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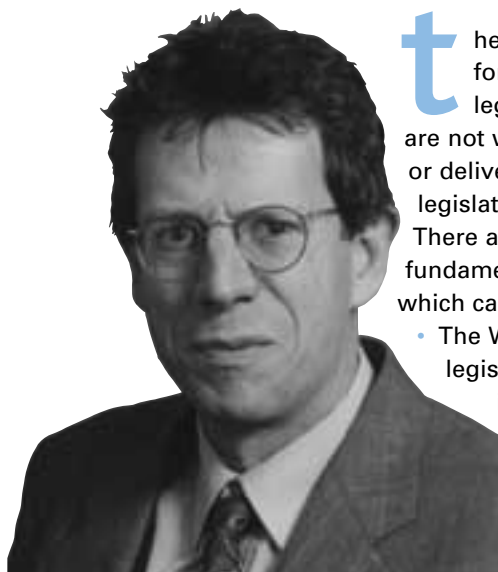
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Cover: Looking north as the Irish Ferry 'Isle of Inishmore' sails past the Chevron-Texaco jetty at Milford Haven.

Photograph courtesy of Milford Haven Port Authority

whitehall versus wales

analysing the way Westminster shares legislative power with Cardiff Bay
 Bay robert hazell says Wales risks getting the worst of both worlds



the arrangements for making primary legislation for Wales are not working smoothly or delivering satisfactory legislation for Wales.

There are three fundamental difficulties which cannot be ignored:

- The Westminster legislative programme is chronically congested, so that it is always hard to find space for Wales.

- The UK government will always have competing priorities.
- Legislation is too often drafted or amended at the last minute, leaving little time for Wales to be properly consulted.

The legislative programme for Westminster is prepared in an annual cycle culminating in the Queen's Speech each November, when the government announces the programme for the coming parliamentary session. The programme is planned and managed by the Legislative Programme Cabinet Committee, chaired by the Leader of the House and President of the Council, formerly Robin Cook. At the beginning of each calendar year the Cabinet Office issues invitations to all departments to bid for space in the legislative programme, and from Easter onwards it begins to prioritise Bills into marshalled lists with four or five different degrees of priority.

These range from bills to fulfil international obligations, and Bills to preserve statutory powers about to expire, to programme Bills promised in the manifesto. Bills with high enough priority receive authorisation to be drafted by Parliamentary Counsel over the summer. The rest languish or die. Competition to get into the legislative programme is extremely fierce, with typically only as few as one in four or

one in five of departmental bids managing to gain legislative slots. Slots are not awarded simply on merit: it is a rare session when one of the bigger beasts in the Whitehall jungle, such as David Blunkett or John Prescott, does not get at least one Bill into the programme.

The whole process is meant to be kept a tight secret until the Queen's Speech is given and the contents of the new session's legislative programme are unveiled. In November 2002 the Blair government previewed most of the contents in a carefully orchestrated series of announcements in the days before the Queen's Speech that broke with all convention. Who said that for their second term New Labour were abandoning spin?

'whitehall knows best'

Into this confidential process have to be inserted the bids for primary legislation that come up from the National Assembly for Wales. Primary legislation is of fundamental importance to the Assembly, since it is entirely dependent on Acts of the Westminster Parliament for the legal framework within which it develops its own secondary legislation and administrative policies. Westminster defines the powers and functions of the Assembly in matters great and small. In the process it can reduce the Assembly's powers – inadvertently or by design – as well as increase them. The Assembly has to be constantly alert to the possibilities of new legislation from Westminster, in terms of the opportunities it may present as well as the risks.

The Government of Wales Act provides a formal piece of machinery whereby once a year the Secretary of State for Wales consults the Assembly about the UK legislative programme, and attends an Assembly debate on the Queen's Speech, after it has been announced at Westminster. In practice, by then it is usually far too late for the Assembly to gain any slots in the legislative programme for the new session just beginning, so the debate is a bit of an empty ritual. However, the Assembly Government is invited to submit bids well before that, in the spring of each year, at the same time as other Whitehall departments; and it is known what bids the Assembly Government has put forward.

So far the success rate of the Welsh Assembly Government has not been high. Rhodri Morgan claims a 500 per cent improvement by comparison with the years pre-devolution, but the figures do not seem that encouraging. For the 2001-02 session the Assembly Government put forward four bids and got half a promise on one. For the 2002-03 session they put forward eight bids but didn't improve their strike rate. This may be no higher than the success rate of any other Whitehall department. But is it right, and in the spirit of devolution, to rank the Assembly alongside any other Whitehall department? The contrast with Scotland is particularly stark: the Scots have been passing a dozen bills a session in the Scottish Parliament (see Panel on page 5).

Whitehall guidance also makes it quite clear where Whitehall's priorities lie: in supporting the interests of the UK Government, not those of the National Assembly. Cabinet Office guidance on Post-Devolution Primary Legislation affecting Wales, states bluntly that, "The purpose of this guidance is to facilitate the efficient conduct by the UK Government of its legislative business. Disagreements are an impediment to that."

The guidance goes on to enjoin departments to consult the Assembly Government at an early stage in the development of legislative proposals, in particular those which confer new functions on the Assembly or alter its existing functions. Consultation will be in confidence and may constrain wider consultation by the Assembly Cabinet: "... in no circumstances will the Assembly Cabinet circulate or allude to Bill material without the consent of the lead Department."

fragmented welsh legislation

In the early days of devolution Whitehall consultation with the Assembly was sometimes perfunctory. The position has improved since, but there is no disguising the weakness of the Assembly's position. Assembly officials are entirely dependent on Whitehall departments to make the first move in informing the Assembly Government about legislative proposals, and they are entirely dependent on departments keeping them in the loop thereafter. Nor is it always possible for the Assembly to negotiate a different policy solution for Wales: in at least one case that was not permitted by the Whitehall department because the difference between the two approaches would have been too glaring on the face of the Bill.

The other fundamental weakness lies in the long and indirect chain of communication between the Assembly Government in Cardiff and those drafting the bill in London. Assembly Government lawyers in Wales are not allowed to instruct Parliamentary Counsel. If a bill relating entirely to Wales is being drafted, the Assembly can second a skeleton bill team to the Wales Office to help with the preparation of the Bill; and they have seconded individual officials to join bill teams in other departments where the Bill has a significant Welsh component. In the main, however, they are kept a long way away from the

legislative action, geographically and figuratively, and are heavily reliant on Whitehall goodwill to keep them in the picture.

These fundamental weaknesses – the chronic legislative logjam, Whitehall's overriding priorities, and the rush in which Westminster legislation is prepared – lead in turn to a number of undesirable consequences. Legislation for Wales is often fragmented and incomplete, because the Assembly needs to grab every legislative opportunity it can. As a consequence primary legislation for Wales is hard to find and to understand, because some of it is in patchwork installments in different statutes. Different statutes also treat the Assembly differently, depending on the approach of the individual draftsman. Finally, because the timetables of Westminster and the Assembly do not always coincide, legislation for Wales can fall between the two legislatures and be poorly scrutinised.

The best known example of fragmentation lies in the only Wales-only Bill so far passed by Westminster since devolution, the Children's Commissioner for Wales Act 2001. Despite its title, the Act did not establish the Children's Commissioner for Wales. That was done the previous year, in Part V of the Care Standards Act 2000. In his evidence to the Lords Constitution Committee when they came to Cardiff in May 2002 Rhodri Morgan was quite candid about the reason why:

"But even that was messy because they said, 'If you would like to have that a year earlier, we can include it in an England and Wales Bill.' That has become quite common. We bid for a bill, they say 'Yes, okay, we will go with that but would you like to tag on the principle and get it established a year earlier than you could otherwise do?' Obviously we grabbed that opportunity."

So fragmented and so hard to find is the law relating to Wales that Cardiff Law School has launched a new public information service, [Wales Legislation on-line](#). It says something about the accessibility of primary legislation relating to Wales that this new service is essentially a private initiative, even though its prime mover is David Lambert, former Chief Legal Adviser to the Welsh Office, and now the Legal Adviser to the Presiding Officer of the National Assembly.

The next undesirable consequence of dependency on Westminster for primary legislation is the extraordinary variation in how legislation for Wales is drafted, and in particular how new powers and functions are conferred on the Assembly. This was strongly brought out in the evidence to the Welsh Affairs Committee and Lords Constitution Committee inquiries, from independent and official sources. The Presiding Officer, Lord Elis-Thomas said in his evidence to the Lords Committee: "At present, there is no consistency of practice and no clear convention on the drafting of Bills which affect Wales – indeed, as the Constitution Unit has argued, each new Bill can be seen as re-inventing devolution."

Government guidance on the making of primary legislation affecting Wales is silent about any principles to be observed in determining the approach to devolving new powers. To fill the gap Professor Richard Rawlings proposed a set of principles, to ensure greater consistency of treatment and parity with powers conferred on English Ministers. These were adopted with minor variations by the National Assembly Review of Procedure (chaired by Lord Elis-Thomas) which reported in February 2002. The Review urged the First Minister to communicate the 'Rawlings principles' to the UK Government, and to impress on Whitehall departments the importance of adopting the principles.

There then ensued a long silence, for which there are several possible explanations. Practice in Whitehall was starting to get better, so Welsh Ministers may have decided not to rock the boat. Some of the Assembly's senior lawyers thought the principles were unworkable. The First Minister may have decided not to force the issue, recognising that UK Ministers were unlikely to agree to be bound in advance by an approach to England and Wales issues which would unduly fetter their discretion. But at the end of March 2003 the issue was forced for him when, in its report on [The Primary Legislative Process as it Affects Wales](#), the Welsh Affairs Committee recommended that the UK Government "take a view" on the Rawlings principles. Consequently the UK government will have to indicate whether they are willing to abide by the principles, or whether they will prefer to continue to allocate powers to the Assembly on a case-by-case basis.

The IWA's comprehensive submission to the Lords Committee, made by Professor Keith Patchett, Emeritus Professor at Cardiff Law School, contains a powerful critique of the whole law making process in relation to Wales. The final criticism is the inadequate scrutiny of primary legislation for Wales. This is compounded by the difficulties of integrating the operations of two sets of institutions that have different working practices, priorities, resources and timetables. Most legislation for Wales is contained in combined England and Wales Bills, but in practice parliamentary scrutiny at Westminster focuses overwhelmingly on the English arrangements. This is perhaps understandable given that England represents 85 per cent of the UK population, and Wales just 5 per cent.

However, even in the rare case of a Wales-only Bill Westminster scrutiny can be seriously inadequate. An outstanding example is the NHS (Wales) Bill, announced in June 2001 with proposals to radically restructure the health service in Wales, replacing the five existing health authorities with 22 new local health boards. Health Minister Jane Hutt said in a press release in June 2001:

"The intention is for the draft bill to be published in the Autumn and the Assembly will have a strong voice in discussing and debating the proposals before they reach the House of Commons. This responds directly to our bid

for such a Bill earlier this year and shows how the National Assembly and Westminster can work together for Wales."

What happened next illustrates very strongly how the Assembly is at the mercy of Whitehall when it comes to negotiating for legislative time. Within weeks the proposals for a separate NHS (Wales) Bill were dropped. Instead they were to be incorporated in an England and Wales Bill, which would provide a more convenient legislative vehicle for the UK government. This meant the proposals went to Westminster before they had been debated in plenary in Cardiff. The results of the Assembly Government's consultation on the proposals arrived in the House of Commons Library on the morning of the Second Reading debate in November 2001. In the debate former Welsh Office Health Minister Jon Owen Jones was moved to say some strong words about how Welsh MPs were being bounced into approving this particular piece of legislation:

"The debate is an opportunity to test whether the present constitutional settlement for Wales provides a means for adequate scrutiny of new Bills. The Welsh Assembly does not have primary legislation powers, but if Parliament simply acts as a rubber stamp for Welsh matters brought to the House, we should dispense with the charade and move towards giving the Welsh Assembly primary legislation powers."

the scottish example

The solution offered by the UK government to the problems of rushed timing and inadequate consultation is the publication of more Bills in draft – as the NHS (Wales) Bill was to have been. Draft Bills which are subject to pre-legislative scrutiny and evidence from outside bodies allow for much more probing scrutiny, time for second thoughts by government, and make for better legislation. There have been promises that in future more bills will be published in draft. But because of the decentralised way in which legislative proposals are prepared in Whitehall, it is up to the Cabinet how far in advance Bills might be drafted, and whether that allows time for a draft Bill stage. All too often it does not. The political imperative of getting the Bill through will almost always override the niceties of better legislative scrutiny, as it will override the separate needs of Wales.

Wales gets short shrift under present arrangements. The Assembly is dependent for all its primary legislation on finding legislative time at Westminster. Yet it has little or no control on when that time will be found, in what legislative vehicle, and with what degree of scrutiny.

To see how it might be otherwise it is instructive to look at the different practice in Scotland, where the Scottish Executive and Parliament now have over three years experience of making primary legislation for Scotland. In its

first three years the Scottish Parliament passed just over a dozen Bills each session. It might be expected that most of these were on matters of Scots law, but in fact such Bills were a minority. Most of the legislation passed by the Scottish Parliament has been in social policy, in subject areas which are devolved to Wales in terms of executive power, but not yet in terms of legislative power. Of the 44 Acts passed by the Scottish Parliament in its first three years (to September 2002), 31 were on subjects which could be devolved to Wales. Seven were on matters of Scots private law, and six were on Scottish criminal law. The full list is set out in the panel alongside.

The categorisation is inevitably arbitrary. Several Acts could have appeared in one or more categories. But the list serves to illustrate the range of matters on which the Scottish Parliament has legislated, and how many of them might be of interest to the National Assembly, because they fall within its executive competence. Three other matters are worth noticing. First is how many are little Bills which are precisely the kind which are so difficult to squeeze into the legislative programme at Westminster. They included a small change to the census (which the Welsh were denied, despite a specific request); postgraduate medical degrees at St Andrews; and closing the loophole over Erskine Bridge Tolls.

Second, is the number of measures to improve governance and accountability in Scotland, in the Public Finance and Accountability Act, Ethical Standards in Public Life, Freedom of Information Act, and creation of the Parliamentary Standards Commissioner and Public Services Ombudsman. The Scots have used their legislative freedom to raise standards in the way Scotland is governed as well as in what the Scottish government does.

The third matter worth noticing is not in the panel, but is perhaps the most important. Westminster has also legislated for Scotland, including on devolved matters. Under a procedure known as 'Sewel resolutions' (named after Scottish Office junior Minister Lord Sewel, who first announced the convention in debate on the Scotland Bill) the Scottish Parliament can grant consent to Westminster legislating on matters which are devolved to Scotland. Initially it was supposed that this procedure would be only rarely used. However, in the first three years of devolution it became almost routine. In fact, there have been almost as many Sewel motions – 34 to September 2002 – as there have been Acts of the Scottish Parliament. In making primary legislation for Scotland, Westminster is still as important as the new legislature on the Mound in Edinburgh.

Why do the Scots allow Westminster so frequently to legislate for them, when the Scottish Parliament could be doing the job themselves? In evidence to the Lords Constitution Committee Professor Alan Page, Professor of Public Law at the University of Dundee identified four main reasons:

acts of the Scottish Parliament 1999-2002

Category	Year	Title of Act
Health	1999	Mental Health
		(Public Safety and Appeals)
Education	2000	Education and Training
	2000	Standards in Scotland's Schools etc
	2001	Education
		(Graduate Endowment and Student Support)
	2002	School Education (Amendment)
	2002	Education
(Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records)		
2002	University of St Andrews	
	(Postgraduate Medical Degrees)	
Environment	2000	Sea Fisheries (Shellfish)
	2001	Salmon Conservation
	2002	Protection of Wild Mammals
	2002	Water Industry
	2002	Fur Farming (Prohibition)
Finance	2000	Public Finance and Accountability
	2000	Budget
	2001	Budget
	2001	Police and Fire Services (Finance)
	2002	Budget
Care/Social Services	2001	Regulation of Care
	2001	Protection from Abuse
	2002	Community Care and Health
Criminal/Judicial	2000	Bail, Judicial Appointments etc
	2000	Regulation of Investigatory Powers
	2000	Adults with Incapacity
	2001	Convention Rights
	2002	Criminal Procedure (Amendment)
		Sexual Offences
2002	(Procedure and Evidence)	
Transport	2001	Transport
	2001	Erskine Bridge (Tolls)
Parliamentary/ Governmental	2000	Ethical Standards in Public Life
	2000	Census
		Scottish Local Authorities
	2001	(Tendering)
	2002	Scottish Local Government Act
		(Elections)
	2002	Scottish Parliamentary Standards Commissioner
2002	Freedom of Information	
2002	Scottish Public Services Ombudsman	
Housing	2001	Leasehold Casualties
	2001	Housing
	2001	Mortgage Rights
Land Use	2000	Abolition of Feudal Tenure
	2000	National Parks
International Agreements	2001	International Criminal Court
Civil Law	2001	Abolition of Poindings and Warrant Sales
	2002	Marriage

- 1 First is the need for uniformity across the UK. Where the Scots accept that a policy needs to be uniform, and Westminster is legislating anyway, there is little point in the Scottish Parliament spending time in passing separate legislation to achieve the same result.
- 2 Second, it avoids disruption to the Scottish Executive's own legislative programme. The Scottish Parliament has a more rigorous and expert process of legislative scrutiny than the House of Commons, which limits the number of Bills which its committees can consider. So the Executive finds it quite convenient to have an alternative legislative channel, especially where its own legislation might be little different from that proposed by the UK government.
- 3 The third reason is when legislation is necessary to give effect to international or EU obligations. In these circumstances the legislation has to be passed, and the international obligation may leave little room for manoeuvre. Westminster is legislating anyway, and the Scots are content to be included in the Westminster legislation.
- 4 Finally there is legislation to close regulatory loopholes, what Professor Page calls the risk of 'regulatory arbitrage' across the different jurisdictions of the UK. If loopholes are being closed, and they need to be closed in a way which prevents people exploiting any potential differences, it might as well be left to Westminster to enact the uniform regulatory regime.

worst of both worlds for wales

It was not originally expected to happen this way, and some in Scotland like the nationalists (and occasionally the Conservatives) have been critical of how much the Scottish Parliament has been willing to leave responsibility for legislating on devolved matters to Westminster. But to the more distant observer it seems the Scots may have got the best of both worlds. They legislate for themselves on the whole range of social and domestic policy matters which would be of interest to Wales – health, education, social services, environment, transport, housing. They legislate on matters great and small. Although most of the Bills are small scale, a few – such as those on free long term care, and student tuition fees – have made big policy changes. And when it suits them they let Westminster legislate. But even then the Scots are not losing control. If the Westminster Bill is amended they are invited to re-affirm their approval of the policy (which is why one Westminster Bill can be the subject of more than one Sewel motion). And if subsequently they do not like the way the legislation operates they are still free to legislate themselves on the same subject matter. In this case the subsequent legislation by the Scottish Parliament would override the earlier Westminster legislation in which the Scottish Parliament had originally acquiesced.

In February 2003 the Richard Commission visited Edinburgh to see for themselves how the Scottish Parliament uses its powers of primary legislation. It will be hard for them not to

have been struck by some pretty stark comparisons. If Scotland seems to be getting the best of both worlds, is Wales perhaps getting the worst?

While the Scottish Parliament passed 44 Acts in the first three years of devolution, in the same period Wales managed to squeeze just one Wales-only statute out of Westminster. All other primary legislation for Wales was incorporated in England and Wales Bills. Even in the most benign of political circumstances, with a sympathetic administration in London, the record in terms of primary legislation for Wales is not exactly impressive.

The National Assembly's policy wishes are generally followed in these combined England and Wales Bills, but the Assembly has no control over how they are expressed by the draftsman. Welsh interests always run the risk of being subordinate to the policy interest of the lead Whitehall department. If the government in London were unsympathetic or hostile, Welsh interests could simply be ignored or overruled. Whitehall decides when and how much to consult with the relevant interests of the National Assembly. Consultation has got much better, and more timely, but there will always be a risk of the Welsh input being too little, too late, especially where the Assembly committees are concerned.

Whitehall sources admit that the complicated nature of the devolution settlement in Wales causes them more problems than the cleaner break of the settlement with Scotland, and requires endless negotiation and consultation. Consultation about legislative proposals is confidential between Whitehall and the Welsh Assembly Government until the bill is published. Unless a Bill is published in draft, publication does not take place until the Bill is introduced into the Westminster Parliament. This allows little time for Assembly committees to look at Bills before Westminster itself engages with them.

It is extraordinarily difficult to integrate scrutiny by two legislatures with separate priorities and timetables. These difficulties have proved hard to overcome between sympathetic administrations; without goodwill they would be quite impossible. Looking at all the contingencies and complications in the existing arrangements, it is hard not to conclude that Welsh interests will always risk being marginal in Whitehall's and Westminster's priorities, and that under the present settlement Wales risks getting the worst of both worlds.

- Professor Robert Hazell is Director of the Constitution Unit at University College, London. This is an edited version of his contribution to the IWA volume *Birth of Welsh Democracy: The First Term of the National Assembly for Wales*, published in March 2003.

news

cardiff's capital role in the 21st century

In early April the IWA organised a three day event in which delegations from Tallinn, Bilbao, and Dublin visited Cardiff to participate in a debate about the role of capital cities of small nations in the 21st Century. They toured many arts venues in the city, including the National Museum, Welsh National

Opera, the Millennium Centre, and Cardiff 2008 as well as participating in a day-long seminar, hosted by the Wales Tourist Board.

The event is planned to be the start of a programme of seminars, conferences and publications leading to 2005, which marks Cardiff's

centenary as a city and fifty years as the Capital of Wales. In the event of Cardiff winning the accolade of European Capital of Culture, to be announced in June, the programme will be taken forward to 2008.

As part of Cardiff's Capital of Culture 2008 bid the IWA is



Pictured visiting a 'New Young Europeans' exhibition at Cardiff's Old Library, headquarters of the Cardiff 2008 bid are (from left to right) Philip Maguire, Assistant City Manager, Dublin City Council; John Osmond, Director, IWA; Erik Terk, Director, Estonian Institute for Future Studies; Cristina Rivero, Research Director, Association for the Revitalisation of Metropolitan Bilbao; Silke Haarich, Consultant, Informacion y Desarrollo, Bilbao; and Helena Tedre, of the Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department. Missing from the photograph is Frank McDonald, Arts and Culture Correspondent with the Irish Times, who joined the group later. The 'New Young Europeans' project works through a developing photographic exhibition alongside seminars and publications dealing with asylum issues within each participating city. Other cities taking part include Brussels, Koln, Cork, Warsaw and Helsinki. The exhibition was shown at Cardiff during April.

leading an exploration of the cultural impact of cities. One object is to identify partner cities across Europe that have relevant experiences to share. In this respect the three cities involved in the first event in April had highly relevant messages to impart. All have put cultural activities at the heart of their strategies for future development.

Tallinn, the capital of Estonia and newly emerged from the shadow of the Soviet Union, is investing in the medieval centre of the city, building a new National Art Gallery and refurbishing many of its traditional churches. Bilbao has the Guggenheim Museum which, like Cardiff's Millennium Centre, is but the most obvious representation of a far wider programme of redevelopment. Meanwhile, Dublin has reinvented itself as a mainstream European capital by projecting its many cultural attributes.

A paper commissioned by the IWA from Professor Phil Cooke, Director of the Centre of Advanced Studies at Cardiff University, will benchmark Cardiff's cultural provision against these and a range of other European capitals. Together with contributions from Tallinn, Bilbao and Dublin, this will provide the core of an initial study to be published by the IWA in July this year. In turn this will signal a programme of further work leading to 2005 and beyond.

Later, they were the guests of Cardiff's Lord Mayor, Russell Goodway, at a civic dinner in the city's Mansion House.

no shortage of questions at swansea

No-one fired the starting pistol but the campaign for the 2003 elections to the National Assembly for Wales effectively began on 27 March at an IWA question and answer session in the Esso lecture theatre at University College, Swansea.

All four party leaders – Rhodri Morgan for Labour, Ieuan Wyn Jones, Plaid Cymru, Mike German, Liberal Democrats and Nick Bourne, Conservatives, were present at the meeting, which drew an audience of approaching 100, an impressive figure for a political meeting in modern-day Wales.

The leaders were asked to comment on a wide variety of issues, with particular interest being shown in education and the controversial question of top-up fees. Members of the audience were keen to know not just how school leavers in Wales would support themselves but how the many mature students now entering higher education would manage.

There were the expected questions too on the Assembly's powers, including tax-raising, and it was this issue that brought one of the few sharp exchanges between the leaders. Ieuan Wyn Jones's advocacy of greater powers resulted in another of Rhodri Morgan's somewhat Delphic utterances. "Whatever question you put to Ieuan I suspect he knits a few more rows and then demands the Assembly be given more

powers." Not quite in the one-legged duck category but getting there perhaps.

More local issues were also raised, including a claim that so-called free bus travel for pensioners in Wales had been bought at the expense of higher council taxes. Coalition leaders were anxious to point out, however, that the cost of these services had been fully funded by the Assembly.

Other questions sought to garner the leaders' views on the over-centralization in Cardiff of Assembly activity and the effectiveness or otherwise of the regional committees, the poor state of internal road and rail communications in Wales, and why the Welsh rugby team could not emulate the success of its soccer counterparts. What needs to be done, the questioner asked, so expectations could be equal?

Elwa's problems were also raised, with members of the audience eager to know what could be done to achieve tighter control of funding on the one hand – and the avoidance of underspending on the other.

Another topical issue raised was the loss of manufacturing jobs in Wales. One questioner asked "Is it not about time that large corporations that leave Wales should pay back in full any assistance paid to them by the National Assembly?" This did happen, Rhodri Morgan explained, but there were rules governing the length of time

during which funds could be reclaimed.

Contrasting attitudes towards the Assembly were also demonstrated. One questioner asked whether or not it was just a talking shop only to be told rather tartly by the First Minister that you could say the same of Westminster or the US Congress or any other democratic body as the job of such organizations was to discuss matters and then make decisions. Another rather more sympathetically wanted to know whether individuals should not stop asking what devolution should do for them but what they could achieve through devolution. Shades of John F. Kennedy in Swansea Bay.

Wales's football team's success in defeating Azerbaijan in late March will have particularly pleased Rhodri Morgan who stressed the importance in answer to one question of qualification for next year's European cup finals in Portugal. He claimed that, "The cultural renaissance in Ireland only started after they qualified for the European cup finals in 1992." He added that Seamus Heaney had then gone on to secure a Nobel Prize for Literature and Roddy Doyle, the Booker Prize, the implication being the same would happen if our lads get to Lisbon. He could also have mentioned the Eurovision Song Contest, which Ireland has won twice in the past ten years, but perhaps fortunately, Wales does not yet have a separate entry.

the politics of geography in wales

Rural areas in Wales need facilities and entertainment of the sort typically associated with larger towns, if young people are to stay in the area and be attracted back, according to [Divided We Fall](#), a new IWA Discussion Paper.

The report believes such an approach can only come about as a result of a new strategy which identifies a small number – perhaps half a dozen – key urban centres and concentrates development on them. Other parts of rural Wales would form the hinterland for these centres and have special relationship with them. In some case the key centres will be interconnected but dispersed smaller settlements, and in other cases relatively large towns.

The report admits there could be opposition from centres not chosen as part of such a strategy, but says a growth pole approach would assist rural Wales as a whole. Locations with natural advantages tend to develop anyway, it says, while if unplanned they remain unfocused and do not develop to optimum advantage. Other changes are also needed, the Paper by IWA director, John Osmond, claims, in the way the crisis in rural Wales is tackled, if much of what we now know as Wales is not simply to disappear:

"If small family farming is to be sustainable it

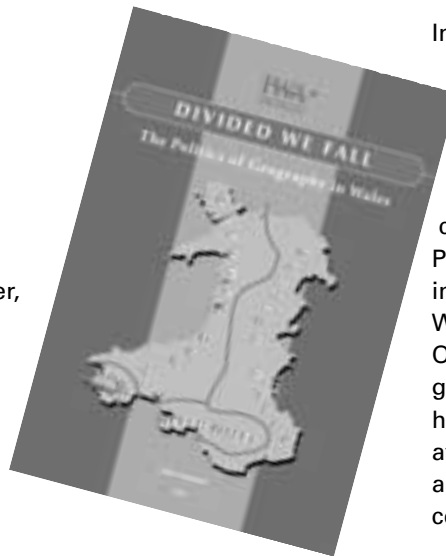
will increasingly be a part-time activity. Many farmers and their partners already accrue a significant part of their income – certainly their cash income – from work undertaken off the farm in nearby urban environments. This type of activity will inevitably have to increase."

