the latest developments at the IWA, and get a reminder of some of the best content on our Click on Wales news analysis website.

Our conference format has been updated. The full day format and the default PowerPoint presentations have been put aside for a shorter and more varied approach. And to answer the concern from members that the events are outside the price range of many, and are too focused on Cardiff, we now produce a summary note of our main events, as well as recording many of them, so that even those not able to attend can dip in to the ones of interest. We've also had a resurgence of branch activity around the country.

And of course the *Welsh Agenda* and Click

on Wales remain a core part of the IWA's mission to generate an intelligent debate about Wales' future. After advertising for volunteers we've assembled a talented editorial board to help shape the content of the *Welsh Agenda*. We've introduced some changes to this issue and we're circulating a questionnaire for you to let us know what you think and to help us as we develop a new strategy.

This edition is the last with John Osmond at the helm of the magazine and Peter Finch as Literary Editor. This will also be the last issue for Kirsty Davies overseeing the production process. Kirsty is leaving the IWA after more than five years as deputy Director to become Oxfam's Director in Wales, and does so with our best wishes.

Each of them have made enormous contributions to the IWA, and John's unique role is the subject of a piece by Peter Stead in the magazine. The drive and commitment of John and Geraint Talfan Davies at the IWA over the past two decades has been extraordinary, and we all owe them a debt of gratitude.

Geraint was one of the original founders of the IWA and has been our Chair since 1992. It is difficult to do justice to his contribution, but we shall try at the members' summer party we are planning in Cardiff in July to honour him. Keep an eye out on our website for details.

It is testimony to the achievements of the outgoing team that the IWA attracted a breadth of first rate applications to our open advert for new board members. The new team we have assembled includes some well known names, and others less well known, who are leading in their fields. Our new Chair, Helen Molyneux, is profiled by outgoing trustee Rhys David in the magazine.

The new team - board and staff - will be working together over the coming months to put together a strategy for the IWA. We will be consulting with you too, of course. But let us not underestimate the challenges we face.

Funding is a key issue for the IWA and one that we need to address urgently - we need to raise £100,000 this year in order to be able to continue to our work as Wales' leading think tank.

We need your help to ensure that the charity not only survives, but finds its voice as Wales' critical friend.

**Lee Waters,**  
**Director, IWA**





# contents

- 04 **'We need to shout louder'**  
Rhys David meets the new Chair of the Institute of Welsh Affairs
- 06 **Farewell to the ineluctable John O**  
Peter Stead suspects that he and the Welsh agenda's departing editor will meet again

## > commentary

- 08 **Welsh Labour should supply its own opposition**  
Gerald Holtham
- 11 **Welsh TV is more than Dr Who**  
Lee Waters
- 12 **Don't rip the heart out of the Coal Exchange**  
Nerys Lloyd-Pierce

## > features

- 14 **Opportunistic moments that extend the boundaries of Welsh devolution**  
John Osmond predicts we'll look back in ten years time and find that events have dictated the pace of constitutional change
- 17 **Crowdsourcing views on policing and justice**  
Jess Blair describes an IWA online research initiative aimed at widening the Welsh devolution debate
- 18 **Social solidarity and the constitution**  
Michael Keating explains why welfare provision is at the heart of the Scottish independence debate

- 20 **Wales, sleepwalking to independence?**  
Lee Waters examines the consequences for Wales of Scottish independence
- 23 **Life in the slow lane**  
Rhun ap Iorwerth finds switching from journalism to politics means adjusting to the oil tanker pace of political change
- 25 **Council borders shouldn't follow where the crows fly**  
Jon Owen Jones says the Williams Commission's proposals for new local government boundaries are worse than the 1974 gerrymander
- 27 **Culture shift needed in delivery of public services**  
Nerys Evans says the Williams Commission's 62 recommendations must be taken as a whole
- 30 **Welsh Government should move quickly on city regions**  
Geraint Talfan Davies argues that Wales has to compete with English cities that are expanding to embrace their hinterlands

- 33 **Thinking the unthinkable on economy**  
Sukhdev Johal, John Law and Karel Williams call for a contrarian research centre to devise policies for local and regional experiments
- 36 **Wales needs a region based on language**  
Adam Price makes the case for a development authority for western Wales
- 38 **Build more houses to save Welsh communities**  
Dafydd Iwan explains why there should now should be a stronger emphasis on Y Fro Gymraeg
- 40 **Empowering bottom-up locally-driven development**  
Dave Adamson and Mark Lang report on the regeneration lessons that have emerged from their year long study of Tredegar
- 43 **Housing should follow transport in south-east Wales**  
Roger Tanner says a Development Corporation should create a new garden city on the edge of Cardiff



# #52 Spring/ Summer 2014



45 **Political pressure to decide Welsh funding fate**  
Eurfyl ap Gwilym finds that Wales could lose nearly a £1 billion if High Speed Rail in England is regarded as benefiting Wales

48 **Lessons for Wales from North Dakota**  
Ian Jenkins says there is a strong case for the Welsh Government to establish a state bank

## > culture

52 **Fishlock's File With Malice to One and All**  
Trevor Fishlock remembers when his typewriter was confiscated and the telex was a teacher of patience

54 **Public poet who made things happen**  
Peter Finch pays tribute to Nigel Jenkins (1949 – 2014) and Menna Elfyn contributes a poetry sequence dedicated to his memory

## > reviews

58 **Welsh Queen of commerce**  
Deirdre Beddoe

60 **Testing the UK's policy of drift**  
Aled Eirug

61 **Brains of the coalfield**  
J. Graham Jones

63 **R.S. was 'ere**  
Tony Brown

64 **Last Word Dangers of squandering Britishness**  
Peter Stead

In the previous issue of the Welsh agenda we published an article by Michael Sullivan entitled *Carwyn's 'One Wales' philosophy spikes Plaid's guns*. This article was a condensation of a much longer conference paper which acknowledges and quotes extensively from an article by David S. Moon: *Welsh Labour in power: 'One Wales' vs. 'One Nation'*, published by the journal of social democracy *Renewal* No 27, in May 2013.

# events

## > IWA Senedd Papers: Welsh Council Tax Reform

Wednesday 14 May 2014 12.30pm-2pm

Media Briefing Room, Senedd, Cardiff Bay

*The second in the IWA Senedd Papers series Gerald Holtham, economist and chair of the Holtham Commission, looks at the devolution of some tax powers to Wales and suggests an alternative method of collecting council tax.*

Entry free but booking essential on [www.iwa.org.uk](http://www.iwa.org.uk) or call 02920 484 387.

## > What future is there for public transport in Cardigan Bay?

Monday 9 June 2014, 7pm-8:30pm

Aberystwyth Arts Centre

*This event will see a panel of experts and academics discuss the possibilities and issues surrounding the future of public transport in rural Wales.*

Entry free. If you'd like to attend this event RSVP the branch Chair at [meilyr@fbagroup.co.uk](mailto:meilyr@fbagroup.co.uk).

## > Prudent healthcare – can it save the NHS in Wales?

Thursday 12 June 2014 1pm-6pm

Central Cardiff: venue TBC

*Health Minister Mark Drakeford has said the NHS in Wales must move towards a culture of 'prudent health care' – not providing treatment where it is unlikely to benefit the patient, or could do harm – if it is to carry on providing an equitable service. Speakers include Mark Drakeford, Health Minister; Sharon Hopkins, Director of Public Health, Cardiff and the Vale; Professor Ceri Phillips, Swansea University; and Sir Mansel Aylward, Bevan Commission.*

IWA members: £45 + VAT; Non-members: £90 + VAT

To book visit our eventbrite page or call 026920 484 387

## > IWA Inspire Wales Award ceremony – in association with the Western Mail

Friday 20 June 2014, 7pm

City Hall, Cardiff – Hosted by Angharad Mair

*The IWA Inspire Wales Awards rewards those doing inspiring work in the fields of Education, Arts, Science, Business, the Environment, Sport, Community, Active Citizenship, School Governor and the promotion of the Welsh Language.*

Booking essential. Visit [www.iwa.org.uk](http://www.iwa.org.uk) or call 02920 484 387

## > How can Cardigan Bay punch above its weight economically?

Monday 6 October 2014

Aberystwyth Arts Centre

*Can we think creatively about how we use the next round of European funding to solve deep-rooted economic problems in the Cardigan Bay area?*

Entry free. If you'd like to attend this event RSVP the branch Chair at [meilyr@fbagroup.co.uk](mailto:meilyr@fbagroup.co.uk)

## Just Published

### > A real Citizen Service for Wales

By Andy Bevan

First of the Senedd Papers in association with the National Assembly Commission

### > Taxation in Wales

By Gerald Holtham

The second Senedd Paper proposes a new method of collecting council tax in Wales



# ‘We need to shout louder’

Rhys David meets the new Chair of the Institute of Welsh Affairs

When Helen Molyneux was invited to apply to succeed Geraint Talfan Davies as only the third chair of Wales's longest-established think-tank, her first inclination was to decline. Yet the timing was tantalisingly appropriate. It coincided with an important deal she was just completing to sell New Law, the Cardiff firm she founded in 2004, to

motor accident management company, Helphire.

The 48-year-old mother of an adult son and teenage daughter remains chief executive of the personal injury and consumer legal specialist, reporting to the new owners in Bath. Meanwhile, her interests across the spectrum of Welsh issues have broadened through another job she has been involved in – membership of the Commission on Devolution in Wales under the chairmanship of former Assembly Clerk, Paul Silk. This was given the task of examining the case for new powers for the Welsh Assembly, including responsibility for some taxes raised in Wales.

Until now Helen's focus has been

on her career, in which she has been spectacularly successful. She made it from a Cardiff University law degree to solicitors Philips & Buck (later transformed into Eversheds, one of the big Cardiff law firms) before starting New Law with a small office, a desk, and one employee. Her firm now employs 390 people, making it one of Cardiff's biggest private sector employers, with other offices in Bristol and Basingstoke and an associate business in Glasgow. Its sale to Helphire will ultimately bring its backers a sum in excess of £40 million.

She was persuaded to join the Silk Commission because she had become aware of the impact of political decisions on business, and of the



importance of sharing in discussions on the changes that would help to alter lives and change society for the better. She became a member of one of the panels put together for the presentations after publication of the Silk Part One report on fiscal powers, and then as a full member of Part Two which looked at the case for

**“There is not enough awareness of what the IWA has achieved, which perhaps we can address through better follow-through on the ideas it generates.”**

wider powers. Issues, such as transport provision for people travelling to work and the impact of business rates, are just two examples she gives of where the policymakers in Cardiff Bay shape the environment for employers and employees alike and where public input is vital.

“The Silk Commission has given its views, and its recommendations now need to be driven forward in the party manifestoes, through public debate and through legislation,” she said. “The IWA is a way I can carry on and progress some of the ideas we discussed.”

Where her business commitments allow, Helen intends to be an active chair of the Institute, working with the new director Lee Waters to set out the vision and strategy of the organisation as it moves into its second quarter century. She will be able to call on support from a board recently strengthened with some Welsh heavy-hitters, containing some of the leading figures in Welsh business, academia and other fields.

Helen is critical of the short-termism which she has seen among politicians, constantly eyeing the next election – and more concerned with process than outputs. She believes this is where the IWA can provide a valuable antidote.

“The IWA has a key role to play in setting a longer term vision for Wales,” she said. “What do we want Wales to look like in 10 years’ time? How can we do things better and how can we improve people’s lives in a practical way instead of just talking about policy?” Politicians, she believes, need to set a goal of what Wales should be

like some years ahead and, working back from there, put in place the steps needed to achieve agreed targets.

“It is a privilege to be asked to follow Geraint as chair of the IWA,” Helen says. “The Institute has a very good reputation and has punched well above its weight for a number of years.” Even so she believes its work is still far too little known or recognised in Wales. She points out that it has been instrumental in initiating debate on a wide range of initiatives from the Wales Millennium Centre to the Cardiff Metro, and has exercised influence across the country through its branch structure. “There is not enough awareness of what the IWA has achieved, which perhaps we can address through better follow-through on the ideas it generates.” She says. “It needs to shout louder.”

Helen’s career and drive suggests she will deliver a strong focus on what the IWA can do best, though she recognises that as in any organisation the constraints imposed by the need to raise funds will always be there. In recent years these have intensified, as a result of the financial squeeze many of the IWA’s key funders are experiencing.

She has a record as an innovator and entrepreneur, which suggests change could be on the way.

Approaching 40 years of age and a top insurance lawyer specialising in personal injury and employers’ liability she was sure of a continuing successful career as a partner at Eversheds. However, she decided the partnership model in a big firm was not for her. Instead, she decided to create a new type of legal entity positioned to take advantage of the upcoming Legal Services Act, which freed non-legal businesses to own law firms and offer legal advice – hence the title New Law.

This has built its business by providing the in-house legal services offered by a number of big corporates, including supermarkets, banks and insurance companies to their clients. That is what made the business attractive to Helphire, a provider of outsourced help, such as vehicle repair and replacement, to the clients of insurance companies. The acquisition of New Law, which has worked closely with Helphire for five years, means a further range of services could be bundled into the parent company’s offer.

Helen will not be short of quality advice from her colleagues on the IWA board, which now includes new recruits in Graham Edwards, chief executive of Wales and West Utilities, Jo Foster, head of the political unit at PHA media and previously a close colleague of deputy prime minister Nick Clegg, Roger Lewis, chief executive of the Welsh Rugby Union, Professor Kevin Morgan of Cardiff University and David Stevens, chief operating officer of Admiral Insurance.

“I have big shoes to fill,” she notes. “I am conscious the IWA is an organisation that is greatly valued and I want to carry on with the good work that has been started. I want to develop a strategy that people can understand and buy into and then to measure our success against what we have said we aim to do.”



**Rhys David** is a former journalist with the Financial Times.

# Farewell to the ineluctable John O

Peter Stead suspects that he and the Welsh agenda's departing editor will meet again

We Welsh live in a relatively free society but nevertheless at various stages of our lives we will all have the personal experience of living in thrall to someone who establishes a hold over us. From my grammar school days particular Latin and Maths masters come to mind. By comparison my university days were the quintessence of liberty although there was one boss who made the asking of favours into a lifestyle. However, nothing in my professional career can compare with the unrelenting demands that have been made by journalist friend John Osmond - he, of course, of this parish.

Month after month through many decades John has interrupted my peaceful life in Swansea by ringing to ask for some written thoughts that were urgently needed for inclusion in some publication that would guide Wales through its latest crisis. I was not alone in this respect. When future historians explain how a new Wales emerged at the start of this century they will need to place full emphasis on how thousands of phone-calls from Cardiff were required to persuade many otherwise dozy academics and bystanders that their country really

did need them to put pen to paper. Devolution was coaxed out of the chattering classes of Wales by one campaigning and untiring editor. We have lived through the era of John O.

In every story of national liberation from around the world there are dramatic instances of leaders who go straight from gaol to be presidents. Just as often there are stranger stories of leaders who avoid stereotyping. I was a product of a Wales where one judged everybody's worth by the Valley in which they were born, the school they attended and the teams they supported. I was not quite ready then to be urged into a new perception of my country by somebody born in Abergavenny, educated at King Henry VIII Grammar School and Bristol University, who had worked as a journalist in Yorkshire and who could never remember whether it was soccer or rugby that was played at Ninian Park.


One weekend in the 1960s an academic colleague and I were stranded on Lundy and, whilst there, we played the game of devising a constitution for a fully independent Lundy Island. This was merely a time-filling game and at that stage I had no

idea of how a later friendship with John would make me think of constitutions as never before. Born during the War and raised courtesy of the Welfare State I could never be anything other than grateful that I was British. Taken to London to see the Coronation decorations in 1953 I never doubted that my capital city was the most important place in the world.

Encountering John was a jaw-dropping experience for I have never met anyone who was so deeply antipathetic to everything London stood for. Those ministries that had given me my free education and medicines were for him the centralist enemy. Four decades on I retain a personal British perspective but I fully recognise the tremendous impact of John's systematic undermining of a British dimension which, in any case, had become something far less benevolent than Labour had envisaged in 1945. In constitutional terms John, as a political scientist, was amongst the first in Wales to appreciate that the UK had become a shaky proposition and that the time was opportune for playing with constitutions.

I still have vivid recollections of





**Encountering John was a jaw-dropping experience for I have never met anyone who was so deeply antipathetic to everything London stood for.**

countless residential seminars organised by John in those last decades of the century. We would meet in small groups at Pantycelyn Hall, Coleg Harlech or the Hill at Abergavenny (I did wonder if that was John's ancestral home) to dismantle Britishness. For John constitutions were always the key but what was attractive was the urbanity and cosmopolitan ambience of these occasions. The Scots and Irish guests were always so intellectually brilliant and the emphasis on literature and culture so apparent that we never doubted that we were rescuing these islands from the philistines. I frequently disagreed with John but the political sub-culture he was creating was enriching Wales.

Rather like that famous *New Yorker* cover that depicted the rest of the USA as a small backdrop to Manhattan we all have our own imaginary maps of Wales. For John there was just Cardiff and Penarth surrounded by the visual splendours of Pembrokeshire and mid Wales. John would tease me about my preference for the Valleys and Swansea Bay. Swansea has long been a bone of contention. I would tease John about his not knowing how to get here and


then he would ask "What is Swansea all about?" I would have to explain that for many Swansea residents Wales is a mere plot invented by Cardiff to get its hands on public funds and investment: the centralist enemy is now nearer at hand.

Of course, there is far more to John's Wales than the constitution. The many books and magazines that he has edited give ample evidence of his desire to see our country defined by its literature, art and music. He is also a fierce defender of civil liberties. His perspective has remained truly cosmopolitan and his interests in foreign literature, films and beauty spots mark him out as a man of the world. His mission, unflaggingly sustained over a generation, has always been to give Wales its own place in that modern world. Having fought for devolution, it was he and Geraint Talfan Davies who almost uniquely appreciated that a new civil society would have to be created in Wales. *The National Question Again* was the very appropriate title of one of his books. In truth, for John that has always been the question and it endures.

Ultimately it has been John's sheer professionalism that has guaranteed the effectiveness of his public career.

Whenever I joined one of his ventures, whether in print or on television, I always knew that I was in good hands. Only once did he let me down. As I addressed the camera on the Bwlch above Cwmparc, John in his director's guise asked me to take a step back before pronouncing on the role of Rhondda miners. I took that step and slid thirty feet down the bank towards Cwmparc. My last view before disappearing was of John doubled up in laughter seemingly caring little about the fate of his presenter.

I later took revenge. When filming in Los Angeles we dashed uninvited into an apartment and on to a balcony to capture a sunset shot, rushing straight past an oriental family eating dinner. "Did you apologise to those Chinese?" asked John. "Yes", I said, but then explained "they were Vietnamese". Determined to milk the moment I added, "and they wanted to know if you were English!"

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

## Welsh Labour should supply its own opposition

**Gerald Holtham on why we need to rekindle some excitement in Welsh politics if the National Assembly is to grow**

The Silk Commission's second report on extending devolved powers reflects a lot of careful thought and analysis. How much is implemented, though, will depend on politics. Securing change from Westminster may well require demonstrating that Welsh public opinion is actively demanding change. Now public opinion does seem to have shifted over a decade or so to a firmer acceptance of the National Assembly. Yet my impression is the public views it a bit like the Welsh soccer team: we're glad we've got one, like other countries, even though rather few of us go to the matches. And judging by some of the results it doesn't seem to be playing particularly well. Although soccer is a more popular game than rugby in Wales, much less emotion is invested in the national soccer team than in the rugby team – probably because the latter wins more often.

That suggests that greater interest in the National Assembly and greater enthusiasm for extending its responsibilities might follow if it was seen, or believed, to be more successful. Much of the indifference to any further devolution and reservations about Silk seem to be based on the thought: "shouldn't they sort out some of the problems we've got for which they are already responsible before they take on many more".

The general perception is not that the Welsh Government has made terrible errors. Labour, after all, has been in government continuously and still does well in the polls and Carwyn Jones has some of the highest approval ratings

of any UK politician. But the feeling is rather that devolved government has not succeeded in changing important things for the better. Comparative education statistics from PISA and more anecdotal evidence from the health service suggest a continued falling behind. The Welsh Government even gets the blame for the Welsh economy growing more slowly than much of the rest of the UK, so falling back in relative GDP per head. Some of that is a bum rap. How a subordinate government with highly restricted powers and no control of fiscal policy is supposed to have caused long-established relative economic decline is not clear.

Enthusiasts for more devolution right now will argue that the performance of a government should not change views on the constitutional settlement in any case. You can't chop and change the constitution with every twist and turn of a government's fortunes, they argue, and we need a sustainable settlement. Accept for the sake of argument, they say, the Welsh Government's performance has been disappointing. To use that to oppose further devolution is to suppose that the performance is not down to the difficulties of one administration. It is to attribute disappointment to some deep-seated inability of the Welsh people to organise a democracy.

Any such inability cannot be down to size considering that there are smaller countries than Wales in Europe that manage a much greater degree of self-government fairly successfully. Do we think so little of ourselves? Must we be fatalistic about the capabilities and capacities of devolved government? Why can't they improve?

That argument has a good point but it does not allay the concerns of many people that responsibility should not run far ahead of capacity. If the soccer team wins more matches the crowds will come; score more policy successes and the active demand for further devolution will grow.

I am not sure that success is just a matter of devising clever policies and building competence in the civil service. In the long run, in a democracy people get

the government they deserve. Bringing the government closer to the people was supposed to increase public interest and attention and generally to release energy in the political system. Oh dear. Even the biggest friends of devolution cannot plausibly claim that has happened. To improve government and its perception among the public, we have to revitalize our politics and get people more engaged. How on earth do we do that?

A revitalized politics poses a particular dilemma for any Labour Party supporter in Wales. Revitalization surely requires a bit of suspense, the possibility of change. Doesn't that mean Labour is supposed to lose office from time to time? You can't expect Labour folk to work for that but there is an alternative, namely a much greater degree of intra-Party openness, more public discussion, even policy disputes. Labour, like any political Party, contains different views. Instead of covering these up in the interests of Party discipline, perhaps they should be allowed, indeed encouraged, to hang out.

Spin and news management in the interests of securing electoral advantage have undoubtedly reduced the quality of political debate in the UK as a whole and served to turn off many of the public UK-wide. But in Wales, the Labour Party is electorally strong enough not to need those techniques. It does not need to be so defensive. If it debated differences of view in public and acknowledged difficulties openly and honestly, there is no Welsh Daily Mail to run tendentious headlines about 'splits'.

It comes down to this: Welsh politics is predictable and a bit boring. Given the enduring impotence of the opposition, if Labour is to rekindle political interest it must provide its own opposition – or at least its own political and policy debates.

Unlike their London counterparts Welsh Ministers show a marked reluctance to appear on television to be interviewed. That is the hallmark of the cautious incumbent who can only see a downside to public exposure. But their job would be easier if the public understood the real difficulties they face. And in Wales

the media, such as it is, is not particularly hostile. The difficulties can be put over and the options debated.

Just imagine if a Minister came on and said "We're sorting out A and B but I'm at my wits end over C; our policies don't seem to be working and the opposition's ideas are no good either. We're considering this and that and we'd welcome public input". Would he or she be an object of derision or would people think they were hearing something real from a politician - and respect them more? In any case, our politicians don't have to pretend to be perfect and know-it-all; the public wouldn't believe that anyway.

A change in political culture is needed to make our people relate more to their government. Such a change in culture cannot happen easily. Does it need some institutional stimulus? Perhaps we need to revisit some of the ideas for electronic consultation and public involvement that were around when devolution was brand

new but which evaporated as the Assembly settled down to business as usual.

A possible stimulus could come from multi-member constituencies. Suppose we reduced the number of Assembly constituencies and elected three members for each. Each Party would have to put up three candidates per constituency and the public would express their preference by voting 1,2,3.... Different views within the same Party could be judged and endorsed by the public, reflected in the order in which it voted for a Party's candidates.

If people in Pontsticill are determined to vote Labour, they can at least ask 'which Labour'. Yes, that would result in a degree of intra-Party competition, traditionally anathema to UK politicians, but it would give the public more influence and the public would like it. For proof, look to the Republic of Ireland where such a voting system has long been in place. From time to time politicians have urged changing it and set up referenda to do so. Every time

the public has refused and clung to the system. Admittedly a degree of selflessness is required of our politicians to move to such a system. What an opportunity to demonstrate that they are not 'just in it for themselves', as cynics claim.

This is not a new idea. The Richard Commission recommended such an electoral system for Wales long ago. Perhaps we need to implement the proposal of that Commission before we tackle the proposals of the latest one.



Gerald Holtham is an IWA trustee and chaired the Commission on Funding and Finance for Wales.



Cleaning, Grounds & General Maintenance

PS Facilities Management is an award winning social business owned by leading mental health and wellbeing charity Gofal.



Working throughout South Wales, PS is a one-stop-shop for all of your maintenance needs.



All profits are invested back into Gofal to support the delivery of its mental health and wellbeing services.

029 20 493403



[www.psfacilitiesmanagement.co.uk](http://www.psfacilitiesmanagement.co.uk)



Cymraeg Ar Waith  
Welsh At Work

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

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

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

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

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

The CADcentre is an independent national, bilingual provider delivering work-based training and skills schemes in Wales and England since 1999.

The scheme is fully funded by the Welsh Government under the Apprenticeships Training schemes, subject to staff meeting the eligibility criteria.

