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a post national wales



Assembly for Wales has not delivered effectively enough to be counted a success, yet.

I hope very much that it does succeed, for government at this level on many issues makes sense, and I am inclined to think that the closer that government is brought to the people the more democratic it is likely to be. I suspect that the current devolved constitution is not one that is ultimately tenable, and in due course I would anticipate that Wales will gain law-making powers. There is some considerable distance to go, however, before one can predict that the people of Wales will embrace such an option. But whatever the short- and medium-term future for the governance of Wales, the question of Welsh identity is as relevant now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, as it has ever been. And, as the sociologist Charlotte Williams has recently written:

“One of the clear implications of devolution is the opportunity to rework discourses of race and ethnicity, to reconfigure discourses of nation and national identity and to re-imagine Wales in deliberate and conscious ways ...”

The fact that Wales ‘exists’ at all in the twenty-first century might be considered remarkable. It must be something to do

this is an important moment in the history of Wales. Today, Wales matters more politically than it has ever done. Today, Welsh citizenship is a reality: there is a devolved political unit, called Wales, which has its own government. True, that government has limited powers. It cannot make laws, it cannot vary taxes. It appears presently to be confused about what it can and cannot do. In the four years since it came into being the National

with our genes! If we look back to the nineteenth century, Friedrich Engels dismissed the Welsh, amongst others, as ‘non-historic’ peoples. Conventional thinking had it that there were those peoples who were called to national greatness (the English, the French, the Germans), for whom the nation-state represented the apotheosis of their ambition, and there were those who, it was thought, could not hope to play a useful role as independent states, largely on account of their small size. For Wales, then, the logical trajectory to follow was one which would see the Welsh people progressively more absorbed into the British state and British Empire, both of which offered them much in the way of opportunities and progress. The trade-off would be a steady diminution in their ‘difference’ as a people. John Stuart Mill, writing in *Utilitarianism, Liberty and Representative Government*, explained that:

“Nobody can suppose that it is not more beneficial for a Breton or a Basque of French Navarre to be ... a member of the French nationality, admitted on equal terms to all the privileges of French citizenship ... than to sulk on his own rocks, the half-savage relic of past times, revolving in his own little mental orbit, without participation or interest in the general movement of the world. The same remark applies to the Welshman or the Scottish highlander as members of the British nation.”

In actual fact, the Welsh reaction to such an opportunity was highly ambivalent. On the one hand, most Welsh people were prepared to reconcile themselves to the British state and to an increasing English cultural dominance in many spheres of life. Yet, confounding the expectations of those who saw political and cultural uniformity as the inevitably corollary of political association, the nineteenth century also saw the beginnings of what Kenneth O. Morgan has called the ‘Rebirth’ of the Welsh nation. This rebirth was not a unilinear or smooth process: it embraced many contradictions. It could encompass the reinvention of the Welsh as a purely Nonconformist nation, of the Welsh as a musical nation, of the Welsh as a rugby-playing nation. None of these were ever fully accurate, but they did provide the Welsh with a multi-faceted identity that reasserted their difference from the English.

These and other characteristics formed the basis for the Welsh version of what political scientists call 'ethnic' nationalism. 'Ethnic' nationalisms are those that stress certain essential criteria that peoples may be thought to have in common: race, language, religion, culture. Thus to belong to a specific national group you have to possess certain characteristics: to share in a line of common descent, to speak a particular language, to adhere to one religious faith, to be part of a common culture. The Welsh, no less than any other national group in the nineteenth century, bought into the idea of an 'ethnic' nationalism: 'Welshness' is to be 'Celtic', or it is to be Welsh-speaking, or it is to be 'Nonconformist', or it is to be 'naturally' poetic or musical or to have been produced by Max Boyce's fly-half factory.

Many historians of Wales, most obviously Prys Morgan, Gwyn A. Williams, Dai Smith, and Gareth Williams have devoted much of their careers to demystifying such notions, to locating the roots of the invention of multiple traditions. They have, collectively, demonstrated that the nation is not a natural political unity but a contingent, historically limited condition. The impact of their work has been to query the notion of a holistic Welsh past, of unitary narratives of national progress. And so, as the idea of a pure Welsh race was revealed as a myth, as the percentage of the Welsh people speaking Welsh receded, as religious attendance in Wales declined to a point where it is now lower than that in England, and as Welsh performances on the field of play have become more and more abject, so the very idea that there can be any essential core of Welshness has become less and less sustainable.

That is not to say that there are not those who believe that such ethnic definitions are still worthy of being defended, or who instinctively reach for those talismans – the controversies of recent years over English in-migration into Welsh-speaking communities in north and west Wales which have revealed that there are still some who cling to such ideas. But on the whole scholars have been more inclined to work with the concept of the nation, in Benedict Anderson's famous phrase, as an 'imagined community', imagined because, according to Anderson, 'the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.' Wales is understood as, to cite the subtitle of the book edited by my Glamorgan colleague Tony Curtis, *The Imagined Nation*. We view national identity as a continuous process of making and remaking, of invention, construction and deconstruction. The very idea of a homogeneous nation is seen as a fiction, and we ask, who is doing the imagining? In whose interests is the nation being imagined? Many will be familiar with this 1921 quotation from Sir Alfred Zimmern:

"The Wales of today is not a unity. There is not one Wales; there are three ... There is Welsh Wales; there is industrial or, as I sometimes think of it, American Wales; and there is upper class or English Wales. These three represent different types and different traditions."