The report argues, however, that a big problem in the way of developing new approaches is the division of responsibilities within the Assembly Cabinet:

"The rural development portfolio is occupied by a Liberal Democrat, Deputy First Minister, Mike German. Economic development, environment, transport, and planning and education fall under separate Labour-held departments within the coalition. Somehow the Assembly Government needs to get a crosscutting grip on the rural crisis if an imaginative policy approach is to confront this central issue."

A change to more co-ordinated action across Assembly Government departments is also needed if another gap – that between rich and poor in Wales – is not to widen to unacceptable levels. The Communities First initiative, which has £83m to spend between

2002-2005 on the 142 poorest communities in Wales, will not achieve its fullest potential, the report claims, because it is seen simply as



a programme to tackle poverty and social exclusion. Instead, it should be a mainstream part of the Assembly Government's economic development strategy. This would enable the problem of low activity rates – the number of people of working age drawn into work – to be tackled. Inactivity now approaches 35 per cent in Merthyr Tydfil, the local authority with the most serious problem, and a further four counties have inactivity rates in excess of 30 per cent.

The report argues that the real division within Wales is not north versus south but a much more complex three-way split, first identified in the 1920 by the inaugural professor of international relations at University of Wales,

Aberystwyth, Sir Alfred Zimmern. This was still evident in the voting patterns in the inaugural Assembly elections in 1999.

In modern terms the three areas are Y Fro Gymraeg, the Welsh-speaking heartlands; Welsh Wales – the south Wales valleys; and British Wales, the areas closest to England, plus Pembrokeshire. Significantly in this last area – the parts of Wales largely outside the Objective 1 status area – gross domestic product per head is 97 per cent of the EU average, compared with an all-Wales figure below 80 per cent.

The danger is of these three regions moving in different directions, with growing divisions between rich and poor and rural and urban, accelerating this process. Unless these two divides start to be bridged with measures of the sort suggested, the hope of Wales becoming a genuine community of communities will retreat.

- See Gareth Wyn Jones and Einir Young in this issue on [A Strategy For Rural Survival](#), page 40 [Divided We Fall: The Politics of Geography in Wales](#) is available from the IWA at £10 (half price to members).

welsh air links should be upgraded

Cardiff International Airport should be given every practical encouragement to develop services and facilities to its maximum potential, the IWA has stated in its response to the UK Government's consultation document on the future of air services in the UK



Cardiff International Airport

In a 27-page report, which argues that the debate on air transport should take place in the context of a wholesale re-appraisal of regional policies, the IWA calls for Government support to take the form of:

- Improvements in road access, including at the very least an upgrading of the existing route from Culverhouse Cross to the airport, if it proves impossible to justify the cost of a wholly new road.
- Completion of a rail link to the airport to include seamless transfer facilities between railhead and the airport itself.
- Development of internal air services for Wales backed if necessary by EU-approved Public Service Obligation (PSO) status giving access to

Government funding. Cardiff would then become the central hub for air services connecting a number of centres throughout Wales.

- The report also calls for a PSO-backed feeder service from Cardiff into Heathrow, London City, or Gatwick, giving Welsh travellers

better access to the wide range of services available from these airports.

The report expresses concern that in the Government document relating to Wales, the idea of a Severnside airport is largely dismissed, while in the West of England paper a new airport at Pilning at the junction of the M4 and M5 is listed as a medium-term option. The Department of Transport's own analysis suggests that adoption of the Pilning option could result in the long term loss of 1.5m passengers a year from Cardiff. "The thinking is less joined up than the regions themselves," says the IWA report.

"The Welsh Assembly Government must take every step to ensure

that if an additional facility is contemplated the aim must be to create the optimal facility for the whole sub-region on both sides of the Severn, taking full account of the much greater economic development needs of south Wales. The Department of Transport cannot be allowed to keep Pilning in the frame as if the impact on Cardiff International Airport and Wales's competitive position were outside its purview. In the context of air transport the DoT has to take a UK view not an English view," the IWA response states.

"We do not hold a brief for either of the two proposals for Severnside airports, or for the Pilning option, but it is undeniable that competing air transport facilities in south Wales and the West of England will generate a less than optimal service both for south Wales and for Bristol and the West of England. However, the current Severnside airport proposals are far from fully worked out, in terms of financial or environmental costs. In this situation it is imperative that the principle of a more coherent, unified, long term development of airports and air transport for south Wales and the

West of England – its costs and benefits – needs to be considered seriously and exhaustively in the interests of the whole of the dual region, and of the balanced development of the UK. Such a study must encompass a study of the future of surface links – road and rail – between all points in Wales to central London, Heathrow and Gatwick. It must also have proper regard for the interests of current owners and investors in both Cardiff and Bristol airports as well as the undoubtedly greater economic development needs of Wales."

On the question of new airport capacity in the Southeast the IWA comes out in favour of additional runways at either Heathrow or Gatwick:

"Wales would undoubtedly look less accessible to potential investors if they had to travel from Stansted (in Essex) or from Cliffe (a new site proposed in Kent) rather than Heathrow. The economic development of Wales would be greatly harmed by any attempt to shift the centre of gravity of air services in London further east."

At the same time, the report argues that urgent attention needs to be given to improving existing links:

barbecue on everest

"There is currently a clear perception that economically vital links between Wales and London are either not improving as they should be or as in the case of south Wales are actually deteriorating. Rail services from north Wales are still under-developed and Mid-Wales roads are suffering increasing congestion as pressure on the M5/M6 and A49 shifts north-south traffic further west. In the south the M4 is increasingly congested, with not infrequent carriageway closures. And although the frequency of rail services has improved journey times are lengthening rather than reducing and there is no current prospect of electrification of the Great Western line."

The report also urges that a feasibility study be completed quickly on the development of internal air services for Wales:

"Internal services would represent a major step forward in bringing Wales together. We should not perpetuate a situation where we are further from each other than from the rest of the world. For these reasons such internal services would merit public subsidy."

To mark the 50th anniversary of the ascent of Everest the IWA's North Wales Branch is organising a barbecue at the Anglesey home of member Richard Cuthbertson. The event is being held on Saturday 31 May, starting at 6pm. There will be two speakers at the event. The first, Jan Morris took part in the 1953 expedition as correspondent for the Times and claimed one of the 21st Century's greatest scoops, announcing that the mountain had finally been conquered in time for Coronation Day 1953. Also appearing will be the mountaineer and writer Jim Perrin, who will describe how the expedition trained in Snowdonia before leaving for the Himalayas.

Richard Cuthbertson, managing director of the Llanberis-based firm DMM Mountaineering which manufactures specialist equipment, is sponsoring the event by holding it at his Tudor mansion house overlooking the Menai Straits. It was the birth place of Owain Tudur, grandfather of Henry VII.

This promises to be a highly memorable event and tickets will be sold on a first come first served basis. Tickets at £10 each, to include barbecue supper and drinks, can be obtained by contacting the IWA at Tŷ Oldfield, Llantrisant Road, Llandaf, Cardiff, CF5 2YQ Telephone 02920 575511 Facsimile 02920 575701 or through our website www.iwa.org.uk Tickets will be

returned on receipt of payment together with full details of how to reach the venue.

Few have enjoyed a life as full or as colourful as IWA member Jan Morris. Born a man, he fathered five children before having a sex-change operation in 1972.



Jan Morris – scoop of the century



Jim Perrin – extreme rock climber

But, besides such headline-grabbing details, she has been at one time or another, an Oxford chorister, Welsh bard, military intelligence officer, newspaper journalist and critically-acclaimed author. Born James Humphrey Morris in Somerset in 1926, he was educated at Lancing College in Sussex. He knew from his

earliest years that he should have been born a girl: not homosexual but simply "wrongly equipped".

A teenage stint as a journalist for Bristol's Western Daily News ended when he became an officer cadet at Sandhurst Military College. He spent the final years of World War Two in Palestine and Italy as an intelligence officer with the 9th Queen's Royal Lancers, an experience which he greatly enjoyed. Following demob in 1949 he went to Oxford University, where he combined his English studies with editing the student magazine, Cherwell.

1949 also saw his marriage to Elizabeth Tuckniss, the daughter of a tea planter. She knew, and understood, his belief that he was a woman and the couple had five children together, one of whom died aged two months. Despite his sex change, the couple still live together extremely harmoniously. James Morris moved seamlessly from Oxford to the Times.

But journalism lost its grip and, following a period on the Guardian, he became a full-time writer. His Pax Britannica trilogy, which he began as a man and finished as a woman, is a Gibbonesque look at the rise and fall of the British Empire. James's transformation into Jan, covered in her book Conundrum, took many

years, beginning with taking female hormones during the early 1960s and culminating in the final operation in 1972.

Traveller and extreme rock climber Jim Perrin is one of Wales's most popular outdoor writers. Alongside his published works, accounts of his many adventures have appeared in the Daily Telegraph, the Guardian and various climbing magazines. His many books on Wales include *Spirits of Place*, a collection of essays evoking places and people of the country, and *River Map*, an account of a journey made on foot from the estuary of the Dee to its source in the remote mountains of north Wales, both published by Gomer. His latest book, *Travels with the Flea* (The Inpinn, 2002), brings together his best work from venues as far apart as Garhwal and Montana, Kirgizstan and the High Arctic, Hungary and Cuba, not to mention walks with his dog Flea through Wales.

Organised in association with Academi, the literature promotions agency.

busy programme ahead for the iwa

The IWA's review of the National Assembly's first four-year term, *Birth of Welsh Democracy*, is proving a big hit, with a stream of new orders reaching the offices in Llandaf every week. Running to 350 pages, with sections on the new constitution now emerging, the policy process and on

the political parties, it offers invaluable insights ahead of the elections due on May 1.



Selling at £19.99 in the bookshops it is available at a special price of £10 to IWA members plus £1.50 post and package. Orders to wales@iwa.org.uk or phone our order hotline at 029 2057 3949.

A strong programme of events for IWA members and their guests for the rest of the year is now being put in place. Apart from those already mentioned in this section, other events include a special seminar on Intellectual Property planned for Swansea on Monday 12 May, and a strong lunch programme this autumn. Among the speakers who have already agreed to address members are Neil Kinnock, vice president of the European Commission, Clive Grace, the new director-general of the Audit Commission in Wales, and Chris Smith, the former UK Secretary of State for Culture.

The two lunches held so far this year both attracted full houses. Tony Davis, managing director, of *bmbaby* spoke about regional air services in south Wales and the plans his airline has for developing its services from Cardiff. He was followed in March by Professor Kumar Bhattacharyya, director of the Warwick Manufacturing Group, whose stout defence of the importance to the UK of a strong manufacturing sector can be found on the IWA website, www.iwa.org.uk

a 'despite' culture

This years IWA Eisteddfod lecture will be delivered by Professor Jane Aaron at Meifod on 5 August on the theme *A 'Despite' Culture – Aspects of Wales's two linguistic cultures and their future prospects*.

Jane Aaron is a Professor in the School of Humanities at the University of Glamorgan. She is the author of *A*

Double Singleness: Gender and the Writings of Charles and Mary Lamb (Clarendon Press, 1991), and a Welsh-language book on nineteenth-century women's writing in Wales, *Pur fel y Dur: Y Gymraes yn Llên y Bedwaredd Ganrif ar Bymtheg* (University of Wales Press, 1998), which won the Board of Celtic Studies' Ellis Griffith Prize and Mrs L.W. Davies bequest in 1999.



She also co-edited the volumes *Out of the Margins: Women's Studies in the Nineties* (Falmer Press, 1991), and *Our Sisters' Land: The Changing Identities of Women in Wales* (University of Wales Press, 1994), and prepared an anthology of Welsh women's short stories, *A View across the Valley: Short Stories from Women in Wales 1850-1950* (Honno Press, 1999). She is currently working on an English-language book on nineteenth-century Welsh women's writings.

coming up...

- **Intellectual Property and Copyright – Protection in the modern age**
Monday May 12th, 6pm
University of Wales Swansea
With Dai Davies, former pop music promoter (including Dire Straits and the Sex Pistols), Elin Rhys, Teledu Telegap and Andrew Beale, Law Department, University of Wales Swansea.

- **Barbecue on Everest**
The 50th Anniversary of the mountain's ascent
IWA North Wales Branch event
Saturday May 31st
6pm – until late
With Jan Morris who reported from the Himalayas on the Everest expedition in 1953 and writer Jim Perrin on the Snowdonia background
Tickets £10
Includes food and wine

- **The Blair Years**
IWA lunch
June 10th 2003
Hilton Hotel, Cardiff
12.00pm for 12.30pm
Professor Peter Hennessy
Queen Mary University, London
Tickets £30
£27.50 IWA members
£225 table for ten

just published...

- **Birth of Welsh Democracy**
The First Four Years of the National Assembly For Wales £19.99
- **Dragon Debates Its Future**
Monitoring the National Assembly December 2002 to March 2003 £10

more information:

www.iwa.org.uk

clear red water



rhodri morgan
describes the
distinctive policy
approach developed
by Cardiff Bay over
the past three years

There were always going to be those ideological fault-lines in the approaches to social welfare in post-war social policy in Britain – universalism against means-testing and the pursuit of equity against pursuit of consumer choice. The great reforms of the Labour Government of 1945 – 51 were by and large universalist – education for all and higher education opportunities for all, a National Health Service, full employment, family allowances, security in old age through an adequate state pension.

On the other hand, has been the approach that motivated the Thatcher governments of the 1980s and 1990s, which sought to reduce state services to a residual, safety-net role, helping only those who demonstrate failure to be able to help themselves – a pauper service. The National Health Service reforms in the late 1980s started off down that road but ran into the buffers of public resistance and there are hints of its return now in the official opposition health policy in Westminster.

The actions of the Welsh Assembly Government clearly owe more to the traditions of Titmus, Tawney, Beveridge and Bevan than those of Hayek and Friedman. The creation of a new set of citizenship rights has been a key theme in the first four years of the Assembly – and a set of rights, which are, as far as possible:

- Free at the point of use
- Universal
- Unconditional

While there will be other new provisions which are means-tested, such as Assembly Learning Grants, free services do bind a society together and make everyone feel that they are stakeholders in it. Here are just five quick examples:

- Free school milk for youngest children.
- A free nursery place for every three year old.
- Free prescriptions for young people in the age range 16-25.
- Free entry to museums and galleries for all our citizens.
- Free local bus travel for pensioners and disabled people.

Services which are reserved for the poor very quickly become poor services. That is why my administration

has been determined to ensure a continuing stake in social welfare services for the widest possible range of our citizens. Universal services mean that we all have a reason for making such services as good as possible. Free access to social welfare services means that they become genuinely available to the full range of people in Wales, not simply those able to afford them.

In a second Assembly term, we will look to maintain this principle and to carry it further forward. We hope, for example, to be able to come to an agreement with local authorities on free access by children to swimming pools in local authority leisure centres.

Turning now to the tension between choice and equality, we begin from a fundamental commitment to the pursuit of equality. We are determined to build a Wales in which people have access to the services and support they need, wherever they happen to live, and whatever their income, ability, family circumstances, language or community background. Equality of provision must be underpinned by equality of access, and equality of opportunity. But most importantly of all, we match the emphasis on opportunity with what has been described as the fundamentally socialist aim of *equality of outcome*.

Both elements are, of course, essential. Our Sure Start programme aims to provide children who happen to be born in disadvantaged families with the sort of start in stimulating life-chances which other, more fortunate, youngsters are able to take for granted. At the same time, the whole thrust of the Townsend Report into dealing with health inequalities

in Wales, is upon bearing down upon those factors which cause ill health – poor housing, environmental degradation and so on – as well as improving ways in which we respond to illness and disease once it has taken hold.

The thread which links these, and all our other, social policy efforts together is a belief that a complex modern society such as ours can only operate effectively when held together by a powerful glue of social solidarity. Indeed, our commitment to equality leads directly to a model of the relationship between the government and the individual which regards that individual as a citizen rather than as a consumer.

Approaches which prioritise choice over equality of outcome rest, in the end, upon a market approach to public services, in which individual economic actors pursue their own best interests with little regard for wider considerations. The Assembly Government attaches a positive value both to diversity and innovation and also to responsiveness to the needs of users of public services. We firmly believe, however, that such receptivity is best achieved through strengthening the collective voice of the citizen – as, for example, in our decision to retain and strengthen Community Health Councils in Wales – rather than basing our services on a model of the user of public services as some sort of serial shopper, forever out there in the



Rhodri Morgan works out and checks on his vital statistics.

market place looking for the piece of education policy or health care which best meets their individual needs.

I want to suggest to you that the theory of marketisation, when applied to social welfare, turns out to be badly flawed. My objection to the idea of Foundation Hospitals within the NHS is not simply that they will be accessed by those public service consumers who are already the most articulate and advantaged, and who can specify where they want to be treated, but that the experiment will end, not with patients choosing hospitals, but with hospitals choosing patients. The well-resourced producer will be choosing the well-resourced consumer as the kind of patient they want – the grammar school equivalent in hospitals.

In other words, in welfare markets, producer-choice, rather than consumer-choice is too likely to be the outcome. That is why the comprehensive school era is not coming to an end in Wales. Selection of pupils by new specialist or faith schools is not the path we intend to encourage. It fails a test which we try to apply to all our policy development at the Welsh Assembly Government, of meeting the wider public interest.

- Rhodri Morgan is First Minister in the Welsh Assembly Government. This is an extract from his 'Clear Red Water Speech' delivered to the National Centre for Public Policy, University of Swansea, in November 2002.



ten pledges for the May 2003 Assembly election

- 1 Abolition of prescription charges, costing £30 million. No-one to wait more than 24 hours to see a GP or other primary care team specialist. £550 million to modernise GP surgeries and hospitals. Two new clinical training schools for doctors, one in south east Wales and one in north Wales.
- 2 Free breakfast for primary school children, costing £16 million. £560 million to improve school buildings. Extend the 20 mph zone and safe routes to schools schemes
- 3 No top-up fees at Welsh Universities for the next four years.
- 4 Scrapping of home care charges for disabled people, costing £12 million.
- 5 Creation of £100 million crime fighting fund.
- 6 Continue the scheme of free bus travel for over 60s and disabled people, and provision of half-price travel for 16-18 year olds, costing £33 million.
- 7 Broadband internet access to be made available to 67,000 extra businesses in Wales. £25m for innovation grants to boost new-technology businesses plus establishing a knowledge bank for entrepreneurs.
- 8 Trunk road improvements worth £175 million, including dualling of the Heads of the Valleys road.
- 9 Commissioner for Older People and free access to swimming pools for over 60s.
- 10 A target of 25 per cent of all waste to be recycled.

adam price speculates on whether a coalition between Labour and Plaid Cymru is possible

red green progressive politics



In 1918, in a brief progressive moment in the aftermath of war, Arthur Henderson, first General Secretary of the Labour Party, famously declared that a self-governing Wales

“might establish itself as a modern Utopia, ... (developing) its own institutions, its own culture, its own ideals of democracy in politics, industry and social life, as an example and an inspiration to the rest of the world.”

What he forgot to mention is that it would take 81 years from Labour’s first manifesto commitment to home rule to the establishment of a Scottish Parliament and a Welsh Assembly. Henderson’s speech in retrospect was a fairly cynical piece of electioneering, and the policy was quietly dropped for the next fifty years. No surprises there – Henderson was the original opportunist. But eighty years on his words sound strangely prophetic as the Welsh and Scottish Governments increasingly dare to be different.

With the worst waiting lists anywhere in Western Europe, devolutionary Wales is certainly no Utopia. But what we lack in almost every deprivation indicator you care to mention, we are beginning to make up for with what Raymond Williams used to call the “resources of hope”. And an important part of that is a new political culture that reflects our own “ideals of democracy” rather than the reheated Thatcherism of the “lap-dogs with lap-tops” as one old wag described Blair’s dwindling Welsh phalanx.

Which is why First Minister Rhodri Morgan’s speech ditching New Labour and declaring henceforth that there would be “clear red water” between Cardiff Bay and Downing Street is massively significant. Not just for Welsh politics, but for all of us who believe in restoring democratic socialism as the animating principle of the Left. In the speech Rhodri claimed that the cornerstone of a Labour-led second administration in the Assembly would be “the fundamentally socialist aim of equality of outcome”. Services would be free at the point of use, universal and unconditional. Community values not consumer choice would be the consistent theme in policy making and delivery. Foundation hospitals, specialist schools and the privatisation of public services will continue to be rejected in Wales.

Comrades in my own party were quick to dismiss the First Minister’s speech as empty Henderson-like posturing, a nervous reaction to the recent NOP poll which put Plaid just one per cent behind Labour on the second ‘party list’ vote. Certainly, the Labour machine in Wales is well aware that is at its

most vulnerable on its left flank. If my party sustains its onward march of the last fifteen years then come the May elections Labour will have no hope of forming a majority administration.

If Labour fails yet again to win that outright majority, as most of the pollsters predict, then it will again have to choose a coalition partner – the same dilemma which will face my own party if it emerges as the largest, but still minority group. The most likely party to respond positively to a radical programme of government based on socialist principles would undoubtedly be Plaid whose principal aim, as proudly enshrined in our Constitution, is the establishment of “a democratic Welsh state based on socialist principles”.

But, just as in Scotland, and despite his new recommitment to founding Labour values, Rhodri Morgan has made clear that his preferred partner remains the Liberal Democrats. Indeed, at the Labour Party conference he went as far as to say that he might choose to continue with the Lib-Lab coalition even with a Labour majority, which understandably caused uproar among Labour AMs, MPs and activists.

Rhodri Morgan may be no New Labour cheerleader, but his contribution to the realisation of ‘The Project’ – of coalition-then-merger with the Liberals to end the twentieth century cleavage and re-form a single non-socialist party of the British centre-left – promises to be even greater than that of the late Lord Jenkins of Hillhead. The Liberal Democrats are weather-vanes in Wales as everywhere else – but these aren’t radicals in the

tradition of Lloyd George, they're neo-liberals, opposed to Government support for the coal industry, nimbys on wind farms, supporters of a modified PFI, and viciously opportunistic opponents of the Fire-fighters' union. It's not surprising then that the Liberal leader in the Assembly, Deputy First Minister Mike German, condemned his boss's comments as 'out dated' and 'neither desirable nor achievable'.

The new vocabulary of political dialogue in Wales is complex and rich with potential, but the geometry strikes me as fairly simple. There are two anti-socialist groupings in the National Assembly, and two avowedly socialist parties, divided on the National Question, but united, at face value at least, in their opposition to New Labour's market driven approach. As we face down that common enemy, then what unites us is for the moment far more important than anything that divides us. An "historic compromise" between the two great currents of the Welsh Left, a radical red-green platform of progressive politics would, in my view, be as powerfully renewing as the first red-green Government in Germany twenty years ago.

But, for now, Rhodri's "clear red water" retains a distinctly yellowish tinge. His opposition to law-making powers for the Assembly and his silence on Iraq make many people suspect this is socialism-in-one-soundbite, rather than in one country. But I for one am glad that a new front has been opened in the battle against Blairism. How fitting that the Welsh Assembly Government, in the first piece of independent Welsh foreign policy since the days of Owain Glyndwr, has signed an educational partnership agreement with Cuba – no doubt, on the lessons of living with a large and powerful right-wing neighbour. Hasta la victoria, as Che would say, and Rhodri maybe mutters in his sleep.

- Adam Price is Plaid Cymru MP for Carmarthen East and Dinefwr. This article originally appeared in *Tribune* in January 2003.

our man in whitehall

jessica mugaseth comes face to face with Peter Hain



Entering the Wales Office on his first day as Secretary of State for Wales, Hain holds aloft a statue of his hero Aneurin Bevan.

Peter Hain's appointment as Secretary of State in October 2002 was welcomed as putting a convinced devolutionist in Whitehall. But how will he square this with his British Cabinet role of representing Whitehall in Wales? Already he has achieved a profile as a government spokesperson on issues way beyond his Welsh brief, with some regarding him as merely a 'house-trained lefty' providing a 'socialist' gloss for the Prime Minister.

"I've never attached a New Labour label to myself and I don't regard myself as being Old or New," was his response to this accusation. "As far as I'm concerned I'm part of a radical Labour tradition which has very

strong roots in Wales." He is also clear where the old-style Labour party failed in its ideology: "The left went historically wrong by concentrating on statism where everything should be run from the centre, with nationalisation and bureaucratic central government – the Whitehall knows best syndrome. I think that's one of the reasons why the Labour party ran into sands in the late 1970s and why we stayed out of power for so long."

Hain believes in "encouraging local activity, local self-government and local initiative." This is why he campaigned for devolution. If he was starting his political life over again, he says, he would aim to stand for the Assembly:

“You can really make a difference in Cardiff Bay. It’s not so easy to make a difference at Westminster. There are 650 MPs there and a lot of other constraints.”

His commitment to decentralisation led Hain to endorse Rhodri Morgan’s ‘Clear Red Water’ speech despite the risk of breaching UK Cabinet collective responsibility on backing policies divergent from those in Westminster. He acknowledges that his relationship with the First Minister is crucial in making the devolution settlement work and denies the fact that his former role as campaign manager for Alun Michael in the bitter leadership battle has left no long lasting divisions: “It was a family argument. It was pretty fierce and harsh but families stay together in the end. We picked up where we started off long before that.”

“You can really make a difference in Cardiff Bay. It’s not so easy at Westminster.”

Assuming the Richard Commission recommends extending the Assembly’s powers, Hain will be critical in making the case in Whitehall. So far he has been cautious, telling the Commission that he is not in favour of “further constitutional reform for its own sake”. Although he stopped short of advocating a second referendum in the event of further powers he said: “The current devolution settlement for Wales followed a manifesto commitment in a general election and a referendum, so any major change would have to have a democratic mandate.”

the CV	
Born:	February 1950, Nairobi
Education:	Pretoria Boys High, South Africa Emmanuel School, London Queen Mary College, London University Sussex University
Work:	Head of Research, Communication Workers Union 1976-91 Health Authority Member 1981-87
Political Career:	Led the Stop the (South African Cricket Team) Seventies Tour campaign 1970 Member of the Young Liberals 1970-77 Joined the Labour Party 1977 MP for Neath since 1991 Opposition Foreign Affairs whip 1995-97 Shadow Employment Minister 1996-97 Welsh Office Minister 1997-99 Minister of state, Foreign and Commonwealth Office 1999-01 Minister for Energy and Competitiveness in Europe 2001 Minister for Europe 2001-02 Secretary of State for Wales 2002 Member of CND, GMB union, Friends of the Earth, Anti-Nazi League and former chairman of Tribune.

He remains committed to a partnership rather than a separatist approach to devolution. As he puts it, “The economic and political ties that link Wales with the rest of the United Kingdom are not chains but a network of veins and arteries through which resources flow.” At the same time, in his inaugural address to the Assembly, he also said, “I will do all that I can to support the Assembly and back Welsh government ... I am determined that Wales’s voice is heeded as the government develops policy.”

Hain’s appointment as Secretary of State should give greater depth to the relationship between Wales and the EU, as he is continuing as the UK’s representative on the Convention on the Future of Europe. He insists that this additional role has enabled him to put Welsh interests at the heart of Europe: “I want to make the European Union more relevant to the people of Wales, to make sure it unites rather than divides countries, and that it creates stability and prosperity.”

Combining his Welsh and European roles, together with acting as Blair’s media trouble-shooter on issues as

diverse as Iraq, the railways dispute and Clare Short’s relationship with the Cabinet, Hain has given the office of Secretary of State for Wales a rare high profile. Inevitably it has led to speculation that he is merely using it as a stepping stone to the next stage in his career, perhaps as the standard bearer for the left in a future leadership election.

His response? “I have never had a career plan. Politicians are either seen as ambitious or on the way out. I have one watchword, which is to make a difference.”

- Jessica Mugaseth is the IWA’s Research Officer.

first term special i

the devolution dividend

kevin morgan asks whether the Assembly is worth having

the febrile atmosphere of an election campaign is hardly the time to expect a dispassionate audit of the Assembly's first term. Perhaps a truly judicious assessment will only emerge when future historians, with the benefits of time and distance, have a better understanding of the protean world of Welsh politics between July 1999, when the Assembly assumed its powers, and May 2003, when the second election was held.