Rhwydwrdd / Freephone: 0800 2000 129

[james.moronev@cadcentreuk.com](mailto:james.moronev@cadcentreuk.com) or

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





## Do you want to...

Cut costs?

Increase  
competitiveness?

Exploit new  
markets?

If you use – or are considering  
using – recycled materials in  
your products or packaging  
WRAP Cymru can help.



## Ydych chi eisiau...

Lleihau costau?

Cynyddu ysfa  
gystadleuol?

Ymelwa ar  
farchnadoedd newydd?

Os ydych chi'n defnyddio  
– neu'n ystyried defnyddio –  
deunyddiau wedi'u hailgylchu yn  
eich cynhyrchion neu ddeunydd  
pacio, gall WRAP Cymru helpu.

WRAP

Cymru

Click on [www.wrapcymru.org.uk/manufacturers](http://www.wrapcymru.org.uk/manufacturers), call 02920 100 100, or email [BandMadmin@wrap.org.uk](mailto:BandMadmin@wrap.org.uk) to discover how your business could benefit.

Cliciwch ar [www.wrapcymru.org.uk/cy/cyllidiweithgynhyrchwyr](http://www.wrapcymru.org.uk/cy/cyllidiweithgynhyrchwyr), ffoniwch 02920 100 100, neu anfonwch neges e-bost at [BandMadmin@wrap.org.uk](mailto:BandMadmin@wrap.org.uk) i ddarganfod sut gallai eich busnes etwa.

## Do you have a workplace

**PROBLEM?**

acaras

**A workplace problem shared with Acas  
is better than halved - it is solved.**

Acas has been resolving workplace problems for over 35 years. Our training courses and business solutions cover key areas, including:

- ▶ managing discipline and grievance
- ▶ recruiting, employing and managing people
- ▶ redundancy and restructuring
- ▶ employee communications and consultation
- ▶ managing attendance
- ▶ employee engagement.

But it is not just  
about solving  
problems, but  
preventing them.  
Go to  
[www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)  
to find out more  
about how Acas  
can help.



## Welsh TV is more than Dr Who

**Lee Waters says BBC bosses have made important concessions on the need for more English language Welsh television**

A year to the day he took over as BBC's Director General, Lord Tony Hall, made a highly significant confession in a speech in Cardiff in April. Despite the shift in production of major networks shows to Wales, he said there's not enough television made about Wales in English. Dr Who may feature Welsh landscapes, but it is no substitute for programmes which tell the modern story of Wales.

Hall conceded that the amount broadcasting about Wales in English has been eroded over the last decade to the extent that it does not deliver a full and rounded reflection of Welsh life and culture. This is a confession that some of his predecessors were reluctant to make, as were some of Lord Chris Patten's predecessors as Chair of the BBC Trust. For the past ten years the IWA has sought to raise this issue in several forums and in dialogue with the BBC itself, but the BBC has been reluctant even to concede that there is an issue – presumably frightened of the financial consequences. The decentralisation of drama production to Roath Lock – welcome and wholehearted though that has been – was an answer to a different problem.

Tony Hall's speech was, therefore, novel and significant in several ways, a recognition that:

- > Welsh language provision is not the only issue in Welsh broadcasting.
- > There has been a substantial erosion of English language television services for Wales over the last decade and more – across BBC Wales and ITV Wales.
- > The shortfall lies not in news and current affairs but in those other reflections of Welsh life such as drama, comedy, entertainment and culture.

Hall asked whether this mattered and gave the following answer: "Of course it does: the vitality of any nation must surely rest on more than its journalism. One cannot fully realise a nation's creative potential or harness its diverse talents through the important, but narrow prism of news"

That last point is something that has not been fashionable as politicians have focused on safeguarding the coverage of news and current affairs to ensure that the development of distinctive polices are not lost on the voters. But it came with the price of sacrificing 'general programmes'.

The morning after Hall's speech, the Assembly's Communities, Equality and Local government Committee held two hour-long sessions, first with Chris Patten and the Trustee for Wales, Elan Closs Stephens and later with Tony Hall and the Director of BBC Wales, Rhodri Talfan Davies. It was a tepid encounter, hardly

and advisors who had spent some time preparing for a 'grilling' seemed palpably underwhelmed, rather than relieved, by the limp engagement from the AMs. Indeed, it will hardly have left an impression with the senior leadership of the BBC that the National Assembly is body to treat with caution, let alone fear.

The men from Auntie did not give ground on the recommendations of the Silk Commission to create a devolved body within the BBC Trust, and they poured cold water over the notion of a Welsh edition of Newsnight.

There were, however, some important concessions by the BBC leadership. The Director General acknowledged the representation of Welsh politicians and issues on BBC 1's flagship Question Time programme was "really important" and currently was "not right". And the network BBC coverage of last year's,

**Not only did the committee spend too much time on the issue of the BBC's coverage of the devolved administrations, but they failed to seize on the concessions made the night before, and more generally missed the opportunity to probe and press the decision makers.**

an interrogation - in fact, a case study in the scrutiny deficiencies of a hard-pressed 60-member Assembly – and, perhaps, the quality of AMs more generally.

Not only did the committee spend too much time on the issue of the BBC's coverage of the devolved administrations, but they failed to seize on the concessions made the night before, and more generally missed the opportunity to probe and press the decision makers. BBC executives

which referred to the role of Environment Agency rather than the new Welsh body, Natural Resources Wales, was "just not good enough".

The most significant concession, however, remains that acknowledgment that aspects of Welsh life are not "sufficiently captured by the BBC's own television services in Wales". Simply recognising that there is an issue is an essential pre-condition to addressing it.

But this is where things will get difficult.

It is unlikely that a fresh cheque is going to be put on a desk at BBC Wales any time soon. And it would be a mistake for Wales simply to adopt an Oliver Twist-like posture. Though the BBC Trust member for Wales, Elan Closs Stephens, couldn't rein in her instincts when she said "If there is a specific pot of money, then I would like to hear where [Lord Hall] would want to spend that to have the biggest possible impact on the feeling of identity within the Welsh audience.

Lord Hall is clearly encouraging a bigger debate, from which there might, eventually, be a more substantial gain. He said: "I do believe the BBC will need to think hard about how it strengthens its support for national and regional self-expression as it prepares its case for a new charter. I would like to invite you all to be a part of the debate."

## Simply recognising that there is an issue is an essential pre-condition to addressing it. But this is where things will get difficult.

Wales should seize that invitation with both hands. That will entail more imagination, focus and mastery of the detail by our elected representatives than was evident at the Assembly Committee sessions, and more engagement in the issue by the Welsh Government than it has shown in recent years. But it will also require the engagement of Welsh civil society as a whole.



Lee Waters is Director of the IWA.

## Don't rip the heart out of the Coal Exchange

### Nerys Lloyd-Pierce bemoans the corporate men who are bent on destroying the Welsh capital's heritage

The Coal Exchange in Cardiff Bay is without doubt one of the city's most fascinating buildings. Constructed as a base from which traders in the city's industrial heyday could carry out their globally important work, it is the place where the world's first £1m deal was struck. One would imagine it's a building worth cherishing.

However, a freedom of information request, made by conservation engineer Jon Avent who works opposite the Coal Exchange, reveals that Cardiff City Council apparently has an intention to demolish the listed interior, keeping only the facade.

As anyone who has been inside the Coal Exchange will testify, the interior is magnificent. The former trading floor boasts rich wooden panelling, an oak balcony, stained glass... To demolish all this would be to rip the heart out of the Coal Exchange. It would destroy the very aspect of the building that illustrates its potent historical significance.

Inside, it's possible to imagine the electric atmosphere as coal owners, ship owners and their agents met daily on the floor of the trading hall to negotiate their latest deals. During the peak trading hour of midday to one o'clock, the floor sometimes had as many as 200 men milling around, shouting, gesticulating, and wrangling over prices.

It was estimated that up to 10,000 people passed through the building each day. At one time, the Coal Exchange's importance was such, that the price of the world's coal was determined there. Built between 1883 and 1886 the Coal Exchange, was pivotal in Cardiff's transformation from

a small town of some 10,000 people to becoming a key commercial player on the international stage.

In more recent times, the building provided a unique, atmospheric music venue, hosting names as diverse as blues legend Walter Trout, saxophone supremo Courtney Pine and indie rockers Arctic Monkeys. So many Cardiff residents have good memories of evenings spent there, a venue brimming with character amid a sea of insipid establishments.

Cardiff's fondness for the Coal Exchange is borne out by a newly launched petition aimed at Culture Minister John Griffiths that has already gathered more than 2,000 signatures, a figure that is rising rapidly.

The Coal Exchange is a Grade 11 listed building. The Victorian Society states that such a listing protects much more than the facade. It also protects the interior, plus outbuildings, boundary walls and all other structures within the 'curtilage'.

The council claims the building is unsafe, and on the point of collapse. However, conservation engineer Jon Avent, who has spent the last 20 years looking at listed buildings in various states of disrepair, says he is of the firm belief that the Coal Exchange is not about to collapse. In his view, it needs a few isolated areas attended to, but nothing too challenging.

It's hard to fathom why the council cannot see the value of restoring the Coal Exchange, potentially with help from the Heritage Lottery fund. It has been suggested that the council wants to build a modern conference centre behind the Coal Exchange facade. But why use a building of national significance for this purpose, when there are plenty of other options?

A common criticism of Cardiff Bay is that the overwhelming majority of its investment in regeneration went on the modern waterfront development, while the historic core, with its run-down but spectacular old buildings was wilfully ignored. Furthermore, as was pointed out in Apolonija Susteric's Artes Mundi 2012 contribution, *Politics in Space, Tiger Bay Project*, in the brave new world of the revamped bay, culture was ignored.

**So much of Cardiff's heritage has already been lost. The canal system that could have been a major tourist attraction is now underground. The picturesque 16th Century ruins of Greyfriars priory were bulldozed and now lie beneath Capital Tower.**

Sadly, this view is true enough. A visitor with an appetite for a richly diverse cultural experience would find the Bay sorely lacking. Even the designation Cardiff Bay lacks the guts and power of a name like Tiger Bay.

Had old and new been married with vision and panache how different the story could have been. Cardiff Bay could have been a thriving and envied cultural centre, a place that seamlessly embraced ancient and modern. Instead, the Bay is a schizoid place of two halves.

How could this have been allowed to happen?

So much of Cardiff's heritage has already been lost. The canal system that could have been a major tourist attraction is now underground. The picturesque 16th Century ruins of Greyfriars priory were bulldozed and now lie beneath Capital Tower. Almost any other city on the planet would have celebrated the priory as an historical feature to be prized. But planning has never been a Cardiff strong point, and it isn't today.

With so much already trashed, it seems inconceivable that yet another piece of the city's fabric can be cast aside with cynical abandon. Yet with will, vision and imagination, a magnificently restored Coal Exchange could be the centrepiece of a revitalised Mount Stuart Square. The Coal Exchange played a hugely important part in the city's history, it should play an equally important part in the city's future.

Some years ago I saw the iconic Patti Smith play at the Coal Exchange. Wandering around Cardiff Bay on a pre-performance jaunt, she noted the shoddy new build on the waterfront, and the sad neglect of the spectacular buildings further 'inland'. She told the audience - "don't let the corporate men destroy your city". The trouble is, they seem hell-bent on doing so.



**Nerys Lloyd-Pierce** is Chair of Cardiff Civic Society.

The banner features the S4C logo on the left, with the tagline 'Cynnwys gwreiddiol o Gymru / Original Welsh content'. The central part is a collage of three images: a group of four people in a landscape, a woman sitting at a table with food, and two women in a hallway. Below these is a screenshot of the S4C Clic website interface, showing a 'S4C YN Fyw' video player and a grid of program thumbnails. On the right, there are four text blocks describing the content: 'Drama o safon ryngwladol / Internationally acclaimed drama', 'Rhaglenni ffeithiol cofiadwy / Award-winning factual programmes', 'Materion cyfoes gafaelgar / Engaging current affairs', and 'Cynnwys digidol arloesol / Innovative digital content'.

# Opportunistic moments that extend the boundaries of Welsh devolution

**John Osmond** predicts we'll look back in ten years time and find that events have dictated the pace of constitutional change

At a dinner in early March to celebrate the launch of their final report on enhancing the powers of the National Assembly, members of the Silk Commission pledged to meet again in ten years time to see how many of their 61 recommendations had been taken up.

That might seem a long time, especially in politics when a week can be an eternity. Nonetheless, that was how long they judged some of their ideas might take to become part of the emerging Welsh constitution, especially those concerning devolution of criminal justice and the creation of a separate jurisdiction.

It was sobering to note that their projection forward to the Wales of 2024 was made almost ten years to the day that the Richard Commission report was launched in Cardiff in 2004. When examining how the Silk Commission's recommendations might come to pass, if at all, it is instructive to look back to see how

the Richard offerings have prospered in the past decade.

Of course, the main thrust of the Richard Commission's agenda - that the National Assembly should acquire primary legislative powers - has been enacted. On the other hand, other parts of their package (which they argued should be regarded as a whole) remain unfulfilled, notably increasing the number of AMs from 60 to 80 and their election by the single transferable proportional vote.

When Peter Hain put through his 2006 Act, which enabled legislative powers subject to a referendum, he predicted that it would take at least ten years to be realised. However, he was overtaken by events, and in particular the Assembly election of 2007. This resulted in the coalition between Labour and Plaid Cymru, the One Wales programme for government, and its commitment to a referendum on more

powers, duly held in March 2011.

It seems likely, therefore, that progress with the Silk Commission's proposals will be equally determined by events and their unforeseen consequences. First up will be the Scottish independence referendum in September, closely followed by the UK general election in May 2015.

A narrow No vote in the referendum, somewhere within the range of 55 per cent to 45 per cent, will create a new context for the Silk agenda. The unionist parties will demand that Westminster comes up with a package of further devolution to ward off pressure from the SNP for a re-run of the plebiscite if it wins the Scottish Parliament election in 2016. In turn this will raise the bar for Labour and the Conservatives so far as Wales is concerned.

So, for example, the Scots may well be offered complete control over income tax with an ability to vary the basic, higher, and additional rates - something which Silk recommended but has been rejected by the UK Government. Without this discretion the parties in Cardiff Bay have declared devolving power of income tax unusable, with Welsh Labour also demanding a needs-based formula for calculating the block grant. If Scotland gets discretion over varying income tax rates the way will be opened for Wales to follow suit. It is noteworthy that in mid-March Scottish Labour unveiled proposals to extend the Scottish Parliament's ability to vary income tax from the present 10p to 15p in the pound, and also to vary the top higher and additional tax bands upwards.

Prospects for early implementation of the Silk Commission's main recommendations for moving to a reserved powers model for the Assembly and for the devolution of police, energy



The Changing Union project is being undertaken by the IWA in collaboration with the Wales Governance Centre at Cardiff University and Cymru Yfory/Tomorrow's Wales. Funded by the Nuffield Foundation and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, the project is tracking and influencing the devolution debate across the UK over three years in the run-up to the Scottish independence referendum in September 2014. See the project's website [www.changingunion.org.uk](http://www.changingunion.org.uk)




and water is likely to depend on Labour being in government following the 2015 general election. At Welsh Labour's Spring conference in Llandudno in April Ed Miliband committed to implementing the Silk recommendation on reserved powers. At the Welsh Liberal Democrat conference in Cardiff a week later Nick Clegg signed up to the whole Silk package.

If there is a hung parliament and Labour or Conservative prospects of forming a government depend on a coalition with the Liberal Democrats or a deal with the SNP and Plaid Cymru (or both), then expect Silk to move to centre stage. After all, this is how the Silk Commission was established in the first place, as a result of an off-the-cuff commitment made in the agreement between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats in their coalition deal following the 2010 election. It was put in as a concession to the Welsh Liberal Democrats, an alternative to their demand for reform of the Barnett formula.

Out of such opportunistic moments have the boundaries of the Welsh devolution settlement been expanded, and the same is likely to prove the case in the next few years. Further progress could then be made following the 2016 National Assembly election. All the parties will need to say something about Silk in their manifestos. And, of course, events will be speeded up if the outcome requires a coalition, most probably of Labour with the Liberal Democrats or with Plaid Cymru. In that eventuality expect a commitment to a further high powered commission with a legal tinge, established to investigate the advantages of devolving powers over the administration of justice and moves to a Welsh legal jurisdiction.

When the members of the Silk Commission meet again for dinner, in 2024, they are likely to find that the Welsh constitutional landscape has been altered substantially, and probably in some ways they had not anticipated ten years earlier.

 John Osmond was founding Director of the IWA and is now a freelance journalist, writer and policy consultant.

## Silk Commission Part II report main recommendations

- > Moving from the current *conferred* powers model of devolution to a *reserved* powers model. A reserved powers model, which sets out the powers which are not devolved rather than the powers that are, would clarify responsibilities and allow more effective, confident governance. It would also bring Wales into line with the other devolved administrations of the United Kingdom.
- > More backbench Members of the National Assembly, between 80 and 100, to improve scrutiny and accountability.
- > Devolving most aspects of policing, ensuring effective cooperation across the UK continues.
- > A phased approach to the devolution of the justice system, devolving the youth justice system immediately with a feasibility study for the devolution of prisons and probation to follow.
- > Completion and implementation of a review of other aspects of the justice system by 2025.
- > Increasing the threshold for devolved consents for all energy generation from 50MW to 350MW.
- > Aligning the devolved competence for water to the national boundary, recognising the need for further consideration of the practical implications.
- > Devolving powers in relation to ports, rail, bus and taxi regulation, speed and drink drive limits;
- > Strengthening the Welsh dimension of BBC governance within the UK Trust framework and transferring the direct government funding of S4C from the UK Government to the Welsh Government.
- > Specific recommendations on a range of other subjects such as the devolution of teachers pay.



Members of the Silk Commission present their final report to Welsh Secretary David Jones



# Mastering politics and devolution

Looking to gain advanced level understanding of devolved government in Wales?

Cardiff University's Masters degree in **Welsh Politics and Government** studies devolution in Wales since 1999; a system based on distinctive historical and cultural factors, a fast evolving constitutional dispensation, new policy-making processes, and still-developing civil society capacity.

With issues relating to shared sovereignty and multi-level governance central to contemporary political debates, this programme opens a fascinating window on broader trends in European and global governance.

Taught full-time or part-time through Cardiff University's Department of Politics and International Relations.

#### To find out more about the programme contact:

Professor Richard Wyn Jones,  
Programme Co-ordinator: WynJonesR@cardiff.ac.uk  
Or: Tel. +44 (0)29 2087 0824  
email: europ-pgt@cardiff.ac.uk  
[www.cardiff.ac.uk/ahss/](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/ahss/)



*"The Masters in Welsh Politics and Government is an excellent course - contemporary, relevant, challenging and engaging. It has been great to be able to study this course part-time whilst working in the field of Welsh Politics. The teaching has been excellent and the course has been incredibly beneficial for me both personally and professionally."* 2011 Graduate

# Meistroli gwleidyddiaeth a datganoli

Hoffech chi gael lefel uwch o ddealltwriaeth o lywodraeth ddatganoledig yng Nghymru?

Mae Gradd Feistr Prifysgol Caerdydd mewn **Gwleidyddiaeth a Llywodraeth Cymru** yn astudio llywodraeth ddatganoledig yng Nghymru er 1999; cyfundrefn sydd wedi'i seilio ar ffactorau hanesyddol a diwylliannol neilltuol, trefniant cyfansoddiadol sy'n esblygu'n gyflym, prosesau newydd o lunio polisiau, a chyfraniad cymdeithas sifil sydd wedi datblygu'n anwastad.

Gyda goblygiadau cyd-sofraniaeth a llywodraethiant am-lefel yn ganolog i drafodaethau gwleidyddol cyfoes, mae'r rhaglen hon yn agor ffenestr ddiddorol ar dueddiadau ehangach mewn llywodraethiant Ewropeaidd a byd-eang.

Caiff y cwrs ei gynig ar sail llawn amser neu ran amser drwy Adran Gwleidyddiaeth a Chysylltiadau Rhyngwladol, Prifysgol Caerdydd.

#### I gael mwy o wybodaeth am y rhaglen, cysylltwch â:

Yr Athro Richard Wyn Jones, Cydlynnydd y Rhaglen:  
WynJonesR@caerdydd.ac.uk  
Neu: Ffôn +44 (0)29 2087 0824  
e-bost: europ-pgt@caerdydd.ac.uk  
[www.caerdydd.ac.uk/ahss/](http://www.caerdydd.ac.uk/ahss/)



© National Assembly For Wales / Cynulliad Cymru

*"Mae Radd Meistr mewn Llywodraeth a Gwleidyddiaeth Cymru yn gws rhagorol - mae'n gyfoes, perthnasol, heriol a diddorol. Mae wedi bod yn wych gallu astudio'r cwrs hwn yn rhan-amser gan weithio ym maes Gwleidyddiaeth Cymru ar yr un pryd. Mae'r addysgu wedi bod yn ardderchog a'r cwrs wedi bod yn hynod fuddiol i mi yn bersonol ac yn broffesiynol."* Graddedig 2011



Canolfan Llywodraethiant Cymru  
Wales Governance Centre





# Crowdsourcing views on policing and justice

---

**Jess Blair** describes an IWA online research initiative aimed at widening the Welsh devolution debate

---

The Silk Commission's recommendations in favour of the devolution of policing and justice powers to Wales - the last major Welsh public service still under Westminster control - received headline attention in the media. Yet there has been relatively little debate about what this would mean in practice.

Certainly, there are contradictory views in relation to the proposal. For instance, while a Silk Commission poll found that 63 per cent supported the devolution of police powers, the same percentage wanted justice powers kept at Westminster.

In an effort to generate greater debate the IWA has undertaken a crowdsourcing research project, bringing together online the views of a wide range of people. We were commissioned by the UK's Changing Union Project to use policing and justice as a pilot project to test the effectiveness of the method in generating wider engagement than is generally possible with more conventional research approaches.

Crowdsourcing is a relatively new method of research, though it has already had some impact worldwide. It enables tapping into the knowledge and opinions of a much larger group of people than can be achieved by more traditional methodologies. A notable example was Iceland's attempt to crowdsource a new constitution following the 2008 banking crisis and the collapse of its Government.

The IWA's pilot project engaged with 55 participants, involving them in a six-week debate using a specially designed web platform. This operated in the manner of a shared blog, with 33 of the participants creating content and commenting on each other's views. They comprised academics, lawyers and Police and Crime Commissioners, together with representatives from the third sector and the Welsh Government. They discussed questions about crime reduction and how devolution of policing and justice would work in practice.

What soon became clear was that some parts of this agenda such as youth justice, where the Welsh Government has already taken an initiative in drafting a Youth Justice Bill, were easier to debate than others. In the case of youth justice our participants were able to articulate what a devolved system would look like and its likely benefits, for example reducing reoffending rates.

This contrasted with other areas of the justice system, such as the courts administration, where it was more difficult for participants to appreciate the problems and benefits that might result from devolution. Although the Silk Commission has opened up the prospect of devolution in these areas, there is still some way to go before we have a clear picture of what a fully devolved justice system for Wales would look like.

As intended, the pilot project was a learning process. Police officers, probation officers and other practitioners were noticeably absent from the discussion. Undoubtedly, our failure to engage with them, despite offering anonymity, was a drawback. Probably it was a reflection of the sensitive nature of the subject amongst

frontline practitioners, despite the fact that the Police Federation submitted evidence to the Silk Commission.

On the other hand a positive outcome was our choice of Tom Davies, the former Independent Police Complaints Commissioner who chaired the project and brought kudos and respect to the process. He led discussion internally on the online platform, and externally, by authoring pieces for ClickonWales to draw in comments which were then discussed on the platform.

A problem was how to synthesize the results. Reducing six weeks of dialogue between 33 participants into a set of shared conclusions was a difficult task. Inevitably, some topics had more discussion than others. Overall, however, we were able to promote a debate where one had been lacking previously.