Many will also be familiar with Denis Balsom's 'Three Wales' model, which breaks Wales down into another triptych: 'Y Fro Gymraeg' (roughly equivalent to Zimmern's 'Welsh Wales'), 'Welsh Wales' (approximating to Zimmern's 'American Wales') and 'British Wales' (matching Zimmern's 'English Wales'). I do not think it an exaggeration to suggest that most Welsh historical writing has focused on (in Balsom's terminology) 'Y Fro Gymraeg' and 'Welsh Wales', and that it is the experience of those areas that stands at the centre of competing understandings of historical and contemporary 'Welshness', about which more in a moment. What this selective focus does, however, is marginalise those who are seen as irrelevant to the unfolding 'national story'. Those in 'English' or 'British' Wales are considered 'not really Welsh', and are easily viewed either as labouring under a form of false consciousness or as making a self-serving accommodation with Wales's more powerful neighbour.

As a consequence, central, singular narratives of Welsh history and identity, that initially privileged the experiences of Zimmern's 'Welsh Wales', have been challenged by those identifying with 'American Wales' (tellingly renamed 'Welsh Wales' by Balsom), only for those too to be undermined by the collapse of the heavy industries that had given us such a strong sense of a vibrant, radical, collective culture in the south Wales coalfield. New narratives have arisen, articulating the dynamics of gender and of ethnicity, but inevitably these are partial and fragmentary.

The ethnic definition of national identity has been exhausted and, one might say, not before time. The identification of essential, 'ethnic' criteria for belonging to a nation is a necessarily exclusive process. In elevating a single 'monoculture' as the model of nationality this upholds characteristics that cannot be universal. It must of necessity (especially in such a historically divided and diverse society as Wales) put obstacles in the way of at least some of its own people.

What, then, can replace an 'ethnic' definition of the nation? The alternative is most commonly called a 'civic' definition, which discusses national identity not in terms of essential characteristics such as language or religion, but in terms of the structures of citizenship and government. Thus, as Merfyn Jones noted in an article published in 1992:

"... the Welsh are in the process of being defined ... by reference to the institutions that they inhabit, influence and against which react".

Those institutions are much more tangible now, after devolution, than they were before. Welsh citizenship is a reality not only when one votes in National Assembly elections, but also both when one takes advantage and when one suffers from the varying implementation of policy this side of Offa's Dyke. We are in the apparently paradoxical situation that, as

the processes of globalization seem to render borders less and less relevant, more and more porous, the changing constitutional settlement in Wales has made the Welsh border more important than at any time in modern history.

But although a 'civic' definition of Welshness – effectively you are Welsh if you live in Wales and (if adult) have a vote here – is certainly preferable to the older 'ethnic' definitions, I would question whether we need to remain confined by the discourses of nationality at all. Devolution, in theory, offers us the opportunity to reinvent a new Welsh patriotism. But, rather than struggling to reinvent the nation, contesting it in its different incarnations, I suggest that it is time to move beyond the nation, for two reasons.

The first is that, in a global era, the nation-state is less and less relevant. The concept of globalization embraces the fact that the 'global' is a dimension of increasing importance in many aspects of our lives, whether they be economic, political, environmental or cultural. Global warming, the internet, international terrorism, Microsoft Powerpoint, more and more, we cannot escape the fact that we are one world, and that the problems that face human beings in one society necessarily have the potential to have an impact on our own lives. In a globalised world, the nation-state is progressively more anachronistic, its limited sovereign powers diminishingly able to control what goes on within its borders. Putting up the shutters is not an option. One cannot screen globalisation out at the nation's frontier. One can only hope to build transnational institutional and legal structures that control the process to the benefit of the majority of the world's peoples, rather than benefit only the multi-national corporations: a globalisation from below, not a globalisation from above.

The second reason is not only that to reinvent nationality in a global era is anachronistic, but it is that it is also philosophically untenable. For any discourse of nationality erects psychological barriers between us as members of one nation, and the rest of the peoples of the world as members of other nations. Definitions work by 'othering': we define who we are by who we are not. Thus we are Welsh because we are not English or British. These sorts of binarisms not only excite unnecessary antagonisms towards others, they also tend to render marginal or invisible those identities, those groups, those people, whose characteristics do not fit those of the imagined nation.

Even civic nationality is still contaminated by the unavoidable logic of any national identity discourse that raises barriers between human beings in different states. Because nationality articulates difference, it is a fundamentally unhelpful discourse. It places obstacles in the way of mutual understanding and it compels individuals to commit themselves to one (nation)-state or another. The peril of embracing the national project (even in its civic form) at this very time is that we will end up with an insular, exclusivist vision of our future that once more attempts a false homogenisation of Welsh society and that marginalises

the experiences and interests of those that do not fit, and that, through what Edward Said called the 'rhetoric of blame', stresses difference and conflict with England to the exclusion of shared experiences and cooperation.

In Wales, according to the last census, there are 582,000 people who can speak at least some Welsh. I am one of them. Quite rightly there are policies and strategies, funding streams and initiatives, that are dedicated to shoring up the Welsh language and helping it to revive. Also according to the last census, there are 590,000 people in Wales who were born in England, 'by far the biggest ethnic grouping in Wales'. They include my wife, my mother and my sister. Now these two groups are not mutually exclusive, but they are very different in their identities and prospects. A definition of Welshness that ignored Welsh-speakers would be untenable. A definition of Welshness that recognizes that only three-quarters of the people of Wales were born in Wales has yet to be articulated.