It sometimes feels as if the Assembly was born under a bad sign, as the old blues singers might have said, because the first election was over-shadowed by the Alun Michael affair, while the second election is being usurped by an altogether more terrifying spectacle – the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq. Time was when the Welsh Labour was merely concerned about voter turnout; now it's more concerned about a possible electoral backlash against an unpopular war. Although it would be nice to think that the forthcoming election could be a Welsh general election as it were, delivering a verdict on the work of the National Assembly, it could just as easily become an opinion poll on Tony Blair's ill-judged alliance with George W. Bush.

Whatever our view of the first term, this is a timely moment to remind ourselves of the dire predictions of the No Campaign during the 1997 referendum as to what would befall Wales if it voted for an Assembly. Among other things we were regaled

with scare stories about impending administrative chaos. We were warned that businesses would decamp to other parts of the UK. We were told that a Welsh-speaking cultural elite would dominate public life. And Tim Williams, the most articulate No campaigner, offered the memorable prediction that a Yes vote would condemn Wales to the status of 'a banana republic without the bananas'.

That none of these things happened is a tribute to the people who were directly responsible for making the transition from administrative to democratic devolution as smooth a process as it was – and here pride of place must go to the civil servants, the politicians and the wide array of support staff. If the transition appeared smoother than the reality, this was due to some 'furious paddling below the water' as one insider described the first term.

three key tests

New democratic institutions are not born overnight, and governance skills don't come ready-made like TV dinners, so there's a steep learning curve for everyone involved in making democracy work. If this is principally a challenge for the politicians and their civil servants, it is also a challenge for the rest of us because, as voters and citizens, we get the Assembly we deserve not the Assembly we desire.

As we begin to reflect on the Assembly's first term perhaps the only

question worth asking is whether it made a difference? This was the question which Geoff Mungham and I posed in our book *Redesigning Democracy: The Making of the Welsh Assembly* (Seren, 2000). In the final chapter we identified three tests which could be used to assess whether the Assembly was actually making a difference.

The first test is whether the Assembly constitutes a *new mode of governance*. In other words a mode of governing which is open, transparent and interactive – both internally in its own affairs and externally in its dealings with its partners. There can be little doubt that the Assembly does indeed signal a new mode of governance and in this respect it represents a major advance on the Welsh Office in terms of openness, transparency and receptivity.

Though manifestly a good thing in itself, a more open and transparent system of governance puts more pressure on politicians to manage their affairs more effectively. A good example here is the problem of under-spend. Budget under-spending occurred in the Welsh Office era too, but then it was an internal matter so it rarely surfaced as a public issue. The transparency, visibility and immediacy associated with democratic devolution means that politicians cannot conceal these problems as they did in the past.

A more open and transparent governance system also means that

problems in quangos (or Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies as they are called nowadays) surface quicker than they did under the more secretive Welsh Office regime. The financial irregularities at ELWa, though regrettable, pale into insignificance compared to the crises that rocked the WDA in the early 1990s. Although the Assembly cannot prevent managerial problems from occurring in public bodies like ELWa (not least because employees, managers and the board are rightly the first line of defence against malpractice), it can help to root them out earlier than in the past.

The second test is whether the Assembly can be said to have made a discernable impact on [economic well-being](#), which was always thought to be the biggest and most difficult challenge of all. It is only fair to say that the Assembly faced a baptism of fire on the economic front because, from day one, it had to deal with one crisis after another – the agricultural crisis, the steel crisis, the Objective 1 crisis, the foot and mouth crisis and so on.

It retrospect the economic challenge boils down to this: how to strike a judicious balance between [fire-fighting](#) (to offer a sane and sensitive response to an immediate economic crisis) and [strategic thinking](#) (to chart new and more innovative trajectories of development). To illustrate this dilemma we need look no further than the foreign-owned manufacturing sector, which directly employed over 72,000 employees in 2000, representing some six per cent of total employment in Wales. It is now clear that the international niche which Wales has occupied for the past few decades – as a low skill and low wage production location for commodity products – is no longer a viable option for the future because the new member states in central and eastern Europe can perform this role more cost effectively.

In the short-term the challenge here is to hold what we have: that means fire-fighting to prevent closures like Hitachi

and re-locations like Panasonic. The longer term challenge is to act strategically by raising the quality of inward investment projects and giving greater priority to indigenous development. The conventional wisdom in Wales, and this is repeated like a mantra by the Assembly and the WDA, is that the Welsh economy will adjust to lower cost competition by moving 'up market' into the realms of the knowledge-based economy. This may indeed be the future, but one wonders how we get from here to there when one in four of the population is functionally illiterate and two in five functionally non-numerate.



In a lecture called [Delivering for Wales](#) at Cardiff University in March 2003, Rhodri Morgan gave a robust defence of the Assembly's economic achievements. Although he was honest enough to say that the Welsh Assembly Government could not claim all the credit for low unemployment and higher activity rates – because these tend to be UK-wide trends – he did want to claim credit for the following:

- Creating an expectation of life-long learning by substantially increasing the number of apprenticeships in Wales, which had risen from 9000 three years ago to 12,500 currently.
- Investing in broadband technology, with £115 million already committed.
- Developing the knowledge economy by building bridges between universities and business through new initiatives like the Technium model and the Knowledge Exploitation Fund.
- Encouraging innovation and enterprise through the Wales for Innovation initiative and the Entrepreneurship Action Plan.
- Maximising the use of Regional Selective Assistance to encourage the highest quality of investment in Wales.

Laudable and important as these initiatives may be, we should not confuse means and ends. The above list consists largely of inputs that may at some point induce positive outcomes – but they are not positive outcomes in themselves. Indeed, many of the above initiatives have yet to prove themselves. For example the Entrepreneurship Action Plan had a failure rate of more than 60 per cent in 2001-02 in terms of its targets for supporting new business ventures.

Similarly, the First Minister referred to "the powerful Technium model" in his Cardiff University lecture, but this incubator model is still in the process of being rolled out across Wales and therefore it has yet to prove itself. Even in Swansea, where the model was launched, there were only 110 jobs at the end of last year and it had already lost its most prestigious occupant, the semiconductor research subsidiary of the US company Agilent Technologies.

The most insidious part of the debate on the 'knowledge economy' is that economic development tends to be conceived in narrow 'high-tech' terms. Yet one of the most promising sectors for job creation in Wales today is the

construction industry and it's not at all clear if the Assembly fully appreciates its own role in this process. Perhaps the most important thing the Assembly has done here is to establish the [Welsh Housing Quality Standard \(WHQS\)](#) as part of a new vision that states that "all households in Wales shall have the opportunity to live in good quality homes that are in a good state of repair, safe and secure, adequately heated, fuel efficient and well insulated."

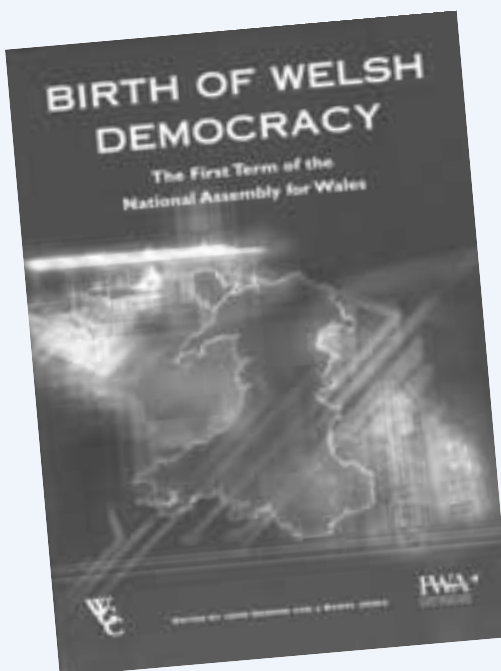
The WHQS sets highly demanding targets for local authorities to meet by 2012 for the social housing sector. But the WHQS constitutes an equally demanding regulatory environment for the construction industry in Wales. But the industry does not seem to be 'tooled up' for the challenge, not least because the WHQS comes at the same time as a number of major construction projects are coming on stream. Between now and 2006 more than 17,000 newly trained workers will be required to meet this forthcoming demand. Yet 65 per cent of construction companies in Wales reported difficulty in recruiting skilled workers in 2002, with bricklayers and carpenters being the worst affected occupations.

This construction story needs to be highlighted because it provides a practical illustration of the potential of [localisation](#) – a strategy of using local, indigenous resources, a strategy which allows the Assembly to promote economic renewal whilst at the same time helping it to meet its duty to foster sustainable development.

It is one of the great disappointments of the first term that the potential of localisation has not been recognised and tapped when so many of the ingredients lie within the control of the Assembly and these could have a tangible impact sooner than some of the more ambitious 'high tech' strategies. On the economic front the most charitable thing to say at the end

of the first term is that the jury is still out because there's clearly no automatic economic dividend attached to political devolution.

The third test is whether the Assembly is able to [enhance civic capacity](#) in Wales. A civic society in which citizens and organisations are well-informed, where they expect high standards of behaviour of themselves and of government, and where they are disposed to collaborate for mutually beneficial ends is perhaps the most important ingredient in the recipe for good governance. And at the heart of a vibrant civic society is the ability to offer, and accept, constructive criticism.



It may be asking too much of politicians to expect them to believe that it's in their own enlightened self-interest to have robust and well-informed interlocutors. But time and again it appears that the Welsh Assembly Government is wont to misconstrue constructive criticism as 'talking Wales down'. As an illustration we need only think of the debate as to whether the Objective 1 regeneration programme is working. Although this is a steep learning curve for everyone involved, and the skills to make it a success are not readily available, the most

important skill of all is a facility to be self-critical, to be able to monitor and evaluate work in progress and to adjust the process in the light of constructive criticism. But criticism tends to be met with knee-jerk responses to assure us that all is well, as though the Assembly is fearful of admitting mistakes.

But problems cannot be redressed if there is a refusal to acknowledge them in the first place. A mature political culture can accommodate constructive criticism because it is perceived to be part of a process of collective learning. To misconstrue criticism as 'talking Wales down' is insidious because it fosters loyalty for its own sake and this is the kiss of death for democracy and development alike. For this reason the fate of the Objective 1 programme will be a barometer of our political culture as well as a measure of our regeneration capacity.

highs and lows of the first term

Everyone will have their own particular list of the highs and lows of the first term, the areas where the Assembly succeeded and where it failed to deliver, and this assessment will be influenced by age, gender, occupation and postcode etc. The most comprehensive assessment of the first term to date is undoubtedly the IWA's recently published [Birth of Welsh Democracy](#) (edited by John Osmond and Barry Jones), which will be a standard reference on the Assembly's early years for some time to come. Aled Edwards has also made a heroic effort to identify the 'top twenty' differences which he believes the Assembly has made to the quality of life in Wales, with political accountability coming top, closely followed by open government ([From Protest to Process – Stories from The National Assembly for Wales](#), Cyhoeddiadau'r Gair, 2003).

I freely concede that my own list may not be to everyone's taste, perhaps confirming that each person's list will be somewhat idiosyncratic.

Nevertheless, one of the high points of the first term for me was the genuine way in which the Assembly sought to meet its statutory duty (under section 121 of the Government of Wales Act) to promote sustainable development. Signalling a new way of viewing and valuing economy, society and nature, the Assembly's sustainable development strategy was enshrined in an aspirational document called [Learning to Live Differently](#).

One hopes that this will provide the strategic framework for the Assembly's strategies on economic development and health and well-being because sustainable development is the one truly big idea that the Assembly has come to symbolise, and here it has the unique status of being the only government in the EU with a legal duty to promote sustainability. The Assembly is beginning to be recognised for its pioneering role in this field because Wales was given the job of co-ordinating a EU network of regions which had a common interest in promoting sustainable development.

This commitment to sustainable development is a good example of the Assembly acting in a strategic manner to chart a new trajectory of development. This is the context in which the Welsh Assembly Government sought to explore the potential of public procurement – the sleeping giant of Welsh economic policy. One of the most important exercises undertaken during the first term – and this attracted almost no publicity – was the [Better Value Wales](#) review of public procurement. One of the many significant findings of this review was that the total value of the public procurement market in Wales was put at £3 billion per annum – that is £1 billion more than it was commonly thought to be.

Although public procurement has to operate within a tightly regulated system of EU rules, the Assembly is beginning to discover that it has more room for

manoeuvre than it thought in this area. Take the example of school food. The humble and much derided 'school dinner' has become a litmus test of the capacity of the public realm to promote joined-up sustainable development. In a recent report [Re-localising the Food Chain: The Role of Creative Public Procurement](#), Adrian Morley and I showed that public procurement could deliver what we called a multiple dividend: it could deliver a [health dividend](#) by enhancing the nutrient quality of school food; it could deliver an [economic dividend](#) by creating local markets for local farmers and producers; and it could deliver an [environmental dividend](#) by reducing food miles.



Cover photograph from Aled Edwards's book, [From Protest to Process](#).

The Welsh Procurement Initiative, which aims to promote more creative procurement practices across the public sector in Wales, could be the single most important vehicle through which the Assembly persuades its suppliers to adopt more innovative forms of behaviour. If EU regulations are not the insurmountable barriers they are widely thought to be, procurement managers must nevertheless be up to the task of designing contracts which have a bigger local spin-off, which is what happens in the more innovative EU

regions. Creative public procurement, in other words, is the most powerful tool for fostering the localisation strategy that I referred to earlier, and this needs to be given much more prominence in the second term if the Assembly wants to practise what it preaches in terms of sustainable development.

Turning from the highs to the lows I find it impossible to choose the most disappointing part of the first term because it's a close call between health and transport. In assessing the Assembly's record on health it is only fair to make two points clear at the outset. Firstly, the problems are awesome because Wales has some of the highest rates of chronic disease in the EU and this is largely due to the noxious cocktail of poverty, lifestyle and diet. Secondly, a good deal of progress has been made during the first term to shift the emphasis from an illness service geared to treatment to a health and well-being service geared to prevention.

The health record may be mixed but it does have its share of highs and these include a children's commissioner, a second medical school at Swansea, widening the eligibility for free eye tests, a national diabetic retinopathy screening programme, freezing prescription charges and extending free prescriptions in a population where 89 per cent of all prescriptions are free today.

Despite these very real achievements there have been two desperately disappointing lows:

- In 1999 the Welsh Assembly Government promised that no one in Wales would have to wait more than six months to see a consultant in out-patients for the first time. In May 1999, when the promise was made, the waiting list figure stood at 21,000 – but in January 2003 it was a staggering 82,000 and in February 2003 it was still 76,000. What is the equivalent waiting list figure in the whole of England? It is just 500.

- The Welsh Assembly Government also promised that once patients had seen a consultant no one would have to wait more than 18 months to have the surgery they needed. But the number of people awaiting surgery today is 5,000 and rising. What is the equivalent waiting list figure in the whole of England? It is zero.

It is right and proper for politicians to claim credit for the highs, and they clearly need no encouragement to do so. But I cannot remember anyone in Cabinet saying that they have manifestly failed to hit these two crucial waiting list targets. The underlying cause of these problems is capacity – or rather the lack of it – and this means beds, nurses, doctors. At a time when capacity is the number one issue in the Welsh health service, one wonders what will be achieved by the creation of 22 new local health boards, the sixth restructuring in Wales in thirteen years.

I understand Jane Hutt’s arguments about the need to create a community-based health service in Wales rather than a hospital service, which is the main focus in England. Devolution, we are told, involves diversity, doing things differently to England. This may be true, but the guts of devolution has got to be *delivery* – and delivery is the one and only thing that can justify diversity.

One cannot discuss the lows of the first term without mentioning public transport and the railways in particular. Public transport is arguably the biggest and most serious policy failure of New Labour. The Assembly is unable to pursue an integrated transport policy for two reasons: it lacks the power (because this power rests with the UK government) and it lacks the resources (because the budget is managed by the Strategic Rail Authority in London).

As things stand the Assembly is thought to be the only ‘regional government’ in the EU without powers over its railways. This wholly unsustainable situation is rendered

even more serious by the fact that the Assembly has been forced to use its own budget to fund rail improvements when rail is not even part of its statutory duty! At a time when other regions and countries are building a high-speed rail infrastructure in the name of economic efficiency, social equity and environmental integrity, Wales is fast becoming the opposite – the ‘banana republic’ of a UK rail network which is ever more exercised by the problems of the over-congested South East of England.

I cannot remember anyone in Cabinet saying that they have manifestly failed to hit these two crucial waiting list targets.

Rail is the lowest of the lows of the first term, though this is nothing to do with the Assembly. What it does mean is that new powers over rail ought to be at the top of the list when the Richard Commission reports on what new powers the Assembly needs to do its job.

the devolution dividend

The good news is that the Assembly has done enough to prove that it is an investment and not just a cost, hence

we have the beginnings of a devolution dividend. The bad news is that very few people have noticed. The biggest achievements of the Assembly’s first term – notably the creation of an open and accountable system of governance and the design of a new trajectory of sustainable development – are not self-evident to the general public in Wales. To this extent devolution remains a minority sport in Wales and the Assembly needs to do far more to re-connect to what the First Minister has called ‘the street level’.

The Introduction to *Birth of Welsh Democracy* puts it more bluntly when it says “the verdict from the polls is that the Assembly has made very little impact on the lives of ordinary people and there has been disappointment at its record, whether it be in health, education or economic development.” Yet, as it also notes, the paradoxical response of the polls is not a rejection of devolution but, rather, a shift in favour of greater powers for the Assembly: “The sentiment appears to be: if we are to have an Assembly then let’s give it the powers to do the job”.

I can think of no better way of characterising the Assembly’s first term than by drawing on the words which Martin Luther King used to describe the mixed progress of the civil rights movement in the US. We’re not where we want to be. We’re not where we should be. But by God we’re not where we were.

- Kevin Morgan is Professor of European Regional Development at Cardiff University and was Chair of the Yes Campaign during the 1997 Referendum.

first term special ii

art of conversation in the bay



david melding
wonders whether
Wales has become a
more eloquent
political entity since
devolution

the National Assembly was the product of much argument and a little conversation. It is now the visible evidence of a great truth: Wales has become a political nation. We can no longer limit Welshness to a cultural identity (although it remains that in part). A much stronger civil association exists in Wales and we must all learn to converse with each other more clearly. I can hear the popular refrain “All they do is talk, talk, talk!” But do we talk well in the National Assembly, or are ours “the babblings of men who speak, but do not speak the same language” (the Conservative philosopher, Michael Oakeshott)? It is only through coherent conversation that sound policies can be adduced and tested by reasonable scrutiny. And it is not only AMs who are responsible for this political discourse within the Assembly, but rather the whole of society. The electorate is not struck mute by the act of voting.

The result of coherent conversation is not ‘consensus politics’, at least not as that rum notion is usually understood. To the winning party in an election, ‘consensus politics’ means the acceptance by the losing party of their fallen state. Here the politically lost gain redemption by acquiescence to the general will (the Holy Ghost of rationalist thought). It is not merely bad manners for the lost to question the victor’s manifesto, it is positively wicked. Not only must party X accept that party Y won, it must repent and greet the victor’s gospel.

I would suggest an alternative definition of ‘consensus politics’. It should be a political process that encourages the art of conversation and allows political parties to agree when they agree (at least half of the time) and disagree when points of difference genuinely exist. It is the ‘game’ element of politics that puts many people off and is driving down turnout at elections. The electorate is too sophisticated to be fooled by feigned arguments and pretended differences. When political parties concentrate on authentic points of disagreement, they sharpen political discourse and present real alternatives to the electorate. This can be done without damaging the stock of policies that behind the scenes receive all-party support.

I would say that the National Assembly has made some limited progress in promoting a more coherent political discourse. The voices of all four major political parties are heard loud and clear in the Assembly. This was not inevitable. The Assembly could have become a monologue for the Labour Party. We can thank Ron Davies for anticipating just how destructive such a soliloquy would have been in a fledging institution.

The regional list system ensured that there was a Conservative group of nine members, not one or two, for instance. Acts of grace by governing parties are very rare indeed; the Labour Party deserves sincere praise for the decision to use an element of proportional representation in

the Assembly's elections. Not only has this resulted in an Assembly that reflects the major strands of political thought in Wales, it has helped the Conservative Party accept the immutability of devolution in all foreseeable circumstances short of constitutional breakdown. To have left the Conservative Party without an effective voice would have damaged both the Assembly and the emerging Welsh Conservative Party.

If proportional representation has ensured that the Assembly is a benign and even harmonious Tower of Babel (with a translation unit thrown in), the internal business of the institution has been shaped by another act of political generosity. The Business Committee is made up of one member from each political party represented in the Assembly. So the dark and deep currents of Westminster's 'usual channels' do not run through the Assembly; instead a more pellucid process determines the political agenda.

The coalition government remains by far the strongest force, but the voices of the minority parties cannot be silenced. It should be noted that very little disruption has occurred in the Assembly and all parties have been content to avoid obstruction and spoiling tactics. Although I dislike the phrase, the label 'inclusive politics' has some validity in describing the conduct of Assembly business. The same can be said of the public appointments process which has been considerably improved by the inclusion of representatives from each party on the selection panels.

I have concentrated on processes rather than outcomes. However, in many of the Assembly's actions the voice of authentic consensus can be heard. The Waterhouse Report threw light on deeds of unspeakable darkness. Those who read the report were deeply affected by the catalogue of abuse inflicted on some of the most vulnerable children in society. The words of St. Matthew ring true: "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it

were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (18.6).

Yet such indignation can be a self-serving attempt to atone for past silence. Those in care did speak, but on the rare occasions they were heard, they were not believed. Now all children in Wales have a voice in the form of a Children's Commissioner, the first in the UK. Devolution has allowed us in Wales to make an articulate response to a grave crisis. It is to be hoped that the all-party consensus that called for a Children's Commissioner represents an acceptance that social care should be at the top of the political agenda.

Conversation can get too cosy. It needs some edge to be stimulating.

The Health and Social Services Committee worked in close collaboration with the Minister and helped shape policy. Generally speaking, the Committee sought to make the post of Children's Commissioner as independent as possible and the Minister accepted the need for complete impartiality. Although the Assembly appoints the Commissioner, the term is a long one (seven years) and cannot be extended or repeated. This ensures that the Commissioner does not have one eye on reappointment. There is no incentive to pull punches.

The appointment process also broke new ground. Probably for the first time anywhere, young people were central to the process and sat on the selection panel. A special representative conference was also held where young

people interviewed all of the applicants for the post of Commissioner and then made a report to the selection panel (both the conference and the selection panel reached the same conclusion). The Assembly is rightly proud of this innovation, even if it was born of the most dreadful circumstances.

Conversation can get too cosy. It needs some edge to be stimulating. Those of us who represent minority parties must occasionally answer back in civil tones. Political options exist in all mature democracies and it is the duty of minority parties to present alternative programmes of government. The 2003 Assembly elections will test the robustness of both Plaid Cymru and the Welsh Conservative Party in this respect. The election manifestos will be a key test to determine whether the political parties can speak clearly to the Welsh electorate. Any manifesto that is a mere wish list will surely be greeted with derision. If several coherent programmes for government are offered to the Welsh electorate, then the quality of political conversation will be high. The National Assembly would have succeeded in strengthening political parties in Wales; and this would be good for the future health of a new-born political nation.

Public attitudes to the National Assembly are wise and instructive. A clear (and growing) majority accept devolution. The fact that Wales is now a political nation is broadly welcomed. Assembly members seem closer to the people they represent, and access to decision-makers is easier. More scepticism is expressed about the particular actions of the Assembly's government. This is the most encouraging indication of health in our new body politic. A clear distinction is being made between the Assembly and the Assembly's government (still constitutionally Siamese twins, but formal separation is inevitable).

The National Assembly has gained a high level of acceptance and therefore legitimacy. I would regard this as a

commonplace observation, but this outcome was in no way assured. There is a rock lurking beneath these calm constitutional waters. Turnout in the second round of Assembly elections is predicted to be very low. Nevertheless, turnout is only one measure of political participation. There is ample evidence of the success of consultation exercises between the Assembly and the public and sectors like business and voluntary organisations. The Assembly has a Voluntary Sector Partnership Council (and there are Councils for Local Government and the Business Sector). Regional Committees meet in every part of Wales and hold “open microphone” sessions to allow the public to question AMs and ministers. In these forums, which are still underdeveloped, conversations are unpredictable and cannot be easily anticipated or controlled by the government.

The art of conversation is key to the success of any free political association. Good conversation leads to sound judgement and the likelihood of successful policy decisions. When conversation is coherent, many voices mingle, some grow fainter others stronger, and the tenses of many generations are present. According to Hobbes, without speech and conversation there can be no “commonwealth nor society nor contract nor peace”. Political conversation must be open to all and never made the preserve of politicians. Conversation is not true or false (as arguments claim to be) but more or less coherent, clear or confused, delightful or dull. The people of Wales are yet to decide whether they think the Assembly delightful or dull, but they want to continue the conversation.

- *David Melding is Conservative AM for South Wales Central and his party's spokesman for health and social services. This article is an edited version of his chapter in Aled Edwards (Ed) [From Protest to Process, Stories from the National Assembly for Wales](#), Cyhoeddiadau'r Gair, 2003.*



In the appointment of a Children's Commissioner, the first in the UK, 'devolution has allowed us to make an articulate response to a grave crisis'. The Commissioner Peter Clarke (pictured above in his Swansea office) is photographed below engaging with his large constituency at the National Eisteddfodd in Denbigh last year.



first term special iii

devolution's colour code



charlotte williams
assesses the impact of
the National Assembly
on ethnic minorities

a review of the impacts of the first four years of Welsh devolution on ethnic minorities can certainly be said to reveal both positive and negative effects. One area of scrutiny is the extent to which the Assembly Government has 'deepened democracy' and delivered on its promises of inclusive governance. Given the historical marginalisation of minority ethnic groups in Wales it could be argued that anything was going to be better than nothing. Or was it?

Devolution was always going to be a risky business for black and minority ethnic groups. Its identification with the nationalist project would be bound to foster suspicion and mistrust amongst these communities. Prior to devolution Wales expressed itself primarily as a nation based on cultural distinctiveness and not as a political state. Those in the minority communities had little idea, therefore, of what kind of state Wales would produce if it were to be self governing.

One of the early challenges to the Assembly was to change this preconception and align itself with civic rather than ethnic, indeed ethnically exclusive, notions of identity. At the outset there were many declarations by the parties that they would appeal to the inclusive and civic instincts of the Welsh people. But there is a big difference between an appeal and action. The first rebuff to such inclusive notions came with the failure to elect a single Assembly member from the ranks of the minority ethnic population.

This might be old news now but it remains highly significant to minority communities. Trevor Phillips, Chair of the London Assembly and of the Commission for Racial Equality, declared the new democratic bodies 'ethnically cleansed'. In this respect the Assembly mirrored the majority of democratic institutions right across Europe. Prior to the Scottish parliamentary elections the head of the Commission for Racial Equality Scotland referred to the "distasteful spectacle of black people being paraded in unwinnable seats." Similar outrage was expressed in Wales with allegations of orchestrated sidelining of

black candidates by the Labour party in particular. In a country with one of the oldest black communities in Europe it was clear that there could be no greater signal of institutional malaise.

The issue of descriptive representation will doubtless command considerable attention in the forthcoming elections and several of the political parties have taken steps to avoid accusations of failing to engage with diversity. There is a strong case for visible representation. If only a symbolic gesture it can act as a strong counter to the apathy and alienation which characterises the experience of black and ethnic minorities throughout Britain in relation to mainstream political processes.

However, as a mechanism for addressing minority interests and for acting as what Shamit Saggar has called a "colour coded check and balance" on policy outputs, the election of one AM of ethnic minority origin will achieve nothing. Neither will it address the wider challenge of increasing investments in national identity amongst ethnic minorities.

Most people from ethnic minority communities remain decidedly cool about Welsh identity. As one prominent community activist said at the Foreign Policy Centre conference addressed by Rhodri Morgan, "I was born and bred here, I've worked all my life here and I'm growing old here, but I don't feel Welsh." This type of statement clearly reflects an aspiration to be seen as Welsh, yet few people from minority groups feel a sufficient sense of inclusion to confidently claim a Welsh identity. People are more often

prepared to commit to a specific locale – “I’m from Butetown” – offering little disruption to dominant notions of who is and who isn’t ‘proper Welsh’. It is certainly the case that people from ethnic minorities have, until very recently, demanded very little from the nation. Dialogues on national identity have more usually been focussed on Welsh/English or more specifically Welsh speaking/English speaking dimensions and on the wider issue of Britishness. Writers in the three Celtic nations have pointed to the de-politicisation and marginalisation of issues of racial diversity in debates on nationalism in these countries. One of the unequivocal impacts of devolution has been to reverse this trend and to make these nations at least more self conscious of their minorities.