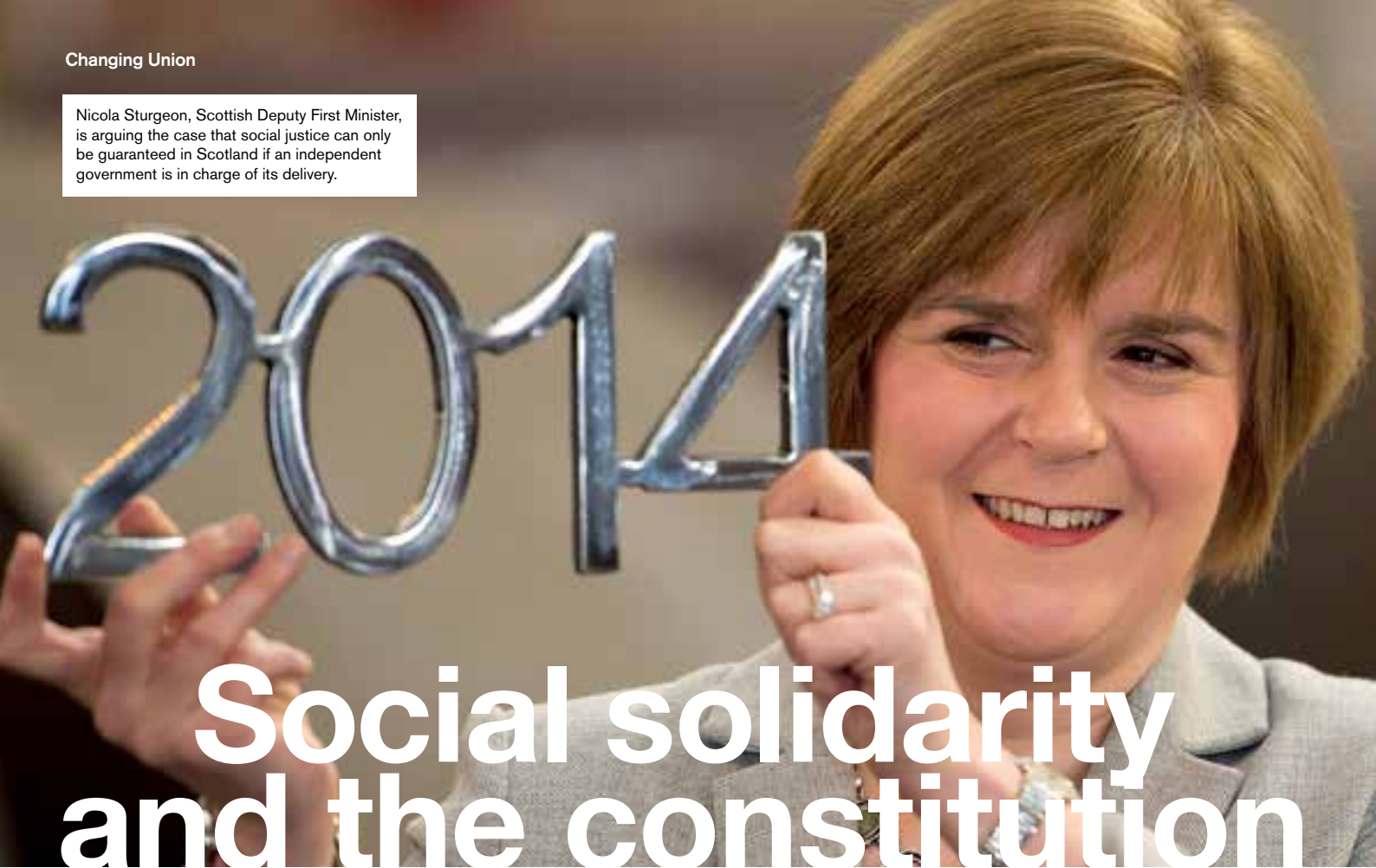
Our participants were overwhelmingly supportive of the idea of the devolution of policing, youth justice and later the justice system as a whole. At the same time they were able to articulate the case for the transfer of some of these powers better than others. Probation was an example where an expert submission had to be obtained before most of them were ready to come to a view. In such cases they were understandably reluctant to offer opinions about something they felt they knew relatively little about.

If implemented the Silk Commission's recommendations on policing and justice will mean radical changes in how these functions are administered in Wales. The debate the IWA has initiated now needs to be broadened out if the full implications are to be fully understood and accepted. This discussion needs to continue and grow.



Jess Blair is Policy Analyst for the IWA. The full report of the policing and justice pilot project can be accessed on the UK's Changing Union Project website.

Nicola Sturgeon, Scottish Deputy First Minister, is arguing the case that social justice can only be guaranteed in Scotland if an independent government is in charge of its delivery.



# Social solidarity and the constitution

**Michael Keating** explains why welfare provision is at the heart of the Scottish independence debate

The constitutional debate in Scotland has begun to turn on issues of welfare state reform. Nationalists propose that welfare should be organised on a purely Scottish basis, while unionists, especially in the Labour Party, insist that it must remain a purely UK responsibility. My argument is that, as with the constitution in general, there is a middle position.

The current allocation of powers in social policy is largely inherited from the old Scottish Office system, but is consistent with traditional federal and public goods theories. Redistributive matters are mostly reserved for the centre, while allocative matters, such as the organisation of public services, are largely devolved. This was also true of the devolution proposals of the 1970s, with the exception that the current settlement gives Scotland some important

instruments in the field of economic development while reserving the main macro-economic powers.

There are two rationales for reserving redistributive powers. First is an instrumental argument, that a larger area is better able to mobilise resources for redistribution and insure against asymmetric shocks. Against this is the argument that it is at the level of the nation that affective solidarity exists, which provides the rationale for selecting the community within which redistribution takes place (no welfare states are ever truly universal). These arguments were recently explicitly confirmed in the report of the Calman Commission.

My argument is that these assumptions must, at least, be modified in the current era of welfare state transformation. There

are two dimensions here, the functional and the territorial.

Social policy specialists talk of old and new social risks. Old social risks are those posed by the traditional industrial labour market and male-headed households. They include the need for family support, pensions and insurance against spells of unemployment.

On the other hand, new social risks reflect the complexities of modern society. They include the highly complex mechanisms of generation and reproduction of poverty, about which there is little consensus; skill erosion in a high-tech economy; changing family structures; precarious employment; and new demographic challenges. The context also includes the appreciation that generational and gender divisions are also relevant.

There is a broad consensus on the need to move from passive support to active measures to incorporate excluded sections of the population in the labour market, although there are striking differences between right and left on the generation of the new inequalities and on



how they should be tackled, notably on the balance between incentives and coercion. The modern vocabulary includes 'social inclusion', 'activation', 'social investment', 'active labour market policy' and 'workfare'.

differing definitions of the deserving target groups and more in the field of services than of cash payments.

There is a strong argument for Europeanising certain welfare provisions.

points to changes in the balance of welfare instruments so as to fit local needs and preferences. Measures like the 'bedroom tax/spare room subsidy', designed for conditions in the south of England, may

## Recent years have seen a rescaling of functional systems across economic, social and cultural domains, and a rescaling of government to match.

The old distinction between redistributive and allocative policies has also broken down, with the appreciation that most policies (and all public services) are redistributive to some degree. This is especially true if we enlarge the notion of distribution beyond income groups to include things like gender, generation and place.

Recent years have seen a rescaling of functional systems across economic, social and cultural domains, and a rescaling of government to match. The 'new regionalism' literature emphasises the way in which economic restructuring follows global, regional and local logics, and not just national ones. Regions and cities have been identified as key levels for the analysis of economic and social restructuring and the emergence of new problems and policy opportunities.

Training and active labour market policies are increasingly elaborated and implemented at local and regional levels, corresponding to labour markets. Politics at these levels is increasingly contested by social forces seeking to define the terms of development projects, notably the balance between competitive growth, social inclusion and environmental considerations. The idea of inter-regional competition within open markets has become a central feature of political debate, although it has been questioned in economic theory.

At the same time, national solidarity is under challenge as affective identities are shifting. The evidence here is mixed and rather inconsistent, but it is at least no longer axiomatic that the 'nation-state' is the sole locus of social solidarity, especially in plurinational states. There is evidence of welfare differentiation across devolved regions in Europe, largely in the form of

Europe is now the framework for market regulation and therefore for its social counterpart. It is Europe, not the nation state, that covers the largest population and most resources and can best respond to asymmetrical shocks. On the other hand, it is manifestly clear that Europe has not generated the affective solidarity to make it possible to produce more than small-scale transfers (through Cohesion policy) and one-off bail-outs.

All of this is prising apart the formally coterminous domains of economic regulation, social solidarity, political representation and governing institutions. It does not mean that solidarity is leaving the nation-state and relocating at either the supranational or sub-state level. We are witnessing, rather, a multilevel solidarity, operating at distinct scales and in different arenas. The old assumptions described at the beginning of this article no longer apply.

In present-day Scotland these functional and territorial dimensions intersect, and are shaping the discussion of social welfare and devolution. Survey evidence shows that Scots do not differ radically from citizens elsewhere in the United Kingdom in their broad preferences for welfare. However, public policy does not emerge directly from citizen preferences but from the aggregation and compromise among interests and preferences within political institutions.

This has produced a rather different balance within Scotland, notably on matters of universalism and public provision. In the longer run such differences necessarily imply distinct fiscal choices, and indicate the need for mechanisms by which Scotland might recapture the benefits of its own social investments, for example in university education. It also

have little relevance in Scotland (or in the north of England for that matter).

As a matter of functional efficiency, the present division between passive welfare (reserved) and active welfare (largely devolved) creates mismatches and disincentives, which are beginning to be recognized. The location of housing benefit at the same level as responsibility for social housing is one instance. Another matter is the interface between unemployment and disability support and training, economic development, urban regeneration and social work services. There is never an undisputed optimal level for the integration of public services, while the idea of 'joined-up government' is often a naïve illusion. However, we can probably do a lot better than at present.

It is fruitless to design a reformed system of devolution predicated on the present mode of welfare state. One thing that we do know is that the welfare state is undergoing major change, if only for pressing financial reasons. This provides an opportunity to rethink how Scottish welfare might fit into an emerging multilevel model and how resources might most effectively be deployed.

 Michael Keating is Professor of Politics at the University of Aberdeen and Director of the ESRC Scottish Centre on Constitutional Change. This article is based on a presentation he gave to a conference organised by the European Institute for Identities at Swansea University in February.

# Wales, sleepwalking to independence?



---

Lee Waters examines the consequences for Wales of Scottish independence

---

Independence is a fringe issue in Wales. Just 12% of Welsh voters support it, and that figure has been stubbornly consistent. But it is far from implausible that within a decade Wales could find itself standing alone, not through any conviction that independence is the best bet, but because the UK has left us.

Let's consider what could happen.

At the end of May it seems likely that UKIP will claim victory in the elections to the European Parliament. Although European issues have hardly featured in the campaign - the Labour election broadcast failed to mention them even once - the results will be seized upon by skittish

Conservative MPs.

Fearful of the impact of a strong UKIP showing in the General Election they will seek to put pressure on David Cameron to harden his line on pulling Britain out of the EU. Although surveys suggest there's all to play for in a future referendum on our membership of Europe, the noise generated by the election result will suggest otherwise.

Same old story? The difference this time is Scotland.

Surveys north of the border suggest far less support for UKIP, and far greater support for remaining within the EU, than in other parts of the UK. The latest YouGov poll shows that in an In/Out referendum 48% of Scottish voters would opt to stay in, compared to 37% in England (voters in Wales would narrowly back staying inside the EU by a margin of 39%/35%.)

Faced with the prospect of English voters embracing UKIP at the Euro election, and the Conservatives plausibly talking about a withdrawal from the EU, the Scots "might well question whether they are part of the shared community of interests" according to Professor Ailsa Henderson, Head of Politics at the University of Edinburgh.

A bellicose response by a panicked Tory right would play into the hands of the pro-independence Yes campaign. They would warn that if Scotland votes to stay within the UK in September's plebiscite the Conservatives would cut them off from Europe. Deftly handled that is surely worth a few more percentage points in the polls.

The Yes campaign now has the momentum, and at the No campaign, having already deployed its major arguments against independence (the threat of losing the pound and the risk of Scotland being denied EU membership), a quiet sense of panic is beginning to set in.

A vote for Scottish independence on September 18th is not only possible, it looks increasingly plausible.

A narrow Yes vote would see the union forged in 1707 ruptured. Whilst

some are convinced that England would lose little sleep over Scotland's departure, I go with those who think the split would be the biggest psychological blow to the ruling elites since the fall of the Raj.

A vote to leave the UK would be just the beginning of a lengthy negotiation on the terms of Scotland's withdrawal from the UK. Thorny issues like the future of the nuclear submarine base and the currency won't be easy to resolve. In the event that Scotland opts to leave it would be wise of Whitehall to be magnanimous, but Unionists' instincts are to make the nationalists stew in their rhetorical juices. It could well get ugly.

So where would that leave Wales?

Unsettled, for a start. And a bad tempered ending of the Union would especially unnerve the Welsh ruling class. Eager to please, they have been very polite in making their claims for consideration. But a resigned sense of powerlessness has solidified in their minds over the last year as it has become clearer that the reasoned cases made by endless committees of enquiry for more powers and more money

Wales that funding mechanism was rather generous to Scotland, and decommissioning it would see the Scots £4 billion a year poorer. Such is Wales' lack of leverage that the Treasury didn't even feel the need to dispute the analysis, it simply ignored it.

As part of their case that the UK is 'better together' the unionist parties have pledged to keep the Barnett Formula in place. It would seem that offending the Welsh is a small price to pay for placating the Scots. Wales, Gerald Holtham has concluded, is to be treated as 'the runt of the litter': "like the youngest child of a poor family that gets only hand-me-down clothes, whether appropriate or not in style or size.", he told a committee of MPs recently.

These are significant statements as they signify the Welsh political elites beginning to give up hope that the union is responsive to its, modest, demands. "The United Kingdom is not a 'sharing union'. It is rather a realpolitik union. Those with the loudest voice and a credible threat of secession, get to have most influence on how resources are allocated", says Prof Richard Wyn Jones of Cardiff

**A vote to leave the UK would be just the beginning of a lengthy negotiation on the terms of Scotland's withdrawal from the UK.**

have had little effect.

Four years ago a Commission on fairer funding for Wales, led by respected economist Gerald Holtham, pointed out that if Wales were treated on the same basis as England it would get some £300 Million more than it received under the so-called Barnett Formula. Unfortunately for

University's Welsh Governance Centre. And, as he starkly put it, in order to keep Scotland in the Union the UK parties are prepared to "throw Wales under the bus".

So that begs the question, would Wales fare any better if Scotland was to leave the UK? It is possible that the Unionist parties will feel that it was



## An independent Wales could have to cut public services by two-thirds if it were not in receipt of a subsidy. There is no sign that the Welsh people have the appetite for that – and why would they?

unfortunate to lose one bit of the Union and they won't be careless enough to lose another. The Welsh may be 'love-bombed'. Concessions will be cheaper: after all tossing a lamb chop to Wales will no longer mean sending a leg of lamb to the Scots. But it seems unlikely. Scotland always mattered more than Wales, and a resurgent England, and its future in Europe, is likely to attract the greater attention of the centre. With Scotland gone England will have jumped from 85% of the UK, to nearly 92% of the rump state.

So what would Wales do next? As the debates around the Barnett formula demonstrated Scotland was never an ally, but it has been a friend in ensuring that devolution is at least considered when decisions are made. Stripped of the Scots, the formal machinery of Government designed to feed in our views will be denuded further - the Joint Ministerial Committee will pack even less of a punch when it's just the Welsh and Northern Irish at the table. The need to keep the north of Ireland stable would at least ensure that Whitehall would need to pay some continued cognizance of the lands beyond England, but with a population of just 3 million alongside an English population of 53 and ½ million, Wales will always struggle to influence.

If Scotland was to vote to leave the UK, a bundle of pro-EU votes in an In/Out EU referendum would leave with them. If the polls are correct Wales' wish to remain in the EU would be overwhelmed by England's wish to leave. Not only would that create a clash of values but it would create deep unease about our economic wellbeing.

The little regional policy there is

within the UK is driven from Brussels and not London. If the EU aid tap was turned off, with nothing equivalent in its place, the concern that economic policy is pre-occupied with keeping the golden eggs coming from south east of England geese would fester further. It is indicative that Michael Heseltine's very bold plan for devolution of funding to the English city regions did not get far with the UK Treasury.

But if this hypothetical chain of events is set off it will be politics that will really shift things. Crudely put, Labour's conversion to devolution in the late 80s and early 90s was powered by a calculation that it was the only way the party could be sure of exercising power in Wales. Some years later Kim Howells reflected on the shift in opinion within his party: "The difference was having lived through an extremely difficult decade and a half in which we seemed to have very little say over what we could or couldn't do in terms of shaping the world we inhabited" he said.

That powerlessness could again shift thinking on the left in Wales. With Scotland out of the equation the ability of Labour to govern alone again at Westminster would be significantly constrained. That may force a realignment of the left on a British level - a permanent coalition of Labour and parts of the Liberal Democrats. But that too will, inevitably, need to be primarily focused on the massively dominant part of the Union: England.

A union dominated by a larger neighbour, chiefly presided over by right of centre Governments, and standing outside the EU, is a very different proposition from the current Union eulogised by unionist politicians

in Wales.

That may be too hypothetical a proposition to concentrate many minds in the present Welsh Labour Party. The current generation of politicians are comfortable with their position: the power politics of control at a Welsh level, and the cyclical chance to govern at a UK level. But if the second option withered it may force a re-think, and the Euro elections could well set off a chain of events which start to change perceptions.

But before supporters of independence get carried away, they will need to start fashioning a vision of a Wales outside the union which is far more convincing than they have to date. As disagreeable as the Union may become, the alternative is surely worse.

Wales has a budget deficit of about a third of our GVA. An independent Wales could have to cut public services by two-thirds if it were not in receipt of a subsidy. There is no sign that the Welsh people have the appetite for that – and why would they?

The scenario I describe is not, perhaps, the most likely outcome. But it is a plausible one. And if it came to pass what would the response of the Welsh political classes be?

Whilst support for independence would move beyond the fringes I struggle to see the political mainstream embracing it. But clinging to our comfortable certainties may not be an option either. The world around us may change so dramatically that we find ourselves with a series of bleak choices.

At the time of writing a No vote in Scotland still seems the most likely, though with the lead narrowing it may be a slim victory that would settle little. But the scenario I've set out could well come about, with profound and far reaching consequences for Wales. And it's about time we started facing up to the fact that the ground beneath is moving.



Lee Waters is Director of the IWA.

# Life in the slow lane

**Rhun ap Iorwerth** finds switching from journalism to politics means adjusting to the oil tanker pace of political change

Like devolution itself, adjusting to life as an Assembly Member is very much a process, not an event.

Yes, the night of August 1st 2013 in Llangefni will forever stay in my memory as an event of immense pride for myself and my family, when my decision to walk away from a career I loved and treasured was repaid with the firm backing of the people of Ynys Môn. Yes, the following day in the Senedd when I took the oath to serve as a member of my nation's Parliament was an event of great emotion, coming as it did within months of losing my mother. But that was just the beginning.

I always found it very easy to be impartial as a BBC political journalist. It was my chosen profession, and although journalists are mere citizens who, like everyone else, have an

opportunity to vote and show support for one political opinion or individual over another secretly in the ballot box, my job was to publicly scrutinise all equally. I always endeavoured to do that. I was pleased that following my decision to stand for election, hardly anyone used that wonderfully convenient tool called hindsight to cast doubt over my impartiality in nearly 20 years with the BBC.

The one time that impartiality was something of a challenge was during the 1997 devolution referendum. I gave equal weight to both the 'Yes' and 'No' campaigns, and hopefully challenged both camps to explain why Wales should or should not begin to take some responsibility over its own destiny. But the declaration of the result was the one occasion where it was difficult to

contain the euphoria within.

That's because I believe passionately in my nation, and the need for all of us to step up to the mark and work together to set a course for a more prosperous future for Wales. That is why, 16 years later, taking my seat in the Senedd in Cardiff Bay, I felt a huge weight of responsibility. Now I had the chance to try to play a small part in helping Wales set that course, and to prove that the hair's-breadth victory in 1997 was the correct step to take on a path to realising a national ambition.

Having been around the National Assembly as a journalist from its inception - and a close-up observer during devolution's formative years between 1997 and 1999 - there may have been an expectation that I knew how it all worked, that becoming an elected politician as opposed to an impartial observer in the same institution would be like slipping from one pair of familiar boots to another. Different style, same fit. But I made it clear at every opportunity that I was approaching this new chapter in my life as exactly that - a new experience, a blank page. A learning curve was ahead of me as steep as any I've faced before, and that is how I wanted it.

There was no purpose in thinking of this as a casual jump from one side of the fence to the other, from observer to do-er, a gentle shift from one part of the national establishment to the other. This was a leap from the 'nothing-to-do-with-me' world of commentary to the 'judge-me-by-my-actions' world of political responsibility.

I was honoured to have been able to play a very small part in the development of this new Wales through journalism - communicating as well as I could with the public about the first unsteady steps being taken by our newborn democracy. We as journalists were learning as we went along, as were the politicians. This was a new 'Welsh politics'.

The shortcomings of the new Assembly were clear to see. The second Government of Wales Act was

inevitable, and the second referendum a necessity to counter the 1997 'No' camp predictions of a 'talking shop'. Yes, it was the right thing to do to grab with both hands what was on offer in 1997, but to have a new institution with both hands tied behind its back, blindfolded and gagged was never going to let us take confident leaps forward. The public had every right to be impatient.

Now it's my turn for patience to be put to the test. As a broadcast journalist, my next deadline was rarely more than a few hours away. More often than not, the time to deliver was minutes or even seconds away. Now my timescale is calibrated in months and years. "You'll find it frustrating," several AMs and commentators fired in my direction following my by-election win. I think I know what they mean, and I also think I am prepared for that frustration - by being determined to not let it frustrate me.

By frustration, I assume my fellow AMs mean the oil-tanker pace at which ideas can be translated into action. I assume they also mean the tedium of

some debates, the simple fact of being in opposition, and the sausage-factory substance-light nature of Ministers' questions sessions. I knew all of this and didn't let it stop me entering the fray. I went into this with my eyes wide open. It's politics.

Some of the ways we work could be improved, I'm sure - and will be improved over time, no doubt. There's a strong argument that the Wednesday opposition debates are given too much time, at the expense of scrutiny of the government. We're there to hold the government to account, after all. These debates are important, and give opposition parties the opportunity to influence the political agenda, but it's about getting the balance right.

I'm enjoying my time on the Enterprise and Business Committee, but there has been a realisation that financial scrutiny of Government actions needs to be sharpened. This is a criticism levelled at other UK Parliaments, too. This is being addressed in Cardiff Bay and I think we'll be a stronger institution for it.

Plenary debates and Ministerial

questioning sessions form only a small part of our workload, but the temptation at times for AMs not to fully engage in debates and to deal instead with our constituency and committee work and the ever-growing stream of emails from our convenient computer terminals in the chamber is one that's almost impossible to resist. I'm as guilty as anyone, but is there a way to ensure that when we are in the chamber, we are always there mentally as well as physically?

There is good reason why we make the most of all opportunities to tackle the e-postbag or read committee papers: the workload is heavy and time is scarce to keep on top of it. This is by no means a complaint - I enjoy it. However, whilst the arguments for the need to bring in additional AMs to properly deal with legislation as well as serving our constituencies is one that will never win favour among the electorate, I'm sure, the reality is that if we are to be effective in transforming Wales, we need a Parliament with the manpower to do it.

We also need the tools. This is not the article to weigh up the merits of the Silk recommendations on taxation. Suffice to say that we will not deal with the issues of critical importance for Wales or turn around our economy without the taxation facilities to enable us to push a radical Welsh agenda.

In the Assembly and outside, it is the responsibility of all of us who believe in our real potential as a nation to take ultimate control of our destiny to show ambition and leadership. These are still early days for me in politics, as they are still, in reality, for our new national Parliament. I'm humbled to have been given the opportunity to serve Ynys Môn and to serve Wales. The challenge now is to use the opportunity to the best of my ability.

No longer on reporting duties, the new AM for Ynys Môn Rhun ap Iorwerth



Rhun ap Iorwerth was elected AM for Ynys Môn in the by-election in August 2013.



# Council borders shouldn't follow where the crows fly

Rhodri Morgan phoned. He wanted to speak to me immediately before the Remembrance Commemoration later that morning. It was 2001 and Rhodri asked me to withdraw my opposition to the Assembly Government's proposal to create 22 new health authorities. He argued that Jane Hutt's policy of coterminous health and local government boundaries would make for a better and more efficient service. I said I agreed but only after Wales first adopted a sensible division of local authorities - by which I mainly meant fewer. As it turned out my opposition didn't count for much and 22 health authorities were formed. Eight years later they were abandoned for the current structure with seven boards.

Last year the new First Minister reopened the debate by setting up the Williams Commission. This has now recommended fewer local authorities but fitting within the existing seven Health Boards. Before looking at the merits of these recommendations it is worth reflecting on why Rhodri didn't grasp this nettle more than a decade ago.

Five years before that Remembrance Sunday Rhodri and I had both served in Ron Davies's team as the Conservative government broke up Wales's 37 District and 8 County Councils and formed the 22 Unitary Councils we have today. Although this wasn't our policy it was our responsibility to try and fashion a united Labour response. This proved to be extremely difficult as local leaders defended the boundaries that secured their authority. Where perceived interests conflicted we tried to arrange meetings to hammer out a consensus. There were often heated exchanges and it is no exaggeration to say that several

labour leaders loathed one another.

We soon realised that any radical proposal from us could never achieve a consensus. In particular we couldn't get agreement on moving away from the existing county boundaries. Anyway it wasn't our Bill and so we settled on the lowest common denominator. With memory of that bitter process still fresh in his mind and with a fragile new institution to run, Rhodri was probably wise to leave that hornets' nest alone for a while.

Although the 22 health authority structure was an expensive and wasteful mistake the idea of coterminous administration hasn't been abandoned. Why else was the Commission led by a hospital administrator with a remit restricting it to recommending authorities that fitted within the existing seven Health Boards? Coincidentally or not, Sir Paul Williams's first task when he was appointed as Head of NHS Wales was to set up the Health Boards. He has been Wales' most competent health manager and I am sure that he wouldn't want to disrupt the Health Boards again. However, solving one problem can cause another.

When tasked with the objective of determining a new structure for Welsh local government there are a range of important considerations. History, economy, culture and ease of service delivery come quickly to mind. But whichever way these factors take us they cannot allow us to cross a Health Board boundary. Oh no! These six-year-old divisions, hastily made to undo the chaos of the 2001 decision, now trump every other factor. No matter that Caerphilly had been part of Glamorgan for hundreds of years or that it is but

---

**Jon Owen Jones** says the Williams Commission's proposals for new local government boundaries are worse than the 1974 gerrymander

---

a short drive or train journey from Cardiff and Pontypridd. That counted for nothing because for six years it was part of the Aneurin Bevan Health Board. No matter that goods and people had moved up and down the steam coal tributaries of the Taff since Silurian times. That counted for nought since Cwm Taf Health Board stopped at Pontypridd.