For me, the answer to these contradictions is not, in the pluralistic style of the Parekh Report on 'multi-ethnic' Britain, to reinvent the nation as 'a community of communities'. This merely displaces the problems of identity definition and collective exclusion onto a different level, and runs the risk of reifying identities at levels other than that of the nation-state. That is why I am not a spokesperson for an English-speaking Welsh identity, for a Monmouthshire identity, or for a border identity: none of those collectivities are viable foundations for a future politics of inclusion.

We in Wales have the opportunity to move to what might be called a post-national state, to construct a partially-autonomous Wales where that autonomy liberates all citizens, not just those who subscribe to the conventional views of what the characteristics and direction of that nation-state should be. This 'post-nation' would be a society that has discarded the notion of a homogeneous nation-state with singular forms of belonging, and that is instead inclusive and culturally diverse.

A 'postnational' Wales would be a Wales that has moved on from the discourse of national identity, that has dispensed with the rhetoric of 'Welshness', and that has fully embraced and come to terms with the concept of a postnational citizenship. Rather than deny (explicitly or implicitly) a Welsh identity to black and Asian people, or to those living near the English border, or indeed to English-born people who have chosen to live in Wales, a post-national Wales discards identity discourse and starts from somewhere else. We decouple the idea of a national culture from the civic rights and responsibilities that go with being a citizen of Wales. Our 'imagined community' is imagined as something that goes beyond the nation-state to embrace the idea of a global democracy. In moving, as Merfyn Jones puts it, 'Beyond Identity', we make Wales 'a place with citizens, not a cause with adherents'.

The opportunities here are not just that we move beyond exclusivist positions on Welsh national identity. They are that we find, through the idea of a postnational citizenship that crosses existing borders and boundaries, a consensus of universal moral values that enshrines the rights of the individual through democratic participation, that speaks in terms of respect for all human beings of all levels of wealth and status, that aims to reduce inequality within and between countries and continents, that seeks human societies that are more in tune with environmental pressures and demands. Perhaps this is a suitably refurbished and updated internationalism of the sort that appealed to so many of the south Wales miners with whom I began my research career. But there is nothing specifically or necessarily 'Welsh' about any of these ideas.

This call for a postnational Wales is unlikely to appeal to all, in fact I suspect that it will fail, at present, to convince a majority. Some of the sceptics will come from the nationalist movement, notwithstanding the fact that there are those within that movement who have done much to advance postnational ideals. They might say that to argue for a postnational Wales is to denude the concept of Welshness of any essential meaning. The answer to that is if that 'essential meaning' consists of terms that are well past their sell-by date then, of course, and the sooner the better. Others might worry that to problematise the notion of Wales in such a fashion is to jeopardise the new Welsh democratic project, and that taking a stronger hold of Welsh nationality is crucial to making devolved Wales a success. But I feel that it is precisely at this point, when the exact form and tenor of Welsh democracy is so fluid, that it is important to recognize fully and take proper account of the ambiguities and complexities that render the national project so problematic. Otherwise we shall generate a future Wales that is embraced by, or fully relevant, only to a minority.

There is a danger that, in rejecting the language of the nation (historically a reasonably successful means of integrating individuals into a large-scale society), we lose social cohesion and descend into a marketplace of anarchic individualism, in which one chooses one's identity as a 'brand', a mixture of designer labels and chic affectations. Critics of globalisation have worried over the 'McDonaldisation' of the world, the swamping of existing cultures by a bland, Americanised consumerism. Globalisation certainly brings with it disadvantages as well as advantages, and it presents Wales, as it presents every country in world (including the USA) with major challenges. But social cohesion can only be strengthened through the democratic participation of all citizens who feel they have an equal stake in the future of their society, and not by writing some groups off as possessing fewer of the credentials of nationality.

The concept of a postnational citizenship is not without its problems. The most obvious location for such a citizenship, in the short term, would be the European Community. That

project looks to have suffered an important recent rebuff in Sweden and there is little immediate prospect, it appears, of Britain joining the single European currency. Once one thinks about the global dimensions of postnational citizenship the most obvious framework for this would be the United Nations, and no-one can be in any doubt that the recent conflict in Iraq, and as importantly the lead-up to that conflict, damaged the standing and effectiveness of the UN. And there are plenty of other reasons to be pessimistic at present, including George W. Bush, Islamic fundamentalism, international terrorism and the continuing conflict in and around Israel. So I do not pretend that this is a goal that will easily or quickly be achieved. But I do believe that, in the long term, human society is moving in this direction, and it might be to Wales's benefit to be at the head of the queue.

Finally, some may suggest that the advocacy of post-nationality represents a denial of history and of the relevance of history, that it is a means of cutting contemporary society away from its historical moorings. It would be curious if I agreed with that. Rather, I think that, if we understand history properly, in all its complexities and ambiguities, we cannot settle for half-truths in the present. The language and rhetoric of the nation-state belongs to just one phase in human history. It does not have to govern our minds and behaviour for infinity.

Outside Wales, political philosophers and social theorists, such as David Held and Jürgen Habermas, have been arguing this position for a while. My colleague Stefan Berger has written persuasively, in the context of German history, on the need for individuals to be at one with their own selves, to move away from the imperative of seeking validation by attachment to a broader collectivity.