However, the current preoccupation with identity should not mask the key issues of redistribution, representation, security and presence that continue to be concerns amongst black and minority ethnic communities. Identity is something these individuals are well versed at negotiating and multiple identifications best describe the experience of most. It is when citizenship rights become embedded that identity investments increase.

At this level there is some cause for optimism in post-devolution Wales. The Assembly has introduced some

pioneering structures to ensure engagement with minority interests across the range of its functions. In particular, there are a number of new organisational mechanisms to ensure multiple points of entry to the corridors of power. It is now possible for members of minority ethnic communities to have direct access to key civil servants in a way never before possible.

progressively, the Assembly, in contrast to Scotland, base their targets on the travel-to-work area populations as opposed to the national average, thus reflecting the urban concentrations of minorities. There are, therefore, some tangible impacts – not least the development of a statistical base in most policy areas from which to monitor and evaluate change.



Children from the Rainbow Club, Butetown, Cardiff, 1957. Courtesy of the Butetown History and Arts Centre, the picture provides the cover photograph of *A Tolerant Nation? Exploring Ethnic Diversity in Wales*, co-edited by Charlotte Williams, Neil Evans and Paul O’Leary, University of Wales Press, 2003.

All this is new and it is as yet early days to offer a thoroughgoing assessment of policy impacts. Nonetheless, the development of a ‘race’ sensitive public policy that is at least attempting to mainstream equality issues and involve members of minority ethnic communities can clearly be marked as post 1999. This is an unequivocal good.

Democracy was never going to be easy and, whether we asked for it or not, close to home governance comes with a price. Devolution is and will be very demanding of black and ethnic minorities. Power to the people implies heavy responsibilities. There are now acres of mahogany board tables to sit round in ones and twos in tokenistic if not substantive presence. Devolved government implies voting in greater numbers than at present; giving up a suspicion of the electoral

register, of political parties and learning to trust. Considerable efforts are being made to promote diversity in public appointments amongst Assembly staff, and to promote racial equality within key organisations such as the NHS and local government in Wales. Very

Yet the minority communities have started from a very weak political base and from a very marginalised position to

the extent that the desire for inclusion is frustrated by a number of inhibiting factors. The dispersal and diversity of the black and minority ethnic population, the fragile black voluntary sector, the heavy burden of consultation, the drain of black élites, the problem of tokenism and the legacy of the passive role of political parties all take their toll. These factors militate against effective engagement.

A long hard look at the political profile as we enter the next elections indicates the situation starkly. There are no black MPs in Wales and no AMs. Of the 800 public appointments just 16 (2 per cent) are from ethnic minority backgrounds. There are 1,257 councillors in Welsh local authorities and 13 (1 per cent) are from an ethnic minority group. A 'guesstimate' suggests no more than half-a-dozen community and town councillors from a potential pool of 8,000. Black groups comprise just 1 per cent of all voluntary groups in Wales. The Assembly government itself, after vigorous recruitment strategies, now has just 38 (1 per cent) ethnic minority employees out of a total 3,800 staff. This situation cannot simply be a reflection of availability pools when the ethnic minority population of areas like Cardiff parallel the UK percentage.

If there were some reluctance to invest at this level on the part of ethnic minorities this would be understandable. All the evidence suggests that participation has its risks. Routine access does not equal power sharing. Ingress comes at the expense of critical distance. Collaboration easily translates into incorporation wherein challenge and dissent is muffled in the desire to work with easy partners. Channels of communication become managed by a cadre of ethnic brokers, carefully selected not to rock the boat. 'Good blacks' are readily recruited as opposed to the awkward squad. Top-down smokescreen politics replaces the fire of bottom up grassroots activism.

Herein lies the possibility of the 'harm' that the First Minister rejected. In this new relationship with the Welsh

Assembly Government many minority ethnic groups have become politically 'ethnicised' when they were just not 'ethnic' before. Suddenly groups that were purely social and cultural in nature have been activated by the new consultation mechanisms and the possibility of funding, status and power.

This is a political mobilisation based in no small measure on antagonism and conflict as groups fight amongst themselves for the white limelight. Now rivalry, allegations of racism, nepotism and sleaze cripple the newly emerging 'ethnic' lobby. Critical movers and shakers have been deposed in very public tribal wars, resulting in the dissipation of élites. In addition, individuals are increasingly being forced into somewhat artificial ethnic categories for the purpose of policy intervention, especially in areas where there are dispersed minorities as opposed to the urban concentrations.

But what if ethnic just isn't ethnic at all? What if such individuals have found ways of associating and articulating needs beyond what Paul Hirst calls the "communities of fate"? What if, perish the thought, it is the Assembly itself that is creating 'the problem of ethnicity' as opposed to reflecting and responding to an ethnically diverse society? One only needs to consider the way in which the English have been newly ethnicised in post-devolution Wales to grasp the principle of this thought.

It is therefore critical to ask on the eve of a newly elected Assembly whether these new paradigms of inclusion can and will work for the benefit of minority communities. Are the old assumptive worlds indeed being challenged or is a curious tag-on multiculturalism being institutionalised instead? Are we witnessing processes of adaptation and real active engagement or increased apathy and alienation? Most likely, in line with the general population of Wales, the Assembly is seen by minorities to have had little immediate impact on their everyday lives. It is the few who are capitalising on its potential

to lift the voice and influence of ethnic minorities.

Progressive politics does not necessarily lead to a participatory culture or to a society that is truly multicultural. The test for the Assembly in engaging with ethnic minorities involves issues of trust, legitimacy, image and the effective transfer of power. These cannot be resolved overnight.

The tests the minority communities themselves face in the new Wales are increasingly complex, often contradictory and perhaps lie beyond the remit of formal politics. They involve the dynamic between nationality and citizenship, between investments in notions of shared cultural identity and investments in the issue of rights – political identity. In terms of the former, dominant imaginings of Welsh identity as largely ethnocultural, white and/or Welsh speaking continue to exclude the majority of the black and ethnic minority population. At the level of day to day interactions ethnic minorities still face all kinds of scrutiny of their credentials and their commitment or allegiance before they can partake fully in Welsh social, economic and political life.

Attachment to Welsh identity is necessarily ambivalent for most and may turn out to be more a product of a shared anti-British sentiment (as Britishness is associated with a certain type of Englishness) than any strong restatement of Welshness. In the new Wales, however, where assertions of Welsh identity gain ground over identifications with Britishness, many people from ethnic minorities are taking the opportunities to engage more fully in redefining the national imagining.

- *Charlotte Williams is a lecturer at the University of Wales, Bangor. She is currently involved in an ESRC funded project on Social Capital and the Participation of Minority Groups in Government. Her biography Sugar and Slate was published by Planet Books in 2002.*

first term special iv

trajectory of change

john osmond puts the Richard Commission on the Assembly's powers under the spotlight

Left to its own devices there is little likelihood that Labour would have embarked on opening up a debate on Wales' constitutional future at this juncture. The Richard Commission on the Assembly's powers and electoral arrangements, which began work last September, was established as part of the coalition deal at the behest of the Liberal Democrats.

Labour's unease is reflected in the fact that it has put off making its own submission to the Commission until after the May election. At the same time the Commission has proved useful to Labour in putting the constitutional issue on hold until then. It was written into the Partnership Agreement that the Commission would not report until the end of this year. In this year's Welsh Governance Centre annual lecture in March, First Minister Rhodri Morgan made a virtue of the fact that, so far as he was concerned, the Richard Commission had taken the question of Wales' constitutional future out of the forthcoming election:

"The people of Wales require an experience of Welsh politics that is about delivering and deliberating on the things that improve the quality of their lives. I have been

determined that the 2003 Wales General Election should be about these things – the economy, public services, regeneration – and not about the Welsh constitution ... our forthcoming Wales General Election is not about the Richard Commission."

The result of the Commission's report will be judged as much by the extent it will wield influence in Westminster as its contents. And in that regard the influence of the Chairman, the Labour peer Lord Richard of Ammanford, will be important. He certainly has what might be termed 'bottom'. He was an early member of the Tony Blair's Cabinet as Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Lords, between 1997-98. However, he fell out with the Lord Chancellor Lord Irvine and left front line politics at that point.

It is difficult to assess what influence he might have in Whitehall these days. Certainly his grasp of the detail and

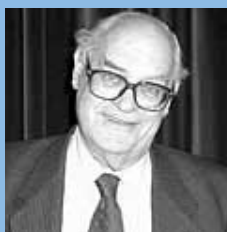
personalities of Welsh politics was rather distant when he took on the task, which arguably provided him with the required sense of detachment. Announcing his appointment in April last year Rhodri Morgan described him as being "... halfway between being 100 per cent Labour Government loyalist, never departing from the party line, and an independent who is outside the party. He is the right kind of person in terms of having clout in Whitehall and Westminster."

Four members of the Commission were nominated by each of the political parties, and five public appointments were made following advertisement and interviews (see Panel). It could not be argued that the political nominees were chosen from the front rank of the parties. And neither did the public appointments produce any high profile personalities. The overall sense was of a low key commission, with only perhaps half the members initially having great insight into the

constitutional and political intricacies with which they had to grapple.

The nominations of Ted Rowlands and Laura McAllister say something about the respective attitudes of the parties that nominated them. His scepticism of

Lord Richard of Ammanford, chair of the commission



Previously MP for Barons Court (London) 1964-74, Lord Richard was the UK Permanent Representative at the United Nations, 1974-79, Chair of the Rhodesia Conference in 1976, a former European Commissioner between 1981-84, and a member of the Shadow Cabinet as Leader of the House of Lords between 1992-97. Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Lords, between 1997-98.



Stormont: The Commission is anxious to discover whether the operation of primary powers in Northern Ireland might have greater application to Welsh circumstances.

devolution owes a good deal to his vehement opposition to PR, which will ensure that this question does not get an easy ride in the Commission. As for Laura McAllister she is not a member of Plaid Cymru these days, though has been a candidate in the past. Her semi-detached position may be convenient for the party if it wishes to distance itself from any consensus that emerges.

The Commission has its own secretariat, headed by Carys Evans, previously a civil servant working in the Assembly Government's Strategic Policy Unit, and before that in Whitehall, serving for a time as personal private secretary to John Major when he was at the Treasury. She brings a grasp of detail and acumen to the job and will undoubtedly be influential in being the main hand in drafting the eventual report.

So far the Commission has received around 40 written responses to its consultation and has heard more than 50 witnesses give oral evidence. They have organised three seminars, on the constitutional, legal and electoral

dimensions of their agenda. The commission has visited Westminster, the Scottish Parliament and has plans to visit Stormont in Belfast. It is anxious to discover whether the operation of primary powers in Northern Ireland might have greater application to Welsh circumstances than the Scottish example. The visit to Scotland convinced many Commission members that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution to devolution in a constitutionally asymmetric UK.

On the other hand, the balance of the arguments the Commission has heard, certainly from the academic direction,

has been in favour of extending the Assembly's powers. Intellectually, a strong case can be marshalled to argue that the Government of Wales Act established an inherently unstable constitutional arrangement that needs further development. The changes in the Assembly's own architecture, with the creation of the independent Presiding Office on the one hand and the emergence of the Welsh Assembly Government on the other, certainly points in this direction.

In addition, survey evidence that the Commission has heard indicates a strong public shift in favour of extending the Assembly's powers. Since the referendum those favouring a Parliament with law-making and tax raising powers along Scottish lines has nearly doubled, while those opting for no elected body has fallen substantially (see the table below).

At the same time, a number of Assembly Ministers, including Economic Development Minister Andrew Davies and Education Minister Jane Davidson, have presented evidence to the effect that they have not been hampered by any constitutional constrictions in pursuing their policy agendas. On the other hand, however, in her evidence to the Commission, Finance Minister, Edwina Hart, attacked the Home Office for refusing to collaborate with the Assembly Government. She implied that, in contrast with its attitude to the Scottish Parliament, the Home Office

constitutional preferences (%) in Wales, 1997, 1999 and 2001

Constitutional Preference	1997	1999	2001
Wales should become independent	14%	10%	12%
Wales should remain part of the UK, with its own elected parliament which has its law-making and taxation powers	20%	30%	39%
Wales should remain part of the UK with its own elected assembly which has limited law-making powers only	27%	35%	26%
Wales should remain part of the UK without an elected parliament	40%	25%	24%

Source: Institute of Welsh Politics, University of Wales Aberystwyth.

did not take the Assembly seriously, implying that this was because it did not have the same powers.


In February the Liberal Democrats, Plaid Cymru, and the Welsh Conservatives all made submissions. In the process the Commission became the focus for an intensifying debate on the Assembly's future. Though he said that no fundamental changes should be made to the Assembly "at this stage", Conservative leader Nick Bourne, argued that its powers should be tested. As he put it:

"We have suggested, for example, paying hardship grants to Welsh students of the amount they are obliged to pay in tuition fees to universities in the United Kingdom. I would term this as muscular devolution. However, the Administration has wrung its hands and said that it has no power to abandon tuition fees in Wales. A sensible approach to ascertaining the precise powers of the National Assembly would be to have a dedicated policy unit within the institution, setting out the existing powers and policy options for the government of Wales."

The Liberal Democrats made the most comprehensive submission, calling for a Welsh Senedd with primary legislation and tax varying powers in the context of a federal United Kingdom. Plaid Cymru's submission was more measured in tone, delineating in some detail how evolutionary steps could be taken to improve the current settlement. At the same time, like the Liberal Democrats, Plaid called for an 80 member Assembly, elections by STV, a national public service for Wales, and a review of the Barnett formula. Although it reiterated its adherence to "full national status" for Wales within the EU, equivalent to Ireland or Denmark, Plaid argued that, "We wish to make it clear that we do not regard legislative devolution as a mere staging post to full national status."

membership of the Richard Commission

political nominees

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Labour:
Ted Rowlands, former Merthyr MP (1972-2001) and Welsh Office Minister 1969-70 and 1974-75.

Though pro-devolution in the 1960s and 1970s he swung to opposing an Assembly in 1997. Brought a good deal of scepticism to the notion of extending the Assembly's powers. Lives in Carmarthenshire.

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Conservative:
Paul Valerio, first Lord Mayor of Swansea in 1982. Councillor, City of Swansea. Retired from family business in the amusement industry. Lives in the Gower.

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Liberal Democrat:
Peter Price, a solicitor and former Conservative Member of European Parliament (1979 – 1994); joined

the Liberal Democrats in the mid-1990s. Member of the National Assembly Standing Orders Commission. Lives in Cardiff.

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Plaid Cymru:
Laura McAllister, a Senior Lecturer in Politics at the Institute of Public Administration and Management,

University of Liverpool, author of *Plaid Cymru: The Emergence of a Political Party* (Seren, 2001). From Bridgend, lives in Liverpool.

public appointments

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Eira Davies is the Managing Director of a web publishing business. Member of the Board of S4C and of Coleg Llandrillo Cymru. Lives in

Wrexham.

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Vivienne Sugar Local Government consultant, former Chief Executive of the City and County of Swansea from 1995 until July 2002.

Now appointed Chair of the Welsh Consumer Council. Lives in Swansea.

- 

Tom Jones is a farmer from Welshpool, Powys. Chair of Wales Council for Voluntary Action, and a member of the Countryside Council

for Wales and Chair of the Millennium Stadium Charitable Trust.

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Huw Thomas from Clowyn Bay. Director of Taro Consultancy, and a former Chief Executive of Denbighshire County Council from 1995 to

2001 and before of Gwynedd County Council. RNID Trustee for Wales.

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Sir Michael Wheeler-Booth was Clerk of the Parliaments at Westminster. Member of the Royal Commission on House of Lords Reform and of

National Assembly Standing Orders Commission. Special lecturer Magdalen College, Oxford.

Last December the Assembly's leading lawyer, Counsel General Winston Roddick QC told the Richard Commission that Wales should have the same law making powers as the Scottish Parliament. As he put it, "There is no point holding high office in the church if you do not believe in it." He argued that the current devolution settlement does not have "an enduring quality" for two main reasons:

- The corporate body established by the Government of Wales Act has, in practice evolved into a parliamentary body and needs fresh legislation to formalise this development
- The present structures rely on an arbitrary difference between primary and secondary legislation – that is to say on what the Westminster Parliament decides, measure by measure, shall be provided through primary and secondary legislation.

And in his evidence to the Commission the Permanent Secretary Sir Jon Shortridge made it clear that the civil service, as it had developed during the first term, could cope with primary legislative powers:

"... compared with the changes that have already taken place, the acquisition of further powers, including those of primary legislation, would represent a manageable progression, not a major step change, in terms of the demands made upon us."

Large determinants on the approach adopted by the Commission will be the outcome of the forthcoming Assembly election, and subsequently the evidence presented by the Welsh Labour Party. Both are likely to be highly influential. However, it seems reasonably clear that there is potential for a consensus to be achieved within the Commission on the following propositions:

- The *de facto* separation of powers within the Assembly, between the executive (the Assembly Government in Cathays Park) and the legislature

- (the Assembly in Cardiff Bay), and the abandonment of the 'corporate body', be acknowledged *de jure* in legislation at Westminster.
- The Assembly gradually acquires primary powers over defined functional areas, beginning probably with education and culture, and developing to include health and aspects of environmental and rural policy. A mechanism might be devised for drawing down such powers over time with the Wales Office negotiating deals piecemeal with successive Whitehall departments.
- A likely rejection of tax varying powers for the Assembly, though this issue has yet to be fully explored.
- An increase in the size of the Assembly from the present 60 to 80, with a corresponding decrease in the number of Westminster MPs from 40 to the low 30s. Some point in the Assembly's acquisition of primary legislative powers may need to be identified to trigger this change if a gradualist route is adopted.
- Options put forward for a change in the electoral system to embrace

greater proportionality than presently applies, but with no specific recommendation.

A key issue will be whether the Commission will recommend a further referendum before such changes are put in place. If it supports the idea that movement towards legislative powers should be a gradual process over time, then this should reduce the pressure for a referendum. On the other hand, Welsh MPs at Westminster are likely to call for one if they see their number being reduced.

Following publication of the Commission's report, probably in early 2004, the timetable will be dictated by Westminster. Rhodri Morgan himself told the Assembly when the Commission was established that any recommendations requiring primary legislation would have to appear in manifestos at the time of the next Westminster general election in 2005 or 2006. He also said that the timing of the 2004 Intergovernmental Conference, which will be considering a major revision to the EU's Treaties, was important.

What Rhodri Morgan appears to have in mind is that separate arguments made at the Welsh and European Union levels will reinforce one another in helping persuade a Westminster government to give ground on extending primary legislative powers to the National Assembly, perhaps by 2007. The likelihood is that events will either accelerate this timetable, or conspire to set it back by five to ten years. Either way, we are on a trajectory of change in a devolutionary direction.

- John Osmond is Director of the IWA. This article is based on a Paper delivered to an Economic and Social Research Council conference in Cardiff in March 2003 on *The Dynamics of Devolution in Wales*.

winston roddick QC



"There is no point holding high office in the church if you do not believe in it."

sir jon shortridge

"...the acquisition of further powers, including those of primary legislation, would represent a manageable progression"



ticking the box

school/college/university term
Go to 36

7 What is your country of birth?

England Wales

Scotland

Northern Ireland

Republic of Ireland

Ebewhere, please write in the present name of the country

unpacking the Welsh 2001 census results
denis balsom finds subtle connections between the language and nationality

to a general sigh of relief the long awaited Welsh language statistics from the 2001 Census found that the number of Welsh speakers has increased, reversing nearly a century of decline. The new Census found 576,000 Welsh speakers aged 3 and over, that is 21 per cent overall and a two per cent increase on the equivalent number in 1991.

Whilst these data are comparable with past Censuses, the 2001 survey also asked people whether or not they 'understood' Welsh. A further 138,000 claimed to understand, but not speak Welsh. And an additional 84,000 gave some combination of positive responses that was imprecise, making it difficult to work out whether they could understand, speak, read or write Welsh. The Census was therefore able to publish a figure in excess of 750,000, or 28 per cent of people, who had reported one or more skills in the Welsh language. At last, it appears as if our official statisticians are taking some account of the complexity of the language situation in Wales. This involves recognizing that, in a bilingual community, the apparently straightforward question 'Do you speak Welsh' cannot be fully answered with a simple Yes or No.

The 2001 Census is also recalled for the furore over the 'tick box'. A question that allowed the Scots and Irish to state their perception of nationality was not carried in Wales, denying the Welsh the opportunity to assert their sense of separate identity. As a consequence, a boycott of the whole Census was demanded by some, whilst the statisticians suggested that, for those who felt strongly, Welsh could be written in under the category 'other'. In the

event, the response to the call for a boycott was modest and is claimed to have had a statistically insignificant impact upon the validity of the Census as a whole. Within Wales, however, it seems likely that a disproportionate number of the protesters were probably Welsh speakers and thus, conceivably, the published data may slightly under-report the total numbers of literate Welsh language users. Notwithstanding this confusion over nationality, the Census has chosen to publish details of those who did identify themselves as Welsh, even though the statistical validity of such data is far weaker than we have the right to expect from the Office of National Statistics.

The innate Welshness of Blaenau Gwent is not undermined by its lack of Welsh speakers.

The new official figures on the Welsh speaking population will be universally used to define a key social cleavage with Wales. The contemporary sociology of Wales, however, has identified that a more subjective sense of national identity is equally

significant in explaining voting behaviour and other social mores in the population of Wales. There is a close correlation to, between these factors and place of birth. It is striking, for example, the high percentages of those born in Wales in the Valleys is accompanied by high proportions of the population giving their civic nationality as Welsh. It is the interaction between these three social attributes – language, Welsh birth, and identity – that characterises modern Wales where a common sense of Welshness is a force for unity, rather than language appearing to divide.

Whilst the Welsh identity data from the Census is flawed, fortunately a recent, major, labour force survey also asked questions concerning identity and perceived identity. This study drew upon a sample of over 20,000, was published by the National Assembly

and can be considered statistically robust (see Table below). Interestingly, it confirms that the rank order correlation between the geography of language and identity is fairly low. This is not to deny that Welsh speakers are not fervent Welsh identifiers, but rather that today’s communities in Wales have a rather more complex composition. The innate Welshness of Blaenau Gwent, for example, is not undermined by its lack of Welsh speakers.

Both these characteristics have been shown to impact upon voting patterns and loyalties. At the coming elections to the National Assembly, a key decision for most voters will be the allocation of their second, regional list, ballot. In regions with strong Labour representation from the constituencies the likelihood of Labour being awarded additional seats from the list is slight. In these seats, perceptive electors will be

looking to support the party that best complements their constituency choice. The logic of recent coalition politics in the Assembly suggests that, for Labour voters, this should be the Liberal Democrats. However, persistent political research has shown that Labour voters, especially in traditional south Wales, are likely to consider Plaid Cymru as their next preferred party, especially amongst those who have a strong sense of Welsh national identity.

It is an apparent paradox of Welsh politics that while Labour and Plaid Cymru are most at odds as parties, their supporters share so much in common. However, a glance at the statistics provides many explanations why this is the case.

- Denis Balsom is Editor of *The Wales Yearbook* and a political consultant with *HTV Wales*.

welsh speakers, welsh born, and welsh identifiers					
County	2001 Census % Speaking Welsh	1991 Census % Speaking Welsh	Change from 1991	% born in Wales ¹	% Giving national identity as Welsh ²
Gwynedd	69	72	-3	71.8	69.9
Ynys Mon	60	62	-2	67.7	60.1
Ceredigion	52	59	-7	64.2	62.2
Carmarthen	50	55	-5	81.8	76
Conwy	29	31	-2	53.5	49.5
Denbighshire	26	27	-1	57.3	40.9
Pembroke	22	18	4	69.7	42.8
Powys	21	21	0	60.3	56.2
Neath Port Talbot	18	18	0	90.4	82.7
Wrexham	18	18	0	73.6	67.1
Flintshire	14	13	+1	53.0	43.3
Swansea	13	13	0	84.1	73.0
Rhondda Cynon Taf	12	9	+3	91.1	84.3
Vale of Glam	11	7	+4	75.8	69.9
Caerphilly	11	6	+5	90.4	82.5
Torfaen	11	3	+8	85.1	75.8
Cardiff	11	7	+4	79.1	44.2
Bridgend	11	8	+3	85.2	79.1
Merthyr Tydfil	10	8	+2	92.0	87.0
Newport	10	2	+8	81.1	66.5
Blaenau Gwent	9	2	+7	92.5	85.2
Monmouth	9	2	+7	62.1	54.3
Wales	21	19	+2	75.5	69.2

1 Column 4: Assembly Government estimates based on the 1991 census .
 2 Column 5: Assembly Government Wales Labour Force Survey 2001 / 02.

theatre special i

a stage for wales

michael bogdanov
says Cardiff and
Swansea should
collaborate to
produce the
forerunner for a
federal national
theatre



The auditorium at Swansea Grand Theatre – “The best conversion of an existing venue in the British Isles”.

Cardiff is the only European capital city that does not possess a single major adult producing theatre or company. Indeed, there is no such company in the whole of south Wales where the majority of the population live. In any other comparable conurbation of two million people in the UK the populace have access to at least three, sometimes six, major producing houses with a plethora of smaller companies within a radius of thirty miles.

What activity there is in Cardiff is confined to the sporadic output of a couple of small groups and the Sherman Theatre, which has a brief to cater for children and young people. Yet Wales possesses some of the greatest wealth of young acting talent currently on display, apart from a number of international icons. The tragedy is that this talent all trained outside Wales and is to be seen on the stages of London and New York, or starring in films made in Hollywood and Pinewood.

It is widely recognised that such shortcomings have economic as well as cultural consequences. The Committee that drew up the short list for the European Capital of Culture 2008 identified the palpable lack of theatre as the main weakness of Cardiff's bid. It is therefore axiomatic that if Cardiff is to have a chance of winning it must possess its own major producing theatre company, its work an acknowledged benchmark of national and international excellence, reflecting the multicultural and bilingual make-up of Wales as a whole.

How should this challenge be addressed? Obviously the best solution would be a custom built multi-flexible theatre or, at the very least, the conversion of an existing building to house an 850 seat and a 350 seat auditorium. However, there is neither the political will nor the finance available to embark on another new building project with the Millennium Centre, the new Richard Rogers Assembly, and the redevelopment of the Royal Welsh

College all coming on stream in the next few years. A new building therefore must remain the long term goal.

In the short term, taking advantage of available spaces, we should play to our strengths and think in the first instance of combining the facilities of Swansea with Cardiff. Not only would this bring into contention complementary venues, but it would maximise the potential audience and put in place the foundation for a truly national theatre for the whole of Wales.

No less than Cardiff, Swansea's facilities and cultural history should be deployed in this effort. In the Grand Theatre Swansea possesses the best conversion of an existing venue in the British Isles. The addition of superb front of house facilities, a studio theatre, rehearsal room and restaurant make an ideal location from which to launch a national theatre company. Cardiff has a thriving receiving and presenting venue in the New Theatre, home for so long to Welsh National

Opera. However, the New Theatre has no production facilities, no wing or backstage space, and its stage lacks depth and width. As a result it is unsuitable in its present form to be a producing house

Nevertheless, when the WNO relocates to the Millennium Centre in Cardiff Bay the New Theatre will still have an important role in the cultural life of Cardiff. Arguably, the Millennium Centre, built for receiving and staging large lyrical theatre presentations, will be too big to house the majority of touring productions. In these circumstances the New Theatre will remain the only venue able to receive

the enormous amount of touring product available. The Sherman Theatre, its infrastructure sadly neglected over a period of thirty years, has enormous potential to expand upward and outward to provide excellent production facilities.

The Swansea Grand, and Cardiff's New and Sherman Theatres should therefore become the dual home of a major new producing company reflecting the language culture of the nation by working in both Welsh and English. The company should link with Theatre Clwyd Cymru in the north and the predicated Welsh Language National Theatre to embrace the whole

of Wales and beyond. We would then have in place a genuine National Theatre, operating federally from the major urban centres of the country

The administrative model would be that of the Welsh National Opera, with offices in Swansea and Cardiff. The company – working title The Wales Theatre Company (WTC) – would tour south Wales before embarking on a larger tour of the rest of Wales and Britain. It would produce both large and medium scale work with associated educational and community programmes, in conjunction with the Sherman, whose brief should be extended to encompass a full time



Swansea's jewel.

output of Young People's work, specially commissioned and devised for children. It would form an association with Script Cymru and the newly created Welsh Language National Theatre to create productions of new and existing work in Welsh.