To be fair NHS Wales didn't create this problem, although it does continue to compound and maintain it. The historic divisions of Wales were 13 counties which remained virtually unaltered from Tudor times until 1974. Meanwhile, the industrial revolution had dramatically altered the distribution of population so that Glamorgan and Monmouthshire had more people than all the rest of the country. So forty years ago a new administrative map was proposed which amalgamated a number of rural shires and divided Glamorgan.

The first proposals that led to this change, made in a Labour government consultation paper in 1970, argued for seven counties. In south east Wales – basically the old Glamorganshire and Monmouthshire - they envisaged three city-led counties focused on Newport, Cardiff, and Swansea but including their Valley hinterlands. They considered dividing Glamorganshire into three but rejected it. Three divisions would result in a county that was “weak... handicapped by a lack of resources and lacking suitable land in seeking solutions to its problems”. Instead they said that the “arguments clearly point in favour of two powerful administrative bodies that will rank with any in the UK”.

So what changed? Well the government did and Ted Heath was



# Culture shift needed in delivery of public services

**Nerys Evans** says the Williams Commission's 62 recommendations must be taken as a whole

Local government mergers only featured in just four out of a total of 62 recommendations in the Williams Commission report. The remaining 58 contain necessary transformative actions that deal with the challenges facing the public sector in Wales. Our report and recommendations are presented as a package. All the recommendations are interlinked and designed to radically transform how public services are governed and delivered. This is because the problems they address are themselves mutually reinforcing.

It is worth remembering the context in which our work took place. The financial pressures on public services are severe and unsustainable. They will remain so for at least a decade. The population is getting older and younger at the same time. Consequently, the demand for key services will continue to grow. These pressures exist across the developed world. They are beyond anyone's control, and are nobody's fault. We need a public sector that can rise to these challenges.

The remit given by the First Minister was to consider the governance and delivery of all public services in Wales. We gathered evidence and issued recommendations on all devolved public services and their capacity to meet current and future challenges. Due to relatively recent changes within

the NHS, the structure of Local Health Boards was outside the Commission's remit. However, the role of the NHS, and its performance and interaction with other services, was very much within scope.

We were also tasked to look at the interface between non-devolved services and consider the work of the Silk Commission. We were asked to propose an optimal model of public service governance and delivery for Wales in light of that assessment.

It emerged quite early on during our evidence gathering that many of the challenges facing public sector organisations in Wales are similar. This led us to take a thematic rather than sectoral approach to our work. These themes were:

- The complexity of the public service in Wales.
- Challenges surrounding the scale of organisations and their capability of operating effectively.
- Our capacity to scrutinise service delivery which is also linked to governance mechanisms.
- Leadership, culture and values of the Welsh public sector.
- Performance and performance management of organisations and services in Wales.

An overarching theme that encompassed all of these elements was the role of the National Government and its relationship with the organisations that are delivering public services in Wales.

The full 350 page report should be read to fully understand the case we make for change and why we've concluded with some basic views about the purposes of public services and why their delivery must change. The public sector cannot continue simply responding to crises or aim to provide uniform services to a passive population. Instead, we need to enhance democracy, and make the most of Wales's very strong sense of community.

Citizens and communities must become much more closely involved in identifying and meeting their needs. The public sector must engage with people and communities – not only to understand their views, but also to enhance their wellbeing and to prevent crises from happening in the longer term. Openness, engagement and democratic accountability must drive the service changes and improvements that citizens and communities need.

That in turn demands the comprehensive, urgent and radical programme of change that we recommend in our report. We all have a stake in this. It will require widespread consensus and ownership on the need for reform. There must be no complacency, allocating blame or piecemeal tinkering with the status quo. That is why it is vital that the programme of change addresses all of the five key themes in our report. Picking and choosing among what we propose would be equally futile.

Overall, our proposals define a programme of radical and comprehensive change which would reduce the complexity of the public sector. Too much effort is wasted on managing complex public sector systems and relationships rather than on providing quality services for citizens. Our proposals will simplify accountability, remove duplication, streamline partnerships and ensure organisations work together effectively.

Although the public sector collects a wealth of data about performance, it is not well used to deliver improved outcomes. We recommend a single and concise set of national outcomes, with local partnerships and organisations feeding in to them. This will increase clarity and accountability while also allowing service providers the flexibility to meet the needs of those they serve.

If choice and competition are not to drive improvement, then clear accountability and informed scrutiny must do so. Yet governance within organisations is too often ambiguous



and indecisive. Scrutiny and other accountability mechanisms are typically under-valued and ineffective. We propose changes which will make organisations more responsive, and will mean accountability mechanisms are better informed, more complementary, more effective and less burdensome.

The public sector needs strong leadership. We propose a range of measures to appoint the best people as leaders, to develop them and to identify their successors. We also propose that public-sector organisations should unite around a shared, collaborative and citizen-centred set of public service values.

The Welsh Government sets the national policy for public services but delivery is undertaken by other organisations. Evidence we received highlighted the need for greater clarity on the relationship and expectations on service delivery within the public sector. Confusion exists regarding the

has driven improvements. A few other countries have adopted a small number of clear national outcomes for the public service and we believe that this approach would benefit us in Wales. This approach should be easier in a small country where engagement is relatively easy, so making it easier to establish the necessary clarity and consensus about what matters.

Greater clarity and distinction is needed from Welsh Government between different measures, indicators, targets and outcomes. We recommend that the Welsh Government set key National Priority Outcomes for the public sector, and create more streamlined and consistent ways of measuring service performance below that, without prescribing the detailed measurement of operational and delivery matters.

Funding arrangements must also be simpler and focused on achieving outcomes. We recommend that

outcomes through strong delivery.

Cherry picking our recommendations will not deliver the step change needed to reform public services in Wales. Our report identified critical, fundamental and unavoidable challenges for the whole public sector, and ways in which those can be mitigated and managed. Some of these call for major changes to structures, roles and processes which will need to be properly and robustly managed in implementation. Others entail one-off changes to current practices, but are still vital.

The public sector is so complex that too much effort is taken up with managing relationships. That's compounded by many organisations having insufficient capacity, which often leads to crucial issues of governance and accountability within organisations being neglected. That leads to poor and patchy performance, with problems failing to be detected or addressed adequately. Overall there's insufficient pressure for change. That in turn leads the Welsh Government to want to be seen to 'do something' – which typically means being more prescriptive about targets, duties, strategies, grant terms and so on. But that just adds to complexity, starting the vicious circle all over again.

But change is possible, as other governments around the world have recognised. Confronting these challenges and embarking on serious reform is a mark of maturity, not of weakness. We have the talent and the commitment in Wales to succeed in this – to secure sustainable and world-class services delivered by agile and responsive organisations.

The public sector is so complex that too much effort is taken up with managing relationships within the sector. That's compounded by many organisations having insufficient capacity, which often leads to crucial issues of governance and accountability within organisations being neglected.

use, breadth and purpose of different indicators set by Welsh Government and regulators.

We heard how the police service now only has one official target, which has led to greater clarity and understanding for the service, which

all specific grants that the Welsh Government pays to other public sector bodies must be reduced and where possible included in unhypothecated funding. A system of earned autonomy should be developed in which recipients of funding can demonstrate positive



Nerys Evans was a member of the Williams Commission, is Vice Chair of Plaid Cymru and former AM for Mid and West Wales. She is a Director at Deryn Consulting.

## December 2013 marked the 10th anniversary of Arriva Trains Wales.

In our tenth year, we are proud of having worked with our partners and customers to deliver **10 years of service** for the people, communities and businesses of Wales and the Borders area.



**£30 million of investment by Arriva Trains Wales** - improving our trains, stations and customer service. We are proud to have delivered these customer benefits, working with the support of key partners such as the Welsh Government.

**High levels of customer satisfaction - 86% 'satisfied' (January 2014), up 7% since 2003** - source: the independent National Passenger Survey carried out by Passenger Focus.

**Outstanding Performance** - we are one of the top 'right-time' performing operators in the UK and are working closely with Network Rail to continue to improve punctuality and reliability.

**We are one of the largest private sector employers in Wales**, employing more than 2,000 people, with 300 new jobs created since 2003.



for further information, please visit [www.arrivatrainswales.co.uk/10Years](http://www.arrivatrainswales.co.uk/10Years)





# Welsh Government should move quickly on city regions

---

**Geraint Talfan Davies** argues that Wales has to compete with English cities that are expanding to embrace their hinterlands

---

George Ferguson, the elected mayor of Bristol is known for his red trousers. They are his trademark. If for no other reason, he does not look like a politician, and in some ways he is not one. His principal qualification for election in 2012 as Bristol's first elected mayor, was not his six-year stint as a Liberal councillor in the 1970s, but the imprint he has left on his own city in his professional capacity of architect. His passion is for place making, and he is rather good at it.

A lifetime's achievement – he is a past President of the RIBA – allows him to appear rather more relaxed than the usual politician. The only message he has to stick to is his own. He is his

own man, with his own values. The superficial adversarial instincts of party politicians seem anathema to him. In his Bristol role he does not need them. He has something more to offer.

Much of this was apparent in March when he faced an audience in Cardiff at the IWA's conference on *City Regions: from aspiration to reality?* Here was the antithesis of negative Welsh localism. There was, he said, no reason why Cardiff and Bristol should not work together, and every reason why Cardiff should be generous about the development of Newport. He even affected to be relaxed about London. "I celebrate London. I celebrate the fact that it is overheating. We can all benefit from that. Cardiff and Bristol represent the best first stop west of London. We can share it out."

There was irony in the fact that this powerful elected mayor from across the Severn should have been speaking in the Welsh capital in the very week that Cardiff Council's Cabinet was undergoing a political implosion.

The spirit of the IWA conference



Bristol Mayor George Ferguson, with his trademark red trousers, is more relaxed than the usual politician – "his own man, with his own values".

was a sign that Wales's engagement with the city region concept is beginning to develop, even if it can still feel skin deep. Despite all party support in the National Assembly, a Welsh Government task force report advocating the adoption of the city region concept in south Wales, and the recent creation of advisory boards for South West Wales and South East Wales, there seemed to be in the audience a nervousness that it could all fall apart.

It is true that the city region concept has had to be imposed by the Welsh Government on our largely recalcitrant local authorities, but that does not make it an entirely top down process. The Welsh Government has the support of a large part of Welsh civil society. Yet that same civil society is also nervous that, having taken the initiative, the Welsh Government will, as on so many things, fall down on delivery.

The government is certainly not short of other distractions, not least the prospect of local government mergers as recommended by the



Williams Commission. That is why, when offered the chance to express its priorities, there was such insistence by the audience on the early creation of a strong Passenger Transport Executive for South East Wales - to implement the Metro transport proposal – as a key indicator of the government’s seriousness and urgency.

It should surely be possible to announce a timetable for establishing such a body, with the necessary executive freedom, quickly: scoping its remit, funding, governance, and staff recruitment, with target dates for any necessary legislation and vesting it with the necessary authority. We need a fast horse that can jump the fences, not a camel that can spread bad breath everywhere.

The presence of George Ferguson, along with other speakers from English think tanks – the Centre for Cities and the Centre for Local Economic Strategies – was also a sign that Wales is, at last, joining a wider discourse. There is now room to hope that our debate will not fall foul of those who believe that city regions are some alien English imposition. The truth is that, as Professor Kevin Morgan reminded us, city regions are a global phenomenon, although it is perfectly possible for us to infuse the concept with our own values. But we have to plug in.

In May 2011 nine cities formed the Scottish Cities Alliance: Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness, Perth and Stirling. It also involves the Scottish Government and the Scottish Council for Development and Industry. It has been formed “to develop Scotland’s potential as a competitive and world class place to live, work, visit, invest and do business.”

In England eight cities constitute the Core Cities network: Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield. Following Manchester’s lead, local government across England have been forming combined authorities to represent their wider city regions. They will re-create, albeit in another form, the English metropolitan authorities that existed from 1974 until they were done away with by a centralising Thatcher government in 1986.

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority was created in 2011. Earlier this year the government approved the creation of four combined authorities around Sheffield, Leeds-Bradford, Merseyside and the North East. Greater Birmingham and the Bristol region also have ‘city deal’ agreements with government. City deals have also been negotiated with 20 other smaller English cities. All these arrangements involve the devolution of some powers

and some additional finance.

This is the context in which Wales will compete in future. It will not be an internal Welsh competition. Some simple population data gives a sense of where the two Welsh city regions are placed currently and where they would be placed in the lists of city regions.

**Table 1** demonstrates how much smaller Welsh local authorities are in population terms, compared with the councils that make up the English city regions. The average size of local authorities in south east Wales is a third of the size of those in the West Yorkshire region. In fact, south east Wales is the *only* city region in England and Wales that has any local authorities of less than 100,000 population: Torfaen 90,000, Monmouthshire 88,000, Blaenau Gwent 68,600 and Merthyr Tydfil 55,700. Swansea and Cardiff also represent the two smallest central cities within each city region.

But **Table 2**, a city region league table of population, paints a slightly different picture.

In population terms a south east Wales city region rises to the middle of the pack. It would actually be substantially larger than the Bristol and West of England city region although, of course, currently less prosperous. South West Wales does remain at the bottom of the pack, even having

**Table 1: City region league table**

	City region	No. of local authorities	Average LA population
1	West Yorkshire	5	445,360
2	Greater Birmingham	7	376,957
3	Sheffield CA	4	329,325
4	North East	7	274,842
5	Bristol + W. of Eng.	4	270,525
6	Gr. Manchester CA	10	260,100
7	Liverpool City CA	6	244,883
8	South West Wales	4	166,725
9	South East Wales	10	145,550

Table 2: City region league table by population

	City region	City region Population	Central city population	Central city % of city region
1	Greater Birmingham	2,638,700	1,028,700	39
2	Gr. Manchester CA	2,601,000	483,800	19
3	West Yorkshire	2,226,800	787,700	35
4	North East CA	1,923,900	284,300	15
5	Liverpool City CA	1,469,300	442,300	30
6	South East Wales	1,455,500	336,200	23
7	Sheffield CA	1,317,300	547,000	41
8	Bristol + W. of Eng.	1,082,100	433,100	40
9	South West Wales	666,900	231,300	35



Outline of a South East Wales Metro, produced by Mark Barry in his 2011 IWA report *A Metro for Wales' Capital City Region*. The priority for those attending the IWA's Metro conference in March 2014 was for Welsh Government to create a Passenger Transport Executive for South East Wales to make a reality of this vision.

included Pembrokeshire, which the Welsh Government has done in its plan. Excluding Pembrokeshire would reduce the south west region by 117,400, bringing it down to just under 550,000. Not unexpectedly, Swansea is much more dominant in its region than Cardiff is in south east Wales.

It is notable that five of these nine city regions are in the north of England. Some have even suggested that Manchester and Liverpool combine into a city region of more than 4 million. This northern concentration also explains why the city region debate in England melds into the wider discourse about

the north-south divide and the need to re-balance the UK - an issue that, inexplicably, seems little talked about in Welsh policy circles, although we are on the wrong side of the line drawn from the Wash to the Severn. In England this latter debate is gathering momentum, fuelled by the disproportionate effect of benefit cuts on poorer regions.

A slew of reports from think tanks – the Centre for Cities, the IPPR, the RSA – have built on Lord Heseltine's 2012 report *No stone unturned* that made the most radical case for devolving power and money to cities and regions in England. Predictably,

the Treasury watered down this heady brew. In recent weeks it is Ed Miliband who has said that he is interested in implementing Heseltine's more full-blooded approach.

Other reports have highlighted imbalances between London and the regions, not only in property, but also in foreign direct investment and even the arts. One report indicated that 85 per cent of arts philanthropy goes into central London. A Parliamentary Select Committee is now looking at the issue and Opera North and Welsh National Opera have submitted joint evidence.

What has this got to do with Wales? We have an overall interest in fostering the re-balancing of the UK, particularly towards manufacturing, but also in infrastructure. The macro-economic levers do not lie in Wales, which is why Welsh Government and Welsh civil society need to take a view on wider UK or English economic and development policies. Of course there is every chance that central government will lose interest in re-balancing anything after an election. The Treasury is not into empowerment. But if Wales' relatively small cities and their hinterlands rest content on their current level of competitiveness, we will take a big risk with our future.



Geraint Talfan Davies is a broadcaster and journalist and Chairman of Welsh National Opera.

# Thinking the unthinkable on economy

Sukhdev Johal, John Law and Karel Williams call for a contrarian research centre to devise policies for local and regional experiments

Like any other kind of government, devolution is an experiment, and experiments should be about learning which builds on successes and recognises mistakes and disappointments. That is a cause for concern about Welsh devolution where political and economic learning is profoundly uneven. Our reach is for more devolved powers to build on the political success of self-government instead of rule from London. However, few recognise that so long as anything like current economic policies are implemented, more devolution will not halt Wales' continuing economic decline.

Despite this, the momentum is towards more devolution in Wales with the English regions playing catch up, while the central state is on the defensive about Scottish independence. The majority vote in the Welsh referendum of 2011 legitimated more devolution and that was followed through in the recommendations of the Silk Commission for tax and spend powers.

Following the Heseltine Review, the Coalition government is quietly promoting city regions. Meanwhile Labour centre left think tanks in a recent letter to the Guardian recommended "giving away power and resources to our nations, regions, cities, localities and where possible, directly to the people."

Such changes might revitalise political participation but are unlikely to secure better economic outcomes.

With limited powers and without radical policies devolution in Wales has made no difference to our economic trajectory of relative decline. Along with many of the English regions, including the North East and West Midlands, we have lost one economic base and not found another. On the relative GVA measure, Wales slipped from 54 to 43 per cent of London's GVA between 1989 and 2011. As the first graph shows (overlead, page 34), things are getting worse with recession and austerity: with 5 per cent of the UK population Wales claimed no more than 2.5 per cent of GVA growth between 2007 and 2012.

While London policy makers fix on aggregates like GDP growth and job creation, differences between and within regions ensure we are not 'all in the same boat' economically or socially. The widening inter-regional disparities between Wales and London are now like those between Sicily and Florence. At the same time sharp intra-regional divisions everywhere separate a public sector middle class which has done very nicely since 1979, from the organised private sector working class which has been wasted by deindustrialisation. As the second graph shows (page 35), the real income gains of the past thirty years in the UK have been captured by the top two deciles who are not all London bankers: Welsh households with an original income of £65k or more get into

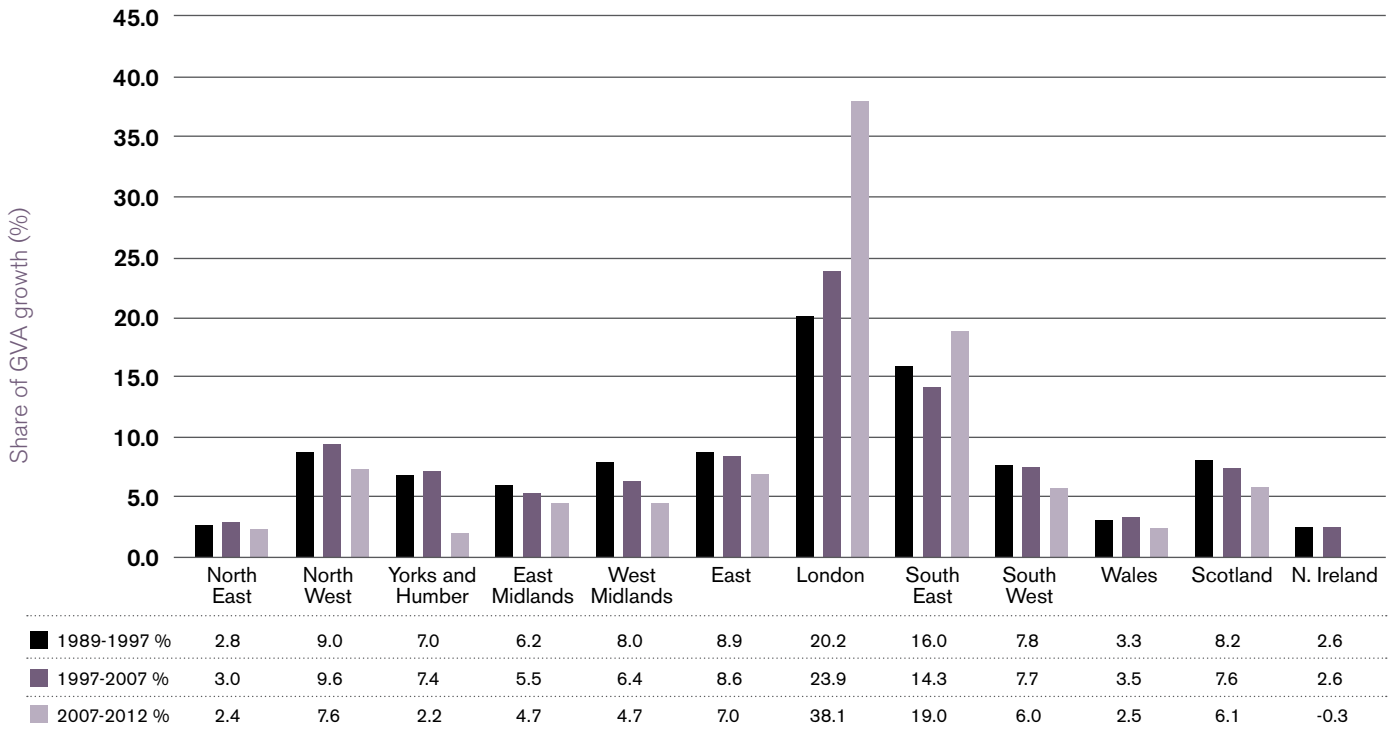
decile 9 and an original income of £110k or more put a household into the top decile in 2011-12.

What are we to make of such outcomes? The obvious excuse is that, in economic terms, devolution is an experiment which has not yet been tried. A devolved Welsh Government needs much larger fiscal powers which should include the power to vary relevant taxes like corporation tax or VAT. This is unlikely to be tried because many fear the result could easily be an Irish type regime of concessions to attract tax-avoiding multinationals to relocate to Newport and avoid corporation tax.

The scope for more responsible macro management is limited. In Wales (as in the UK) there is no Plan B alternative to austerity because no set of orthodox macro-economic policies can deliver sustainable growth. Consumption cycles of boom and bust are driven by housing equity withdrawal which was larger than GDP growth in the premierships of Thatcher and Blair. Wales is different only because the property price driver is weaker and reliance on public expenditure is stronger. More fundamentally, as our graph on household income gains shows, the problem is not growth but distribution. Income gains do not trickle down to the bottom 30 per cent of economically active households. This is a worsening



Share of (nominal) GVA growth by region



problem for Wales because austerity expenditure cuts are now forcing public authorities to lead downwards pressure on wages and conditions.

Against this background, the question for the Welsh Assembly and Welsh Government is: what have they learnt? In answering this question, we can distinguish between four different kinds of learning:

- 1 Within the framework, which uses the latter to judge between outcomes.
- 2 By adapting the framework, in order to remedy a detectable problem.
- 3 As gaming the framework in order to turn it to advantage, for instance by complying formally with performance metrics.
- 4 As large scale reframing during which the validity of the whole framework is undermined.

From this point of view, the Welsh political classes are capable of

incremental learning (1), (2) and (3) in many policy areas. Take the recent controversy about NHS and hospital performance in Wales. Here the Assembly is incrementally learning about hospital inspections and such like, partly through an opportunism about statistics which is part of the adversarial political process. But when it comes to economic policy, there is no enthusiasm for a learning (4) or large scale reframing of economic policy even though it is clear that (with or without the WDA) inward investment has not solved our problems and Ministers are on the back foot with every new plant closure.

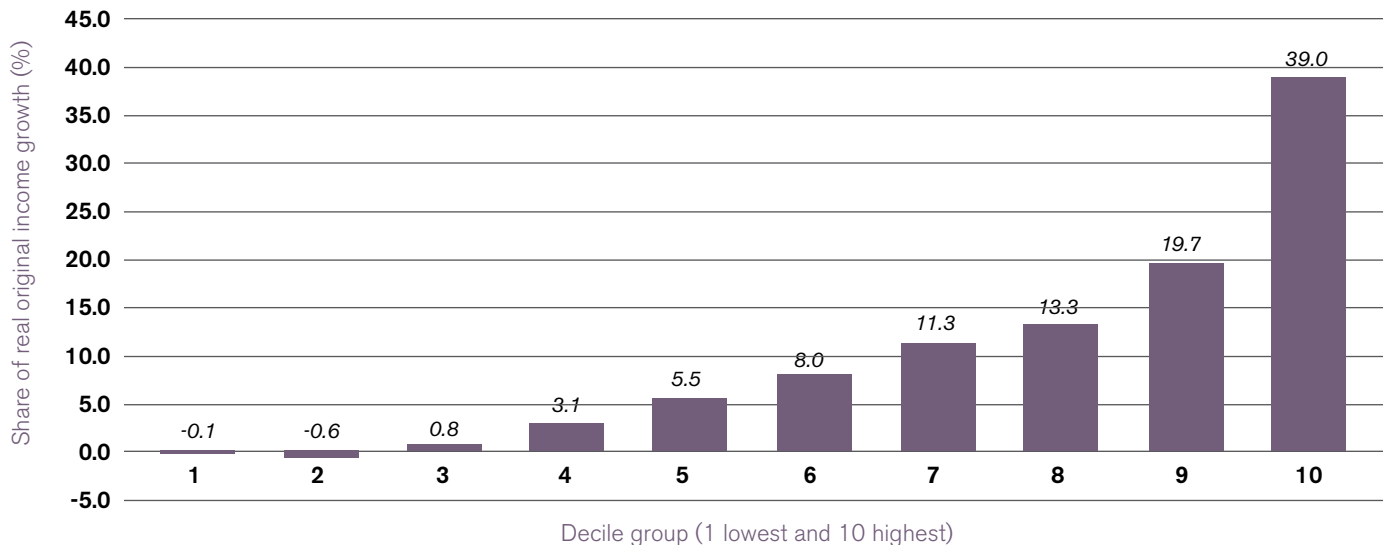
Paradoxically, it is outsiders from English-based consultancies and research centres who have led the argument for economic reframing because Wales cannot win with present policies. It was the New Economics Foundation, based in London, which produced a report for the Wales TUC arguing that inward investment was not the answer. Our

own CRESC research centre, based in Manchester, has argued for a new kind of Welsh industrial policy focused on what's left in the foundational economy – that part of the economy that produces everyday goods and services like food and adult care; and also proposed new policies like the social licensing of supermarkets that truck the goods in and van the money out.