Inside Wales, there have been genuflections in this direction by one or two writers, particularly Merfyn Jones and Charlotte Williams. But on the whole, and for very good reasons of its own marginality and relative powerlessness, Wales has been preoccupied for the best part of two centuries with asserting and inventing its identity rather than setting it to one side. We are now, in the twenty-first century, on the cusp of a newly relevant sense of Welsh citizenship. Rather than feel we need to bolster that with the tired rhetoric of nationality, we in Wales have the opportunity to short-circuit the historical process. If we so choose we can leave behind the ultimately irresolvable problems of nationality with its discriminatory and negative dimensions, and move to a more open, participatory society in which all are equal, not just before the law, but also in the language and consciousness of civil society.

- *Professor Chris Williams is Director of the Centre for Modern and Contemporary Wales, School of Humanities, University of Glamorgan. This is an edited extract from his inaugural lecture, delivered on 14 October 2003.*

an academy of national administration

In the wake of its new policy paper making the case for a Welsh Public Service, the IWA is launching a research project on the feasibility of an Academy of National Administration to serve both the public and private sectors in Wales. Two concerns have come together to highlight the need for such an initiative. First, has been the call for a new form of public service in Wales made by First Minister Rhodri Morgan in the run up to the May 2003 Assembly election.

Secondly, opportunities in Wales to take a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) course recognised by one of the leading accreditation organisations such as the Association of MBAs, are limited. Undoubtedly, this places Wales at a disadvantage in attracting high calibre people from many organisations and businesses that will only consider accredited courses. It also obliges business in Wales to opt in many cases for courses outside the country when they wish to provide to provide MBA training for rising executives.

Part of the background to the First Minister's call for a new form of public service is that the small size of the Welsh civil service is limiting career possibilities, especially since there is very little flow between Cardiff and Whitehall. The Permanent Secretary Sir Jon Shortridge drew attention to this in his evidence to the Richard Commission which is looking at widening the powers of the National Assembly.

As Rhodri Morgan declared, "We need to invent a new form of public service in Wales, in which individuals are able to move far more easily than now between one form of organisation and another." He said staff should be able to zigzag' in their careers between local government, the Assembly, health service administrators, higher education administration,

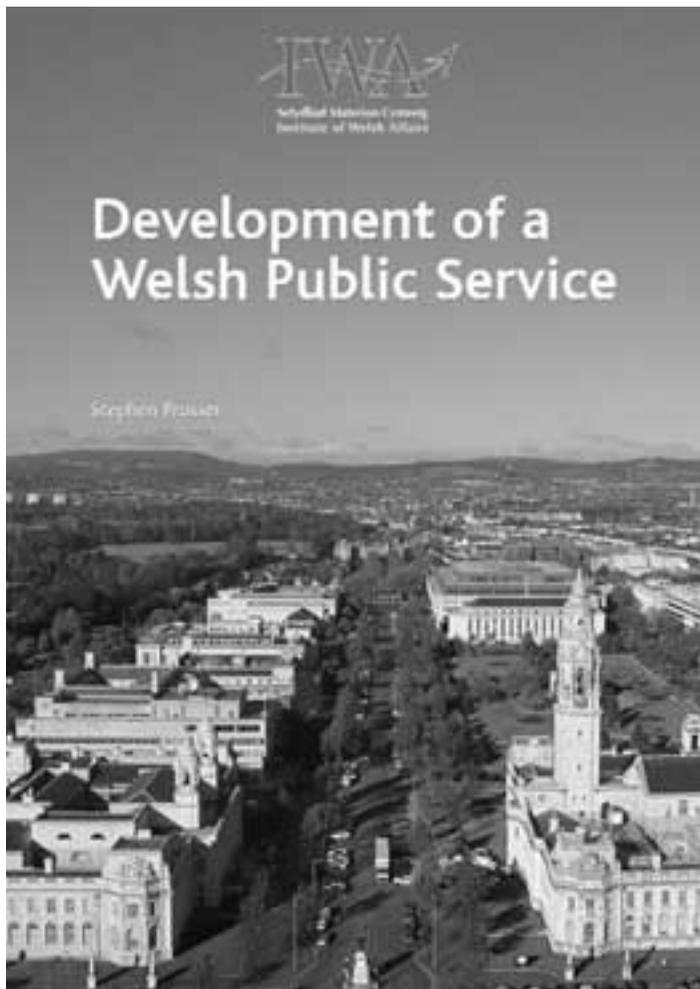
and organisations like the WDA and the Wales Tourist Board.

This call was the starting point for Professor Stephen Prosser's study, *Development of a Welsh Public Service*, published by the IWA in November 2003. In it he argues that there is no central focus or organisation to bring the different parts of the Welsh public service groups together. As he says:

"The Welsh public service needs a physical location to be clearly identified with its development ... This would be a dedicated resource, charged with taking forward the learning and development agenda and jointly owned by the constituents of the Welsh public service.

The IWA's new research project will take this recommendation forward, and also examine the prospect of widening the brief to embrace the private sector. This would not only address the limited opportunities to take accredited MBA courses in Wales, but also ensure cross-fertilisation between the public and private sectors.

- *Development of a Welsh Public Service* can be obtained from the Institute of Welsh Affairs (price £10; half-price to IWA members).



does liverpool belong to north wales?

A debate on the relationship between Liverpool and north Wales is being organised by the IWA's North Wales Branch on Thursday 12 February 2004 at Llandrillo College, Rhos-on-Sea, starting at 6pm.



For generations Liverpool has been regarded by many in north Wales as their capital, the closest major urban centre, a gateway to the world. Through the 19th and much of the 20th Century it was home to a Welsh-speaking community, complete with chapels, Eisteddfodau and sporting institutions. In one formation it was an external colony for the Welsh. Will this continue in the 21st Century?