The WTC would be interactive, instigating co-productions and sharing production facilities with theatres in other parts of Wales, Britain and Europe – in particular with the middle-scale venues and Theatr Clwyd Cymru, whose residencies at the New Theatre should continue and form an important part of the overall profile. It is also imperative that the WTC's eclectic programme of work originates from unconventional spaces as well as orthodox performance venues.

The company would comprise, at any one time, between twenty and fifty actors – inviting back many of the self-exiled, high-profile, world class Welsh actors, directors, designers etc. to take part, thus ensuring a further life for each project, for example a season in London and International Festivals.

October/November 2003 marks two important moments in the Welsh literary calendar – the 50th anniversaries of the death of Dylan Thomas and the first stage performance, in America, of *Under Milk Wood*. During the year the eyes of the literary, dramatic and cinematic world will be focused on Thomas and Wales. A high profile production of *Under Milk Wood* is planned for the Grand Theatre November 2003, followed by a specially commissioned new adaptation of *A Child's Christmas in Wales* for children in Welsh and English. Both productions will tour Wales and the UK after a season in Cardiff, followed, for *Under Milk Wood*, by a season in London and in New York. This would be made possible by attracting actors with an international profile to take part. There would be an educational programme in Welsh and English about Dylan Thomas to tour schools.

Though almost upon us, these two productions, touring as they will throughout Wales and the UK, could serve as a unofficial launch of the company in the late Autumn 2003. It would continue its programme of work into 2004, offering large and medium scale productions of new plays and classics in both languages plus an educational and community output of devised projects.

It is significant that other cities on the shortlist for the 2008 Cultural Capital of Europe ... have a long tradition of theatre provision.

2005 marks the centenary of Cardiff as a capital and the WTC should celebrate this with a specially commissioned large-scale community project involving professional artists and the people of the city. The project would be an exploration of the social and industrial highs and lows of Cardiff's development before emerging as the dynamic modern cultural and political powerhouse that it is now becoming. There would be particular emphasis on the multi-cultural aspect of Cardiff's life, particularly on those communities whose profile is all but invisible. Cardiff 2005 would form part of a series of south Wales' community projects exploring for example, the heritage of coal and steel. These performances would take place in unconventional spaces in the midst of the communities involved – for instance,

coal in the winding shed in Tonypany, steel in the steel works in Port Talbot.

The output would increase annually until, by 2008, its repertoire would consist of approximately some eighteen pieces of work. The aim should be to establish a company of international reputation in the Welsh and English languages, but with its roots inextricably linked to the communities in which it is based – an umbilical cord to the culture that gives it birth. As W. B. Yeats put it, describing the mission of the Abbey National Theatre he founded in Dublin in the early part of the last century, its purpose was "to bring to the stage the deeper thoughts and emotions of Ireland."

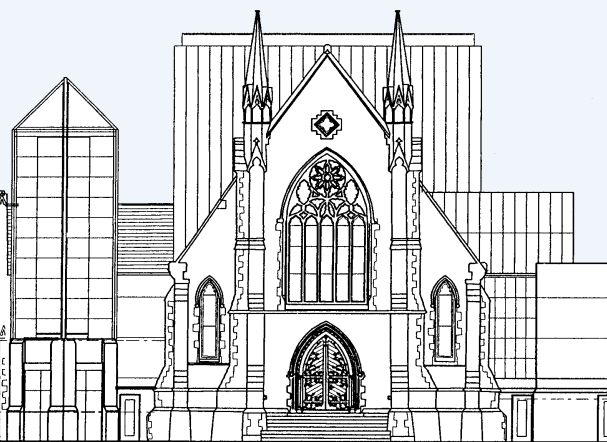
It is significant that other cities on the shortlist for the 2008 Cultural Capital of Europe – Liverpool, Newcastle/Gateshead, Birmingham, Bristol – have a long tradition of theatre provision. Liverpool has injected an annual revenue budget of £2 million pounds and rising into its consortium of four producing theatres in preparation for its bid. Newcastle/Gateshead have converted the Baltic Flour Mills into spectacular performance and gallery spaces and are investing a further £1 million a year into live theatre. Birmingham and Glasgow (a previous holder of the title and still a benchmark for achievement) have been revitalised as theatre centres.

The effect has been to provide a quality of life that encourages the development and relocation of business and industries, and increase these cities' appeal as attractive residential locations. We could expect a similar impact to occur in Wales as a result of investment in our theatre, in conjunction with an increase in the provision for other art-forms. It is ironic that we can sing, dance and play nationally but we still have no means to express ourselves on stage. It is time to fill in this embarrassing hole in our cultural garden.

- *Michael Bogdanov is a free-lance theatre and film director.*

theatre special ii

modest venue – melodramatic debate



Front elevation plans for Ebeneser Chapel,
Charles Street, Cardiff.

terry hands teases out
what we mean by
'national' in
addressing our north-
south theatrical divide

there used to be a sign hanging in the foyer of the old Theatr Clwyd. It read: "The nearest thing to a National Theatre of Wales – The Sunday Times". When I became Director in 1997 I took it down. For a start the theatre was not Welsh, nor did it have a national remit. And what could be a National theatre in a country with neither a mainstream theatre tradition nor a producing-house infrastructure? Still, the compliment was well-meant and worth having. My associate Tim Baker and I set out to earn it.

Quality had to be the key. We needed to set standards of production and performance that at least equalled anything to be seen on the other side of the border. Which meant forming a company. One-off productions rarely attain the levels that ensembles can achieve. And the company had to be Welsh. It was not easy. So many Welsh actors, without producing theatres in their own country had left to work in England and they were hesitant to return. It was understandable. They had seen too many false dawns.

Eventually we put together a company of 45 actors, 80 per cent Welsh – half of them Welsh speaking – in a repertoire of modern classics and new writing and kept them together for nine months. This first company would form the core of future ensembles and the numbers would grow to over 70 a season.

We needed to develop a new audience so we tripled our Theatre in Education work – enlarging both the repertoire and the outreach. We needed to raise our national profile so we quadrupled our touring, introducing a residency in Cardiff (six shows in the first year) and the Mobile Theatre. This latter was and is our most successful touring initiative to date. By taking everything – stage, sets, lights, even seats we could create a complete theatre in a leisure centre or school-hall, maintain production values and introduce a new socially-inclusive audience to the best we had to offer.

At the end of our first season in 1998 we won the Barclays/TMA Award for Theatre of the Year. At the end of our second in 1999 we were designated a Welsh National Performing Arts Company. Clwyd Theatr Cymru was now officially 'The Nearest Thing to a National Theatre of Wales'. We still did not reinstate the Sunday Times board. The problem was the word 'national'.

It is used a great deal in Wales. We have a national stadium, a national opera, a national orchestra. I even saw a sign in Cardiff recently for a Welsh National Body Piercing Centre ... All these titles provoke little comment, but when we come to theatre then the debate is waged with a ferocity matched only by the debaters' previous inertia. Most theories centre on touring – either large-scale or fleets of coracles – despite the proof in other countries that you need flagships for quality and 'homes' for audience development. Touring as a *raison d'être* is largely a management concept and like most management concepts it usually leads to less art and more management. But committees can't build National Theatres nor can they run them – witness the recent failures in Scotland – nor can theatres be invented overnight. They need to evolve.

For too long in Wales administrators, bureaucrats, expert advisers and committees had been constructing expensive management haystacks in the mistaken belief that they were thereby creating artistic needles. And it hadn't worked. Cardiff, Swansea, Aberystwyth



Owen Teal plays Macbeth in Clwyd Theatre Cymru's production in 1999.

for instance should have had their own producing houses long ago. But this was the 'old' Wales – the Wales of the Welsh Office and the quangos. Perhaps the new Assembly would make a difference.

It has. Whatever party divisions may affect other fields, culture has received constant cross-party support. The benefits of flagships have been recognised and there are now homes planned for opera, music, dance and contemporary art. Even the Assembly itself has seen the need to move from its present office-block to a real home – the masterpiece proposed by Richard Rogers. Here in the north we had long wanted a second home in the capital. This was a declared aim from '97 onwards – partly to fill a vacuum, partly to confirm our national remit. Now we also wanted to be part of the new Wales. We didn't re-hang our board but we did change our name to Theatr Cymru. We waited for an opportunity to put our case.

It came with Cardiff's decision to bid for Capital of Culture 2008. Clearly any such bid would need a mainstream year-round producing house. Perhaps that could be us. There would of course be problems. First was Cardiff itself. There are those who have difficulty with the idea of capital cities in general and Cardiff in particular. Which is silly. Cardiff has been the capital for nearly fifty years and a city for nearly a hundred. It is also the city making the bid.

The second problem was greater. There is no suitable venue. Chapter promotes experiment and new writing while the Sherman is a dedicated young people's theatre and a link in the mid-scale receiving-house chain. The New Theatre is a No. 1 touring house. All are necessary. It would be pointless to compromise one to provide for another.

So in December 2001 we went to Cardiff's Lord Mayor, Russell Goodway, and asked for his help in finding a new venue. This he gave and after a three month search we settled on the Ebeneser Chapel in Charles Street just behind Marks and Spencers. In the autumn of 2002 – again with the help of the city – we commissioned a feasibility study from Michael Reardon, resident architect for Hereford Cathedral and creator of the award-winning Swan Theatre in Stratford upon Avon.

The new venue could provide a stage seven metres wide by 15 metres deep for an audience of approximately 450. It is an epic space, but the proximity of the audience would also allow for intimacy. It would be a people's theatre in a people-space. It is modest proposal, but it could develop an audience of 65,000 in the first year.

The costs of conversion would be low – certainly less than building from scratch or humanising the New. More importantly, the running costs would

be less than half those of a stand-alone operation. The whole scheme is conceived as one organisation with two homes: Clwyd and Cardiff. Four productions would begin in Cardiff and then travel north; four productions would begin in the north and then travel south. There are advantages to Clwyd Theatre Cymru, both financial and artistic, in extending the life of a play. There are advantages to Cardiff in the workshops and facilities of Mold, the extended touring and education, all well established and all potentially available 52 weeks of the year in the capital. It is, of course, not dissimilar to the Stratford/London axis operated by the old Royal Shakespeare Company. Our aim would be to create a national organisation linking north and south.

So would we then be able to put up our Sunday Times board? Well – probably not – for the reasons previously given and in any case there is a National Theatre already proposed, based in the north and working in the Welsh language. However, if that initiative grew to realise its full potential and if that led (as it would) to a need for a metropolitan base and if we could provide that link, then – perhaps – yes, we could drop the word 'national' and re-hang our board. "The nearest thing to a Theatre of Wales". We'd be happy with that.

- *Terry Hands is Director of Clwyd Theatr Cymru.*

gareth wyn jones and einir young say we should embrace 'Development Domains' as a central focus for economic policy in the Welsh countryside

rural survival strategy

Recognising the declining role of agriculture in rural economic development the Minister, Michael German, has symbolically taken the title of Minister of Rural Affairs in what was once the Assembly Government's Agriculture Department. In thinking through his new portfolio he will necessarily have had to confront some other crucial realities.

The rural economy tends historically to be equated with a dependence on the land-use disciplines: agriculture and forestry with associated businesses augmented by cultural or green tourism. Yet, even in Powys, the least 'urbanised' region of Wales, agriculture and forestry make only a modest 15-20 per cent contribution to the economy which, throughout rural Wales, is heavily dependent on public sector employment.

The problems currently affecting farming and rural communities are not confined to Wales, the UK or the EU. They are found all over the world, partly due to the revolution in agricultural production technology, partly to the low internalised costs of transport, partly to changing patterns of retailing and to the rise of 'agribusiness', and partly due to changing lifestyles and expectations. Most are affected by the catch-all of globalisation.

The position in rural Wales has been exacerbated by BSE, CJD, the high £/Euro exchange rate and by Westminster policy, under both Conservative and Labour administrations. This has prevented

Wales from making full use of EU initiatives, for example agri-environment diversification which would assist rural areas but which would impact on the Fontainebleau abatement to the UK Treasury. Nevertheless, but for our membership of the EU and the infamous Common Agriculture Policy, and indeed the militancy of French farmers, the position would be much worse.

While agriculture and the family farm, hopefully supported by woodland expansion (mainly hardwoods) and better environmental management and much greater local added-value through the Agri-Food Initiative and niche marketing are vitally important, they are

likely to be insufficient to ensure the economic future of rural Wales.

It is expected that basic food commodity prices will continue to decline and, as agriculture's contribution to GDP also declines, economic and political power will be increasingly concentrated in urban centres. Consequently, if the small family farm is to be sustainable, which is Assembly Government policy, it will increasingly be a part-time activity within a wider socio-economic spectrum. To a significant extent it already is. Many farmers or their partners already secure a significant part of their cash income from work undertaken off the farm often in a nearby 'urbanised' centre.

potential development domains in rural wales

medium development domains

- **Y Fenai:** comprising all communities on either side of the Menai and adjacent small towns and villages.
- **Llanelli:** including Burry Port, Felinfoel to Pontardulais.
- **Aberconwy:** comprising Llandudno, Colwyn Bay and the lower end on the Conwy valley.
- **Dyffryn Clwyd:** comprising Rhyl, Prestatyn, Dyserth, Rhuddlan to Llanellwyr/St Asaph.

smaller development domains

- **Glannau Ceredigion:** Aberystwyth to Aberaeron and adjacent villages.
- **Tywi:** Caerfyrddin and adjacent villages to Llandeilo.
- **Glannau Madog:** Porthmadog, Penrhyndeudreath, Blaenau Ffestiniog Cricieth to Pwllheli.
- **Hafren:** Welshpool/Y Trallwng to Newtown/Y Drenewydd.
- **Daugleddau:** Milford Haven, Haverfordwest and Pembroke.
- **Gwy:** Builth/Llanfair ym Mualt to Llandrindod

If young people are to stay in rural Wales or be attracted back, lifestyle issues are as important as income alone. The kind of facilities and entertainment typically associated with 'urban' communities needs to be enhanced and made more readily accessible.

Taken together these realities point to a new policy context for considering the problems of rural Wales:

- A new approach is needed for economic and social development which is, to a significant extent **not** dependent on the land-use based sectors, but builds upon the strengths and potentials of the larger, albeit dispersed population centres.
- In such a context, even the term 'rural Wales' may be misleading and unhelpful, with its implication of homogeneity although in reality covering regions and areas with very different problems and potentials, for example Tregaron, Bangor, Rhyl, Cross Hands, Carmarthen, and Tudweiliog in Penllyn.
- Instead of emphasising the rather artificial differences between 'rural' and 'urban', which have little basis in Welsh social and industrial history, there is a need to develop a comprehensive 'economic and social development strategy' which caters for all parts of Wales.
- Typically 'urban' problems exist in so-called rural areas, for example west Rhyl, and 'rural' issues are important in so-called urban areas, for example Gower, Maelor, and the Vale of Glamorgan. Social exclusion and deprivation are found in all areas.
- A comprehensive development strategy should not be limited to purely economic concerns but should also cover education, training, research, communications, transport, culture, leisure facilities, housing, health provision, planning, and shopping. It should also have a strong environmental component, for example waste management and minimisation, and energy use efficiency.

In sum diversification is now not just a matter for the individual farm economy, but for the whole of the so-called 'rural economy'. In this sense there is little to separate rural and urban problems. We are dealing with a need for sustainable development for the whole country and we must recognise that the work profile in so-called rural areas will have many similarities to that found in urban areas.

There is an increasing recognition of the need to help local companies grow and of the potential power of activity clusters – linking research, development, skills and economic growth. It is also clear from data on population and traffic flows (see, for example, the accompanying map on bus usage), that nascent centres for growth already exist. Given that resources are limited and that expectations are high, we believe the only way forward is to identify a small number of key centres, distributed strategically through rural Wales – what we termed 'Development Domains' – and concentrate on their potential.

Despite their somewhat dispersed populations they are already significant centres for development containing a range of social and cultural facilities. The argument for emphasising already existing trends is that public investment needs to be targeted if it is to be effective. Ten potential 'Development Domains', are listed in the accompanying panel, divided into four medium-sized domains and six smaller ones. Taken together the great bulk of the population of rural Wales is within easy reach of them.



Map 1 – Bus flows through Wales.

Despite their somewhat dispersed populations they are already significant centres for development containing a range of social and cultural facilities. The argument for emphasising already existing trends is that public investment needs to be targeted if it is to be effective. We recognise the vital importance of the main urban centres in Wales: Cardiff and its ancillary communities; Swansea Bay comprising Swansea, Neath and their associated villages and towns; the central valleys; Bridgend/Ogwr; Newport and the eastern valleys; and Wrexham/Deeside. They can be also viewed as potential 'Development Domains' covering the bulk of the population. However, the ten domains described here focus on what can be loosely classified as 'rural Wales' the large proportion of which is within 10 to 20 miles of them (see Map 2).

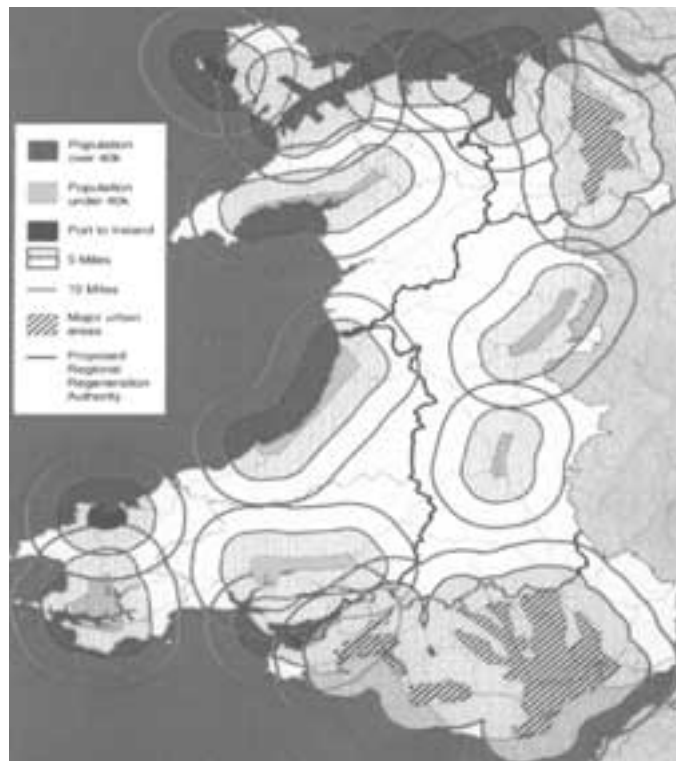
These rural Development Domains proposals mirror, in part, the established concept of nodal point development but with three significant modifications.

- 1 Development domains are wider areas rather than the more narrowly drawn population centres typical of nodal point strategies. They allow for a broader population and resource base and acknowledge the greater mobility of modern society. For example, instead of thinking of Bangor or Caernarfon or Beaumaris, it is suggested that the 'domain' should be all the communities on either side of the Menai Straits combining to give a total population of around 50,000.
- 2 The policy context should comprise social as well as purely economic factors ensuring that livelihood and aspirational issues are fully addressed.
- 3 Environmental factors must be a part of Development Domain planning including integrated transport, efficient local energy use, and waste management. Taken together these would produce a true response to the sustainable development challenge.

It could be argued that the Development Domain focus advocated here will deprive others of investment and will not address many of the issues arising from low population densities, from the crisis in agriculture and from the lack of affordable housing. We would argue that strategically dispersed through Wales and taking full advantage of existing economic assets and social and cultural strengths, Development Domains are a necessary condition for dispersing high and sustained living standards throughout the country.

There are significant definitional, administrative and political challenges in these suggestions. We are in fact referring to some 70 to 80 per cent of the land area and up to 35 per cent of the population of Wales – all that live outside the urban centres of Cardiff, Newport, the Valleys, Swansea Bay, Bridgend, Deeside and Wrexham.

While the change in Mike German's title shows that the shift from agriculture to wider rural developmental issues is being recognised, it also highlights the political and administrative problems. How can the Minister of Rural Affairs generate a comprehensive policy for 'rural development' when many of the crucial issues come under other departments: economic development is in one Ministry, environment, transport and planning in another, while education and housing are in yet others.



Map 2 – The ten Development Domains in rural Wales, with their 10 and 20 mile radius's illustrated.

One hypothetical solution might be for "Rural Affairs" to have charge of all these issues in rural Wales. The result would be that the Minister, in this case Mike German, would run most of Wales leaving the First Minister, Rhodri Morgan and the rest of his cabinet the urban rump. Of course, this would be a political absurdity. It would also be illogical given the intermingling of the rural and the urban issues discussed earlier.

The WDA has just one a small rural unit, based in Newtown, which appears

relatively low in the Agency's hierarchy. Moreover, the WDA is answerable to the Minister for Economic Development and most of its GDP targets are more readily met in the populous east of Wales. Some have advocated the resurrection of the old Development Board for Rural Wales with a greater geographical cover. However, that would be both politically impossible and administratively undesirable.

The political and administrative answer lies in the Assembly Government insisting on a new policy vision through which all the various departments and agencies, especially the WDA and ELWa, together with local government, would embrace. This could only happen if a consensus were to emerge that such a policy must be pursued to stop the continuing erosion of rural Wales.

The policy approach suggested here is one in which we address the problems of all our communities without creating an artificial barrier between urban and rural Wales. By recognising the growth potential of certain areas, the Development Domain concept would allow indigenous sustainable economic growth combined with good social facilities to provide Welsh people with a high and sustainable standard of living.

- Professor Gareth Wyn Jones is Chair of the Wales Rural Forum. He and Dr Einir Young work on rural development in developing countries at the Centre for Arid Zones Studies, University of Wales, Bangor. The themes of this article are developed in *A Bright Future for 'Rural' Wales*, Centre for Environment and Regional Development, University of Wales, Bangor, April 2003.

making us better off



steve hill calls for the Assembly Government to adopt a culture of evaluation in its efforts to improve Welsh prosperity

While it may be premature to judge whether the Assembly Government has made Wales better-off, it is not too early to develop an evaluative framework to assess the its success in promoting balanced economic development. This should be used not only to judge the economic benefits that have been produced but, more importantly, to enhance positive impacts and minimise negative ones. In addressing how the Assembly can influence prosperity at least four questions arise:

- 1 How do its economic development policies differ from pre-Assembly policies?
- 2 Does its policy process capture local knowledge in a policy relevant way?
- 3 Has economic development moved up the policy agenda with increased resources being applied?
- 4 What is the influence of European Structural Funding on the regional development agenda?

The first question may be less easy to answer than it looks, largely because of the relative obscurity of the details of economic development policy pre-Assembly, with public pronouncements generally limited to Ministerial wishful thinking. One obvious beneficial impact of the Assembly is transparency. However tortuously derived and painfully consensual, the Assembly Government's 2002 economic development strategy *A Winning Wales*, is fully published and disseminated. The over-riding policy shift has been the increased emphasis on enterprise development, although, given parallel shifts in other UK regions, this may or may not be attributable to devolution. Similarly the operation of the Assembly's Economic Development Committee provides plenty of opportunity for the capture of local knowledge, with the Committee proving keen to listen to relevant expertise and interests.

Economic Development does give the appearance of having moved up the policy agenda, not least through the National Economic Development Strategy and the complex policy-making that accompanies the application of European Structural Funds. While relative increases in economic development funding may be more planned than realised, and while the accompanying definition of funds for economic development may be generously wide, the Assembly Government has been assiduous in not using European Structural Funds as a substitute for its own economic development activities – a characteristic more difficult to apply to other levels of UK governance.

The search for universal solutions to the problems of regional development has been both long and generally fruitless. What has become generally acknowledged is the deficiency of policies that (i) offer grants to incoming firms on the basis of the jobs they generate; and (ii) restricts support to those firms that can demonstrate that they wouldn't have come without the grant. Taken together these simply encourage labour intensive, subsidy-dependent incomers. Economic development strategies seeking to develop the knowledge economy must be smarter and more subtle, recognising the role of place in the location decisions of successful people and firms. Factors such as culture, environment, and education – long recognised as important in a general way – are now the focus of more systematic promotion.

One important set of lessons comes from the recent research study *Competing with the World* published by the Institute of Welsh Affairs in 2002 in association with Barclays, the WDA

and OneNorthEast, the northern England development agency. This looked at the characteristics and experiences of sixteen of the world's most successful regions in terms of economic development, and sought to draw lessons for less successful regions. The lessons learned from the study boil down to three main issues:

- 1 It is vital to apply consistently over an extended period a strategy based on rigorous economic analysis.
- 2 Higher and further education institutions and schools have a central role in economic regeneration.
- 3 The SME sector is the main source of economic vigour.



These three conclusions have a particular resonance in Wales, given the publication of the National Economic Development Strategy and its accompanying economic analysis, the recent Assembly Government's Review of Higher Education and emphasis on its significance for economic development, and finally the recent Review of Business Support and the Enterprise Action Plan for Wales. Whatever the quality of the final

proposals and analysis, it is difficult to argue that the Assembly has failed to address the right issues.

There are inevitably multiple definitions and interpretations of being 'better off', including the intrinsic qualities of higher degrees of autonomy and involvement in decision-making processes. The specification of well-being involves the full range of social, economic, cultural and environmental considerations. The Assembly Government does recognise the importance of reliable and contemporary indicators, and is putting some resources into improving the quality of available information in Wales – one important positive impact.

Even if the latest figures showed a substantial boost to the Welsh economy, it would take a leap of faith to ascribe this to the Assembly. Similarly, a dismal Welsh economic performance could be despite the substantial positive impacts of the Assembly. That is to say, economic performance could have been much worse without the Assembly. Assessing the difference is the task of an evaluative framework which should include the following activities:

- The prior appraisal of policies or actions before implementation – that is, what if analysis, drawing on previous experience or the expectations of theory.
- Co-terminus monitoring to facilitate on-going policy development.
- Reflective evaluation, looking back over measured experience in order to learn for the future.

At its best, evaluation becomes a learning process developing an evidence base to allow policy-makers to avoid the mistakes of the past. Changing circumstances should be recognised in defining the policy context and allowing objective assessment of how resources may be better deployed. At its worst evaluation

can be judgmental, conducted in haste as an after-thought, poorly resourced and aimed at substantiating prior, often political, convictions.

Nowhere is this range of possibilities more relevant than in the area of regional development, where the relationship between cause and effect can be complex and where specific policies can be overwhelmed by the wider context. Industrial clusters, for example, have been judged successful not because of specific policy interventions but largely because of their emergence in areas with dense networks and particular forms of local linkage and association. Apparently spontaneous industrial successes are difficult to replicate unless the social and economic preconditions are in place.

The central and obvious point is that there are multiple determinants of the relative success of regions and nations. These include the endowment of history, the structure of industry, attitudes towards enterprise, levels of competitiveness, local institutional capacity, the accidents of agglomeration or whatever, according to the politics and predilections of the observer. Interventions by national or regional government usually rely on a rationale of market failure, whereby the absence of factors such as information, knowledge, competition, or affordable premises provides the context for policy actions aimed at increasing prosperity, however defined. Assessing the efficacy of these interventions is made difficult by two problems:

- The lack of a direct link between cause and effect, with other influences (such as changes in the macroeconomic framework, or shocks to the system such as a fall in the world price of steel or a fire-fighters strike) can be far more important. Within the field of regional development this lack of clarity is compounded by economic and social inter-relationships and the multiplicity of policies (and their multiple effects).

- As importantly, the impacts of regional (or even national or federal) governments are at best indirect. A [Winning Wales](#) may call for 135,000 jobs, or higher relative GDP, but it is not actually the Assembly that delivers jobs and prosperity. This occurs as a result of the actions of firms, organisations and individuals, operating in markets that are complex and often capricious. Hence the Assembly Government and its Agencies must seek to influence the behaviour of others. In the end its success must be assessed in relation to these indirect impacts.

These difficulties have led to a variety of approaches to assessing the economic effects of regional policy, including the Scottish Output Measurement Framework which seeks to provide comparators for disparate policies and actions around a data-set of consistent evaluations, and the Industrial Development Board of Northern Ireland, which monitors the performance of IDB client companies without explicitly claiming any responsibility for changes in those performances. One common characteristic is the need for appropriate and timely data, suitably analysed to provide policy guidance, often without reference to any fundamental philosophy or guiding theory.