These ideas are being taken up within Wales. Adam Price's economic plan for Y Fro Gymraeg represents the new economic thinking about localism, as does Dave Adamson's Deep Place argument about what to do in Tredegar. However, radical new thinking is not being developed in a major Welsh research centre on the economy and has not been taken up by the Welsh Government. This is a tragedy because continued Welsh economic underperformance will undermine social spending by Welsh Government within a decade. Moreover, this is doubly constrained by

## As the near permanent party of government Welsh Labour has to change. It is not enough to exploit the Silk recommendations and take back the utilities for public good.

Share of the growth in real original income between 1979 and 2012 in economically active households (%)



limits on redistribution from the centre and a poor local tax base.

So what needs to change in Cardiff so that new economic thinking gains traction and informs radical action?

Wales needs a contrarian research centre whose agenda is reframing the Welsh economy and devising active policies for new local and regional experiments. The history of the social sciences in Wales since the 1980s is about the pursuit of reputation as defined in the Anglo American mainstream: heterodoxy has been expelled from university economics departments. The main achievement is the building of Cardiff Business School now 'ranked fourth in the UK for research excellence' because it plays the same game as its competitors.

The Welsh Institute of Social and Economic Research is a worthy federal initiative but puts the main emphasis on the social part of socio-economic. In various departments of different institutions, Wales has a scatter of organic

intellectuals who need to be brought together (with outside reinforcement) in a research centre whose brief is to think the unthinkable on behalf of Wales and other loser regions.

As the near permanent party of government Welsh Labour has to change. It is not enough to exploit the Silk recommendations and take back the utilities for public good. This would only be the first step towards running the Welsh foundational economy for the benefit of the bottom third of active households and the economically excluded.

There were signs of change in Welsh politics when Plaid Cymru changed its cultural aura with a new leader. But, how far has the Labour Party moved on from what was described in the Kevin Morgan and Geoff Mungham book *Redesigning Democracy - The Making of the Welsh Assembly (2000)*? The mass party has continued to decline, so that the Federation of Small Business (Wales) may now have more members

than Labour in Wales.

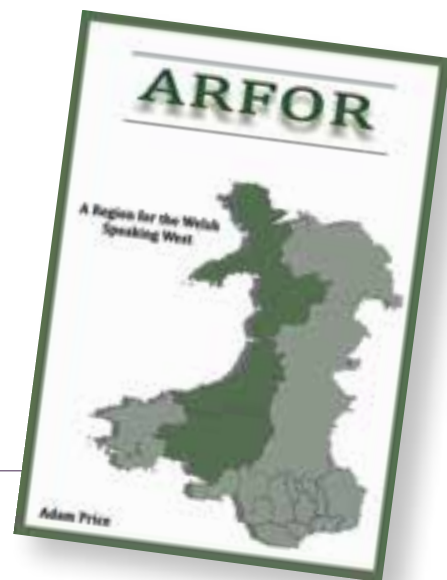
Senior civil servants will discourage political vision and heterodox economic strategy and thereby normalise a definition of politics as manoeuvre between factions and personalities. Is it too much to expect some backing for reframing and new policies from Carwyn Jones and, next time around, a radical appointment as Business and Enterprise Minister?



Sukhdev Johal, John Law and Karel Williams are professors at Queen Mary University of London, the Open University and Manchester Business School. They work in the ESRC funded Centre for Research on Socio Cultural Change. Their recent joint work on the foundational economy and on government as experiment is available in working papers on the [cresc.ac.uk](http://cresc.ac.uk) website.

# Wales needs a region based on language

Adam Price makes the case for a development authority for western Wales



There is now a desperate need for a regional strategy which reflects the reality of our linguistic geography. This should include everything: from economic development, linguistic planning, public services, housing and planning, to transport. The main objective should be to revitalise the west in its broadest sense, by merging the economic and linguistic elements together.

The only way to achieve this in practical terms is through ensuring that there is a governmental structure which is related to this task. We need to create a region for the west – from Benllech to Bury Port. The four most Welsh-speaking authorities – Môn, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire – would be its heart, but without forgetting the Conwy Valley, west Denbighshire and Montgomeryshire, north Pembrokeshire and the Welsh speaking neighbourhoods in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.

This is not as utopian as it seems upon first glance. We are moving inevitably towards creating some form of regional level of government. The series of regional consortia in different contexts reflect this, as well as the question mark above the future of the education authorities. It is clear that the Redwoodian model of 22 unitary authorities has failed and that further reorganisation to seven or eight regional authorities is on the horizon sooner or later.

The question for the Welsh speaking areas is which model would best suit? In the south there are movements towards city-regions around Cardiff and Swansea, with related enterprise zones. There is a need to create a regional counter point to counter balance this – not a region based on cities but based on language.

Creating a regional authority covering the western seaboard would be a revolutionary step in the history of local government in Wales. It would break the traditional north/south colonial divide, and state that linguistic / cultural considerations are more relevant than geography.

Arfor is the name that I suggest for the new region. It would be a directly elected authority, but would operate locally through county committees similar to the quasi-federal system of the current county of Powys. Aberystwyth would seem to be the appropriate natural location for the main chamber of the Western assembly, the Menai strip the capital city and Carmarthen as a bridge to the South.

Creating a new geographical entity in the West would allow us to present policies in favour of the Welsh language across the region, such as:

- Making the Welsh language the main administrative language within the public sector.

- Making bilingualism a mandatory component of procurement policy – as in the Basque country – to promote local buying.
- Making bilingual signage mandatory in every sector, according to a timetable and by area, in order to create identity.
- Securing a language premium – a public subsidy from the centre – to reflect the role and contribution of the region in sustaining the Welsh language. Until recently families within the Irish Gaeltacht that raised their children in the Gaelic language could claim a payment *Sceim Labhairt na Gaeilge* of around 260 Euros a year. I do not propose a system of direct payments but if sustaining the Welsh language is a national aim this must be recognised through the public financing system.
- Creating a bed levy within the tourism sector in order to fund local economic development.
- Investing in transport infrastructure in order to secure internal cohesion. This would mean upgrading the public transport infrastructure to ensure that it would be easy to travel between the main population centres, specifically re-connecting Carmarthen to Aberystwyth and also Pwllheli-Caernarfon-Bangor.

One of the main aims of the new Arfor



will be to create for the first time a process of urban growth, for the first time ever perhaps, in favour and not at the expense of the Welsh language.

The process of urbanisation has been a factor in the west for a century and more. One of the main factors has been the changes in agriculture. In the 40s of the last century a family farm of around 50 acres would have sustained a family and a crew of agricultural workers whereas now 200 acres, significant capital and probably a second income are required.

People's expectations in terms of living standards and social life have also been transformed – by television, the internet, by going away to college and so on. And unless we can offer these kinds of opportunities for leisure – socialising with people of the same age and same nature in the same place – which is the city experience, within a Welsh speaking west, then young people will continue to flock to cities such as Cardiff, Manchester, London and so on.

There is also a strong relationship between the size of a population and economic growth rate. That is to say, small towns and villages cannot reach a sufficient size for specialisation and creating a diverse local economy and this means that an array of local needs have to be bought in. One of the main reasons therefore for the relative poverty of the West is the failure to create population centres of a significant size.

And yet in the context of the Welsh language traditionally, population increases and the developments which allow this – marinas and so forth – tend to be seen as threats to the linguistic pattern. One of the main aims of Arfor will be to overturn the pattern of rural depopulation and in-migration which has been a feature of the West for the last half a century. Young people have left for the excitement and opportunities of the large cities in England and Cardiff, vacating houses for wealthy, older in-migrants. This picture must be turned on its head and our own in-migration of Welsh speakers in their 20s and 30s



Children in Llanrug near Caernarfon prepare for the 2013 Urdd Eisteddfod. The 2011 Census revealed that the village was the most Welsh-speaking community in Wales. Overleaf Dafydd Iwan argues this is in part because it has seen the most new houses built in the whole of Arfor.

should flow to the West.

Is it possible to create this kind of new paradigm, increasing population and strengthening the language at the same time? What gives us hope in the figures is the growth seen in the amount of Welsh being spoken in the main Welsh speaking hinterland around Caernarfon – in areas such as Waunfawr, Clynog, and Llanllyfni.

The Menai area – the cluster of towns around the Menai river – Bangor, Caernarfon, Llangefni and the surrounding suburbs contain perhaps 50,000 people in total. 'Dinas Menai', as some describe it, has already been designated as the main focus of development or hub for the north-west in the Wales Spatial Plan. This needs to be upgraded and the multi-centre Menai turned into the capital city of Welsh speaking Wales with the aim of making it a magnet for young Welsh speakers in the same way as Cardiff is on a wider scale. In the same way Aberystwyth, Carmarthen and Llanelli should be developed as secondary centres along the lines suggested by Gareth Wyn Jones and Einir Young for development domains nearly a decade ago.

One governance model for Arfor would be an authority in the form of local government but on a regional scale. Another option, which is inferior in my opinion, would be to keep the current system and create a development agency

across the region, a kind of West Wales Development Board but with a linguistic as well as economic aim. That is the model for *Udaras na Gaeltachta* created in 1979 to administer the Gaeltacht areas in the Republic of Ireland. Until last year Udaras was also a hybrid of an agency and local authority with direct elections to the board. The innovation in the constitution of Udaras which should undoubtedly be replicated in the Arfor region is the merger of economic and cultural-linguistic aims, in recognition of the dual crisis western communities face.

If anyone doubts the effect of governance on the development of the Welsh language I would encourage study of the difference in the decline in the language in the area of Gwynedd Council over the last ten years compared with Carmarthenshire council which has reigned over an unforgivable loss in the Amman Valley. This is a result of a deliberate policy of denying the primary role of the Welsh language within the education system.

Adam Price is former Plaid Cymru MP for Carmarthen East and Dinefwr and will be the party's Assembly candidate for the constituency at the 2016 election. This is an extract from his recent policy paper *Arfor - A Region for the Welsh Speaking West*.

# Build more houses to save Welsh communities

Dafydd Iwan explains why there should now should be a stronger emphasis on Y Fro Gymraeg

Some people who knew of my antipathy towards Adfer and the idea of Y Fro Gymraeg during the 1970s find it ironic that I now support specific policies to strengthen the Welsh language in the west. Back in the days when we had no elected National Assembly, and the Welsh language was not a fully official language, I was convinced that achieving those twin aims was our priority as a nation – as a whole undivided nation.

However, now that we have a legislative Assembly and official status for the language, we must recognise the regional differences within Wales, and tailor our policies accordingly. And as for the Welsh language, we must acknowledge that it must be fostered in many different ways, as a new emerging language of life in the capital city, as the lively *lingua franca* of a large professional class, as the medium of education for thousands of young people from non-Welsh speaking homes in the east of Wales, but most of all as the common language of a diminishing – but still significant – number of communities in more rural areas.

If we lose these communities where Welsh is the natural means of communication of the majority, it would not necessarily mean the demise of the language, but the language would cease to be a 'living' language in the full sense of the word. It would lose its main source of power – the power

which sends the lifeblood coursing through its veins. Now I would be the first to recognise that such communities are not wholly confined to the west of Wales, and we must take great care not to undermine those Welsh-speaking communities still managing to retain their language close to the border, especially in mid and north-east Wales.

But there is a growing awareness that we have to apply stronger policies specifically designed to bolster the language as a community language in the west of Wales. During the consultation period leading to the Language Act of the Cymru'n Un government, I attended a few meetings where the consensus on this matter was evident, and it is a matter of regret that this has not progressed as an idea since the Act was passed. I believe that several events now being envisaged could be an opportunity to translate this into real policies.

Firstly, the eagerly awaited, and long delayed, publication of the 'standards' by the Language Commissioner must I believe recognise that different policies must apply in different parts of Wales. To put it simply, there should be a far stronger emphasis on Welsh as the major language in western areas. In this context, the reorganisation of local authorities will provide an excellent opportunity to strengthen the use of Welsh in local government, and to apply the language

policy of Gwynedd, or a large part of it, in Ynys Môn, Ceredigion and Caerfyrddin, and a strengthening of the language policy in neighbouring Conwy, Dinbych, Maldwyn and Penfro.

I would applaud the ideas of Adam Price, not so much in creating one County Authority for the west, but a Development Agency for the western counties, charged with economic policies designed to develop communities and creating the conditions necessary for the survival of the language.

This brings us to the complicated question of the relationship between the economy and the language, and more specifically the relationship between planning and housing policies and the language. Asking developers to prepare 'Language Impact Studies' to support planning applications serves no purpose whatsoever, as such 'Studies' can be fashioned to prove anything. If they are to be effective, a neutral body – such as the Language Commissioner – should prepare such studies on major applications, based on specific agreed and proven criteria.

The spotlight has recently been on the TAN 20, but let's be honest and recognise that 'Technical Advice Notes' are not going to be the salvation of any language. What is needed is a planning system based on a holistic approach to communities, where linguistic and cultural and social factors

are just as important as land-use and infrastructure. I was a keen supporter of 'spatial planning' championed by Sue Essex, and now apparently discarded by the Welsh Government. This attempted to understand how Wales worked, and how the different regions interacted, and how this could be translated into planning and economic policies.

I am also a great supporter of Plaid Cymru's notion (again somewhat forgotten) based on Professor Gareth Wyn Jones' work on Wales as a number of regions or 'development domains', each with an urban hub serving a more rural hinterland. The idea of decentralisation is paramount, and moving key jobs – and government departments – out of Cardiff to other parts of Wales, must be seen as a major factor in reviving the fortunes of rural Wales, and helping to create a critical mass and thriving hubs in north, west and mid Wales.

To many concerned with the well-being of the language, housing is the *bete-*

*noir*. Some give the impression that if we stop building houses, the influx of English incomers will stop and the language will be saved. Wrong! Most people moving from England to Wales (not all) have money, and they will find a house to suit them, and will pay the asking price. If we stop building new houses, all that will happen will be that prices will be driven up, making it more difficult for local people to buy – or rent – a home.

It is worth remembering that the last Census revealed that the most Welsh-speaking community in Wales is Llanrug – the village which has seen most new houses built in the whole of Arfon. Am I saying that building more houses will save the language? Of course not, but we must change the emphasis from allocating land for housing, and arguing about numbers, to the factors dictating planning permission. And housing should always be planned according to local proven need. And under present legislation, 'affordable housing' – well-designed

houses restricted in size and restricted to local need has to be a central plank.

As for local government reorganization, what must go hand-in-hand with this is giving more powers and responsibilities to community councils, and encouragement for them to cooperate with neighbouring councils so that they can undertake significant projects in the community. After all, they have powers which the Welsh Assembly does not – the ability to raise taxes and to borrow money! But they must be given more responsibilities so as to give community councillors – the people closest to our communities - a more meaningful challenge, and a more effective role in the planning and regenerating process.



Dafydd Iwan was President of Plaid Cymru 2003-10, is Director of Sain, Wales' leading recording company, and secretary of Cymdeithas Tai Gwynedd housing association.

Creu perthynas iachach ag alcohol yng Nghymru Building a healthier relationship with alcohol in Wales

Alcohol Concern Cymru, 8 Museum Place, Caerdydd / Cardiff, CF10 3BG  
029 2022 6746  
www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/cymru @accymru

Alcohol Concern *Meddal yn Ddiol am Alcohol* Alcohol Concern *Making Sense of Alcohol*

Elusen gofnestredig rhif 291705 Registered charity no. 291705

**ON JUNE 12<sup>TH</sup> THE IWA WILL GATHER TOGETHER KEY FIGURES TO DISCUSS 'PRUDENT HEALTHCARE'.**

Professor Sir Mansel Aylward, Bevan Commission, Welsh Health Minister Mark Drakeford AM, Sharon Hopkins, Director of Public Health, Cardiff & the Vale, Prof Dylan Jones Evans, Bristol Business School are just some of the speakers.

**Date:** Thursday 12th June, 1.30pm  
**Venue:** Cardiff City Centre, TBC

**Ticket Price:** £45 plus VAT for members and £90 plus VAT for non members.

For more information or to book tickets please visit the IWA website: [www.iwa.org.uk](http://www.iwa.org.uk) or call 029 2048 4387 or email [laura@iwa.org.uk](mailto:laura@iwa.org.uk)





# Empowering bottom-up locally-driven development

**Dave Adamson** and **Mark Lang** report on the regeneration lessons that have emerged from their year long study of Tredegar

The Sirhowy Valley above Tredegar – pristine once more. In the foreground are the remains of a self acting incline haulage for lowering stone from the adjacent quarry down the hillside to Bedwellty Pits. The quarry was in use from the 1850s onwards.

We believe that a more positive future than just ‘managed decline’ is possible for many of our disadvantaged post-industrial communities across the south Wales Valleys. Over the last year we have been undertaking an in-depth study of Tredegar in Blaenau Gwent to identify a series of action points that we argue would collectively provide a route towards a more sustainable future.

In our report *Toward a New Settlement: A Deep Place Approach to Equitable and Sustainable Places* published at the end of April, we outlined the main arguments. We believe a focus on place can be a powerful mechanism for managing public policy interventions. Our report sees this focus as the most appropriate and effective means to address two significant and interconnected social policy problems, of how to:

- Overcome the inequitable distribution of wealth, and the unacceptable agglomeration of

poverty in post-industrial areas.

- Adjust to a more environmentally sustainable economic model.

We offer a critique of Neo-Liberalism, which sees the poor as a victim of their own failings, rather than as a consequence of the uneven distribution of wealth and opportunities, which we argue is an inevitable consequence of the Neo-Liberal model itself. In this assertion we are not alone. For example, we are supported by the recent report of the Welsh Cooperatives and Mutuals Commission. We advocate some of the central principles of Keynesianism, but imbue them with contemporary concerns for poverty eradication and environmental protection.

Our Deep Place approach is influenced by social exclusion analysis, which provides an important mechanism for understanding why certain places become disconnected from the mainstream economy and society. Transition Theory, which

connects global environmental conditions with local action, also influences our approach. However, we try to overcome its limited perspective on public service reform and over-emphasis of individual consumption patterns by also considering Total Place approaches to public services. These identify collective consumption of public services and a more collaborative relationship between the citizen and the local state.

The ‘Foundational Economy’ model developed by Karel Williams also influences our approach. This is the area of the economy where 40 per cent of the UK workforce is employed in providing services such as social care, utilities, telecommunications or food. We see the Foundational Economy as the principle means to achieve local economic growth.

In combination these perspectives constitute our Deep Place approach, which we apply to a detailed case study of Tredegar. We argue for a more

localised economic model for the town, which we believe can both eradicate poverty and achieve sustainability. We do not suggest that there should be a separation of the economy of Tredegar from mainstream economic activity, as the Welsh economy itself is intricately connected to the UK, European and global economies. We do suggest, however, that a semi-autonomous local economy would be better placed to enhance the foundational economy through localised supply chains and patterns of employment. We identify four key local economic 'sectors' that are critical to the future success of a more localised economy in Tredegar:

- Food
- Energy conservation and generation
- The care sector
- E-commerce and employment

The study also considers the major challenges facing Tredegar in four other key areas: health, education, housing

and transport. Tredegar is a significantly disadvantaged location in terms of health inequalities. Consequently, we argue that public health policy needs to be underpinned by a comprehensive anti-poverty strategy that addresses the gross inequalities that have come to characterise Welsh society. We also suggest that, where possible, local procurement of goods and services should be actively pursued. However, the NHS and clinicians are only part, albeit an important part, of the solution to overcoming health inequalities. Also of significant importance are sustainable communities and engaged local people. International evidence has shown that the greater the engagement of local populations with their own health, the more significant the benefits.

There are major educational attainment gaps between the people of Tredegar and the more affluent areas of Wales. Of course, Tredegar is not alone and across the UK children from the lowest income families are

half as likely to get five good GCSEs and study subsequently at university. David Egan has recently argued that in order to successfully close the poverty gap in education, there needs to be interventions as part of a holistic strategy involving schools, families and communities. In keeping with the general principles of subsidiarity and localisation evident in the report, we support Egan's suggestion that there needs to be a Cooperative Educational Trust established to include schools attended by residents of Tredegar.

Provision of housing services including construction, repair, renovation and low carbon retrofitting also provides considerable opportunity to promote local economic development. Economies of scale would suggest a joint approach bringing together a Housing Renewal type intervention together with energy conservation measures. In the case of social housing we can be confident that housing quality will reach the

**Rydym wedi cael dylanwad mawr yng Nghymru am bron i 30 o flynyddoedd. Mae ein huchelgais am ddyfodol gwyrdd a theg yn fwy nag erioed. Ymunwch â ni.**

**We've been hugely influential in Wales for nearly 30 years. And we've even more ambitious plans for a green and fair future. Join us.**

02920 229 577 [cymru@foe.co.uk](mailto:cymru@foe.co.uk) [www.foe.co.uk/cymru](http://www.foe.co.uk/cymru)  
[facebook.com/foecymrucydd](https://www.facebook.com/foecymrucydd) [twitter.com/foecymrucydd](https://twitter.com/foecymrucydd)



The national charity for children's play  
 Yn unigol rannol athol ar chwarae plant  
 play wales chwarae cymru

Creating a play friendly Wales  
 Creu Cymru chwarae-gyfeillgar

[www.playwales.org.uk](http://www.playwales.org.uk)  
[www.chwaraecymru.org.uk](http://www.chwaraecymru.org.uk)



Welsh Housing Quality Standard, though this is not true of the private sector rented accommodation. The most critical issue currently in housing is the extent of supply, particularly of affordable homes, but there appears to be little interest amongst private house builders in building in the area. We suggest that Blaenau Gwent local authority should explore mechanisms for securing private sector interest in both rental and market sale provision by undertaking a ‘de-risking’ strategy on its development land assets.

Public transport in Tredegar is limited and expensive. We argue that transport affordability must be closely considered, particularly for those on low incomes or seeking to return to the labour market. Walking and cycling can provide a sustainable transport solution, but there are limitations in terms of travel distances and there is a need for investment in safe walking and cycling routes.

We suggest that the lack of local authority involvement, can lead to a disconnect between larger more strategic road improvements, and the localised needs of the Foundational Economy. The Cardiff Metro proposals represent a realistic option for improved regional connectivity in south-east Wales, but there are some key issues it would need to address. We suggest that one of these considerations is the issue of ownership and control, as well as the ongoing revenue of the Metro.

The need to coordinate activities and develop synergies between the actions of national, regional and community patterns of governance is essential. Despite the demise of the Wales Spatial Plan, there are an array of spatially oriented policy developments including Enterprise Zones, Local Growth Zones, City Regions, and the Wales Infrastructural Investment Plan. Welsh legislation currently under consideration include the Future Generations Bill and the Planning Bill, both of which could have major implications for the models of governance required in Wales.

## We support the objectives of the Williams Commission recommendations, but believe they have not gone far enough.

We support the objectives of the Williams Commission recommendations, but believe they have not gone far enough. In order to deliver a Deep Place solution we argue it would be necessary to have single authorities, not just fewer and larger local authorities, seeing the merger of local authorities, police authorities, fire authorities and local health board functions.

Governance for resilient and sustainable places should be inclusive and seek to engage local citizens with the management of their public realm. We suggest that this requires a very different perspective from the normal approach to power at community level and is dependent on a willing and open ability to share power and work for common objectives.

In the immediate to medium term we recognise the need to develop the role of the Town Council in Tredegar and foster the emergence of a local anchor organisation to develop a Place Plan that addresses the physical, social, cultural and environmental futures of the town. We argue that the proposed Planning Bill and the Place Plans approach will require extending to include social and economic issues, as well as the simple physical planning of the community.

We also argue that more strategic regional planning and connections to a ‘polycentric’ city region create the potential for economic development along with reform and improvement of public services. In the longer term

we identify a need for a clear process of ‘double devolution’, in which a level of autonomy for this tier of local government is developed.

We are very conscious that the proposals in our Tredegar Study face the most hostile financial climate of the last fifty years. The impact of the UK Government’s welfare reforms has been estimated by Welsh Government to have taken almost £1 billion from the Welsh economy. The ability of Welsh Government to compensate for such policies is limited. As the austerity programme translates into cuts to the Welsh Government’s own budget, the knock on effect for local authorities will create formidable challenges for service delivery in places such as Tredegar. In this light we fully support the recommendations of the Silk Commission for extended powers for Welsh Government to include borrowing and taxation powers, which might underpin some of the actions we have identified in our report.