Sponsored by the public relations firm Quadrant, the main speakers will be David Henshaw, Chief Executive of Liverpool City Council and Secretary of the Liverpool Culture Company which steered through the 2008 bid; Rev D. Ben Rees, the Liverpool-based publisher and iconoclast, a spokesperson for the Liverpool Welsh; Ann Gosse,

Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure, Denbighshire County Council; and will be chaired by Geraint Talfan Davies, Chair of the IWA and the Arts Council of Wales.

In 2008 Liverpool becomes European Capital of Culture. Its bid document promises to "celebrate Liverpool's established and emerging cultural links with Cologne, New York, Dublin, Riga, and Shanghai. The Cities at the Edge Festival will explore the creative and historic threads that link Liverpool with some of Europe's other most culturally vibrant and edgy port cities – Naples, Marseilles, and Bilbao." Yet nowhere in the document does the city's doorstep Welsh neighbour get a look in. Can this change? This IWA evening offers a chance to debate these issues with leading figures from both sides of the border.

The debate will be followed by a wine reception and buffet.

- To obtain tickets, £10 per head to include hot buffet and wine, contact: IWA, Ty Oldfield Llantrisant Road, Llandaf, Cardiff, CF5 2YQ Telephone 02920 575511 Facsimile 02920 575701 E-mail wales@iwa.org.uk

second term challenge

Wales's relatively weak devolution settlement has left it at a disadvantage in formulating innovative economic policies to deal with the loss of manufacturing jobs when compared with Scotland. This is a conclusion drawn by Professor Phil Cooke, of Cardiff University, in *Second Term Challenge*, published by the Institute of Welsh Affairs in association with the Constitution Unit at University College, London. The new book, arising from a conference held by the two organisation in the wake of the May 2003 election, examines the tasks facing the National Assembly for Wales as it proceeds into its second term.

Professor Cooke, director of the Centre for Advanced Studies at Cardiff, argues that Scottish policy has been able to develop innovative instruments with a strong focus on knowledge-based economic development strategy. In contrast Wales's entrepreneurship and innovation supporting policies have not been systematically integrated, lack synergies and have under-performed.

In the run-up to the May 2003 elections First Minister Rhodri Morgan claimed that he had placed 'clear, red water' between his administration in Cardiff and Tony Blair's 'New Labour' Government at Westminster. The Editor of Second Term

Challenge, IWA Director, John Osmond, said, "The challenge for the second term is to put this distinctive profile into effective practice. So far it has been largely expressed as declaratory policy statements. Following closely behind is another challenge: to improve the structures and extend the powers of the Assembly to give the Assembly Government the discretion it needs to put its policies into effect."



In the book Professor David Reynolds of the University of Exeter deals with education policy, Scott Greer, of the Constitution Unit examines health policy, and Professor Iain MacCleave of Nuffield College, Oxford looks at the operation on the Barnett Formula which underpins the Assembly's finances. Professor Robert Hazell, Director of the Constitution Unit, analyses how Labour will deal with recommendations that are likely to come from the Richard Commission on the Assembly's powers in early 2004.

- Second Term Challenge is available from the IWA at £10 (half-price to members).

new gwent branch



Geoff Edge – elected Chair of the new Gwent Branch

An IWA Gwent Branch, covering Newport, Monmouthshire, Torfaen, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent and south Powys is to be launched in March 2004. Three planning meetings have been held with members electing Geoff Edge, Pro Vice Chancellor of University of Wales College Newport as Chair.

The new branch will be launched at a day conference which will examine the emergence of Newport as

the region's economic and cultural driver.

"This is an extremely important initiative for the Institute," said Director John Osmond. "The Gwent region is one of the most populated and important parts of the country and will be an important voice in the counsels of the IWA in coming years."

The new Branch will complement the existing IWA branches in North Wales,

West Wales and Swansea Bay. After consultations the IWA's Management Board has decided to amalgamate Ceredigion with Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire in the West Wales Branch. For the time being northern Powys will be serviced by the North Wales Branch while south Powys will become part of the Gwent Branch. If there is demand consideration will be given in future to the creation of a Powys Branch on its own account.

slow train coming

Much greater priority needs to be given to south Wales rail services in order to reflect the growing importance of Cardiff as a European capital city and to support the potential for economic growth in the area. This is the frank admission made by Chris Kinchin-Smith, managing director of First Great Western, the operator of London-Cardiff services, responding to the IWA's recent report on rail services, Capitals United.

Mr Kinchin-Smith, whose comments appear in the report, promises a new timetable in late 2004 with the aim of improving punctuality on the line. He also reveals that studies are being made to see whether some limited-stop express services can be introduced, avoiding some of the current en-route stops. Late night

services from London may also be restored, enabling people to spend an evening in London and return home.

"We share the concern that speed and reliability of these services have now been left behind those of the best high-speed railways in Europe and elsewhere and we wish to work with private and public sector partners to resolve these issues," he says

The report, produced for the Institute of Welsh Affairs by the Wales Transport Research Centre at the University of Glamorgan, also generated a strong response from the chairman of the Strategic Rail Authority, Richard Bowker. Contrary to the findings of the report he argues that the service between Cardiff and London is "dramatically" better than it was in the

1980s, with more and longer trains on the route: "We recognise that rail travel will continue to grow next year and the Strategic Rail Authority will be consulting on a Great Western route utilisation strategy, seeking views from everyone as to how we should develop this important part of the transport infrastructure."

The IWA report calls for substantial further investment in rail services between Cardiff and London, revealing that although the frequency of services to and from London has improved significantly in recent years, there has been no matching improvement in timings.