Ideally the policy development process would move from the identification of needs and opportunities to the design and delivery of policies to address them. This would operate within a monitoring framework that continually assesses both the relevance of changing needs and the impacts of policy upon meeting those needs, in a feedback loop that becomes an iterative process driven simply by what works.

In this conception the 'learning region' is one that successfully fosters the development of institutions and information networks within an



evidence-sharing culture. Within this region, processes of evaluation provide the systematic link between policy actions and policy analysis, between needs assessments and effective actions to meet those needs, within a learning and supportive environment that encourages evidence capture and organisational learning.

principles of an evaluative framework for regional development

- 1 Evaluative process should be open, transparent and simple
- 2 Assessment should look forward as well as back.
- 3 Process should distinguish between activities, results and impacts or outcomes
- 4 Impacts should be assessed in terms of objectives
- 5 Framework should allow comparison of different actions and policies
- 6 Performance should be compared with and without action, policy or institution
- 7 Minimum indicators should be adopted compatible with objectives
- 8 Framework should drive actions in pursuit of priorities.

The objective of evaluation is to answer the question of what difference does (or, perhaps will) the Assembly Government make to improving the prosperity of Wales, acknowledging the practical and conceptual difficulties of so doing. The search for precision can perhaps be replaced by the development of a learning evaluative framework that encourages policy change to reflect assessed evidence. Such a framework should embody principles designed to ensure that it is difference, rather than activity, that is assessed, as outlined in the chart on the left:

An Assembly Government evaluation framework consistent with these principles can provide for monitoring and policy development within a learning process that will enhance desirable outcomes. This framework must acknowledge the indirect nature of Assembly impacts on prosperity. It is business activity that determines prosperity, rather than the direct actions of policy-makers, and it is the Assembly's impact on business performance that must be assessed.

Given the indirect nature of influence, appropriate information must be collected on a number of levels. The first is the level of the firm, that is the direct recipients of Assembly policy actions, whether in the form of grant assistance, training allowances, innovation subsidies, or consultancy advice. Given the objective of

improving prosperity via business performance, it is firm-level data, such as output or sales revenue, employment, and total wage bill that must be collected in a consistent and timely manner. Aggregate firm level data for those organisations in direct receipt of Assembly actions can then be compared with relevant business performance outside of the Assembly's sphere of influence – either in the form of non-recipients of Assembly resources, or from outside the region.

...GDP does have universal currency, and can be closely related to indicators of business performance such as productivity, wage levels and total revenue.

The second level of data is the region itself, enabling the comparison of Wales as a whole with similar regions elsewhere. An obvious example would be comparing GDP per head in Wales with both the UK average and the relevant figures for comparable regions. Whilst a level of Welsh economic performance consistently above that of comparator regions is not in itself evidence of Assembly Government

impact, the absence of such evidence would be a serious obstacle to hypothesised positive impact.

Indeed, such a notion is implicit in the Assembly Government's target of narrowing the per capita GDP gap with the UK average. However imperfect a measure, GDP does have universal currency, and can be closely related to indicators of business performance such as productivity, wage levels and total revenue. Hence, policies that have the impact of increasing these business performance indicators are likely to have positive effects on Welsh GDP. Moreover, whilst aggregate regional data on employment, wages and value-added are normally available only after some time-lag, and hence may be poor indicators in a responsive learning framework, business turnover or sales revenue may be a useful proxy, with a significant relationship to these other indicators. Hence even raw data on business turnover, preferably combined with employment (to assess productivity) can be a leading indicator for likely prosperity changes.

A careful programme of individual evaluations can complement the firm and regional levels, looking at the effects of particular actions or particular policies. Together these can build up a strong case history of previous interventions and their effects that can be used to inform future actions. Analysis of this case set should address the nature of individual interventions and the mechanisms by which Assembly Government actions are translated into changing business performance. Once more the emphasis is on consistent and, as far as possible, objective, evaluations that contribute to the development of an evidence base and its application and use in policy formulation, policy

improvements and the dissemination of best practice. Finally, and crucially, the development and interpretation of this evidence base should allow the definition of performance benchmarks. These would identify high impact activities and those recipients most likely to gain maximum benefit from intervention.

Developing an appropriate framework for evaluating the impact of the Assembly Government upon prosperity is a complex but crucial task, and not only for maximising the beneficial effects of the Assembly itself. Politics in Wales, as elsewhere, is facing a crisis of perceived relevance, with low election turnout and a general cynicism towards political institutions. The development of an evaluative framework that has public confidence can play a significant part in the long process of establishing the credibility and relevance of the Assembly, quite apart from positive effects on resource allocation.

The Assembly Government is a powerful institution, not least in its ability to direct the expenditure of substantial sums of public money. Hence it must be held to account for the difference it makes to prosperity as well as its other, complementary objectives. The Assembly Government **can** help make Wales better-off, with prosperity impacts joining other benefits of inclusion, participation and transparency. The Assembly Government's recent creation of a Research and Evaluation Unit should play an important part in delivering these beneficial impacts. That said, it will be more difficult to achieve so long as the Unit remains within the confines of the Assembly itself, raising questions about its perceived policy independence and ability to challenge.

- *Stephen Hill is Professor of Economic Development at the University of Glamorgan. This is a summary of an inaugural lecture given at the University of Glamorgan in December 2002, the full text of which is available from shill1@glam.ac.uk.*

science special i

why we need a science strategy

phil cooke charts
Wales' progress in
venturing into the
Knowledge Economy

New pressures on competitiveness have been caused by global economic recession experienced in European regions and elsewhere. In the UK we have the added burden of an overvalued currency that has helped devastate our manufacturing industry. So much so, that for England the Department of Trade and Industry has raised its 'bail-out' fund from £2 billion to £6 billion. This is a sign of the corpse of 'Old Labour' stirring at the flight of manufacturing jobs to developing countries with low labour costs, and recognition of the pain of both the death throes of the 'Industrial Age' and the birth pangs of the 'Knowledge Economy'.

For it remains UK government policy to deliver a knowledge-driven economy, something to which the recent *Wales for Innovation* plan also aspires. Comparing Wales with Scotland, we seem to be taking the low and boggy road while the Scots are taking the high road as we shall demonstrate later.

A definition of the Knowledge Economy is one 'in which more than 40 per cent of workers are employed in high technology manufacturing and knowledge-intensive services'.

These are computing, telecommunications, software, biotechnology and aerospace, on the one hand, and research, media, financial services, health and education services, on the other.

According to Table 1, some 43 per cent of EU regions have 40 per cent or more of their workforce within the knowledge economy sector. It will be seen that in this table Wales does relatively well, at a similar level to Rhône Alpes and Ireland. One reason why this happens is that the UK is a far less manufacturing intensive, more services-based economy than all but Sweden in the EU. Another reason is that the EU statistics office, Eurostat, includes automotives in the 'high technology manufacturing' category, incidentally boosting Wales, whereas the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development formula

places it outside. Finally, as we shall see, Wales has above average health and education employment.

These statistics are misleading if anyone wishes to draw comfort from our location in the higher reaches of the Knowledge Economy league table. Since those 1998 data were published, the Welsh economy has experienced a unique turnaround. Ironically, the positions of the two Welsh regions will have remained much the same despite the loss, shown in *Table 3*, of 44,000 private, manufacturing jobs between November 1998 and the same month in 2002. This is because of the simultaneous rise of 67,000 public administration jobs, overwhelmingly in health and education.

Wales is becoming more 'knowledge intensive' in statistical terms, unusually through rapid expansion of public

table 1: selected regions from knowledge economy index, 1998 data

Selected Regions with more than 40% of workforce in Knowledge Economy		Selected Regions with less than 40% of workforce in Knowledge Economy	
	EU Position		EU Position
Stockholm	58.65 (1)	Gelderland	39.99 (87)
London	57.73 (2)	Northern Ireland	37.31 (97)
Helsinki	51.5 (11)	Sachsen	35.97 (109)
Paris	50.17 (16)	Upper Austria	34.28 (123)
Stuttgart	48.84 (19)	Athens	33.79 (125)
S.W. Scotland	47.59 (24)	Navarre	32.06 (135)
East Wales	43.91 (53)	Auvergne	31.82 (137)
W. Wales & Valleys	42.87 (60)	Calabria	31.29 (141)
Rhône-Alpes	42.22 (67)	Alentejo	18.63 (179)
S. & E. Ireland	40.18 (86)	Aegean Islands	12.70 (188)

Sources: Eurostat Regions, Yearbook, 2001; Cooke and De Laurentis, EU Knowledge Economy Index, Cardiff, Centre for Advanced Studies, Cardiff University, 2002.

table 2: manufacturing employment change in great britain, 1991-2001 (march)

Region	2001 (%)	1998 (%)	1991 (%)	%Change 91-01	%Change 91-98	%Change 98-01
E. Midlands	20.5	21.5	26.7	-6.2	-1.2	-1.0
Eastern	14.5	17.1	19.7	-5.2	-2.6	-2.6
London	6.4	7.8	10.0	-3.6	-2.2	-1.4
North East	16.5	21.1	21.6	-5.1	-0.5	-4.6
North West	16.4	20.2	22.1	-5.7	-1.9	-3.8
South East	11.2	13.9	15.5	-4.3	-1.6	-2.7
South West	14.2	13.9	15.5	-3.2	-0.7	-2.5
W. Midlands	19.9	25.7	28.0	-8.1	-2.3	-5.8
Yorks. & Humberside	17.8	21.3	23.0	-5.2	-1.7	-3.5
Scotland	12.8	15.4	17.6	-4.8	-2.2	-2.6
Wales	17.1	21.7	21.6	-4.5	+0.1	-4.6
GB	14.1	17.4	19.3	-5.2	-1.9	-3.3

Source: Office of National Statistics.

table 3: regional manufacturing employment change, 1994-2002 (november)

Region (000s)	2002 (%)	2001 (%)	2000 (%)	1998 (%)	1994 (%)
E. Midlands	434 (21.0)	453 (21.9)	455 (22.6)	481 (24.1)	494 (26.4)
Eastern	430 (15.5)	460 (16.6)	444 (16.2)	465 (17.6)	475 (19.0)
London	287 (8.0)	284 (8.0)	282 (8.1)	319 (9.4)	310 (10.1)
North East	194 (17.6)	210 (19.1)	220 (19.9)	233 (21.7)	205 (19.6)
North West	557 (17.4)	569 (18.2)	594 (19.1)	622 (20.4)	665 (22.6)
Scotland	336 (13.9)	337 (14.1)	368 (15.3)	375 (16.1)	380 (16.7)
South East	569 (13.6)	582 (14.0)	567 (13.8)	656 (16.3)	600 (16.2)
South West	366 (14.7)	364 (14.8)	385 (15.8)	378 (16.2)	377 (17.1)
Wales	206 (15.8)	220 (17.4)	223 (17.7)	250 (20.4)	237 (19.9)
W. Midlands	563 (22.5)	572 (22.8)	567 (23.2)	639 (25.8)	629 (26.7)
Yorks. & Humberside	444 (18.7)	440 (18.7)	479 (20.3)	477 (20.8)	471 (21.3)
GB	4,386 (15.7)	4,491 (16.2)	4,584 (16.7)	4,893 (18.2)	4,843 (19.1)

Source: Office of National Statistics.

table 4: regional public administration employment change, 1994-2002 (november)

Region (000s)	2002 (%)	2001 (%)	2000 (%)	1998 (%)	1994 (%)
E Midlands	502 24.3	488 23.6	467 23.2	438 21.9	400 21.4
Eastern	640 23.1	633 22.9	637 23.2	570 21.6	475 19.0
London	850 23.8	851 24.0	771 22.1	769 22.7	731 23.7
North East	326 29.6	327 29.7	301 27.3	283 26.4	263 25.2
North West	874 27.4	856 27.4	853 27.4	756 24.8	720 24.5
Scotland	690 28.6	671 28.1	649 27.0	635 27.2	583 25.6
South East 1,004 24.0	974 23.4	987 24.0	960 23.8	864 23.3	
South West	653 26.1	626 25.4	642 26.4	588 25.2	564 25.6
Wales	415 31.8	368 29.1	368 29.2	348 28.4	311 26.1
W. Midlands	606 24.2	621 24.8	568 23.2	559 22.5	516 21.9
Yorks. & Humberside	634 26.7	592 25.2	604 25.6	552 24.1	513 23.1
GB	7,193 25.7	7,008 25.3	6,846 24.9	6,459 24.1	5,964 23.5

Source: Office of National Statistics.

administration. Most economics textbooks are silent on the propulsive role of public sector employment in a world of globalisation, competitiveness and technological innovation.

Conventional, monetarist economists see a 'bloated' public sector 'crowding out' competitive, innovative and entrepreneurial spirits. Unlike Scotland, where a strong emphasis has been placed on science-based industry, the policy approach to the knowledge economy in Wales seems to have brought forth a new model of job-generation, the nearest predecessor of which may be that practised by Gosplan, the Soviet Union's economic development agency. But such a judgement may warrant partial revision, as will be suggested later.

The question needing investigation is what happened and why to reverse the upward trajectory of Welsh manufacturing. In [Table 2](#) comparative statistics of manufacturing job change 1991-2001 reveal Wales until 1998 as the UK's only increasing source of manufacturing employment.

[Table 3](#) then shows what happened until November 2002, the last date for which Labour Force Survey statistics are available at the time of writing. Briefly, this table shows three relevant things. First, note the growth in Welsh manufacturing. Second, note the higher than average percentage job loss in manufacturing 1998-2001 (which nevertheless translated into a relatively modest 9,287 jobs). Accordingly, third, we see Wales' slippage from third to fourth in regional manufacturing employment share in Britain.

In the UK, large firms accounted for two-thirds of the losses and Wales is unlikely to be much different. Next the analysis takes us up to November 2002, as shown in [Table 3](#). This table reveals three important features for the 1998-2002 period. First, although not the largest magnitude in absolute numbers, the Welsh percentage decline in manufacturing was, at 4.6 per cent,

the steepest. Second, the two-to-one ratio of large firm to SME job loss suggests that large firms accounted for approximately 30,000 of the 44,000 jobs lost from 1998-2002. Third, Wales slipped from fourth to sixth in regional manufacturing employment share in approximately one year.

Moving on, [Table 4](#) shows how fast employment in 'public administration' has grown in Wales of late. Wales now has the highest percentage public administration in the land. Reflecting back on the 1998-2002 period that saw a major downturn in the manufacturing labour market, the 67,000 rise in public administration employment more than made up for the 44,000 manufacturing jobs lost in that period.

Returning to [Table 3](#), we see Scotland's new de-industrialisation hit earlier so that although it lost a lot of manufacturing jobs 1998-2002, its share was lower and less were lost than in Wales. Nevertheless, the situation caused the Scottish Parliament to commission [Scotland's Science Strategy](#). This reviewed basic scientific research, costed it, assessed it in relation to world-class benchmarks, and prioritised three fields for which extra resources and attention would be forthcoming. The fields were Biosciences, Medical Science and E-Science. Activities to develop closer networking among public and private research laboratories, to stimulate technology transfer from the Scottish health system and to promote a science-based economy were begun.

Regarding the last, the Scottish Executive, then produced an economic strategy document charging Scottish Enterprise and economic actors generally, to espouse their vision of a [Smart, Successful Scotland](#). This made reference to the Knowledge Economy and proposed actions to:

- Enhance knowledge inputs and outputs among global businesses in or relevant to Scotland.
- Hasten the rate of spin-outs from scientific research; making Scotland's

'talent' base more 'sticky', and augment it by stimulating a more cosmopolitan image.

Three examples of each are summarised in what follows. First, foreign-owned firms planning to leave are targeted to encourage them to replace production jobs with Research and Development. This has resulted in some success, one reason being that Scotland's science base is excellent, producing 28 per cent of UK biotechnologists and 20 per cent of medical doctors with only 9 per cent of the UK population. At 17.5 per cent, pharmaceuticals firms spend twice the amount on Research and Development that other sectors average, hence knowledge linkage around healthcare makes sense.

Scotland's new de-industrialisation hit earlier so that although it lost a lot of manufacturing jobs 1998-2002, its share was lower and less were lost than in Wales

A second example, concerning spinout firms, is the ambition to enhance an already successful cluster programme by establishing new Technology

Institutes that will take basic research from universities, patent it as appropriate, transform it into near-market innovations and commercialise it by licence, sale or new spinout. I recall hearing new WDA board member Simon Gibson, founder of Ubiquity Software, proposing that idea to then Economic Development Minister Mike German's Economic Futures advisory group in 2001, but to no avail. In Scotland, three of these in Life Sciences, ICT and Energy are planned.

Finally, to enhance knowledge inputs and outputs, an extranet linking the Scottish business diaspora has been constructed, is functioning successfully and will be expanded externally and adapted as an internal knowledge management system first for all [Scottish Enterprise](#) staff and then for the Scottish 'knowledge economy'. This is one idea the WDA has copied, commissioning IWA to find the expatriates.

In Wales, building a knowledge economy has proven to be a hard nut to crack. Assessments of performance regarding initiatives such as the Entrepreneurship Action Plan, the Knowledge Exploitation Fund, and Finance Wales are seldom published. However, official statistics reported in the [Western Mail](#) on 16 January showed that for the financial year 2001-02, in return for an average £80 million per year expenditure in its first three years, the Entrepreneurship Action Plan was set a target of providing support to 4,600 new business ventures. In fact it only assisted 1,800: a deficit of 2,800. For 2002-3 the Action Plan was set a goal of supporting 6,300 start-up businesses, and 4,000 start-ups were assisted by the WDA from April 2002.

Part of this expenditure is on [entrepreneurship](#) modules in colleges. A report on the Knowledge Exploitation Fund's own website

shows that despite budgets of well over £20 million per year being spent, only five per cent more entrepreneurship modules were being taught in universities and other higher education institutes, although 25 per cent more were taught in further education colleges. But 75 per cent of the latter had no or few mechanisms for technology transfer, while the statistic for universities was 25 per cent. It can be concluded that there is a significant disconnect in this particular part of the entrepreneurship-driven renewal of the regional innovation system in Wales.

Finance Wales, is a vehicle designed to supply venture capital to innovative SMEs and start-up businesses because of a perceived market failure in private provision. However, the number of businesses coming forward for equity investment are so few that its venture capitalists are being re-deployed to co-fund grant packages. Further administrative expediency and risk aversion has resulted in equity now being tied to accessing Regional Selective Assistance, thus incentivising entrepreneurs to becoming 'grant junkies' rather than weaning them off grant-dependence as modern investment theory advocates.

Thus we come to a hint of a silver lining, surprisingly, in the 67,000 new jobs created from the Welsh Assembly Government's own block grant. The breakdown between health, education and public administration between June 1999 and June 2002 was 22,000, 18,000 and 3,000. Both health and education contribute to innovation, the first in patient treatment, and the second in producing talent. But, as services, they are frequently seen as parasitic on the real economy. Research conducted by the Centre for Advanced Studies for ELWa shows Wales performs a valuable export function for the Welsh economy at university level. Of the roughly 15,000 graduates produced each year by the thirteen higher

education institutions, half are from outside Wales. Each is worth, notionally, £15,000 per year to the economy, or £112.5 million in total, which over a typical three-year degree course is an 'export' value of £337.5 million. If to that are added the Welsh students, the figure doubles to £675 million, and adding in the salaries of employees, the sum is over £1 billion, (though the 'export' value remains at a third of that).

research team from Cambridge. A new Biosciences Centre has been built to house the new School of Biosciences. An existing Medipark in the medical school houses some thirty biotechnology start-up businesses and these will move as they grow on to the Gene Park.

In other words there is the seed crystal of a possible biosciences cluster for which the healthcare demand and the education



Cardiff University invested substantially in attracting the 'star' scientist in stem cell research, Lasker Prize-winning Welshman Martin Evans, and his research team from Cambridge.

In 2003, the Welsh healthcare budget is £3.4 billion and healthcare has even greater innovation potential because of the central role of life sciences, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology in scientific and technical support. In 2002, a Cardiff-based academic consortium won £4 million from the UK government and Welsh Assembly Government (through the Knowledge Exploitation Fund) to build a Gene Park. Eventually, this will be built in Cardiff's waterfront district linked virtually to other University of Wales biosciences centres.

Ambitious plans, being realised in 2003, will merge Cardiff University and University of Wales Medical School, creating a new institution. In support of the biosciences capability that underpins the merger, Cardiff University invested substantially in attracting the 'star' scientist in stem cell research, Lasker Prize-winning Welshman Martin Evans, and his

and research supply are crucial components. Government support in and beyond Wales assisted all features in this development, but mainly through research and infrastructure funding. Augmentation of the pharmaceuticals sector is desirable, given that Amersham and Bayer are the principal global representatives of the sector in Wales since Parke-Davis and Warner Lambert joined the manufacturing exodus years ago. This is a task in which the WDA ought to be the key source of expertise. But in the absence of a 'knowledge economy' strategy comparable to that operating in Scotland, such a possibility remains unrealised.

- Professor Phil Cooke is Director of the Centre for Advanced Studies, Cardiff University, and adviser to Lord Sainsbury's UK Innovation Review Panel. He advised OECD on Scotland's 'Regional Knowledge Laboratory' approach to economic development in 2002.

science special ii

networking the genes

paul atkinson reports on a new genome research centre at Cardiff University

The recent announcement of the first draft of the map of the human genome, followed by the mouse genome and the rice genome, and the fiftieth anniversary of the discovery of the structure of DNA by Crick, Watson, Wilkins and Franklin, have given renewed prominence to the significance of genomic science. Now a new genome centre at Cardiff University will provide an important impetus for collaborative research between different disciplines and different higher education institutions.

The Centre for Social and Economic Aspects of Genomics is a joint venture between groups of social scientists and ethicists at Cardiff and Lancaster Universities. It has received over £4 million for the first five years of a planned ten-year programme of research and publications. This is part of a major national investment by the Economic and Social Research Council, which has set up a UK-wide Genomics Network, with other Centres established at the Universities of Exeter and Edinburgh.

Cardiff is especially well placed to host the new Centre. There has been a long-standing research collaboration between social scientists, language experts and lawyers at Cardiff University and geneticists and clinicians at the University of Wales College of Medicine. The projected merger of these institutions, which has now been agreed and due to be completed in 2004, will bring the



research teams and the practitioners even closer together.

The Genomics collaboration builds on a number of research projects in recent years. A Cardiff Research Centre for Genetics and Society was established on the basis of £0.5 million funding from the Wellcome Trust for work on social and personal aspects of genetic medicine. The new Centre extends these collaborations to new research areas.

The wider research environment in Wales is also providing a good setting for the venture. The Wales Gene Park founded in 2002, brings together university scientists, medical geneticists, Techniquet, the Welsh Development Agency, social scientists, lawyers and others. The Gene Park is a 'virtual' Research Centre at the moment, though there are plans to give it a physical location in Cardiff Bay. The vision for 'Biotech in the Bay' is an important development for Wales. It will support strategic research and generate an environment for biotechnology spin-out and breeder units.

The new Genome Centre will be looking at the development of biotechnology clusters, not just in Cardiff Bay, but globally. Researchers will be examining the UK biotechnology innovation system to trace the linkages between scientific discoveries and the commercialisation of products. This research will examine the innovation strategies pursued in different national contexts. In particular it will look at what impediments to rapid innovation might exist within the UK. A number of possible barriers to innovation will be examined, including:

- NHS procurement policy.
- The relationship between fundamental research in the public sector and commercialisation by private-sector firms.
- A relative reluctance of top UK scientists to set up in business.
- Possible lack of adequate venture capital.

In itself the mapping and sequencing of the human genome tells us relatively little about the complex biology of growth and development. The proteome is the next frontier in the molecular biology of the post-genome era. Genes regulate protein synthesis. Scientists now need to map the array of proteins in order to take further the lessons of the genome. Under Professor Peter Glasner the Cardiff Genome Centre will be looking at the emergence and trajectory of this new scientific specialism. As well as the work of the Wales Gene Park, the research will examine research

underway at San Francisco's biotech bay and at the 'genome fen' development outside Cambridge.

From a very different perspective, research leaders Ian Welsh and Robert Evans will be looking at emerging patterns of political debate and protest surrounding the use of genomic techniques, and the new technologies of stem cell science. The use of embryonic stem cells is but one high-profile area of scientific work that raises important ethical and legal questions. The Centre will be documenting these processes of public discourse. The research will concentrate on the manipulation and use of human material. In the process it will complement the much larger volume of social research that has documented the extensive protest and direct action directed at GM crops and foods.

Genetic science is already having significant impact on medical practice. In another of the Centre's research priorities, Professors Angus Clarke and Srikant Sarangi will be looking at the impact of genetic medicine and genetic counselling on the self-perceptions of individuals and families who are identified as having genetically-transmitted conditions, or as being at risk of contracting them. Genetic medicine can have significant consequences for people's sense of identity, their perceptions of the future, and their insurance status. These will form a major theme in the research work of the Centre.

At the same time our colleagues at Lancaster will be pursuing bio-prospecting and the appropriation of genetic resources in the Amazon region, the ethics of information held in genetic databanks, the new science of plant genomics and proteomics. It is an important new investment in Welsh social research, which in turn supports other research initiatives in biology and medicine.

• *Paul Atkinson is Associate Director at the Centre for Economic and Social Aspects of Genomics, Cardiff University: website www.cesagen.lancs.ac.uk*

science special ii

land of science as well as song

rhodri griffiths says
we should learn to
love our scientists

While our singers, actors and poets are famous across the world, it is little known that Wales is also a land of science. In the biosciences, mathematics, physics, geography, engineering and numerous other disciplines Welsh scientific achievements have had a huge impact on the world. It is time that we began to promote this little regarded part of our culture.

Wales has historically excelled in the biosciences, no doubt due to our special flora and landscape. Several of the historic giants of botany travelled to Wales to study our plants. The first was Thomas Johnson (1605-1644) visiting to study the plants of Snowdonia in 1658. John Ray – the most eminent botanist of the 17th century visited in 1658. Significantly, Wales is mentioned almost as frequently as the Galapagos Islands in Charles Darwin's – *Origin of Species*.

It is undisputed that 1858 was a landmark year in the history of religion and science. On the 1 July, Charles Darwin presented the paper – *The Origin of Species by Natural Selection* to a meeting of The Linnean Society of London. The great debate of science with religion had begun. However, it is often overlooked that Darwin presented two papers at the meeting – his own and one by Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913), *On the tendency of varieties to depart indefinitely from the original type*. Some claim Wallace, a Welshman



It is believed that the Welshman Alfred Russel Wallace (1823 – 1913), from Caerleon, concluded the theory of evolution in advance of Darwin.

from Caerleon, Newport, had concluded the theory of evolution in advance of Darwin. His lack of fame is probably due to a conspiracy conjured by Darwin's colleagues and Wallace's own reluctance for the limelight. How unfortunate that the Welshman from Gwent does not enjoy equal recognition with Darwin, probably the most famous scientist of all.

Pioneering scientific work continues in Wales. We have centres and institutions that are world famous in their specialist field of research. We excel in energy, engineering, pest management, medical genetics, the environment, wound healing, mechatronics, printing, advanced materials, electronics and opto-electronics to list only a few. The world-class reputation of the University of Wales and research organisations such as the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research has long been established.

We can justly be proud of many individuals including Michael Disney, Professor of Astronomy at Cardiff University. He has close links with the space telescope "Hubble" being one of a select group chosen to design and operate the telescope. One of the world's leading authorities on the origin and early evolution of plants is Professor Dianne Edwards, also of Cardiff and Interim Director of The National Botanic Garden of Wales. Probably, Sir Bernard Knight is the world's leading forensic pathologist. Professor Phil Williams, himself a world-renowned space physicist at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, once described Sir John Houghton to me as the most important man on the planet. Born in Dyserth, north Wales he is an expert on atmospheric physics and the leading authority on climate change acting as advisor to several governments. Others have taken advantage of their scientific background to accumulate vast wealth.

We need only think of Sir Terry Matthews (telecommunications) and Sir Chris Evans (biotechnology).

Wales continues to have world-class expertise in both its academic and industrial base. Within the University of Wales Aberystwyth, Bangor, Swansea, Cardiff University, University of Wales College of Medicine and Institute for Grassland and Environmental Research there are world-renowned research groups. Some 8,000 students study life science related subjects and approximately 230 research staff within the university are A or A* rated.



A leading authority on climate change, Dyserth-born Sir John Houghton has been described as "the most important man on the planet".