Professor Dave Adamson is Chief Executive and Mark Lang Senior Researcher at the Centre for Regeneration Excellence Wales. Their report *Toward a New Settlement: A Deep Place Approach to Equitable and Sustainable Places* can be downloaded at [www.regenwales.org](http://www.regenwales.org)



# Housing should follow transport in south-east Wales

**Roger Tanner** says a Development Corporation should create a new garden city on the edge of Cardiff

It has always been a disappointment to me that, during a career in town planning that spanned 40 years, my native city of Cardiff, far from taking the lead in Welsh planning, has usually lagged behind. Indeed, it looks like Cardiff City will be one of the very last of Wales' 25 planning authorities to adopt a Local Development Plan.

Now, however, the city has an opportunity to lead the way - not only in Wales but in the whole of Great Britain - by promoting the development of the first 21st Century New Town in the UK.

The opportunity is presented by the combination of two powerful drivers. First is the city's phenomenal population growth, certainly in Welsh terms, and the consequent demand for housing. Second is the prospect of a comprehensive rapid transport network in South East Wales - the 'Metro' (see *the welsh agenda* No. 49, Spring 2013).

Between 2001 and 2011, Cardiff's population grew by over 46,000 - a quarter of the population growth in Wales. Cardiff has continued to grow, with an additional 3,100 people added in 2011-12, representing - 30 per cent of the national increase. At present this rapid growth in population has not been

reflected in an increase in the number of households. The recession and financial crisis has prevented new households from forming and increasing numbers of twenty and thirty-year-olds are forced to live with Mum and Dad. However, this can only be a temporary phenomenon. When wages begin to catch up and overtake inflation, demand for new dwellings in the Cardiff travel to work area will be enormous.

Cardiff City's deposit Local Development Plan proposed to meet the anticipated demand through the allocation of eight large 'strategic sites' for development, mainly in the remaining green space around the north of the city. Three of these sites, with a capacity for 7,000 to 13,000 dwellings, are allocated to the north

west of Cardiff.

Also north west of Cardiff is the track bed of a disused railway line that used to link the west of the city to Llantrisant. This is recognised in the Metro plan as an ideal opportunity to develop a modern rapid transport route to accommodate commuting into the city from Rhondda Cynon Taff (currently running at 18,000 trips a day). The most likely form of rapid transport here is a tram-train facility similar to those to be found in many continental cities.

The Cardiff Local Development Plan sort of recognises this by showing a number of possible transport routes in the Constraints Map accompanying the plan. However, transport proposals are absent from the all important Proposals Map, which shows only the strategic development sites.

Cardiff Civic Society is no 'NIMBY' organisation. Rather, the Society wants to see Cardiff grow in a sustainable way into a modern European city. However, it is objecting to Cardiff's deposit Development Plan which, it says, should be phased so that housing development follows public transport infrastructure, not the other way around.

Sketch showing the extent of the proposed New Town to the north-west of Cardiff - a 21st Century version of the 'Garden City', with high density communities clustered around public transport stations, but physically separated by extensive parks and recreational facilities.



The all too plausible scenario is that the rapid transport route will take a decade to plan, finance and implement, by which time the bulk of the new houses in the three strategic development sites will have been built as extensions to existing city suburbs. Inevitably this would add a torrent of

a single entity – a New Town - rather than a series of competing unconnected extensions of existing suburbs. Furthermore, we believe there is a compelling argument for developing this New Town through a purpose built delivery body – a New Town Development Corporation. Although

## The ‘Garden Cities’ of the 20th Century featured low density semi-detached houses with generous private gardens. They were a positive response to the densely packed unhygienic slums of the 19th Century.

new car borne commuters on to the already congested road system.

Far better to concentrate development in the next decade on other sites in the city and in adjacent local authority areas that can plug into existing or enhanced transport facilities, while the rapid transport link to the north west of Cardiff is being constructed.

Further, the civic society advocates going beyond that. Instead of merely responding to the demands of the developers and landowners who have drawn up the proposals for the strategic sites, Cardiff should take the lead by itself defining areas for development in its Development Plan, in partnership with Welsh Government and Rhondda Cynon Taf. These should be entirely new neighbourhoods, each centred on a station on the proposed rapid transit route all the way from western Cardiff to the growth areas around Llantrisant proposed in Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

Moreover, this integrated development and transport corridor should be planned and developed as

no new towns have been built in Britain for several decades, the legislation for declaring one is still on the statute book.

The advantages of a New Town development over the private development led alternative are numerous:

- The development is much more likely to be planned in an integrated, sustainable way with a complementary suite of land uses, not just housing.
- In an era when council budgets are being cut and unlikely to be able to fund infrastructure, a new Town Corporation could raise funds against the value of its future assets.
- A Development Corporation would be able to use compulsory purchase powers to acquire land that was needed for infrastructure.
- Most importantly, a Development Corporation can secure the majority of the uplift in land values conferred by development allocations and recycle this into infrastructure and facilities to serve the public and into

the quality of the built environment.

- The Development Corporation would be a social landlord, much more capable of delivering the huge numbers of affordable houses that Cardiff needs, than existing cash strapped housing associations and local authorities.
- The Board of the Development Corporation would formalise a partnership between local authorities, the private sector, public utilities and government, that will have to occur anyway if development is to occur sustainably but which would be far more effectively implemented through the development corporation model.
- The Development Corporation would be charged with creating new communities in accordance with the Welsh Government’s sustainability agenda, for example on energy efficient dwellings, which the private sector is reluctant to implement.

The ‘Garden Cities’ of the 20th Century featured low density semi-detached houses with generous private gardens. They were a positive response to the densely packed unhygienic slums of the 19th Century. The ‘New Town’ proposed here is unlikely to follow that model but could pioneer a 21st Century version of the Garden City with high density communities clustered around public transport stations but physically separated from each other by extensive public ‘gardens’ in the form of parks or recreational facilities, as illustrated in the diagram on page 43.

Does Wales, and its capital city in particular, have the vision to grasp this exciting new opportunity?



Roger Tanner was Strategic Planning and Regeneration Manager with Caerphilly County Borough Council before retiring in 2013. He is now active in Cardiff Civic Society and the Royal Town Planning Institute Cymru.

# Political pressure to decide Welsh funding fate

**Eurfyl ap Gwilym** finds that Wales could lose nearly a £1 billion if High Speed Rail in England is regarded as benefiting Wales

Depending on how the Treasury allocates the funding, implementation of HS2 - the high speed rail link between London, the English Midlands and the north of England - will have a significant impact on the Welsh Government's capital budget.

If HS2 spending is regarded as being fully part of the Barnett block grant calculation Wales would benefit by nearly £1 billion over ten years. On the other hand, if the Treasury takes the view that it is outside the calculation of Barnett consequentials, as happened with spending on the Olympic Games, then Wales will receive nothing.

HS2 is divided into two phases:

**Phase 1** will link London with Birmingham, and will cost £21.4 billion including a contingency of £5.7 billion but excluding the cost of rolling stock. Construction is due to start in 2017 and should be completed by 2026.

**Phase 2** takes the connection north to Leeds and Manchester and will cost £21.2 billion. Completion dates are less clear. The current assumption is that Phase 1 and Phase 2 will be built sequentially although consideration is being given to starting Phase 2 before Phase 1 is completed.

In considering what impact this major project might have on Wales three assumptions have been made:

- Consideration will only be given to Phase 1, although similar considerations will apply to Phase 2
- HS2 Phase 1 expenditure will be fully funded from increased public spending, will be an *addition* to the Department for Transport budget, will not displace other capital spending, and will be evenly spread over the ten years of construction with respect to time and will include absorption of the contingency allowance.
- Expenditure on the other Department for Transport programmes will be as set out in the latest Statement of

Funding Policy published by the Treasury in 2010. Clearly by the time the next Statement is published in 2015 there will be changes in the provision for the various programmes.

A major issue for Wales is whether, if this expenditure goes ahead, it will be included as part of the calculation of the Barnett-derived block grant that will be allocated to the Welsh Government over the next decade. According to the latest Statement of Funding Policy the total 2010-11 provision for the Department of Transport in Whitehall was £13.265bn. The weighted comparability factor for Wales was 73.1 per cent. This means that Wales receives its population share of any change in the Department's programmes totalling £9.697 billion (73.1 per cent of £13.265 billion) of the departmental provision. The balance is £3.568 billion, of which Network Rail accounts for £3.23 billion, and none of this is devolved to Wales.

In the calculations that follow, the population ratios are those set out in the latest Statement of Funding Policy where the Wales to England ratio is 5.79 per cent. This was the ratio used by the Treasury in the recent uplift in the Welsh block grant thanks to an increase of £2 billion in the Department for Transport budget which included £850 million of preliminary expenditure on HS2.

This £2 billion increase led to an additional £85 million for Wales (£2,000 million x 0.731 x 0.0579). Wales received an uplift corresponding to expenditure on HS2 because between Spending Reviews the Treasury uses the pre-existing comparability factors and population ratios and applies these at the departmental level - in this case the Department for Transport.

Looking to the next Spending Review expected in 2015, expenditure of HS2 could be treated in one of three ways, shown in the box on the following page.

There are therefore three possible funding outcomes for Wales:

- If HS2 is treated in the next Spending Review in a similar way to the London Olympics then Wales will receive no additional funding at all.



### Option 1: Exceptional

It would not be included in the Department for Transport budget and so would not be subject to the Barnett formula. As a result Wales would not receive any increase in funding. Many would view this as outrageous but such a treatment was employed in the case of the London Olympics: there is no account of the London Olympics in the provision for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport in the 2010 Statement of Funding Policy and such expenditure did not increase the budget provision of that Department. In the case of the Olympics the devolved administrations did not receive any increase through the Barnett mechanism. If this option were adopted Wales would receive no funding corresponding to expenditure on HS2 once the revised Statement of Funding Policy is agreed in 2015.

### Option 2: UK weighting

Expenditure on HS2 would be regarded as for the benefit of the UK as a whole, resulting in a partial proportionate increase for the Welsh budget. Taking the data from the latest Statement of Funding Policy and assuming that nothing else changes, then the total Department for Transport annual provision would increase by £2.14 billion from £13.265 billion to £15.405 billion (the £21.4 billion cost of HS2 Phase 1 spread evenly over ten years). The weighted comparability factor for Wales would be 62.9 per cent (£9.697 billion / £15.405 billion). Thus if the total Department for Transport departmental spend per year increases by £2.14 billion due to HS2, Wales would receive an additional ~£78 million per year (£2,140 million x 0.629 x 0.0579).

### Option 3: English weighting

Expenditure on HS2 could be assigned a comparability factor of 100 per cent, as was the case for the £14.8 billion London Crossrail programme which has no devolved equivalent and was therefore regarded as for the benefit of England alone. This would be used in the computation of the overall, weighted comparability factor for the Department for Transport. In this case the devolved administrations would each receive their population share of the change in the Department for Transport provision due to HS2. The overall weighted comparability factor for Wales would now be 76.8 per cent (£11.837 billion [£9.697 billion + £2.140 billion] / £15.405 billion) and Wales would receive an additional ~£95 million per year (£2,140 million x 0.768 x 0.0579).

- If the project is treated as being for the benefit of the UK as a whole (Option 2) Wales would gain £780 million over the ten years of Phase 1.
- If it HS2 treated in the manner of Crossrail and not being of benefit to Wales (Option 3), we would gain £950 million over the ten years of Phase 1.

The difference between options 2 and 3 is £170 million over ten years. Given that the two phases of HS2 are of similar cost and duration then the impact on Welsh funding would be similar for Phase 2. In practice of course the comparability factors and population ratios employed by the Treasury will change post 2015 but the broad conclusions and estimates set out here will continue to be valid.

These are just the 'technical' arguments surrounding application of the Barnett formula to HS2. In reality many decisions are made as a result of political negotiation and the leverage of the parties involved. In too many cases the UK Government, through the Treasury, is judge and jury in its own case.

A key event in the resolution of the HS2 funding question will be the next UK Spending Review. At each such review the Treasury publishes an updated Statement of Funding Policy which sets out the guidelines for the application of the Barnett formula and crucially also publishes comparability factors for the various public spending programmes. It is to be expected that the HS2 programme will be included for

the first time in the 2015 Statement of Funding Policy.

The terms of the Treasury's Statement of Funding Policy is supposed to be agreed with the devolved administrations. Given the current confusion and disagreement between Whitehall and Cardiff Bay over the funding for the electrification of the Valley lines it is even more important that the Welsh Government marshals its arguments well in time and ensures that Wales gets a fair deal in accordance with the principles set out in the Statement of Funding Policy. These include:

- Transparency: the system is readily understood and its operation is open to scrutiny.
- Consent: the system commands the support of governments, parliaments and people and is equitable and predictable in operation.

The next Spending Review will take place soon after the UK General Election in 2015. It will be up to us in Wales to press the UK political parties to commit in their manifestos to Wales receiving its consequential share of HS2 expenditure. Following the election and in the lead up to the release of the Statement of Funding Policy the Welsh Government will need to ensure that funding of HS2 will have a full, 100 per cent Barnett consequential for Wales.



Eurfyl ap Gwilym is Plaid Cymru's economics adviser and a Trustee of the IWA.

## Higher Education Wales

The representative body for Welsh higher education institutions – promoting university interests in Wales, the UK and internationally. With a diverse student population from across the globe, the higher education sector in Wales touches all parts of society - from its central importance to the social and cultural wellbeing of the nation through to powering the economy with job creation, world-class research and groundbreaking innovation.

To learn more about Higher Education Wales and the sector's wider contribution visit [www.hew.ac.uk](http://www.hew.ac.uk)

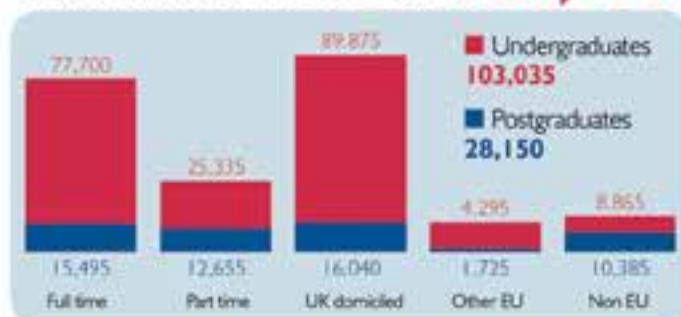


### WELSH UNIVERSITIES

# 7.3%

Latest statistics show that applications have **increased** by 7.3% - higher than any other part of the UK.

Total number of students: **131,185**



### STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Welsh universities' overall satisfaction rate according to the National Student Survey = **84%**

### RESEARCH

Research at Welsh universities has grown at a rate that outpaces the world and UK average.



Wales is within the **top 20** research countries in the world and part of a world-leading UK science base - second only to the US in its share of global citations.



**Sêr Cymru - £50m scheme to enhance and build upon the research capability in Wales.**



Applications to the Arts and Humanities Research Council exceed UK average.



**Research shows that Welsh universities lead the UK in terms of output quality per pound invested.**

### ECONOMY

# 91%

of graduates from full-time first degree courses in Wales are employed within **six months** of leaving higher education - higher than the UK average.

Universities contribute more than **£2 billion** a year in gross expenditure to the Welsh economy, with international students alone generating a value-added contribution of over £140 million.



Universities are major employers in their own right - collectively they have **24,600** employees with a total turnover of **£1.2bn** located in Wales.

Based purely on patterns of expenditure, for every £100m that is invested in higher education, £102m will accrue to industries.



### INNOVATION

Skills and Employability Framework - first agreement of its kind in the UK between students, industry and higher education.



Welsh universities generated **10%** of all UK graduate business start-ups and more than **10%** of estimated turnover, despite representing only **5%** of UK higher education.

Welsh universities are currently working in partnership with the aim of Wales becoming a distinctive open education nation by 2013/14, where students and lecturers from across the globe will be able to access world-class material from its institutions.





# Lessons for Wales from North Dakota

---

**Ian Jenkins** says there is a strong case for the Welsh Government to establish a state bank

---

The past 30 years have seen the expansion, deregulation and privatisation of the financial sector at the expense of the 'real' economy' of manufacturing and production. Indeed, the role of money middlemen acting as intermediaries has grown exponentially. According to the Bank of England, this activity accounted for around 1.5 per cent of the UK economy's profits a year between 1948 and 1978. However, by 2008 the figure had risen to 15 per cent.

There is nothing wrong with 'Intermediation' as such. Banks should be middlemen between investment capital and the productive economy. The issue is the extent. As former US bank regulator William K. Black observed, "Middlemen serve a very useful purpose, but should not be very big and should not make a lot of money". He concluded, however, that that was precisely what had happened. As he put it, "Finance has become the dog instead of the tail ... They have become a parasite".

Private banks have gained this dominant position through control of credit issuance, the

primary mechanism by which money is created, and in the process promoted speculation and unsustainable bubbles in the economy. What we need instead is to redirect credit issuance towards more stable, productive and sustainable uses.

For a productive economy to exist there must be adequate streams of affordable credit. There is no doubt that affordable borrowing for investment has been a vital contributing factor in the decline of the productive economy in Wales.

Instead, we should follow the public banking model in Germany where, after World War II, its *Landesbanken* facilitated the growth of the *mittelstand* sector of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises. The same approach has enabled the Bank of North Dakota (BND) to contribute significantly to the State's being the only one in the USA to run a budget surplus post-2008.

What is money and where does it come from? These are questions rarely asked in mainstream economics. Yet the answers to the questions hold one of the keys to understanding the economy and for devising a more democratic system. In his 1975 volume *Money: Whence it Came, Where it Went* J.K. Galbraith observed that, "The study of money, above all other fields in economics, is the one in which complexity is used to disguise truth or to evade truth, not to reveal it." And he continued, "The process by which banks create money is so simple that the mind is repelled".



Figure 1

Source: The Public Banking Institute (<http://publicbankinginstitute.org/background.htm>)

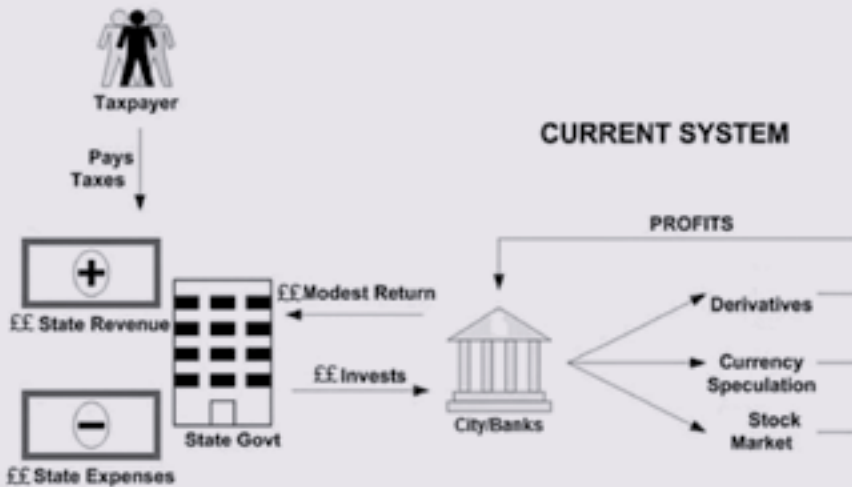
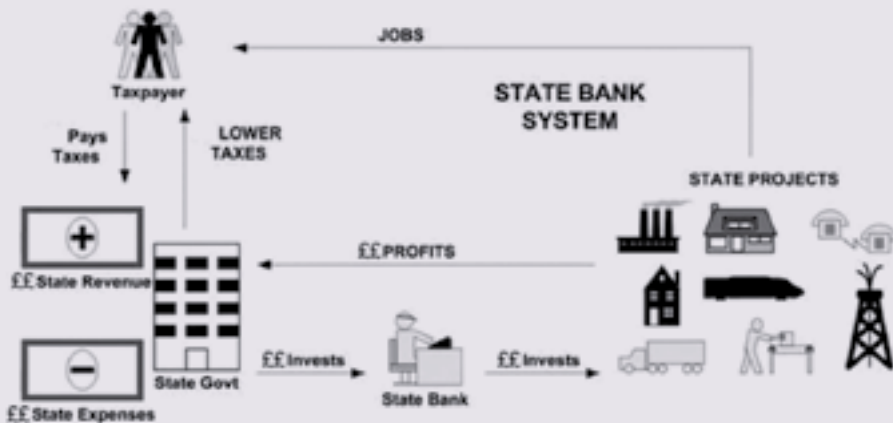


Figure 2

Source: The Public Banking Institute (<http://publicbankinginstitute.org/background.htm>)



So what is money? The instinctive answer to this question is that money is the physical notes and coins produced by the government, the money produced at the Royal Mint at Llantrisant, ironically making it one of an increasingly diminishing range of Welsh exports. Yet 'physical' money of this sort only accounts for approximately 3 per cent of money in circulation. This 'narrow' money is indeed the product of government, as under the Bank Charter Act 1844 the

power to create banknotes (and coins) became the exclusive preserve of the Bank of England, in agreement with Westminster.

However, the other 97 per cent of 'broad' money in circulation is the product of credit issuance through fractional reserve banking. As Martin Wolf, the Financial Times columnist, put it, "The essence of the contemporary monetary system is the creation of money, out of nothing, by private banks' often foolish lending" (9

March 2010).

This process is profoundly counter-intuitive. Most people assume that banks lend the deposits they receive, which is not the case. Money issued through loan creation is created out of nothing, subject only to rules for capital reserves. In its Quarterly Bulletin in 2007 the Bank of England made this clear:

"By far the largest role in creating broad money is played by the banking sector... When banks make loans they create additional deposits for those that have borrowed the money."

In a speech the following year Paul Tucker, a Member of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee, made the same point:

"Subject only to confidence in their soundness, banks extend credit by simply increasing the borrowing customer's current account ... That is, banks extend credit by creating money."

The Bank Charter Act 1844 prohibited private banks from printing banknotes, but not from issuing money by ledger entry through the making of loans. Over the past thirty years, with the advent of electronic systems, this facility to 'print money', by creating credit in borrowers accounts with a stroke of a keypad, whilst noting a corresponding asset to the bank, has expanded significantly. The Bank of England has recently reiterated the nature of the system of money creation in a paper entitled *Money creation in the modern economy*, which formed part of the Q1 Quarterly Bulletin for 2014. Consequently, this long-obscured process has now moved out of the realm of heterodox economics (some even labelled it 'conspiracy theory') and into the centre of the debate.

So, the power of money creation is

principally in the hands of private corporations who are able to make sizeable profits through the levying of interest, as well as being granted the power to decide which sectors of the economy should be afforded liquidity. In the past 30 years this direction of credit has moved increasingly away from the productive 'real economy' towards speculation and bubble creation.

Now part of the deposit base of private banks is income from local and national government. This allows the banks to use public money as a deposit base for lending for speculation. This is without the seemingly endless reserves handed to these institutions through 'Quantitative Easing' and other bailout mechanisms post-2008 (See Fig.1)

Wales has an opportunity to utilise an alternative model of investment for its local and Welsh Government funds into a state bank along the lines carried out by Bank of North Dakota in the United States. The bank's primary deposit base is the State of North Dakota itself. As it says:

"All state funds and funds of state institutions are deposited with Bank of North Dakota, as required by law. Other deposits are accepted from any source, private citizens to the U.S. government."

This framework provides the economy of the state of North Dakota with affordable (and available) credit for SMEs and resources for the improvement of infrastructure. Under the state banking model the benefit derived from interest accrued in the credit-issuing process is returned to the state and can be re-invested or spent in the public interest, instead of being paid to shareholders in dividends or given away in absurd bonuses (See Fig.2).

The overall result has been to make North Dakota the only US state to run a budget surplus throughout the financial crisis since 2008. This must make their model at least worth considering in a Welsh context.

The Silk Commission was asked to consider the Welsh Government's

current financial powers in relation to taxation and borrowing and concluded that it should be granted borrowing powers. The Commission based this conclusion partly on 'international evidence' drawn from a single World Bank publication from 1999: making this 'evidence' neither ideologically neutral nor current.

The Silk report contains no consideration of the role of banks in money creation through credit issuance, and the attendant problems of misallocation of investment, and no investigation of the successes of public banking in the international context, or of the potential role for public banking in Wales.

Yet it is important that these issues be brought into the debate on the Welsh economy, since to ignore them would be to exclude a potentially democratising and sustainable banking system from the debate. In turn that would risk making any grant of borrowing powers to the Welsh Government nothing more than a new stream of income for private banks. If devolving borrowing powers to the Welsh Government were to mean it submitting itself to the 'discipline' of the bond markets, then that would be a poor outlook for investment: ask any citizen of Greece, Spain or Ireland.

In the second part of his 2013 review examining access to finance for SMEs in Wales, commissioned by Business Minister Edwina Hart, Professor Dylan Jones-Evans concluded that a Development Bank for Wales would be the best way to overcome the gap between the demand of SMEs in Wales for finance, and the credit supplied by banks. He also points out that Finance Wales has failed to fill the gap, and moreover charges interest rates above the European Commission's reference rates for the cost of loans from state banks. Meanwhile, other avenues of funding such as peer-to-peer lending are also not yet sufficient to meet the needs of SMEs in Wales. Professor Jones-Evans suggests a Development Bank for Wales

could be created by:

"...bringing together all the financial support schemes for SMEs within the Welsh Government, the funds managed by Finance Wales and elements of Business Wales, as well as UK Government schemes such as UK Export Finance and the Business Growth Fund."