Indeed, the report's analysis of timetables between London and three other important UK cities in 1977, 1987, 1997 and 2002 show

that trains to and from Cardiff were making faster average journeys 16 years ago than they are now. In 1987 the fastest train was timed at 1 hour 49 minutes to London and 1 hour 40 minutes from London. Today these fastest times have been extended by six minutes and 20 minutes respectively and average journey times have also become longer. In 1987 17 out of 21 services were scheduled to reach Cardiff in less than two hours compared with none (out of 28) in 2002.

By contrast, services to and from Leeds and Nottingham – regional capitals respectively of Yorkshire and the East Midlands – have achieved generally better times over the past 15 years and have also grown in frequency. Average times to Leeds (which has benefited

from the electrification of the West Coast Main Line) have improved and the average journey time is only just over 10 minutes longer than to Cardiff, despite the extra distance.

In addition, the report, which has the backing of CBI Wales, points out that there is the problem of delays on the Great Western main line, which means that trains often run more slowly than time-tabled. "By any normal standards Cardiff has good rail services, yet as frequent travellers will testify, a gap has emerged between promise and performance," it says.

A weaker rail service than is available to other leading UK cities could impact severely on Cardiff's future competitive position. As the authors of the report, Rhys David of the IWA, and Professor Stuart Cole of the University of Glamorgan, note:

"A number of medium-sized cities up and down the UK, including Cardiff, are seeking to move into a bigger league of British centres creating the critical mass that will enable them to capture regional leadership across a wide area. It is these cities that want to position themselves to play host to big events, such as celebrity concerts, big sports teams, significant cultural activity such as theatre, opera, museums and galleries, and big conferences and exhibitions.

"They want to be on the shopping list for companies seeking to locate regional or national public and private sector headquarters and to have facilities that will attract not just UK but international tourists. They want to be able to boast universities that are among the top ten in their field and to house prestige research institute. They want to have vibrant retailing centres where the world's top fashion houses and other leading retailers are represented."



Small countries such as Wales need one of these semi-super cities if they are to have a strong place in the world. If visitors find it increasingly difficult to visit the Welsh capital by road or by rail, it will be disadvantaged in its attempts to attract those international players, the report states.

The report points to a number of understandable reasons why it is taking longer to reach Cardiff and other parts of Wales by train

from London, compared with the late 1980s. In particular, the main line has had to accommodate many more trains, both passenger and freight. Paddington itself is much more congested since the introduction of the Heathrow Express and trains are making more stops en route. Half of all Cardiff trains now stop at Didcot to accommodate increased commuter traffic to and from London.

Signalling has also come under review following accidents such as that at Ladbroke Grove in 1999. The age of the fleet and of the track and signalling are also a factor.

In their recommendations the authors of the report say rail services to Wales need to be seen in the context of transport policy as a whole. "In the case of south Wales the need is for adequate investment in rail services to and from London and other major centres, providing a frequent fast and reliable service.

"If Cardiff is to grow to its full potential it needs to be positioned as an easy-to-reach destination enjoying fast, frequent and peak period limited stop access to the UK capital and good services to other important cities.

- *Capitals United* can be obtained from the IWA, Ty Oldfield, Llantrisant Road, Cardiff CF5 2YQ Telephone 029 2057 5511 E-mail wales@iwa.org.uk (price £10; half-price to IWA members).

coming up...

- **Cardiff Lunch:** First Minister Rhodri Morgan Thursday 29 January Hilton Hotel Cardiff 12.00pm bar opens 12.30pm Speaker Tickets £30 / £27.50 to IWA members £250 table for ten.
- **West Wales Branch Dinner:** Inward Migration and the Market Economy Friday 12 March, Falcondale Hotel Lampeter 7.30pm for 8.00pm with Cynog Dafis former MP for Ceredigion and AM for Mid and West Wales.
- **Cardiff Lunch:** Richard Lambert, Monetary Policy Committee, Bank of England. Friday 19 March, Hilton Hotel Cardiff. 12.00pm bar opens 12.30pm Speaker. Tickets £30 / £27.50 to IWA members £250 table for ten.
- **Creating a Welsh Brand - Lunch with Rachel Rowlands,** Friday 26 March, Bodysgallen Hotel, Llandudno 12.00pm bar opens 12.30pm Speaker. Tickets £25 / £22.50 IWA members £200 table for ten.

just published...

- **Second Term Challenge:** Can the Welsh Assembly Government Hold its Course? £10
- **Development of a Welsh Public Service** By Stephen Prosser, £10
- **Capitals United** By Stuart Cole and Rhys David, £10

more information:

www.iwa.org.uk

mind the gap



dylan jones-evans
puts the economic
performance of the
richer and poorer
regions of Wales
under the spotlight

Following the Assembly elections in May 2003 First Minister Rhodri Morgan made the pledge that his all-Labour government's highest priority was to help the least well off in society. As he put it, "We have to spread prosperity and create social justice and that sense that we are bringing home the bacon for all parts of Wales and all types of communities as well."

In this case the key issue for the Welsh economy during the next three-and-a-half years is not whether it is doing well as a whole, but whether prosperity is being spread across the nation. And in particular, this means to the 15 counties in west Wales and the Valleys that have qualified for Objective 1 funding and are classed amongst the poorest areas in Europe.