According to Welsh Development Agency statistics, there are 224 bioscience companies in Wales distributed into 98 biotechnology, 10 pharmaceutical and 116 medical devices companies, employing some 9,000 people. Wales is home to some multinational and other emerging biotechnology companies. For example, Amersham plc is a company based in Cardiff employing some 450 people with a turnover of £70 million. Initially, a supplier of radioactive materials for diagnostic kits and radiotherapy it now supplies leading edge innovative and enabling systems, which are used by the pharmaceutical

industry, biotechnology companies and academia worldwide. An emerging company is the IGER spinout, Molecular Nature Ltd. Formed in June 1999, the company which specialises in the discovery of novel chemicals from plants has attracted significant investment and employs 25 scientists.

Wales has under performed the UK in the growth of GDP. Under representation in high growth industries is one of the significant reasons for this low GDP. A key indicator is that business research and development in Wales is only 0.7 per cent of GDP compared to 1.4 per cent for the UK (this being significantly lower than the majority of other EU countries, Japan and US). This is a significant shortfall and one that is well recognised by the Welsh Assembly Government.

Globally, biotechnology has entered a stage of exponential growth. By 2005 the biotechnology market is expected to grow to \$0.5 trillion. The global pharmaceutical market alone is in excess of \$400 billion growing at 7 per cent per annum.

In the past the sector has been dominated by large pharmaceutical companies (8 of which are in the top 25 most valuable companies in the world) but is experiencing change with greater opportunities for smaller biotechnology companies. This led to a sharp increase in the number of biotechnology start-ups from 1998 onwards although 2003 has seen a decline. Small biotechnology companies such as Amgen, Chiron and Genetech became billion dollar companies in relatively short time.

This is an industry which exhibits high value-added which is generally higher than for the economy in general with

some welsh science achievements

- The equal sign (=) was invented by Robert Recorde, born in Tenby.
- William Jones (1675-1749) originally from Anglesey was a co-worker of no less than Isaac Newton when calculus was invented.



Links between the tin plate industry and Felinfoel Brewery led to the first ever beer can in Europe.

- The work of the bone-setting physicians of Anglesey continued for almost two centuries leading to the establishment of a world famous orthopaedic clinic in Liverpool and the invention of the Thomas calliper, which saved thousands of limbs during the First World War.
- Cardiff born Brian Josephson won the Nobel Prize for Physics for his research into superconductivity in 1973.
- The Denbigh born Isaac Roberts (1829-1904) took the first picture of an extra-galactic object, the Andromeda nebula.



- Charles Wynn-Williams (1903-1979) invented the "scale of two" particle counter which became the basis for virtually all computers and digital equipment.

- Donald Davies, born in Treorchy devised the technology, which lies behind the Internet



- Britannia bridge was the first iron rail bridge in the world.



- Richard Trevithick rail locomotive made its first journey on the Merthyr Tramroad.



- Two of the most important geological ages (Silurian and Ordovician) are named after ancient Welsh tribes

- The copper-zinc alloy (muntz metal) was invented in a Swansea copper works. Its use in naval ships was a significant factor in the dominance of the British Empire.



- Sir Brynmor Jones (1903-1989) pioneered use of liquid crystal display.

- The first transmission of radio waves was in Wales by Marconi (1897).



growth rates which can be faster. It can be small scale and localised. Surely, this is a sector that Wales if it is to change its economy to knowledge-based, high-tech should consider investing within?

Despite our strengths the global growth in biotechnology is not reflected in Wales. Recently, the Welsh Development Agency commissioned Ernst and Young to develop a Strategy for BioScience in Wales. This identified inherent weaknesses including a lack of focus, a skill shortage and notably a lack of investment finance. The sector was characterised as fragile with low levels of new company formation and a poor national and international profile.

Ernst and Young identified that Wales has the potential and opportunity (for a limited time) to develop a meaningful biotechnology cluster that could significantly contribute to the economy. Substantial, long term commitment and co-operation from industry, government and academia is identified as key if Wales is to succeed. Investment in both research base and innovation and commercialisation activities is highlighted. Action is required urgently. Many are calling for the appointment of a Minister for Science for Wales. However, as yet science is not devolved to the Welsh Assembly Government.

Some initiatives are underway including the Wales Gene Park and BioTechnium. Wales is starting later than many other regions. Clusters have been established elsewhere and competition is fierce. If we are to keep up we will have to have to run faster.

- Rhodri Griffiths is Managing Director of the Science Department at the National Botanic Garden of Wales. This article is based on a presentation he gave to the IWA's West Wales Branch during 2002.

helen buhaenko reports on a project that is engaging with deprivation in the Gellideg council estate in Merthyr

combating the 'gender contract'

The story of the Merthyr estate Gellideg is of how a group of people in a deprived area, with few resources and little formal education, came to build a real community. They have their own organisation, the Gellideg Foundation, which has raised more than £700,000 over the past three years and now has a staff of thirteen. With these resources they have provided job training, restored and equipped community buildings, created an outdoor sports area, a café, a crèche, and employed their own community workers. In the process they have analysed the power structures within the estate and the world beyond and come to understand some of the problems that have been holding them back.

The Gellideg Foundation was founded by six mothers living on the estate in 1998. Their co-ordinator, Colette Watkins who has lived on the estate all her life, recalled that they met on a course about how children learn at school:

"We got talking about the problems on the estate. There was no community spirit. Nobody talked to each other about the problems or what to do about them. So we thought we'd have a go and see if we could do something for ourselves."

Prompted by the funding opportunities as a result of Objective 1 status given

to the Valleys in 1999, the Foundation began to ask some fundamental questions about life chances in Gellideg:

- What was needed to bring about change and tackle issues such as low self esteem, debt, drug abuse and economic inactivity?
- How did the men and women living in Gellideg experience poverty?
- How could they become more involved in improving their situation?

The second of these questions brought the most revealing answers. The

Foundation approached Oxfam Cymru for advice and support on how it could work with the community to identify barriers to development and opportunities for change. Together the two organisations devised a scheme to undertake a gender needs assessment of the most marginalised men and women on the estate. The process took four months during 2001. The subsequent analysis of interviews with more than 70 people on the estate was used to create a programme to regenerate the estate, a programme that was targeted to address the different needs of men and women.



panel 1: gellideg's vital statistics

- The estate was built by the council between 1948 and 1963.
- It consists of mainly houses with seven blocks of flats at the centre.
- Today's population of 3,500 live in 1,200 households,
- The large majority of the houses are council-owned with less than 20 per cent owner-occupied
- The estate has a post office, general store, butchers and fruit and vegetable shops
- One of the largest buildings on the site is the Social Club which has gone through a series of bankruptcies and is currently closed. The Gellideg Foundation is planning to renovate the building and open a community business to underpin the sustainability of the organisation.

panel 2: merthyr poverty statistics

Gellideg will at least 'share' these statistics. In most cases the estate's position will be significantly more extreme

- 66 per cent of households have an income of less than £10,000.
Source: Assembly Government, Mapping Social Exclusion in Wales, 1999
- 48.6 per cent are in employment.
Source: census 2001
- 4 per cent of the population are unemployed.
Source: census 2001
- 28.2 per cent of the population are in 'real unemployment' in the UK.
Source: Beatty, Fothergill, Gore and Green, The Real Level of Unemployment, Sheffield Hallam University, October 2002. Official unemployment figures do not take into consideration the 'hidden' unemployment of men and women who have been diverted onto sickness-related benefits and those who are looking for work and are available for work but not claiming benefit.
- 28 per cent of households are in receipt of housing benefit.
Source: Assembly Government, Mapping Social Exclusion in Wales, 1999
- 29 per cent per cent of housing is local authority or housing association owned.
Source: Assembly Government, Mapping Social Exclusion in Wales, 1999
- 13.6 per of households are occupied by lone parents
Source: census 2001
- 12.5 per cent of homes are 'not fit for habitation'.
Source: Assembly Government, Mapping Social Exclusion in Wales, 1999
- 44 per cent aged between 16 and 60 have no qualifications.
Source: 2001 census
- 30 per cent suffer from limiting long-term illness.
Source: 2001 census



Members of the Gellideg Youth Group painting the back of the shop on the estate.

The assessment led to a successful bid for nearly £500,000 of Objective 1 funding, out of a total of £721,000 that has been raised over the past two years. As important as the money was the generation of a new community spirit in Gellideg. Colette Watkins explained:

"At first it was difficult to get people to believe that things could change. But now they are starting to believe something can be done."

Karen, another resident on the estate, added:

"We thought the Foundation would just be a flash in the pan, but it's getting better all the time. Now people are seeing that something can be done. Fifty voices are better than one."

The Foundation was clear that to achieve a deeper understanding of the complex relationships that underpin Gellideg's community, a gender perspective had to be central to their survey. Although women and men have similar concerns

and face similar problems, their outlook is different (see [Panel 4](#), summarising the findings from the Gellideg survey). The researchers found that Gellideg has its own, all-pervasive, 'gender contract'. This is an unwritten – and often unspoken – arrangement between the sexes that it is a woman's job to be the carer in the family, while man's is to be the breadwinner. One Foundation member, who has four sons and is now taking a university degree, described the contract in the following terms:

"I think most Welsh women get a bad deal. Welsh men are living in the Stone Age. They think women should do as they're told. It's still very much the women's role to do the housework and look after the kids. It's not like that for everyone but it's like that for women on this estate."

Failure to apply a gender perspective, being in effect 'gender-blind', means that policy interventions can unconsciously reinforce gender stereotyping. So, for example, pre-school

provision becomes in practice a mother and toddler group, thereby excluding men. Gender stereo-typing limits the life choices available to both men and women and can reinforce inequalities. Being aware of the distinctive needs of men and women, and acting on this awareness, means that poverty can be addressed more effectively. Nevertheless, stereotyping continues to be a powerful influence. The 'gender contract' still shapes the self-image of men and women in the Valleys guiding their aspirations and expectations.

This was why the Gellideg Foundation have described their survey of the needs of their community a gender assessment. They were also insistent that the exercise would fail unless it belonged to the people of Gellideg, acknowledging that they were the poverty experts. Trainers from Oxfam worked alongside the Foundation's co-ordinator and its two youth workers. They adapted tools that are used routinely in the developing world to ensure that regeneration initiatives are led and owned by people experiencing poverty.

In-depth interviews, on a one-to-one basis, some lasting up to three hours, with 73 residents were carried out by two youth workers managed by Colette

panel 3: interview assessment tools

- **Problem wall and Solution Tree**
A basic warm-up exercise to get people talking about the problems they have and their initial take on the solutions.
- **Time Trends Analysis**
Interviewees talk about the estate's history and the problems that it has encountered over the decades.
- **Mobility Mapping**
Establishes what facilities people use on the estate and where they have to go to obtain services unavailable there.
- **OK / Not OK Line**
Explores people's perceptions of poverty and survival strategies, by asking what it means to be Ok or not Ok, and where they would place themselves / their community along this line.
- **Managing Wheel**
A tool to be used with individuals or households whereby a circle is drawn and divided into seven sections, representing the days of a week. Participants use this to show when how they obtain and spend their income.
- **Impact and Flow Diagrams**
A spider diagram exercise used to explore how one issue leads to another, for instance establishing linkages between education, training, and employment.

Watkins. Interviewees were approached personally to be involved, rather than randomly selected. As a result the interviewees did not represent a cross-section of the estate. Instead, they were chosen to represent a sample of the most marginalised within Gellideg. This was established by checking their profile against the groups identified in the Objective 1 guidance notes as the most marginalised: single parents, disabled

men and women, unemployed people, ethnic minorities and drug users. In addition, care was taken to ensure that there was balance between the number of men and women interviewed, and that young, middle and older aged people of both sexes were included.

The two youth workers who carried out the survey were at first concerned that people would be reluctant to talk about their lives and the problems they faced. However, whilst people were reluctant to attend meetings, or even drop-in to evening classes for fear of 'showing themselves up', interviewing them at home was much more productive. Confidentiality was important since many of the discussions were highly personal. About 90 per cent of the interviews were carried out using the diagrammatic tools itemised in Panel 3, with three or four different tools being used in each interview. As Mark Connelly, one of the youth workers involved, recalled:

"The tools were useful as a starter. They helped to find a way into the discussion, to get it going. We didn't write anything down during the interviews, otherwise it would set a barrier straight away.



Residents from Gellideg pointing to the derelict Social Club they plan to renovate in the future.

We went out and wrote things down immediately afterwards. The exercise enlightened us as to the needs of the people on the estate. It was a real eye opener. People's needs vary a lot. Some people don't need anything, and have lots of support from friends and family. Others have very little. It gave me an insight into the estate that I hadn't had before."

Men and women of different ages often face similar issues but with different perspectives and so can be affected differently. The information gathered was analysed into three categories- structural, social and personal (see [Panel 4](#)). Together they provide a picture of the complex set of constraints on people trying to tackle their marginalisation. It is noteworthy that gender stereotyping run through all categories.

The Gellideg Foundation believes that gender analysis should be a requirement of project development for all agencies involved in tackling social exclusion in situations such as are found on the Gellideg estate. It also strongly recommends that the people who actually experience poverty should be actively involved in the design of projects and the formulation of policies to counter-act it. In addition:

- To be effective, needs assessment and policy analysis should be participatory, involving all sectors of the community, including the most marginalised.
- When addressing issues that are very much at the personal and household levels, it is important to ensure that interviews or meetings are held in circumstances that are considered to be 'safe' by interviewees.
- Confidentiality is important, and therefore there needs to be trust and rapport between the interviewees, interviewers and their organisation and an understanding within the community of what the process is about and aiming to achieve.
- This type of work cannot be done quickly. Gaining trust can take time.



A number of the abandoned houses in Gellideg.

In addition, there needs to be a longer-term vision than just the 'assessment'. This should consider how the project will continue to work with interviewees to take forward the issues they have raised.

- Three further conditions are required for a successful participatory process: (i) the involvement of men and women across different age groups; (ii) an understanding of the different needs of different groups; and (iii) an analysis that looks at the relationship between the sexes.

Of course, societal and structural barriers remain which are beyond the scope and power of a community groups to overcome by themselves. Much frustration continues on the Gellideg estate, despite the efforts that have been made. As one of the residents, Karen, put it:

"Tony Blair should come to places like this and see what's happening. It maddens me a bit. We keep coming up against a brick wall. The authorities should take responsibility for this estate. We shouldn't always have to get the Foundation to help us."

It was not easy for the people of Gellideg to question their assumptions about other people on the estate – the attitudes of men to women, the young people to the old, and older people to the young. Nor was sticking to the first principle that for the initiative to succeed, it had to belong to, and be shaped by, the residents themselves rather than by outsiders. Nevertheless, in the process they have improved their confidence in themselves, the shape of their community, and the quality of many of their lives.

- Helen Buhaenko is Programme Development Officer for the UK Poverty Programme in Oxfam Cymru. Its report, *Fifty Voices Are Better Than One: Combating Social Exclusion and Gender Stereotyping in Gellideg in the South Wales Valleys*, co-written by the Foundation and Oxfam, was published in April 2003 and is available from Oxfam Cymru, Market Buildings, St Mary Street, Cardiff, CF10 1AT. *The Gellideg Gender and Participation Toolkit* will be available from Oxfam Cymru in September 2003.

panel 4: findings from the gellideg survey

structural barriers

employment

Men have a good overview of the local job market, and assess it from the standpoint of what they consider is their role – to bring home enough wages to provide long-term security. Being able to secure the bare minimum needed to cover their own and their family's requirements does not encourage them into work. Lack of employment, 'jobs for the boys', agency and temporary work do not offer security.

Unemployment for men is seen as the norm. It makes economic sense for men and women to combine state benefits with formal and informal employment in order to make a joint livelihood.

Many younger men show a strong desire to start their own business. When explored further, this desire often comes from a fear of being unemployable by others, sometimes because of the stigma of being an ex-offender. Lack of business experience and little knowledge of finances are the primary obstacles to pursuing this interest. Young men also feel that factories are likely to take on women ahead of men because women are cheaper to employ.

Older men have a stereotypical view of men's work – manual labour and heavy industrial jobs – that are either not available today or are not suitable for their standard of health. This notion of what is 'man's work' and what is 'woman's work' is limiting their life options.

Older men feel on the margins of the economy, believing that there is little point in retraining and that it would be humiliating to do so. Their

perception is that the computer-literate young get the chances, and that their own plentiful experience in both formal and informal employment is not valued in the job market.

Women need to find employment that fits around the needs of their children. On the whole men do not take a part in childcare responsibilities. Women caring for children look for job opportunities that fit around school hours – these jobs are invariably low-paid and part-time and do not make going to work pay. To access a better paid, full-time job, women require the right qualifications and appropriate childcare. Young women feel that the lack of sound advice is preventing them from accessing training, education and employment opportunities.

With these restrictions in place, the likelihood of women finding employment that provides a good income and fits around the family's timetable is high on impossible. It is felt by all groups that everyone is struggling to survive. People focus on themselves because life is hard. One woman said: "When everything has been paid out on the household I have about £20 a fortnight left. When food or other necessities are short I just go without."

children and childcare

Many women view life through the lens of childcare responsibilities, and paid work is an additional rather than a central concern for many. The most significant support required by women is childcare. Apart from being prohibitively expensive, most women distrust childminders and would only consider a crèche as an option.

There is no crèche on Gellideg, so this role is usually fulfilled by a grandmother or close female family friend. It is rarely the domain of the father of the child/children. Many mothers are very dependent on their family networks. But government initiatives only provide childcare expenses for registered childminders – something that most grandmothers are not.

social conditions

Women mention a range of other barriers that are not highlighted by men, including the poor standard of housing on the estate, the apathy of the council towards their needs, and the lack of information on benefits, training, credit, and the lack of support facilities such as doctors, solicitors and credit unions.

Men are concerned for the wellbeing and future of their children and worried about the levels of drug abuse and crime on the estate.



social barriers

social capital

Women in general comment on the lack of 'social capital' on the estate, which means that people, both women and men, do not support each other. The women also talk about 'cliques' who only interact within themselves, and about conflict between the cliques. There is a lack of sharing of information and a lack of good quality advice. People are mistrustful of each other for fear of being 'shopped' for being on benefits to which they are not entitled.

Older men and women blame social problems on the young. Older men say the young 'do not want to work and just take drugs all day'. Both groups say that the parents are partly to blame, as they do not control their children and have handed down the values of not working for a living, being on benefits and drinking.

Both younger and older women feel that some young women are 'breeding for money' – that they have children in order to get extra benefits.

In general, although men have strong views on some issues such as crime and parenting, they make little comment on how social attitudes on Gellideg affect them. This may be because relationships are not their top priority. They see their way out as getting away from the estate, either temporarily or permanently.

poor environment

Lack of facilities is mentioned by all age groups. Old age pensioners and young men say there is nothing to do. Younger men find it hard to penetrate the social barriers that prevent them realising their potential. They do not blame anyone else for their problems, and do not suggest many solutions.

People moving to the estate from elsewhere have no opportunities to get to know new people. There is agreement that newcomers must feel especially isolated because there is a generally prejudiced view against outsiders coming to the estate.

Public transport is another issue, being too infrequent, too expensive and too limited. Women are particularly affected by the physical environment of their area. They tend to walk around the estate more, visiting the shops, the school, standing at the bus stop, going to the post office. The built environment impacts on their wellbeing and can be threatening, especially at night. Women's dependency on an inadequate public transport system limits their ability to leave the estate to access different facilities and to interact beyond the community in the immediate street.

crime

Women between 25 and 50 say that different levels of crime are accepted and acceptable. Crime, such as theft, against a family member or close friend is not acceptable. But theft from a public place may be viewed differently. Women are aware that crime inhibits progress in the area and prevents opportunities from developing. However, there is a real fear of repercussions from reporting crime to the police. Crime breeds fear and increases isolation and women are aware that they are more vulnerable than men. Many feel intimidated by the fear of crime.

Women over 50 report that they are often too afraid to leave their homes because of crime. Some older people are thinking of moving because of the fear of crime – mostly from youth nuisance. They say crime levels have escalated over the decades. Young men say they fear theft of their possessions and property, and are more likely to stay indoors to protect their things, although this leads to boredom and isolation. A criminal record is also a

disincentive to looking for work, however minor the offence – for example, fines for non-payment of the TV licence fee. Many young ex-offenders consider themselves unemployable because of their status.

stigma

Women feel the stigma of using outside agencies, particularly Social Services, and feel stigmatised by these agencies when they are dealing with them. They feel outsiders have a negative attitude towards people from Gellideg. Women feel their social standing is low. Men between 25 and 50 also mention the stigma associated with being unemployed that they feel from outside agencies. They say being unemployed saps their self-esteem and undermines their confidence. There is little opportunity for them to interact with others outside the family circle and this compounds their feelings of isolation and depression.

Women between 25 and 50 are concerned that they have no control over the type of residents who are introduced into the estate, which is at the discretion of the local authority. When problem families, ex-offenders, and others are housed on the estate, the women are concerned about the perceived threat to their families from drugs, increases in crime and other illegal activities. Young women said they are affected by anti-social behaviour. Speeding drivers, for example, make roads unsafe. Vandalism is also an issue with existing facilities, already inadequate, being repeatedly broken and covered in graffiti. The general shabby and run-down nature of the estate is depressing and gives the area a bad name.

Young men say the estate itself is not considered attractive – "this place is a dump." Consequently they do not value it and it becomes vulnerable to abuse. Cars are dumped in the streets and bus stops are vandalised as a matter of course.

personal barriers

training

Men are very clear that any training has to be work-related. They fear that sickness benefit will stop if they want to take up training opportunities. Merthyr Tydfil was criticised as having a limited choice of training activities. The cash incentives to take up training in the first place are also criticised as being too low. Another important barrier to accessing training was the fear of mixing with men from other areas. Bullying, rivalry and conflict were mentioned as consequences of putting men from different areas on a course together.



Older men see no point in changing career when they feel they face age discrimination. Many older men have literacy and numeracy problems that they do not want exposed in a public training environment.

Many young men are not thinking for the long term but for the here and now, and so if a job comes up half way through a training scheme, the training is dropped and the qualification is sacrificed, as cash now is a more attractive option. Many feel that there is little point in bettering themselves in the first place, because of the general lack of jobs on offer. Young men also fear losing benefits if taking up training

and are self-conscious about their low levels of educational achievement.

Women focus on the practical difficulties in accessing training and automatically accept responsibility for childcare. The cost of materials and transport as well as course fees, combined with lack of flexibility around school hours, childcare and part time work, prevents them from taking up training. Women's barriers to training also include low educational achievement that creates low self-esteem and confidence levels in a classroom environment. Many women are drawn to stereotypical training opportunities in catering or childcare as they are seen as safe, non-threatening options. However, these training

opportunities often perpetuate the status quo by leading women into low paid, part-time work.

family

Family is the centre of women's world and their horizons are determined by the boundaries of

the estate. Women are often stressed and exhausted by juggling the roles of mother and provider. However, these roles also give them a purpose in life. Women between 25 and 50 welcomed the opportunity to talk about the circumstances of their lives and the barriers and opportunities that affect them. They understood that they had adopted a caring role that was preventing them from realising their full potential. They felt that many demands were made on them, as mothers, grandmothers and wives. However, the family was the focus of their attention and they knew their role was important in keeping the family together.

self-esteem

Men, and young men in particular, are poor at finding support from others. They are more vulnerable to isolation, and to feelings of inadequacy and hopelessness. Young men are struggling to find their role and purpose in today's world. This low self-esteem and low self-confidence prevents many from achieving their potential and seizing life opportunities that could come their way. Generally, society expects little from them and this undermines their self-worth. A general lack of motivation and ambition characterises many young men.

Women report that the vicious circle of getting into high interest debt, and then not taking up employment because of increased repayments when off benefits, impacts on their self esteem. Women with young children can quickly find the framework of their lives shrinking to the confines of their home and immediate surroundings. This also applies to older women and those looking after disabled relatives. One older woman in this situation said: "I haven't been to Merthyr town centre for two and a half years."

A lack of confidence, coupled with high levels of boredom, can sometimes lead to drug and/or alcohol dependency.

health

A significant number of women between 25 and 50 suffer from ill health, including back, respiratory, mobility and coronary problems, overweight and lack of general fitness. Some, but by no means all, are on sickness benefits. Older men face major problems with disability and illness with many having mobility, respiratory and coronary problems. Women over 50 also suffer from lack of mobility from the house and immediate environment of the estate, for a variety of reasons, including: caring responsibilities for grandchildren and others, own illness and disability problems, and fear of crime and theft.



making development sustainable

kevin bishop and john farrar report on a new study to measure our impact on the Welsh environment

boots trampling on the land is a powerful image, and one that is integral to the concept of the ecological footprint. How much land does it take to support one person in the fullness of their lifestyle? How much land does it take to support the three million people of Wales? Obviously if that land area is less than the area of Wales, we are sustainable. If it is larger we are not, forgetting for the moment trans-boundary movements of goods.

There has already been one ecological footprint study carried out for Wales, by the Oxford-based environmental Consultancy [Best Foot Forward](#). This found that in 2000 Wales' footprint was 5.25 hectares per person. The key components found by this study contributing to Wales' footprint are shown in the Table. With any footprint it is always important to put the information in context. Provided similar methods of data collection and analysis are used, one of its advantages is that it provides an easy comparator.

The global average – 'earthshare' is the jargon – is 1.92 hectares per person. Compare that with London, which is 6.63 hectares per person. The average resident of Wales is using 2.75 times the global average earthshare. From this we can deduce that if everyone consumed the same as the average inhabitant of Wales we would need nearly two extra planets to support them. Of course, if our consumption patterns were more

like those of London then we would need even more space. Remember, too, that the 5.25 hectares (equivalent to 13 acres) is not hectares of Wales as such: it is hectares of hypothetical land with productivity (growth of plants and animals) equivalent to the world average.

The 2000 study relied upon estimated data in key areas of transport, energy and waste. However, more sophisticated data collection and analysis is required so that policy makers can feel more confident in the results. A new footprinting project, beginning this Spring, will improve the quality of data for Wales as a whole and recalculate Wales' footprint. take the concept further in Wales.

As important as the accuracy of the data, is to ensure that it is used by policy makers. Many previous footprint studies have found it difficult to engage with them once the study has been completed. Technically sophisticated

reports have been left to languish on shelves. In the language of footprinting, they have trod very lightly on the minds of policy makers.

The importance of the messages that can come out of such studies is shown in the Table which indicates the main components of Wales's ecological footprint as we currently understand them. It shows, for instance, that waste is the biggest contributor to our footprint, followed by food. Wales' poor record on managing waste is well known but here we can see how waste compares to other issues. We gain an indication of how important it is going to be for the Assembly Government, local authorities, the waste management industry and ourselves to seriously tackle waste if Wales is to move to a more sustainable trajectory.

The latest Welsh footprinting study marks a significant departure from

main components of Wales' ecological footprint

Main Components	All-Wales thousand area units	Footprint per person (area units)
Electricity	1,630	0.55
Gas and oil	3,342	1.13
Transport	1,882	0.64
Food	5,248	1.78
Waste	6,831	2.32
Water, built land	247	0.08
Total	15,469	5.25

Source: The Footprint of Wales, a report to National Assembly by WWF; research by Best Foot Forward. Units are hectares of average productive land. The area of Wales is just over 2 million hectares.

many that have gone before by working with key actors from the outset. The project is a partnership based approach both to the data collection and the communication of the findings. As well as WWF Cymru the other partners in the project are the Environment Agency Wales, the Welsh Development Agency, the Welsh Assembly Government, the Countryside Council for Wales, the Institute of Welsh Affairs, Cardiff University, Bangor University, Cardiff County Council, Gwynedd County Council and the Stockholm Environment Institute (based in York).

A major feature of the project is to acquire and analyse detailed data for two contrasting urban and rural areas, Cardiff and Gwynedd. We expect the comparison to shed light on the differing needs and pressures of urban and rural areas and to inform local policy accordingly. In each case the project involves close collaboration with the councils involved. This will enable them to build their own capacity so that they can undertake future footprinting exercises themselves. Council staff will thus play a part in the data collection and analysis.

At the all-Wales level we can expect the production of a more sophisticated Welsh ecological footprint to have four main impacts:

- 1 To communicate more effectively the link between local actions and their global environmental impacts.
- 2 To enable comparisons to be made between different types of policies such as transport, waste, and energy so their impact on the environment can be measured
- 3 To enable policy makers to prioritise their actions in a more informed and integrated manner.
- 4 To enable the Assembly Government to pursue its commitment to making the ecological footprint one of its all-Wales quality of life indicators.