This would provide a substantial depository base for any new Development Bank, which could then be leveraged to provide a significant boost to the loan funds available to businesses in Wales. Though Jones-Evans focused on his remit of funding to SMEs, such a Development Bank could also provide finance for infrastructure projects in Wales. This could provide a means for the Welsh Government to avoid costly external debt for infrastructure projects, such as onerous PFI contracts, by borrowing from its own bank. The interest paid on such loans would be returned to the Welsh Government to be spent in a socially useful manner, instead of seeing it disappear from the Welsh economy to the City or another financial centre.

There is a widely perceived need for change to the economic system and especially for reform of the way in which banking operates. Most people think there is 'something wrong' with the way in which banking currently functions. I believe that a public bank, properly instituted with all due diligence and care for regulation and democratic supervision, can provide a direction for sustainable change in Wales and beyond.



Ian Jenkins is training to become a solicitor and is a director of Arian Cymru ([www.ariancymru.eu](http://www.ariancymru.eu)), a non-aligned think-tank promoting alternatives to an unsustainable debt-based economy.



Your Society

Our doors have  
been open to  
Members for  
over 150 years

PRINCIPALITY  
BUILDING SOCIETY

Visit one of our  
branches across  
Wales and the borders  
or go online at  
[principality.co.uk](http://principality.co.uk)



@PrincipalityBS



Find us on  
Facebook

*Be part of our mutual*

**PRINCIPALITY  
BUILDING SOCIETY**

Principality Building Society is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority, reference number 155998. Principality Building Society, Principality Buildings, Queen Street, Cardiff, CF10 1UA. [www.principality.co.uk](http://www.principality.co.uk)





The Sikh scholar and journalist Khushwant Singh, staunch for free speech, who has just died aged 99.

# With Malice to One and All

**Trevor Fishlock** remembers when his typewriter was confiscated and the telex was a teacher of patience

In my attic stands a portable typewriter, scarred and sellotaped, a museum piece gritty with dust. It was my companion on the road for many years. I wrote on it in hotel rooms in India, in the Northwest Frontier, in China, Russia, Africa and America. It reminds me of the excitement of working as a foreign correspondent. It's a useless artefact now but I daren't throw it away because it's a talisman. I fear that if I junked it all my words would dry up.

It belonged to the communication world ruled by the wonder of telex. I typed my stories and took the copy to a telegraph office where operators with fingers faster than snakebites typed a tape, fed it into the telex machine and dialled The Times in London.

How bitter it was when he couldn't get through. How wonderful when the machine whirred and glowed and chattered out the code 264971 Times G. Connection! The story was on its way. The telex man, or woman, smiled too: the telex was a teacher of patience.

At the beginning of my posting in India Sanjay Gandhi, the ruthless younger son of the prime minister, crashed his plane in

Delhi and was killed. It was a major story. I drove straight to the Hindustan Times and asked to see the editor.

His name was Khushwant Singh. I did not know him. I found him in the pandemonium of the newsroom. Perhaps he saw that I was new and needed help. "I'll give you ten minutes," he said, clearing the room with a wave. He talked. I scribbled. He set me on the road, the kindness of strangers. That evening I watched my dispatches rattling through the telex.

I grew to know Khushwant Singh well. He was a novelist, Sikh scholar and journalist, staunch for free speech, admirer of the British Press. His column 'With Malice to One and All', was a commentary on politics and events, and often pricked pomposity. It was an institution. He had courage and candour. "I have to speak my mind," he told me. This mind once upset a man in Canada who wrote a letter and addressed the envelope to: Khushwant Singh, Bastard, India. It was quickly delivered to his door.

I attended many of his soirees for a whisky and discussion. Ever-courteous, he listened far more than he talked. He closed down at 8.30am and was in bed by 9pm.

Then he was up at 4am with the BBC radio news, writing his provocative columns on yellow pads to be typed by a secretary. Early in the morning he played tennis. He has just died, aged 99.

In my next posting, New York, typewriter and telex were still useful; but the newspaper world was changing and I first used a small computer in a cab, writing up the funeral of Count Basie in Harlem.

But I was still telexing in my Moscow years as the Soviet Union crumbled. There and elsewhere British journalists stood out as representatives of a free press democracy.

Today many British politicians want to regulate an already weakened press. Few speak for the freedom of newspapers. You have to wonder what the Cudlipp brothers of Cardiff, Percy, Reg and Hugh, would say. I wonder what Frank Mason of Pembrokeshire would say. He was a distinguished spokesman for freedom of the press. As editor of the Tenby Observer he campaigned for the Admission of the Press Act of 1908. This gave reporters the right to go to council meetings – a step forward for democracy.

I look at the old typewriter now and recall that once, on one of my arrivals in Delhi, a customs man took it away. It was a while before it was restored to me and in the meantime another officer said soothingly: "Your typewriter has been confiscated for your own good." Ah, yes.

# Institute of Welsh Affairs Membership survey

The Institute of Welsh Affairs is changing, and we want to know your thoughts on your membership. Please complete the survey below to help us understand what you think of your membership with the IWA.

Name:

.....

Email Address:

.....

What do you think of the new format of *The Welsh Agenda*?

.....  
.....  
.....

Out of ten, how important do you think *Click on Wales* is to the IWA?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
(1: Not at all important, 10: Very important)

Out of 10 how important is *The Welsh Agenda* to the work of the IWA?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
(1: Not at all important, 10: Very important)

What do you think of our weekly newsletter?

.....  
.....  
.....

Would you change anything about *The Welsh Agenda*?

Yes  No  Don't know

If so, what?

.....  
.....  
.....

What more can the IWA do to engage with you?

.....  
.....  
.....

How often do you read *Click on Wales*?

Every day  Once a week or more  
 Once a month  If there is a piece of interest  
 Occasionally  Never  
 Other:

.....  
.....  
.....

Do you have any other comments about the work that the IWA has done in the last year? If so, please enter them here.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

# Public poet who made things happen

Peter Finch pays tribute to Nigel Jenkins 1949 - 2014

Nigel Jenkins, critic, teacher, encyclopaedist, psychogeographer, musician and poet died at the age of 64 this January in Swansea. He was a politically engaged Welshman of the left. He was a poet first and foremost who admired Harri Webb and Idris Davies as much as he did Allen Ginsberg and Amiri Baraka.

At the time of his death Nigel was Associate Professor of Literature at Swansea University. He taught creative writing for decades both before and after his great work as English editor of what he called *Psycho*, the great time-consuming beast that was The Welsh Academy Encyclopaedia of Wales. He was an overt nationalist, a fervent opposer of that largely uneducated class that held parts of Wales in thrall – including George Thomas, Charles and Di.

He was a proponent of the underdog, a supporter of those writers who he saw as having been ignored undeservedly or who, by the nature of what they engaged with, were never going to be accepted in mainstream Welsh literary society. Childe Roland (Peter Meilleur), the Llangollen Welsh-Canadian concrete poet may never have become as celebrated as he is without Jenkins' support. Although hardly an avant-gardists himself Nigel promoted Meilleur as one of Wales' unsung treasures, helping get him admitted to the Welsh Academy and gaining space for his verse among the public art works of Swansea.

Nigel was a public poet. His verse adorns street facades, public buildings and hospitals across the south. He challenged authority head-on with the work he had inscribed onto benches and street paving for Swansea's year as Capital of Literature. 'Remember tomorrow' was a line of his

which was installed but then immediately removed by the Council for being "too irrational". Poetry makes nothing happen, said Auden, but in the Celtic west things were different.

The seeds for Nigel's love of psychogeography were sown with his visits to India in the late eighties and the subsequent writing of his prize-winning book *Gwalia in Khasi*. His more recent *Real Swansea* and *Real Swansea Two* allowed him full creative space. There is nothing to compare with Nigel loose in the landscape with history, memory and acid intervention all copiously to hand. The books sold by the thousand. The work he was engaged on at the time of his death, *Real Gower*, will appear in 2015.

He was a political as much as a cultural

activist. In 1988 he was jailed for damaging the wire at the American air base at Brawdy Pembrokeshire. He was anti-apartheid. He was a believer in Welsh self-determination and like many around him was as stunned by the 1979 referendum as he was delighted by the vote to create a Welsh Assembly in 1997. He was a supporter of the Welsh language movement and reclaimed his family heritage by learning the tongue as an adult.

With fellow poet Menna Elfyn he established a special kinship of idea and cultural purpose. They co-directed the MA programme in Creative Writing at Carmarthen from 1998 to 2004, engaged in literary travels across the world, and presented their work in the east and in America. They translated each other's poetry and, while in Asheville, she helped him choose the cowboy outfit he wore at many readings.

He is survived by his ex-wife Delyth, his two children Angharad and Branwen, and his partner, the singer, Margot Morgan.



Peter Finch is the Welsh agenda's Literary Editor



Nigel Jenkins



# Marwnad o fath— in memory of Nigel Jenkins

Sequence by **Menna Elfyn**,  
translated from the Welsh by the  
author and Elin ap Hywel

Who now will gather snowdrops?

'Can  
a flower?  
Can  
a poem?'

Seeds blown,  
will they be welcomed,  
these native tremblers

will they give new breath  
to the burial ground,  
whisper to the living

of a man in a coat,  
hunter of flowers.  
Will they? Will you

see their light?  
'I know what I am  
doing here',

said the bard,  
*bardd gwlad*,  
who asked only

for snowdrops,  
'a warmer world',  
hallowed ground.

\*\*

Byddem yn dadlau  
am ddirgelion yr *haiku*.  
Mynnais ei bod yn ddull

ry gwta heb gyfleu  
ehangder delweddd.  
Heddiw, yr amheuwyr

sy'n deall cryndod,



Nigel Jenkins 1949 - 2014. Image: John Briggs

tair llinell o unigrwydd,  
a'r gweld yn gafael.

*Glas-nos:*  
nosweithiau glas,  
glesni'r bore.

\*\*

*'Hope I can deliver Real Gower  
on time'—note at beginning of  
December 2013*

You were 'Real Gower',  
the druid of oak,  
its strangeness – your *cynefin*.  
every *talwr*, scope for a story.  
You laughed, repeating your  
childrens's charge:  
'*dim hanes*', no history the little ones said  
when you took them hiking.

Today, I know all those histories  
poured like the living stream,  
will satisfy their hearts with tales  
drawn up, forever new.

But not today. No, not today.  
First we must turn to the history  
of grief.

\*\*

Buried in the boots  
you bought in Asheville.  
I was there; bore witness  
as you chose, discussing  
the relative merits of various pairs,  
some too tight,  
others just right, leather softer,  
more yielding.

And for fifteen years  
the boots were a source of teasing.  
After all there was much  
of the sheriff cowboy about you,  
the kind of man who, when he hit town

would be mobbed by the crowd,  
eager to be within earshot of that  
powerful voice,  
laying down the law, just and measured.

Only one thing missing—  
your steps, as a cowboy  
were never that heavy;  
your learning  
was worn lightly.

Nothing wild about you,  
And as for a gun?  
you were the empty handed  
peacemaker with nothing  
but your boyish pocket knife.

And I bid you farewell,  
not in a wicker coffin  
but on your stallion  
as you make your way  
into the wilderness,  
sunset ablazing,  
I daresay you'll rest awhile  
in some stream by the mountain.

\*\*

*Too many funerals  
of friends we sighed  
as we arrived  
at Conran's departure.*

Driving back south,  
your hand at the wheel  
and a barn owl flits  
as it lit our lane homewards,  
an ember in the sky,  
beating its warmth,  
eager for life.

*Duende*, I said then,  
Conran's soul  
leaving the land.

Today, that owl  
is in my heart  
hauntingly present.  
And you, *cyfaill*, *Cymro*,  
incomparable *compañero*

no longer the driver.  
Let the road ahead  
be steady.

\*\*

*Handholding  
(following a visit at Tŷ Olwen  
Hospice, Morriston)*

I'd ask you to hold my hand  
tightly as the plane rose,  
the fear of oblivion  
within me. Rising-  
to its zenith?  
Thermodynamics: so hard to  
understand.

Today, now I know  
you cannot rise above  
the turbulence of clouds--  
so hard to comprehend.  
Far from the touch of my hand,  
I could not even return  
one final favour.

And yet, I left you  
among your loved ones,  
keeping vigil,  
their hands upon you  
to ease your flight.

Nothing for me to do  
but drive homewards,  
through motorway's overflow,  
to the wailing of wipers,  
the tyres screeching.

\*\*

*Dyma'r mis y byddet yn mynd  
i chwilio am eirlysiau,  
lawr yn y meysydd a'r gellydd,  
eu byseddu'n dyner,  
gweld y byd trwy glychau iâ  
eu glendid.*

*Heddiw, addefaf yr af  
yn y dirgel ryw ddydd  
a phlannu eirlysiau  
yng ngladdfa'r gymuned,  
fel y byddi'n blodeuo  
bob blwyddyn, a dof  
ar eu trywydd i'w gweld  
yn siglo, a chrynu  
yn atseinio i'r plwyf  
dy enw.*

\*\*

February, your month  
to search out snowdrops  
down in the fields and woods,  
touching them tenderly,  
seeing the world through their  
ice-bell purity.

This day I vow I will  
some day, secretly  
plant snowdrops in the  
common burial ground,  
you then  
will flower each year, I  
will follow their trail to watch them  
swaying, shivering,  
ringing your  
name  
throughout the parish.



Menna Elfyn is Creative Writing Director at the University of Wales Trinity St David. Her latest bilingual collection *Murmur* (Bloodaxe Books, 2012) is a Poetry Book Society Recommended Translation, the first time for a Welsh language volume with English translations to receive such an award.

#### Notes

*cynefin*-- a Welsh word for place (of belonging)  
*talar*—acre  
*bardd gwlad*—poet of a particular area  
*claddfa'r gymuned*--Pennard Community Burial Ground  
*Glas-Nos*--title of anthology we co-edited for CND Cymru in the eighties  
*Asheville* -- a place in North Carolina we visited together as part of a month long tour of the US as 'Three poets from Wales'. The third poet was the late Iwan Llwyd.  
*Conran*—At the end of January 2013 we travelled to Tony Conran's funeral in Bangor and on the way back, a barn owl narrowly avoided the windscreen.  
*Common burial ground*—Pennard Burial Ground and a reference to the fact that his wish to be buried there was refused by Pennard Community Council.

iwa

---

# INSPIRE WALES AWARDS 2014

---

**DATE: FRIDAY, 20TH JUNE, 2014**

**VENUE: CARDIFF CITY HALL, CATHAYS PARK, CARDIFF CF10 3ND**

The Western Mail is once again delighted to be partnering the Institute of Welsh Affairs for the Inspire Wales Awards 2014.

The IWA Inspire Wales Awards celebrates those who have excelled in their specialist field across eleven different categories including Education, Arts and Culture, Science and Technology, Business, the Environment, Sport, Community, Young Achiever, Creative Industries and the promotion of the Welsh Language. This year we have launched a new category to recognise and reward School Governors, often unsung heroes.

The eleven category winners will be announced as part of a glittering ceremony held in the prestigious Cardiff City Hall before an audience of over 400 guests. The event will start at 7.00pm with a drinks reception followed by a four-course meal, live entertainment and an awards ceremony hosted by Angharad Mair.

**£75 plus VAT for an individual ticket  
and £700 plus VAT per table.**

To book your seats please phone Jessica Davies-Timmins  
on 029 2048 4387 or email [jessica@iwa.org.uk](mailto:jessica@iwa.org.uk)

in association with  
**Western Mail** 



## Welsh Queen of commerce

Deirdre Beddoe



*Turning the Tide: The Life of Lady Rhondda*

Angela V. John

Parthian 2013, £20

*Turning the Tide* is a lengthy and painstakingly detailed account of the life of Margaret Haig Thomas, Second Viscountess Rhondda (1883-1958). An enormous amount of research and hard work has gone into producing this volume and the author has used a very wide range of sources. As such, the work makes an interesting contribution to the study of British feminist history, particularly in the inter-war years.

The structure is for the most part clear. John follows earlier biographical accounts especially Margaret's own lively and beautifully written autobiography, *This Was My World* (1933). John sensibly draws heavily on it for her first four chapters but she also adds additional information from other sources to check the accuracy of Margaret's account, although such excessive detail tends to clutter the narrative.

Both books give accounts of the privileged upbringing of the much loved daughter of the immensely wealthy industrialist and Liberal politician D.A. Thomas. It was an enchanted childhood spent in the family home at Llanwern in Monmouthshire and with her delightful Haig aunts and cousins at Pen Ithon

in mid-Wales.

Margaret's education got off to a slow start. Until the age of thirteen she was taught by French and German governesses from whom she learned 'only trifles'. Thereafter, however, she received a sound education at St Leonard's School in St. Andrews and later at Somerville College, Oxford. Margaret loathed the humiliation she suffered as a plump and tightly corseted debutante in several London seasons and quickly drifted into marriage, in 1908 with Humphrey Mackworth, the son of a local baronet from Caerleon.

Two things were to change her life dramatically. Firstly she discovered the militant women's suffrage movement when, accompanied by her mother, she took part in the Great Suffrage Procession to Hyde Park in July 1908. She was converted dramatically and threw herself into 'the Cause' speaking at public meetings, taking part in demonstrations, and then committing 'an outrage' by blowing up a pillar-box in the Stow Hill district of Newport. This led to her imprisonment and her going on hunger strike. John submits Margaret's own account of her prison experience to detailed scrutiny. The other life-changing event of these years

of the rest of her life.

The First World War also had a major impact on her life. In May 1915, returning from New York with her father aboard the luxury liner the *Lusitania*, she almost lost her life. On the night of 7 May the vessel (which was in fact carrying munitions) was attacked by torpedoes fired from a German U boat and sank rapidly. Margaret spent hours in the freezing water and though feared dead was eventually rescued.

Margaret was to play a major part in the war effort. She was appointed Commissioner of Women's National Service for Wales and Monmouthshire, organising the recruitment of women into agriculture and into the newly created women's services. It is interesting that Margaret herself writes nothing about her wartime work in which she played a prominent public role. John provides a full account of this and offers what I think may well be the reason for its omission in Margaret's autobiography - a major scandal involving another Welsh woman.

By 1918, Margaret was Chief Controller of Women's Recruitment in the Ministry of National Service and it was in this London-based post that she was to enter into

**Margaret was to play a major part in the war effort. She was appointed Commissioner of Women's National Service for Wales and Monmouthshire, organising the recruitment of women into agriculture and into the newly created women's services. It is interesting that Margaret herself writes nothing about her wartime work in which she played a prominent public role.**

came at her mother's suggestion: Margaret joined her father in running his huge business empire as 'a highly confidential secretary and right hand man'. These two facets of her life - as a feminist campaigner and as a business woman - were in fact to determine the shape

of violent conflict with Violet Douglas Pennant, daughter of Lord Penrhyn, the north Wales slate magnate. Violet, who had a sound and long held reputation for philanthropy and public service, had been Health Insurance Commissioner for South Wales for seven

## I have always had an admiration for Margaret Lady Rhondda because she was a feminist. Welsh Labour historians had no time for her and there are moments in this book when I can understand why.

years. She had reluctantly taken on the post of Commandant of the Women's Royal Air Force. Aware of the appalling state of this newly formed organisation, Violet accepted on a one month trial basis. At the end of the month she submitted her resignation but was persuaded to stay on only to be summarily dismissed shortly afterwards. Margaret played a part in Violet's dismissal. She had been asked to write a report on the women's camps, and in it she was especially critical of the WRAF. John thinks Margaret, who was doing many other things, had relied on others for her information. On the other hand Violet was thought by her biographer to be too much of a lady to bully others and allowed the affair to dominate the rest of her life.

Margaret's own autobiography ended in 1918. The year was a decisive turning point for her; the tragic death of her beloved father, who had actually worked himself to death as Minister of Food, was a huge loss. There was only ever one man in Margaret's life and that was D.A.

D.A. had trusted and loved his daughter. In June 1918 he had been made a Viscount and on his death his title passed to his daughter in her own right. In the same year women over thirty were granted the vote in parliamentary elections. Margaret saw the war as a wonderful, liberating thing for women and once again she took on roles of national importance in the planning of post-war reconstruction. She was aware

that women were being dismissed en masse from their wartime employment and pushed back into domestic service. Margaret was now London based, whilst poor neglected Humphrey remained in Monmouthshire. By 1921 he agreed to pose as the 'guilty party' and allowed her to divorce him. Margaret's private life seems to have taken a different turn the next year when Helen Archdale, a suffragette and Margaret's former assistant in the Ministry of National Service, moved into Chelsea Court into a flat immediately below Margaret's.

Margaret remained a prominent figure on the British and indeed international scene and John devotes a chapter to her business interests entitled 'The Queen of Commerce'. She was fully conversant with D.A.'s diverse business interests ranging from coal, steel, newspapers and printers to shipping. In 1926 she became the first (and as yet the sole) female President of the Institute of Directors. By 1937 she sat on the board of thirty-one companies and chaired seven. But the hey day of big profits from heavy industry was passing.

Margaret emerges as Britain's best-known feminist in the inter-war years. She focussed on 'Equal Rights' feminism and it is not surprising that a woman in her privileged position would do so as she had very little understanding of the lives of working class women. Her attack on the inequality of the British political system was her attempt to take her seat in the House of Lords which she

called the last feudal assembly in Europe. In 1922 she appeared to have won the argument but by a deft piece of skulduggery, her victory was snatched away.

John devotes a chapter to the 'Woman-Centred World' in which Margaret lived from the 1920s onwards. She lived with Helen Archdale for many years and when that relationship broke up with Theodora Bosanquet. With her great wealth Margaret was able to indulge herself in a wonderful project, establishing and running the journal *Time and Tide* with an all-women board. As a publication it was unique, covering politics, industry, economics, art and literature. Contributors included Winifred Holtby, Katherine Mansfield, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and George Bernard Shaw. It is a joy to dip into old copies but although popular and respected, the journal lost money and was subsidised by Margaret's personal wealth. On her death in 1956 there was not enough money left even to honour her bequests.

I have always had an admiration for Margaret Lady Rhondda because she was a feminist. Welsh Labour historians had no time for her and there are moments in this book when I can understand why. It is one thing to know that in politics she was a Conservative but it is still a shock for a south Walian to read that in the 1926 General Strike she allowed her London business premises to be used for the government transport organisation that deployed the volunteers and blacklegs who drove buses and cars in the strike.

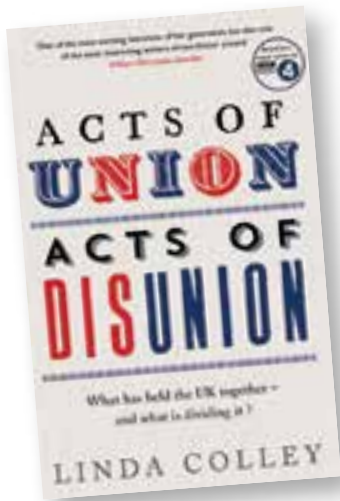
Nevertheless, I think that her life and work deserve to be much better known, especially in Wales. I had hoped that this new book would bring her life story to a wide audience. However, it is an academic and very long book. At 645 pages (including 100 pages of footnotes) it is somewhat off-putting and I think that it would have been a better book had it been a shorter one.



Deirdre Beddoe is Emeritus Professor of Women's History at the University of South Wales.

## Testing UK's policy of drift

Aled Eirug



*Acts of Union and DisUnion*  
Linda Colley,  
Profile Books, 2014, £8.99

This slim, stimulating and insightful book is based on a series of broadcasts Linda Colley made on Radio 4 to mark the year in which the people of Scotland are asked to make a seismic choice and vote upon their membership of the United Kingdom.

English-born (and with a Welsh mother), Linda Colley is Professor of History at Princeton University. She is author of *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, on the union of Scotland and England and the creation of British identity, and *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World 1600-1850*, the history of Britain's entanglement with slavery.

At 171 pages, the book's size may initially disappoint those fans of Colley who have been entranced by her revisionist and novel interpretation of the nature of British identity and its relationship with England, Wales and Scotland. Indeed, she is one of the few English historians who have a deep understanding of the complicated nature of national and cultural identity within the British Isles, and its implications for the UK's constitutional and political character. However, this volume carries its scholarship lightly and enables the reader to be guided through the swirl of the UK's constitutional and political history without losing the social

and economic impact of the changes.

Colley uses the various legislative Acts of Unions, both within the United Kingdom and the European Union, as the framework for her succession of essays. But this is not a dry analysis of dusty documents. Rather it is an enjoyable exploration, teasing out meaning through speeches, cartoons and maps. In doing so it provides the context for documents that we have often misunderstood.

For example, she explains that the background intent of the the Welsh Acts of Union of 1536 and 1542, and their insistence that use of English be required in any public office was essentially the same as the historian Thomas Macauley explained in relation to India 300 years later. He wrote that English should be the only medium of subsidised education in British India, so as to "form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern: a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect." As Colley comments:

**She reminds us that whilst devolution in the late 1990s is often portrayed as a novel and imaginative response to a democratic deficit by New Labour, it was in fact a part of unfinished business from the late 19th Century, dating from the Cymru Fydd movement led by Lloyd George.**

"This was essentially what the legislation in 1536 and 1542 was designed to encourage in regard to Wales, and an attempt to do, and essentially what for centuries was achieved: an effective, on-side Welsh ruling class that was fluent in English, and that behaved in a similar (though not identical) fashion to its counterparts in England."