The regional disparities were recognised in 1999 through the awarding of Objective 1 status to west Wales and the Valleys that qualified because their average prosperity was less than 75 per cent of the European average. Consequently, at the same moment it assumed powers over economic development, the Assembly Government was given access to £2.5 billion of investment from public, private and European funding. This was a 'once-in-a-lifetime' opportunity to regenerate its poorest areas. Indeed, one of the most difficult challenges of the Assembly's first four years has been the management and delivery of the Objective 1 programme.

For example, it was nearly nine months before the first projects were approved. The complicated administrative systems put into place to deal with applications led to considerable concern that the private sector would be turned off by the entire process.

Fortunately, this has recently been addressed with the body responsible for administering the project – the Welsh European Funding Office – losing its status as an independent body and being brought under the direct control of the Economic Development Division.

Quite rightly, Economic Development Minister Andrew Davies has established a system to streamline the management of the entire programme. Hopefully, this will simplify the application process and speed up the delivery of new project ideas. Whether these changes are a tacit admission of failure of the process to date or merely a reorganisation of the management of the Objective 1 programme to make it more efficient and effective depends upon your political colours. However, the only real examination of whether the programme is working is whether the Objective 1 regions of Wales are actually closing the gap with the rest of the country.

Data published by the Office for National Statistics at the end of October revealed that the average prosperity for the Objective 1 region had decreased to 67 per cent of the UK average in 2001. In contrast, east Wales – comprising of the counties of Cardiff, Newport, Vale of Glamorgan, Powys, Monmouthshire, Flintshire and Wrexham – continued to grow in prosperity at the same rate as the UK. In the period 1998-2001 the gap in wealth between the two regions of Wales widened by over 20 per cent (see Table 1).

Instantly, it was argued that these figures were out-of-date and that they do not take into account the employment changes that have occurred within Wales in the last two years. Since 2001, it can be argued,

they may well have closed the gap between the Objective 1 region and the rest of Wales.

Given the absence of gross value added figures since 2001, an informed answer can only be provided by examining more up-to-date statistics in other areas – in particular job creation, increasing wealth and reducing economic inactivity.

In terms of job creation, data from the Labour Force Survey suggests that in the period from August 2000 (when the Objective 1 programme first came on stream) to August 2003, the number of people in employment in Wales increased by 81,000 – a record of which the Assembly Government should be rightly proud.

However, as Table 2 shows, only a third of these additional jobs – 27,000 – have been created within the Objective 1 region. In contrast Cardiff, Monmouthshire, Wrexham and Flintshire experienced an increase in employment of 54,000 during same period. This demonstrates that though job creation – one of the main aims of

west wales and the valleys objective 1 region



Force Survey shows that the number of people in manufacturing has declined by over 21 per cent since 2000 within the Objective 1 region, with the number of manufacturing jobs in Rhondda Cynon Taff for example going down by around 13,000. The number of jobs in financial services has also decreased within the Objective 1 region since 2000, whilst showing an increase in the rest of Wales.

Another worry regarding the employment figures for Wales is the change in the age profile of workers during the last three years, with evidence of out migration of young people from the poorer parts of Wales. For example, the Labour Force Survey shows that those in employment between the ages of 16 and 35 within the Objective 1 region has actually decreased by around 34,000 since 2000. In contrast, the

number of over 50s in work within the Objective 1 programme – is taking place, it is not happening as fast in the Objective 1 region as in the rest of the country.

number of over 50s in work within the west Wales and the Valleys went up by 38,000 in the same period.

In terms of sectoral growth in high skill and highly paid sectors, the Labour

Force Survey shows that those in employment between the ages of 16 and 35 within the Objective 1 region has actually decreased by around 34,000 since 2000. In contrast, the number of over 50s in work within the west Wales and the Valleys went up by 38,000 in the same period.

table 1: gross value added at current basic prices 1998-2001 (£ per head)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	% Change 1998-2001
Non-Objective 1	12,793	13,317	13,854	14,430	12.8%
Objective 1	8,857	9,056	9,364	9,678	9.3%

Source: Office for National Statistics

table 2: employment in wales 2000-2003 (all 16+)

	July 2000	July 2001	July 2002	July 2003	% Change 2000-2003
Non-Objective 1	492,000	497,000	518,000	546,000	11.0%
Objective 1	781,000	770,000	769,000	808,000	3.5%

Source: NOMIS (Labour Force Survey)

in pay between Objective 1 and the rest of Wales has increased by over 40 per cent (see Table 3). In 2003, the gross average weekly wage in the Objective 1 area was £327, as opposed to £370 for the rest of Wales. Certainly, the cost of living is probably lower within the less prosperous areas. Nonetheless, this is a worrying statistic given that one of the main aims of the Objective 1 programme is to ensure that the gap between the poorer and richer areas of Wales is closed.

Decrease in economic inactivity has been perhaps the main social and economic mission of the Assembly Government and, to some extent, it has succeeded with the number reduced by 35,000 in the period 2000-2003. However, the biggest fall has not been where it has been hoped for, namely in the poorer parts of Wales. As table 4 shows, there has been a fall of 10.6 per cent in the proportion of those who are economically inactive since 2000 in the non-Objective 1 counties. In contrast, however, there has only been a 0.2 per cent fall in the Objective 1 counties over the same period. Therefore, while the overall record is impressive, 97 per cent of the fall in economic inactivity is happening where it is needed least, namely within the richer counties of Wales.

The evidence presented here suggests that in terms of employment generation, weekly wages, and economic activity the gap between the poorer and richer parts of Wales continues to increase. This is despite the latest report on

structural funds to the Assembly's Economic Development Committee indicating that over £1.2 billion has been committed to 918 projects within the Objective 1 programme.