Exploring the implications of the findings of the latest study offers particularly exciting possibilities. The project team



intend to engage in scenario building exercises with relevant actors so that practicable and sustainable policy recommendations emerge. The belief is that people who have been involved in data collection and have a critical awareness of the assumptions within the footprinting model will be more willing to sign up to realistic scenario planning exercises. For example, how much could waste production be reduced in Cardiff and Gwynedd? What are the possibilities for promoting local foods? And what are the implications of such decisions for both the local and the all Wales footprints? It is the prospect of working with those who design and implement policies that provides the very real hope that the Wales footprint will help to establish local and national priorities to take us on a more sustainable route.

It would be a delight if the ecological footprint were the single measure needed of our environmental impact. It is no surprise that it is not. The footprint is a single measure of how our use of the land matches its ability to support us. It tells us nothing about the economic or social elements of sustainability, and compresses the environmental element into just one figure. Its simplicity is both its greatest strength, in terms of communicating its message, and its greatest weakness – for two main reasons.

First, any conversion of such a complex range of things from energy to food and waste to a single unit is going to produce problems. With our present patterns of consumption, poverty produces a small footprint and wealth a large one. The fact

that Wales has a smaller footprint than London may just be due to its lower GDP. Consequently, a low footprint itself may be no comfort: we want a low footprint in a strong economy.

Secondly, the footprint completely excludes 'nasties' like pollution, and has no way of incorporating hazards like nuclear waste. Such environmental hazards may have thresholds for human toxicity, and certainly have legislation that works on threshold concentrations and doses; none of this is reflected in the footprint. Within the footprint calculations, the bio-capacity is very crude and different means of addressing the question of how much food we can produce would yield much better answers. And the horrible jargon – bio-capacity, earthshare, eco-index – is the enemy of clear communication of the core issues.

The calculation of a footprint for Wales must not be the end of the study but a starting point for involving those who need to take action on its results. The development of a standard footprint methodology for Wales along with the experiences of councils in north and south Wales should encourage other councils to participate in footprinting.

- *Kevin Bishop is Head of Environment and Regeneration at the Welsh Local Government Association. Professor John Farrar is Director of the Institute of Environmental Science, University of Wales, Bangor. Their study is funded by the waste management company BIFFA, utilising the landfill tax credit scheme, and co-ordinated by WWF Cymru.*

mainstreaming renewable energy

peter jones says
Wales should move
towards more
sustainable ways
of living

Sustainable development is still very much a professional activity for a range of groups and interests, with renewable energy technologies being one such interest. If Wales is truly to develop as a sustainable society – and to deliver on the sustainable development obligation set out in section 121 of the Government of Wales Act – we need to move out from the professional interests and ‘experts’ and into the wider community, in order to mainstream sustainable thought and behaviour.

The IWA's conference on The Welsh Potential for Renewable Energy, held at Llanberis last September was a welcome contribution to this process. exciting, comprehensive in its coverage. It was well attended by more than 100 delegates drawn from a broad background of public bodies, private companies, and NGOs. Presentations addressed the principal renewable technologies, notably on- and off-shore wind turbines, tidal energy schemes, biomass and photovoltaic solar energy, together with the future potential of hydrogen-fuelled technologies. Planning issues, community energy initiatives and the respective roles of the Assembly Government and the Welsh Development Agency were also discussed.

The limited public debate in Wales about renewable technologies is reflected by the gulf in understanding that currently exists between those who recognise the urgent need to move forward with renewable energy and a clear and unambiguous acknowledgement of this in wider

society. Those directly involved are convinced of the human causes of climate change and of the consequential need for alternatives to fossil fuels. Too often, however, the public debate through the media is conducted in terms of the limited concept of on-shore wind farms and concerns about the visual impact. These, it should be said, are real issues, genuinely felt and expressed. However, climate change, and how to slow down and limit its effects, should be at the heart of the debate. People need to understand the concerns about climate change and the urgency of acting to control it.

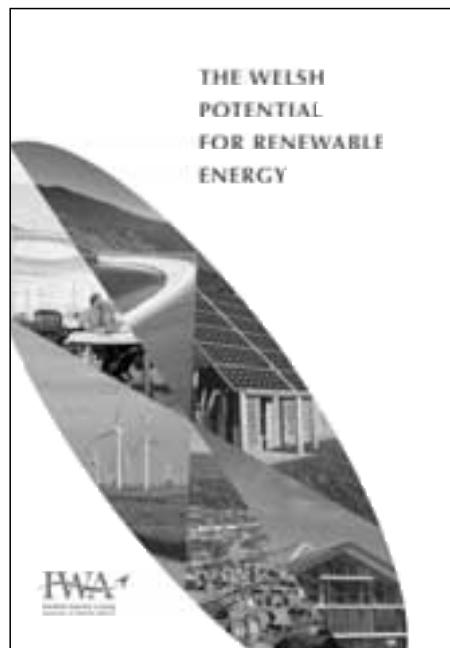
Sustainable development, including renewable technologies, must be brought to the very core of everyday thinking and behaviour. Professionals have reached the point of knowing what needs to be done, at least in some fields of policy and certainly with regard to energy generation. Moving forward on a sufficiently large scale, however, requires public knowledge and acceptance. How can this be created?

Political leadership must play its part but, to do so, requires new thinking by those in the conventional mainstream about social priorities and their policy consequences. It has been suggested that sustainable development involves finding ways of doing more with less. Beyond this, it has even been suggested that we must learn to do less with less. High consumption societies, such as the one we have in Wales, must learn to address the question of levels of resource use, set

in the context of the capacity of the planet and the competing demands of low consumption societies elsewhere. Currently, for example, the UK Government strategy for sustainable development includes a firm commitment to continued economic growth as an essential component. Yet no explanation is thought necessary: it is there as a political given. Similarly, the Assembly Government is committed to raising Welsh GDP per capita from 80 to 90 per cent of the UK average by 2010. Whilst understandable in terms of traditional economic thinking, how does this equate with sustainable development?

Currently, the media both create and reinforce mainstream, non-sustainable thinking. Transport use is a good example. People are encouraged to regard car driving as the norm and, therefore, desirable. Too often, reportage implies that other modes of travel, including the physical effort involved with walking and cycling, are to be avoided and are in some way inferior. Of course, many journalists and editors themselves share these beliefs. So how can we break these modes of thinking, opinion forming and daily reinforcement of belief and behaviour? One step would be to hold seminars with representatives of the news media to change the way they think and what they write.

Small community energy projects offer a way into an active connection between people's everyday lives and more sustainable ways of living. Yet, the number of people involved is limited and wider public knowledge and awareness is largely untouched by any media reporting. The evidence seems to be that communities in physical proximity to renewable energy projects – and who have been informed about the general and particular benefits of such schemes – are content and, indeed, enthusiastic in their support. There appears to be a public receptiveness to renewable



energy developments, provided the context and need for them is explained – and perhaps most importantly, that people can connect the benefits with their own daily lives and needs. The mainstreaming of sustainable development into daily life can learn from this experience. Priorities for sustainable development must connect with public thinking so that in time it can become majority thinking.

Possible ways forward in Wales are being explored under the aegis of the recently formed voluntary sector Welsh Climate Change Communications Programme. This is a grouping of interested individuals, drawn from a number of leading NGOs active in the environmental field. The focus is on climate change, its causes and mitigating measures, and changes that people can make in their daily lives. The problem is how to reach people, and keep on reaching people.

The Programme envisages an advertising campaign that will focus – possibly month by month – on specific issues. For example, the more efficient use of energy in domestic households, to link to the popular agenda of cost saving. To be effective,

the campaign will need to be intensive in its use of the media and sustained over a number of years; this will require significant levels of funding. It has been suggested that the Assembly Government should establish a fund to support climate change mitigation measures. Such a fund could be used, in part, to fund research and development in renewable energy technologies but also small-scale pilot projects with which households and communities can engage. There is also a need to fund a campaign to promote a broader understanding and support of measures to promote sustainable development in Wales.

The newly created Sustainable Development Forum for Wales could play a prominent role in this process, providing a Welsh focus, not only for researching sustainable development issues but also, crucially, for promoting them in the community. The Forum is independent of the Assembly Government and able to act without needing constantly to consider the short-term politically adverse reactions there might sometimes be to its ideas and proposals.

Wales and the rest of the high consuming 'developed' world needs to move towards more sustainable ways of living. To achieve this will require fundamental culture change, away from a narrow consumption, status and power led way of thinking and acting towards a more environmentally aware and responsible sense of our place as a species. Sustainable development is not just a set of policies to be bolted on to others – it has a fundamentally different ideological starting point, from which everything else should flow.

- Peter Jones is Environmental Policy Officer for RSPB Cymru. The IWA's 114-page report *The Welsh Potential for Renewable Energy*, is available at £30 (half-price to members).

team wales abroad

eluned haf reports on the new Welsh representation in Brussels

Wales' representation in Europe is having a face lift. Henceforth, the Welsh Assembly Government will be at the helm, with the controversial Wales European Centre (the WEC) taking a backseat in a new structure dubbed Ty Cymru. Leaving aside the many arguments around the desirability of this change, one thing is certain. If the new structure to succeed, merely leaving it in the hands of a handful of a few well meaning civil servants in Brussels will not be enough. Our engagement with the European Union will have to change, not just in Brussels but in Wales as well.

Regional offices have become the life and soul of Brussels over the last fifteen years. By now there are at least 170, of all shape and sizes, each having different interests and ways of working as well as differing relations with the governments of the countries they represent. The Wales European Centre, set up in 1992 by the Welsh Development Agency and the Welsh Local Government Association, is just one. During the 1990s membership of the mini-embassy grew to include more than 70 Welsh organisations.

However, with the advent of the National Assembly things changed. Although the Assembly quickly joined the Centre, it was inevitable and desirable that soon it would need its own representation. After all, this is how the other large legislative regions like Scotland are represented in Europe. Scotland Europa, the equivalent of the WEC in Brussels, is a separate entity from the Scottish Executive though they are both based in Scotland House and work together when desirable.

What was unfortunate was the impact of last year's announcement by Rhodri Morgan that the Assembly and its £189,000 annual contribution was pulling out of the partnership. For whatever reason, the then chief executive of the Centre was caught off-guard, as were many on the board of directors. No one quite understood the rationale for the timing of the announcement, just a few weeks before the publication of a report on the working of the Centre by Sir John Gray. Soon gossip was spreading around the regional offices that Wales was in trouble. There is no way of measuring the effect this may have had on the image of Wales in Europe. For the Welsh living in Brussels and particularly for the competent staff of the Centre, many of whom have since been made redundant, it was soul destroying. Yet again it seemed that the people Wales could not work together and that backstabbing and unfortunate personality clashes prevented 'Team Wales' from playing together effectively.

At the same time the upheaval provided an opportunity for a much needed new start. The European Union itself is going through a time of reflection in terms of how it carries out its work. The European Convention, the body that has been created to map out the future of the EU, is currently drafting a so called constitution to replace the many Treaties that have until now been controlling the Union's deliberations. With the Secretary of State for Wales, Peter Hain, as the UK government's representative on the 210-member body, we should be in a good position to carve out a new role.

The new Ty Cymru needs to learn to share information and pool resources.



Des Clifford, Head of the new Assembly Government office in Brussels, pictured outside the Wales European Centre at 20 Rue Joseph II.

Although the Assembly, the Wales European Centre and the Welsh Local Government Association will remain in the same building, they will work independently. The Assembly Government has just appointed six new policy officers to deal with European concerns within its remit. These include agriculture; environment; education, culture and youth; research, innovation and energy; economic and regional development including state aid issues; health and social affairs, and EU general and constitutional affairs. The Assembly Government sees itself as the leader of Wales in Europe. WEC, which has been demoted from that role, is reduced in size and will now only work for its remaining members. It will be less involved in lobbying and influencing policy.

Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies such as the WDA or ELWa, may find themselves operating as a bridge as they will belong to both. In the past, the ASPBs may have been able to act independently on the European stage. Henceforth, they are expected to tow the Assembly Government line in Europe as well as in Wales. On the other hand, WEC will remain in charge of networking opportunities for the ASPBs with similar bodies elsewhere in the EU, responsible for co-ordinating the increasing number of visits paid to Brussels by Welsh officials.

Des Clifford, the Head of the Assembly Government Office in Brussels, is optimistic about the future. He says that since his office opened in Brussels in 2000, it has had to deal with immediate priorities such as reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, and the progress of the structural funds. He now wants to broaden and deepen the level of Welsh engagement with the EU institutions. At the same time he warns against unrealistic expectations.

“Whilst the Brussels office will provide the arms, legs and eyes—there is now a need to make sure that they are well connected to the body back in Wales. We must ensure that Brussels and Wales has an effective communication system and that any work in Brussels is well rooted in the body of the National Assembly back at home. We must be clever in the way we place ourselves in the future Union to maximise our impact. We must use our position as a UK nation and a European region to pull all the strings at our disposal. These include increasing our direct contact with the European Commission and the UK government machinery, while collaborating effectively with other EU regions.”

Wales must look to herself and similar nations and regions rather than Brussels or London for answers. There

are practical, relatively easy things Ty Cymru can do to improve team work, such as organising regular meetings with other players like the five Welsh Euro-MPS. Scotland House provides monthly video-links for the Scottish Euro-MPs to participate in the Scottish Parliament’s European Committee meetings. There is no reason why Ty Cymru cannot do the same.

In the long run the success of Ty Cymru will depend on the extent to which Welsh people embrace the EU. Of course, we need to be realistic in our expectations which makes it ever more necessary that we take a strategic approach. Wales currently has just one per cent of the EU’s population. After enlargement it will be even smaller, making it even more necessary that we punch above our weight.

- *Previously a journalist with the BBC in Cardiff, Reuters in London and at the European Parliament, Eluned Haf is currently setting up a Welsh European project and communications management business.*

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farming and the men in brussels



glyn davies describes his encounters with the EU's Common Agricultural Policy and sketches out its future

I first encountered the CAP in 1973 when Britain first joined the European Economic Community which by then had already been in existence for about 20 years. I was a very junior partner in the family farm business that I still run today.

The CAP offered the business a new economic environment. It extended the system of market support that already operated in the six original Treaty of Rome signatory countries, the main objective of which was to increase the supply of food and support the incomes of millions of farmers across Europe by keeping food prices high.

At that time there was no reference whatsoever to the environment. For many years I took decisions to plough and re-seed every accessible corner of the farm (and some corners that were not accessible), to bulldoze out of existence miles of hedges and to drain every square inch of damp land – all without the slightest regard for the environmental consequences. My personal interest in the environment had not yet been awakened and I was responding to Government stimulus. More importantly I did not have to have much regard for the market. The CAP was our great protector.

It was no surprise that the CAP became synonymous with butter mountains, with wine lakes, with over-production, and not least, a massive waste of public money. Things simply could not go on as it was.

My next contact with the CAP was in the late 1980s and early 1990s. By this

time I had become Chairman of the Development Board for Rural Wales, a specialist rural development agency covering the whole of mid Wales. I was fortunate to meet, get to know and have a number of discussions with a predecessor of today's Agriculture Commissioner, Franz Fischler: a visionary Irish cattleman from Sligo named Ray MacSharry.

I think of Commissioner MacSharry as being the first EU politician willing to grasp the deeply unpopular nettle of trying to reform the CAP into a system more related to the market. He was not prepared to continue an existing market support system based on such blatant protectionism.

The language of the CAP changed. We began to hear about different coloured boxes into which payments supporting agriculture would fall. Pillar 2 became part of EU speak. The environment began to play a role in all CAP discussions.

Even though the MacSharry reforms were fundamental they were also rather modest in financial terms. However, at the time they were seen as revolutionary. They were resisted in many quarters, as fundamental change usually is. Commissioner MacSharry was unpopular, as visionary people usually are.

I was once flying over mid Wales with him in a helicopter when the door suddenly flew open when we were still some 200ft above the ground. It was a frightening experience for both of us. But when relating the story of this

close call to the Permanent Secretary at the Welsh Office a few days later, pointing out that Commissioner MacSharry could very easily have fallen to his death, I was told that, "I had missed a glorious opportunity to be of service to my country".

The MacSharry reforms were underpinned by fundamental objectives which responded to several pressures, both internal and external. The World Trade Organisation was demanding an end to EU protectionism in its efforts to reduce market distortion throughout the world. There was an obvious need to end the scandal of over production and there was a growing awareness of the need for diversification of the rural economy.

A key part of the reforms was a change to direct payments for farmers rather than the old discredited market support mechanisms that had encouraged over-production. This was an essential first step that we are revisiting today as part of the 'decoupling' agenda (of which more later).

During the period from 1992 until Agenda 2000 was agreed in 1999 there was not much money transferred into rural development to reinforce the MacSharry reforms. However, the future agenda was set. Where we are today is a logical development of what MacSharry started in the early 1990s.

The next major step forward in reform of the CAP was Agenda 2000 agreed in Berlin and setting programmes to take us forward to 2006. Agenda 2000 built on the MacSharry reforms. There was now formal recognition of the environment. There was radical reform to the Rural Development Regulation. There was reinforcement and expansion of rural development, or Pillar 2 as it became known. There was further reduction of the pre-1992 market support system.

One important change worth mentioning included in Agenda 2000 and one that Welsh farmers will

appreciate was a decision to reclassify Hill Livestock Compensatory Allowances (or Tir Mynydd as it is now known) as Pillar II rather than Pillar I. This means that 'modulation' does not apply to Tir Mynydd payments, a position of significant importance to Wales where livestock farming is dominant. Modulation is the term applied to the top slicing of a percentage from agriculture support payments (Pillar I) for transfer to specific Pillar II payments.

Agenda 2000 was a particularly difficult negotiation and not every major issue was finalised. It was therefore decided to put off some decisions until a Mid Term Review in 2003. And that is where we are today.

There are several reasons for the current Mid Term Review. There is the need to resolve matters relating to the dairy sector, the cereals sector and the sugarbeet sector. It has already been decided to introduce a Dairy Premium from 2005 but there is much more decision making to be done. It is necessary to create a CAP that can accommodate ten new countries joining the EU in 2004. Left alone, the CAP as it stands would be bankrupted within months. In addition there are

two other global pressures:

- It is necessary to enable the EU to meet World Trade Organisation demands at the next major meeting in the Doha round of negotiations in September 2003
- There is a requirement to respond to the sustainable development agenda agreed at Gothenburg in 2001 and reinforced at the Johannesburg Summit in 2002.

It is difficult to take up a firm position on issues relating to the Mid Term Review because we do not yet have enough definite information to go on. But one thing we do know is that it is important. When the Assembly's Agriculture and Rural Development Committee first considered the Fischler ideas paper last July it decided that I, as Chair, should seek to recall the Committee during recess if more detailed proposals became available.

Further proposals were published in January 2003 but still with many fundamental questions unanswered. The intention is that there should be agreement by the end of the Greek Presidency at the end of June in good time for the Doha round Summit in September.



"It is necessary to create a CAP that can accommodate the ten new countries joining the EU in 2004 [shown in the dark tone on the map]. Left alone, the CAP as it stands would be bankrupted within months".



Glyn Davies discusses a point on Penybryn Farm in Kerry, near Newtown.

However there are three main principles underlying Fischler's ideas that we do know about and can consider in principle now.

- 1 Firstly there is a commitment to further reduce the trade distorting market support measures. And here the changes to the dairy sector will have a significant impact on Wales while changes to other sectors will have no more than a minimal impact.
- 2 Secondly there is a commitment to 'decouple' direct payments to farmers from trade distorting production incentives. This movement of payments from one 'box' to another is essential to meet World Trade Organisation demands.
- 3 And thirdly there are the proposals for 'modulation' whereby Pillar 1 payments are top-sliced at an increasing rate and transferred to non-trade distorting, rural development payments. Fischler's

latest proposals also introduce 'degressivity' which like 'modulation' top slices support payments – but to pay for new demands on the CAP such as the Dairy Premium.

The one major factor hovering in the background behind all of these discussions is the overall budget available to finance the CAP. This is the issue that was recently decided at last November's Brussels Summit and which led to the Prime Minister's tantrums and lack of 'politeness' towards President Chirac. The budget up until 2013 was agreed between France and Germany with no reference to other states. Agenda 2000 had already introduced a ceiling on the cost of the CAP for the first time. However, the Brussels Summit agreed a ceiling on expenditure right up until 2013 in much more controversial circumstances. It was agreed that the current Agenda 2000 ceiling should continue to increase by inflation until

2006 and then by an increase of 1 per cent per year until 2013. It seems that Pillar II payments are not covered by this agreement so there will remain plenty of scope for argument.

The arrangements by which accession countries will be brought into the CAP were also agreed. This was vital because the full cost of accession on current production based payments would be hopelessly unaffordable. For example it has been calculated that Poland would consume 50 per cent of the entire CAP budget under present arrangements.

What has been agreed is that the ten accession countries should receive support at 25 per cent of the rate available to existing EU member states when they join in 2004, rising by 10 per cent per year until 100 per cent is reached – all of this within a 'decoupled' CAP.

The situation is not as bad as it seems as long as 'decoupling' goes ahead fully. The total cost of financing the ten likely accession countries in a reformed CAP is likely to amount to a touch over 10 per cent of the total.

There was a great deal of confusion following the totally unexpected Franco-German deal. Many, including myself, thought the Fischler ideas paper was dead and buried and there were press reports suggesting that he thought so too. However it turned out that this was no more than wishful thinking by the French. I am told it was just that the French Government was 'first out with its press release'. It seems that 'spin' continues to be alive and well in France.

It is now clear that Commissioner Fischler does not see the Brussels agreement as having any effect on his proposals at all. In fact he sees the agreement as increasing the momentum. So 'decoupling' and compulsory 'modulation' are still very much on the table. There are two other important issues:

- 1 The first is the importance of co-financing, or what we usually think of as match funding. At present 'modulation' is voluntary within the EU. In fact Britain is the only EU state which currently has a scheme, involving 'modulation' rising to 4.5 per cent by 2006. The French also introduced a scheme but abandoned it because it was too complicated and unpopular. The absolutely crucial point about the current EU voluntary scheme is that it is co-financing, making it acceptable to the farming industry. At present there is no reference to co-financing in the Fischler proposals. If 'modulation' is not match funded it will not be a welcomed scheme.
- 2 The second issue is the British share of the rural development Pillar 2 budget. There are two points to make. Firstly, the monies presently 'siphoned off' CAP payments through 'modulation' are recycled within the member state. British

farmers receive all of the 3 per cent modulated at present. The Fischler proposals suggest that top-sliced monies are retained by the EU and distributed from Brussels.

The British record of accessing rural development money is not good. The basis of concern is that the current formula for redistributing money under the Rural Development Regulation disadvantages Britain very seriously. The root of the problem is that the British Government through the 1990s did not claim anything like its 'share' of this money – based on population. I do not know whether this was because of a general desire to restrain public spending or whether it was in response to the discouragement to claim EU funds inherent in the 'British rebate' mechanism agreed in the 1980s. Whatever, the fact is that Britain claimed about 3.5 per cent of the budget rather than the 12 per cent that her population would suggest was more appropriate. Unfortunately when Agenda 2000 was agreed it was decided to use a distribution formula based on historic payments. It is no surprise that British farmers are nervous.

However under Commissioner Fischler's current redistribution proposals a new formula would be used. There would be three factors based on land area, labour force and some form of prosperity indicator. At present it is thought that the 3.5 per cent historic payment based formula is to be abandoned.

Of course, things are unlikely to be that straightforward. There will always be the issue of whether countries which would lose out hugely as a result of this change of formula would be prepared to accept it. Will there be some horse trading when an agreement is being hammered out? We must be hopeful that our negotiators will be strong on this point.

Looking ahead is a hazardous business when discussing the CAP. The only people who seem to know anything about what is going to happen are the French and

they do not tell anyone until the deal is done. However I have absolutely no doubt that the trends we have seen since MacSharry and the radical changes begun by MacSharry will continue.

The old market support system will disappear completely. There will be an increasing focus on cross-compliance in the future. I am sure some of this will seem unreasonable to farmers but regard for the environment and animal welfare will become ever more important whether they like it or not. I do not believe that farmers should object to this trend as long as it is within reason. It is very important that the taxpayer feels that their money is buying 'goods' that they value.

I do not think there can be much doubt that direct payments will be 'decoupled' from production. We do not know how quickly this process will progress but I expect to see significant reform agreed by June. I believe 'modulation' is here to stay and will become a EU wide measure. It is worth noting that if we are going to make a success of the programmes already in place in Wales, an increased level of CAP resource redirection must happen. For example the Assembly Government is currently operating an all Wales agri-environment scheme, Tir Gofal, as a flagship policy on a hopelessly inadequate budget.

There will be some reduction in the payments to Britain, including Wales of course, over the next few years. The agreement of a cost ceiling until 2013 coupled with the introduction of the Dairy Premium in 2005 and other changes, notably the costs associated with an EU of 25 countries rather than 15 make this inevitable.

Over the next few months there is much to decide on in what is likely to be a fundamental reform of how the CAP operates.

- *Glyn Davies is Conservative AM for Mid and West Wales.*

interesting times



peter stead

Policy statements are coming thick and fast from the Government of Wales, and there seems to be warm approval of the latest dramatic proposals. All satellite and digital programmes, including every Sky package, are to be provided free in Wales and all rail travel is to be free, as are mobile phones and the calls made on them. A Labour Party spokesman pointed out that these policies had long been part of Labour's vision for Wales and that only legal details had delayed their announcement to this time immediately prior to the Election. Access to satellite programmes would greatly enrich the cultural life of Wales and more phone calls could only boost the economy. Meanwhile free rail travel would allow the release of rail employees currently working in office, platform, booking office and inspection duties; these people could now be retrained as drivers

thus allowing scheduled services to run as advertised. This particular initiative follows a bold and amazingly successful experiment on the service between Neath and Swansea where nobody has actually bought a ticket since 1990.

The other parties have been quick to applaud these proposals. Plaid pointed out that they had first suggested them in their Pontlottyn Conference in 1998, whilst the Liberal Democrats hoped that this was only a prelude to an announcement that all charges would be abolished and that everything would be free in Wales. The Tory Party in Wales concurred, arguing that the considerable savings made by all families would immediately be invested in stocks and shares; consequently, small businesses and free enterprise would be liberated.

There has been general approval of the Western Mail's announcement that, following the huge success of its recent revamp, it is now to do away with words altogether and rely entirely on photographs. Apparently the public has really taken to the way the paper now skilfully deploys the national colours of Wales (red and green) in all its illustrations. Research indicated that readers had virtually abandoned efforts to find news and other familiar

features in the paper as they were now content with the pictures. At the same time BBC Wales has announced that they are dispensing with the services of all professional radio broadcasters. All radio programmes will now take the form of phone-ins. A spokesman pointed out that as people now take their news off the internet, all that was needed in scheduled programmes was opinion, both public and popular.

It is now generally conceded that David Moffett is the most clear-sighted and original thinker that we have had in Wales since the days of the great coal-owners such as Lord Rhondda and Lord Merthyr. It is good news, then, that he is to be given a fuller role in Welsh life. He is joining the Welsh Government as Chief Executive with plenipotentiary powers. In conversation he revealed some of his ideas. The Cabinet will be reduced to just three positions so that European-like quality can be guaranteed. The three ministers would be based in Ebbw Vale, Kidwelly and Rhosllanerchrugog. Similarly there would only be 40 AMs, with proportional representation being consigned, as he put it, "to the dustbin of failed Welsh romanticism." The whole of Wales would be reconstituted as one parliamentary constituency sending only

five MPs to Westminster. Eventually they would be elected by a first-past-the-post nationwide election. However, in the first instance Mr Moffett has been asked by the political parties in Wales to nominate his five favoured candidates. Already there has been some west Wales disquiet at the sweeping nature of these proposals, but such is the admiration in the capital at the way that this ruthless and realistic reformer has dealt in the past with one deeply-entrenched, financially inept and patently confused oligarchy that it is willingly conceded that he is the obvious man to save us from our civil servants and politicians.

Meanwhile, back at the WRU there has again been support for its chief executive's notion that for next season the Welsh national team and Llanelli would swap places. Wales (who would be called 'the Black Shorts') will play at Stradey Park and fulfil that club's league and cup fixtures, whilst Llanelli (to be referred to unambiguously as 'the Scar-lets') would take up the international commitments.

Mr Moffet also confirmed that there would be no more canned singing at the Millennium Stadium and that only Swansea Male Choirs would be asked to lead the pre-match singing. For the first time in years one can sense that Wales is being knocked into shape.