She points out that such methods were a precursor to how 'London' tried to deploy its power in Britain's overseas Empire. But she does not allow us - or the Scots - to avoid the fact that the Welsh also gloried in

Britain's overseas adventures. Until at least the 18th Century, the idea circulated widely that Britain - and its empire - was originally a Welsh creation.

She reminds us that whilst devolution in the late 1990s is often portrayed as a novel and imaginative response to a democratic deficit by New Labour, it was in fact a part of unfinished business from the late 19th Century, dating from the Cymru Fydd movement led by Lloyd George. She quotes Winston Churchill in 1910, calling for separate parliaments for Wales, Scotland and England, and for regional assemblies in England. She sees much continuity in the pressure for constitutional reform and contends that it is in fact the two world wars that punctuated a political process.

Her emphasis on the importance of identity is reminiscent of Gwyn A. Williams and his quest for *When was Wales*. As she puts it, "political peoples who manage to cohere usually evolve, foster, and substantially believe stories about

themselves. In order to succeed and flourish, states and nations need an attractive idea of who they are".

This paean to the importance of story telling reminds us of the importance of the media in Wales that tell us stories about ourselves. The popularity of Huw Edwards's recent series on the history of Wales is testimony to our own desire to hear our own story being told.

It is ironic of course, as Colley herself points out, that her essays are not just about the past but they possess a deeper contemporary resonance, given our current anxieties about globalisation and the UK's



place within the European Union. Her view is that England and its Euroscepticism reflects a more unfocussed sense of identity than in other parts of the UK.

Colley has commented elsewhere that the argument for the continuation of a robust British identity should not define itself by what it isn't, as in the case of UKIP, but by what it is. But, as she points out, Britishness is often ambiguous.

It is often interchangeable with the 'United Kingdom' and is reflected in the popular mind with particular institutions such as the BBC and the monarchy. Her questioning of what binds us as UK citizens is incisive and challenging and reminds us that the banal flag-waving of the Olympics does not create more than a temporary unity of purpose.

It is a reflection of Colley's deep scholarship and erudition that she articulates the challenge facing Britain in such an engaging manner. Her illustrative stories take in characters who are on the fringes of the Empire, refugees, Irish admirals, Scottish generals, Welsh radicals, and balloonists. The stories range across the United Kingdom and beyond, to the old empire, and to the heart of Brussels. But they also illuminate the themes of her book, of the shifting sands of political union and the constitutional recognition of those differing identities.

Colley's conclusions are that constitutional change within the UK is inevitable. She believes some kind of federation and a written constitution should replace the current order. She reminds us that we live in a state-nation, not a nation-state, and she ends her lectures by quoting a Canadian observer of the United Kingdom at the end of the 20th Century: "A policy of drift will never result in united strength."

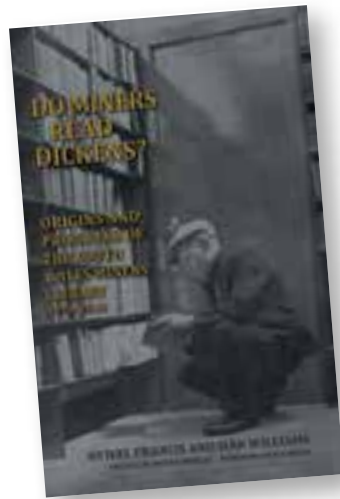
That 'policy of drift' will be sorely tested by the Scottish independence referendum in September. This book is a remarkably clear sighted guide to what has divided, but also held together, the United Kingdom.



**Aled Eirug is Chair of British Council Wales.**

## Brains of the coalfield

J. Graham Jones



*Do Miners Read Dickens? Origins and Progress of the South Wales Miners' Library, 1973-2013*

**Hywel Francis and Siân Williams**  
Parthian Press, 2013, £15.00

In 1983, two university professors looked slightly bemused as they scanned the shelves of the South Wales Miners' Library. Rather pointedly one asked the other, "Do miners read Dickens?" This most sumptuously produced and profusely illustrated volume, a positive joy to handle and read, is an attempt to answer this and several other, inter-related questions. It is a real credit to the expertise and enterprise of Parthian Press.

Publication of the book marks the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of the South Wales Miners' Library at the then University College of Swansea back in 1973. Formed out of the relics of as many as sixty Workingmen's Institute libraries across south Wales - the so-called 'brains of the coalfield' in an age long gone - the Library was by far the most successful and enduring of the various projects financed by the then replete coffers of the Social Science Research Council during the relatively affluent 1970s and 1980s. It contains an array of banners, documents, personal testimonies and photographs of dozens of mines and miners from the Rhondda and the other legendary

south Wales coalfields. It is also a storage centre for rare audio tapes of interviews with now long-gone pit workers and their families, and houses film footage of ranks of police versus lines of colliers in the dramatic 1984-85 miners' strike.

The authors are Dr Hywel Francis, since 2001 the Labour MP for Aberavon, also an accomplished, widely-published labour historian and lecturer and formerly Professor of Continuing Education at Swansea (and the son of the revered south Wales miners' leader the late Dai Francis, who is depicted several times within the book), and Siân Williams, since 1995 in charge at the Library.

By the 1930s, there were over 100 miners' institutes in the south Wales coalfield. Built and maintained by the miners, and financed in part by weekly deductions from their pay packets, the institutes were the location for many adult education classes in the south Wales coalfield. There were no public libraries in the Valleys until the 1920s, so most of the institutes had their own library or reading room. These naturally exerted a great deal of influence on the communities which they served. Their books and journals reflected the interests of the local community, and usually contained a wide selection of both serious and light reading matter.

As Dai Smith points out in his 'Foreword', the institutes and their libraries occupied a pivotal role in the social and recreational life of the burgeoning south Wales coalfield Valleys from the high noon of the 1890s until at least the 1950s. Among the best examples were those at Aberaman near Aberdare, Treorchy, Llanhilleth, Blaenafon and Abercynon, all of which were built between 1893 and 1913. Collectively, as Smith puts it, they "met the changing needs of welfare, recreation and intellect from within communities which coalesced around their presence as the most enticing and vital part of their whole public life".

On the first day of 1973, adopted Welsh journalist Trevor Fishlock published a highly emotive, provocative, challenging article in *The Times* which asserted that these precious institute libraries were now almost daily being "destroyed by ignorance, accident and plunder", and consequently had "all but

vanished in the past ten years”.

This volume succeeds in its three-fold aims, to be an elucidation of the circumstances surrounding the setting up of the South Wales Miners’ Library in 1973, an outline and visual depiction of some of its most outstanding holdings, and an examination of the gradual steps by which it became part of the empires, respectively, of Swansea University and later the Welsh Government. Interestingly, its establishment occurred as part of the seventy-fifth anniversary celebrations of the setting up of the South Wales Miners’ Federation in 1898 as an ambitious salvage operation to rescue and preserve the contents – and perhaps to some extent the ethos too – of the old miners’ institute libraries.

The fascinating first section entitled ‘Books and bridges’ chronicles the Library’s evolution over four decades. More than 20,000 printed works from the miners’ institutes had been collected by 1975 alone, later to be augmented by further sizeable deposits from a large range of institutes, together with the fine personal libraries of people like Will Paynter and the veritable MP for Merthyr S. O. Davies. Much attention is then devoted to a historical review of the developing role of the institute libraries from the 1890s onwards. Tredegar Institute – which issued no fewer than 105,157 volumes during one year alone, in 1947, played, it would seem, an especially central function. Yet as early as 1964, the Tredegar institute had vanished,

Education Act of 1944, and the resultant major expansion of secondary education. There followed the emergence of local authority sponsored library services, distinct and lasting changes in the recreational pursuits of the people who were increasingly engaged by television, going to regular bingo evenings, and attending local social clubs. Above all else, there were extensive pit closures from the late 1950s onwards.

The central and most substantial part of the book, entitled ‘Rich seams’, looks engagingly at the multiplicity and variety of the holdings of the Library and provides us with some fascinating, brilliantly reproduced illustrations of a rich array of banners, photographs, cartoons, posters, minute books and other documentary records, and various artefacts of all kinds. All are fully captioned providing their historical background in south Wales. The main historical themes are the burgeoning coal industry of south Wales before 1914, the impact and the outcomes of the two world wars, the long depression of the inter-war years, the 1926 General Strike, the ensuing lengthy lock-out in the coal industry, and the role of the miners from south Wales during the Spanish Civil War.

Due, well-paced attention is then devoted to the results of the nationalisation of the British coal industry by the post-war Attlee government in 1948, and the gradual programmes of the closure of the coal mines from the 1950s onwards. The theme of the

disaster of October 1966 is related, followed by the lasting impact of the miners’ strikes of the 1970s and, above all, 1984-85. This most impressive section ends with material deriving from the devolution referendum campaigns of 1979 and 1997 in south Wales, and the final closure in 2008 of the Tower Colliery near Hirwaun in the Cynon Valley which had been run by the miners themselves since 1994, until, to their intense dismay, the coal reserves finally ran out. It is pleasing that this section ends with a splendid group photograph of an exuberant Elaine Morgan of Mountain Ash receiving an honorary fellowship at Swansea University in July 1994.

The final section entitled ‘Enriching lives’ features the stories of several users and beneficiaries of the Library. These include accomplished painter George Brinley Evans (the oldest contributor to the book, now in his late eighties), trade union leader Tyrone O’Sullivan, social historian Alun Burge, Welsh labour historian Chris Williams, and some mature students who have excelled at their studies in part by making use of the superb resources of the Library.

Attention is also given to the role and potential of the Library in the current digital age, its contribution to distance learning, including to the development of the Community University of the Valleys and similar initiatives. To round off the volume, we are given a helpful list of the various oral history interviews noted in the main text, a select bibliography of relevant printed source materials, biographical notes on the contributors to the volume, and an index to some of the contents. All are produced to the highest academic and pictorial standards.

As one turns the pages of this essentially popular work, there is a sense that a much fuller background story, supported by an in-depth academic analysis, remains to be told of the crucial themes outlined here. It is to be hoped that this challenge may soon be taken up by one of our many distinguished labour and industrial historians of south Wales.

**The main historical themes are the burgeoning coal industry of south Wales before 1914, the impact and the outcomes of the two world wars, the long depression of the inter-war years, the 1926 General Strike, the ensuing lengthy lock-out in the coal industry, and the role of the miners from south Wales during the Spanish Civil War.**

and all of its contents had been summarily dispersed.

The social, communal and political history of the coalfield valleys is most competently sketched by Hywel Francis. The once focal role of the institute libraries was gradually undermined by educational advances, notably the impact of the Butler

ever-present risk to life and limb posed by this immensely hazardous industry is also highlighted, with accounts of the most prominent disasters such as those at Senghenydd in 1913, and Six Bells Colliery at Abertillery in 1960, with their massive loss of life.

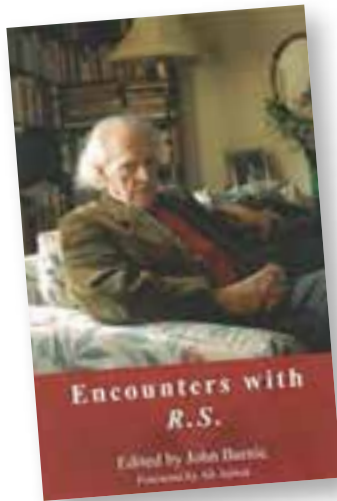
The full significance of the Aberfan



**J. Graham Jones was formerly Head of the Welsh Political Archive at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.**

## R.S. was 'ere

Tony Brown



*Encounters with R. S.*

Ed. John Barnie

The H'mm Foundation, 2014, £9.99.

Menna Elfyn, one of the contributors to this enjoyable short collection of reminiscences of R.S. Thomas, quotes the American monk and theologian Thomas Merton: "Contradictions have always existed in the soul of man. But it is only when we prefer analysis to silence that they become a constant and insoluble problem".

Contradictions and silence: in some ways these are close to the essence of R.S. Thomas. While waiting in silence is a recurrent strategy for accessing the spiritual in his poetry, he was not a man unafraid of social silence. Grahame Davies recalls the silence after conducting an interview with RS: "neither journalist nor poet able to find the words". It is a toe-curling experience which quite a few of us occasionally experienced...

At the same time one also recalls the (usually po-faced) humour. Someone at Eglwysfach recently recalled to me that she always associated the social R.S. with laughter, and it is a motif that recurs here. Davies himself later finds him "warmer, kinder and funnier" as he got to know the poet. Osi Rhys Osmond recalls him speaking to a group of school children as a "joyous bringer of meaning". Gillian Clarke remembers him as "jovial" and again suggests an unexpected capacity to relate

to children. Leaving after an overnight stay at her house, the poet puts a pound note for each of her young sons on one of their pillows and a note: "R.S. was 'ere".

A number of the contributors recall their original 'encounter' with the work. At school in Cardiff Gwyneth Lewis finds the poet's early visions of Wales not to her taste but years later enjoys a warm relationship of "teasing bicker". In school in Wrexham Grahame Davies encounters 'Cynddylan on his Tractor'. Fflur Dafydd reads the poetry in her classroom at Dyffryn Teifi and then later embarks on a PhD on his work, only to hear on the car radio of the poet's death as she drives for a first meeting with her supervisor. As she says, in a beautifully written piece, there was something very 'Thomosian' about this, like entering a room from which the poet has just departed.

Not all of the encounters are academic, though, or even literary. The book-dealer Jeff Towns encounters the books, usually in rare editions, rather than the man, including a piece of pulp fiction about a Welsh biker gang, which quotes eight lines of 'A Welsh Landscape'. Jon Gower knew Thomas mainly as a fellow birdwatcher — images of birds crop up throughout these essays — but like the majority of the contributions his piece also makes astute comments about the writing. For instance, he quotes Andrew Motion suggesting that "There's a part of [RS] that wants to be a bird, wants that freedom, wants to be exonerated of the foolishness and the frenzy of humanity, but he can't do it, partly [...] for moral reasons, the feeling it would be an escape, he can't let himself".

Archbishop Barry Morgan, in a thoughtful and acute piece, also goes beyond his acquaintance with the man to engage with the nature of his thinking and his fate: "He searched and longed for God and for him the question was not whether God existed but the kind of God he is". Interestingly, Morgan points out the paradoxical inconsistency (that word again) between Thomas's liberal theology and his "extreme conservatism" in terms of church liturgy.

Of course, the emotional anguish of that search is what gives his religious poetry its power. Despite the media's emphasis on the hill farmers and Thomas's nationalism when he died, his religious poetry is among

his finest. And as Gwyneth Lewis rightly points out, RS wrote his best work in his late seventies and eighties.

The moving force behind the publication of this collection, Ali Anwar and his H'mm Foundation, have done the poet's readers some service in bringing these recollections together. The book mainly avoids the merely gossipy and contains much that is insightful and critically sharp. M. Wynn Thomas has

**Despite the media's emphasis on the hill farmers and Thomas's nationalism when he died, his religious poetry is among his finest.**

a rather elegantly-written comparison of Thomas's ancient cottage at Sarn Rhiw, the site of his fine late work, with Yeats' Thoor Ballylee. And, again drawing on his own research, Grahame Davies asserts, "That the matter of Wales is not the main subject of Thomas's work". This is a calculatedly surprising assertion, but ultimately a sound, indeed fundamental, one.

Thomas's 'Wales' is less a place than an ideal, a way of living one's life, open to the realms of the imagination and the spirit. As Davies argues, Thomas's engagement with the actual condition of Wales—inescapable and important as it was -- should be seen as "explicitly subordinate to his wider concerns about modernity and materialism". In relating Thomas to the stance of T.S. Eliot, Simone Weil and Thomas's own hero and exemplar Saunders Lewis, against what they saw as the debased values of our modern, secularised world and their aspiration towards a transcendent spiritual reality, Davies points to the ways in which Thomas reaches beyond specific geographical and cultural location. In doing so Thomas showed himself to be a genuinely major poet of our times.



Tony Brown is Professor of English and Director of the R.S. Thomas Study Centre at Bangor University.





# Dangers of squandering Britishness

Peter Stead

So inept and misguided has been the Tory handling of the Scottish question that the notion that Cameron's Government would be quite happy to wave goodbye to the Scots has developed some credence. There is only one Scottish MP on the Tory benches, the Party only collected 16.7 per cent of the Scottish vote in 2010 and the disappearance of 41 Labour MPs would contribute greatly to the chances of permanent Tory rule in England.

During this Spring it became clear that Cameron's aides were reminding him of the existence of Wales. Suddenly references to the 'scandal' of Socialist Wales were likely to punctuate any of Cameron's replies to Labour questions in the Commons. Plainly the Prime Minister was wanting to convey his deep concern for the physically infirm and school children of Wales even as he diverted attention away from troublesome English scandals such as dodgy ministers, the Royal Mail sell-off, flood prevention, the Midlands NHS and the increasingly Byzantine Metropolitan Police. But so pointed, insensitive and passionate was his exploitation of Welsh issues that one began to wonder if he had decided that Wales might just as well go the same way of Scotland. That would remove another 26 troublesome Labour MPs from the Commons and throw the whole task and cost of regenerating a post-industrial society firmly into the hands of those incorrigible Welsh Bolsheviks.

For anyone with an interest in history of these islands there is much that is astonishing in the manner in which the massively influential dimension of Britishness is being discounted. At the heart of this new dispensation has been the failure of the two traditional British parties, Conservative and Labour to cope with de-industrialisation. It was the industrial economy and its associated urban culture that gave both parties their identity and that identity was fundamentally British. That was apparent in the way in which both parties readily gathered votes in every corner of the kingdom and in the fact that both Scottish and Welsh voices were heard at the highest level of Cabinet government. However, neither of these two

historic parties was fully able to comprehend the new post-industrial sociology and consequently both became mindlessly guilty of squandering their British dimension.

Cameron's persistence in playing the anti-Welsh card brought the essentially pejorative term 'Tory' back into our headlines and all the old prejudices came flooding back. I was reminded of the 1964 General Election in which I reported on the 'contest' in Rhondda East. After one day's campaigning the Tory candidate gave me a lift back to Cardiff during which he proudly boasted that he had managed to persuade one voter to accept his poster. He wryly reflected on the way that many elderly voters had accepted his offer of a lift on polling day - they appreciated that the Tories had the smartest cars and meanwhile Labour cars would be released for other duties. He knew that memories of the 1930s counted for everything here and that there was no chance of saving his deposit. In all his Welsh references Cameron seems to be resorting to Means Test rhetoric and accepting that this will once again become a no-go area for the Tories.

With this kind of tabloid polarisation it is easy to forget that there have always been committed Welsh Tories. Wales had 14 Tory MPs as recently as 1984 and even in 2010 they won 8 seats and gathered 16.7 per cent of the vote. Listening to Cameron I was thinking of those Welshmen who climbed to the top of the Tory tree: Geoffrey Howe, Michael Howard and Kenneth Baker. In particular, I thought of the Tory candidate being driven through Gowerton in a jeep during the General election of 1979. He was an impressive figure who looked rather as if he was in the process of staging a military coup. I've often thought how different the UK and Wales would have been if Michael Heseltine had come to power in his bid for the leadership and we had taken advantage of what became his undoubted appreciation of the true complexity of job creation in a post-industrial society.

Historians now tend to discount the notion that Disraeli was committed to a classless politics. Certainly, however, Queen Victoria's favourite politician wanted to see Tory leaders

tackling the concerns of the working classes. If this tactic failed he foresaw the electoral dominance of a Whig élite. We can see now that Cameron heads what is essentially a Whig government, one quite incapable of planting Tory grassroots across the whole of Britain in the manner that a Heseltine could have achieved. Those conscientious indigenous Welsh Tories labouring to spread the message of enterprise must surely despair at Cameron's unfailing Thames-Valley haughtiness.

Labour's squandering of its British dimension has been most apparent in Scotland where the local leadership lacked the intelligence and integrity to oppose the Nationalist challenge. South of the Border there are clear signs that Labour is developing some awareness of what could be its historic role of preventing the Balkanisation of Britain that could result from the electoral successes of politicians such as Farage and Salmond. Hitherto Labour has hung on to its Socialist image as it seeks to cement its traditional voters. But surely Labour now has to confront and exploit the fact that it is the only party that can sustain and enhance a true British identity.

We have arrived at a vital moment in the history of these islands. There are several possibilities, some of them potentially disastrous. Mercifully the polls indicate that what the British people, and not least the Welsh, most want to see is an intelligent and rational devo-max that would still allow all parts of the kingdom to benefit from a dynamic and diversifying economy.

Talented people from Scotland and Wales can still choose to operate on a wider stage, but meanwhile all too many of their fellow-countrymen stagnate in increasingly isolated puddles. The task now is to persuade every one to show enterprise by taking advantage of being British. The Welsh have one great stroke of luck: prosperous England is near at hand and, once transport links are improved, it's there for the taking. Now, of course, modern technology allows us to take our Wales with us. Wales to the rescue!

# Keeping up with the Joneses

Bringing fast, fibre broadband to Wales

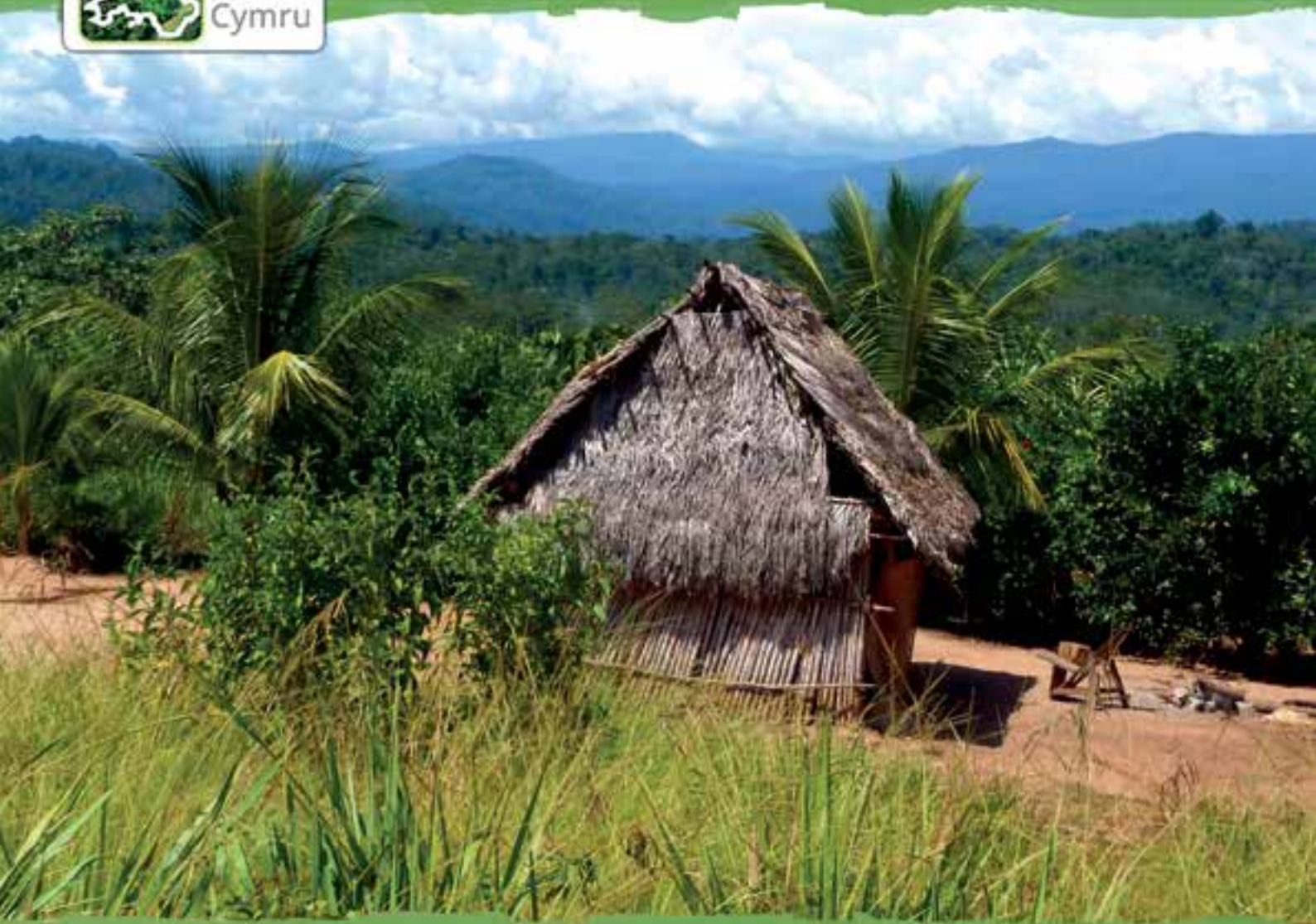


To find out how we're connecting Welsh homes  
and businesses to fibre broadband, visit:

[www.superfast-cymru.com](http://www.superfast-cymru.com)







**Mae coedwigoedd trofannol yn  
amsugno bron i 1/5 o'r allyriadau  
CO2 dynol yn y byd bob blwyddyn.**

**Dewch at eich gilydd i gynnal ardal o  
goedwig law maint Cymru.**

**Cymru, rhan o'r ateb  
nid mesur o'r broblem.**

**Tropical forests absorb nearly a 1/5  
of the world's man-made CO2  
emissions every year.**

**Come together to help sustain an  
area of rainforest the size of Wales**

**Wales, a part of the solution rather  
than a measure of the problem.**