Those parts of Wales that are not receiving Objective 1 cash are actually doing better than those in receipt of structural funds.

The Objective 1 programme is one of long term transformation. Some of the projects that are being developed have considerable potential to make a significant difference to the more deprived areas of Wales. However, the most up-to-date statistics available suggest that those parts of Wales that are not receiving this extra cash are actually doing better than those in receipt of substantial structural funds.

The reasons for such a disparity need greater analysis, as it calls into question the approach and relevance of the current Objective 1 programme.

Perhaps the most important question is whether there are enough infrastructure and capacity building projects being undertaken within the Objective 1 region to underpin a sustainable future. If not, then we will be left with a reliance on the more prosperous areas to generate wealth and employment, leaving much of the Objective 1 region to serve as residential or tourism areas. This would not sit well with many natural Labour supporters who would be reluctant to support any approach to concentrate sustainable jobs outside of their core constituency. Indeed, the Norman Tebbit 'on your bike' approach to employment and wealth generation is something that one would not expect from the current Labour administration in Cardiff.

To ensure that wealth and employment come to all parts of our nation equally during the next decade, the Assembly Government should consider diverting resources from the more prosperous parts of Wales. That would certainly be a bold move. However, it will be needed if the gap between the 'haves' and 'have nots' within the Welsh economy is to be closed.

- *Professor Dylan Jones-Evans is Professor of Entrepreneurship at the North East Wales Institute, Wrexham.*

table 3: gross weekly wage in wales, 2000-2003

	2000	2001	2002	2003	% Change 2000-2003
Non-Objective 1	326.1	339.12	356.22	369.76	13.4%
Objective 1	295.28	304.87	319.76	326.52	10.6%

Source: NOMIS (New Earnings Survey)

table 4: economic inactivity in wales, 2000-2003

	2000	2001	2002	2003	% Change 2000-2003
Non-Objective 1	322000	327000	312000	288000	-10.6%
Objective 1	635000	648000	661000	634000	-0.2%

Source: NOMIS (Labour Force Survey)

welsh by design special i

water in a bottle



ross lovegrove
describes the thought
processes that led him
to further develop one
of Wales' most
successful products

ty Nant, which had built its success on a marketing pure Welsh water in a deep blue glass bottle, approached me during 2000 to design a plastic version that would help them grow in the more popular end of the market. Their approach came unexpectedly as I had never anticipated working in my home country.

The company is owned by an Italian, Pietro Biscaldi, who lives and works in Genoa. Apparently his wife had read about me in an Italian magazine called *Amica*, which talked about my background from Wales and my success as an international designer. This had instant appeal. It seemed a good fit had been established between the origin of the designer and the origin of the brand. There was potential for creating a powerful design with an excellent media story to follow.

When we first met at the St David's Hotel in Cardiff, along with Nick Taylor the company's managing director, an immediately warm and open connection was made, one that was full of optimism. There seemed to be a true uniqueness about this collaboration. At the table were a group of people who knew the potential of the brand and its iconographic status. Moreover, we were all connected to design problems, either through practice, study or patronage.

And, of course, the Welsh and the Italians have a lot in common. I remember writing a little note to Pietro illustrating with a sketch how Wales must have once been joined to Italy, and was now only separated as a result of plate tectonics.

The Italian business model is one based on intuition and trust. Friendships are founded on a love of life and creativity. There is a shared interest in the cultural and commercial ambition to make things beautiful. Quality follows the presentation of food, the way a product is moulded, how a fine suit is cut and worn.

However, the company was young. There was a learning curve to traverse. It would be a testing challenge to produce a new bottle with new materials and new processes. This would be so even if we were to produce a fairly non-challenging, standard design, which of course was not the objective. Technical knowledge and understanding the market had to be acquired. The bottling plant had to be researched and installed. All this had to be done simultaneously, from scratch, and in a way that maximised the investment, respected schedules and guaranteed the product's successful entry into an already saturated global market place.



Yet the company had one great resource. This was its position as the bottler and distributor of truly beautiful water, packaged in a way that was already distinctive and recognised as an authentic product all over the world.

Indeed, the blue glass bottle continues to enjoy success as a premium product favoured by leading luxury hotels and restaurants. Its shape and colour is regarded as elegant and refined for non utilitarian table-top use where presentation and service are as important as consumption. The bottle has a universal status as a cultural artefact.

concept that would communicate the relative quantities of liquid that could be obtained from a small 50cl bottle and from 1 and 1.5 litre bottles.

The ideas I came up with were all too technical or conversely too simplistic. My joy in creating was always countered by the nagging thought that too many people across the world are denied access to clean water, this essential element of life. My moral dilemma made me question my continued involvement and at one moment I considered returning my stage one fees to the client.

However, rightly or wrongly water consumption has become an intimate part of first world systems of food production and global distribution. There is no way we will retract from this position in the foreseeable future. My professional instinct told me that branding the world's most essential commodity for mass supermarket consumption could be one way of communicating a new sense of belief in water's value and purity.

As the commissioned designer the easiest route for me would have been to have adopted a similar rotational form to that of the glass bottle, made more contemporary in some way, and to have pigmented the polymer in the same blue. However, this opportunist, quick fix approach would have been a dis-service not only to the client but also to our emerging culture. It would have been a lost opportunity to re-assess the meaning of water and its value to humanity itself.

The first few months were very frustrating as I searched for deeper meaning at an economic, environmental and purposeful level, and studied how to use less material in the design. I wanted a collapsible structure to alleviate land fill mass. I also wanted a

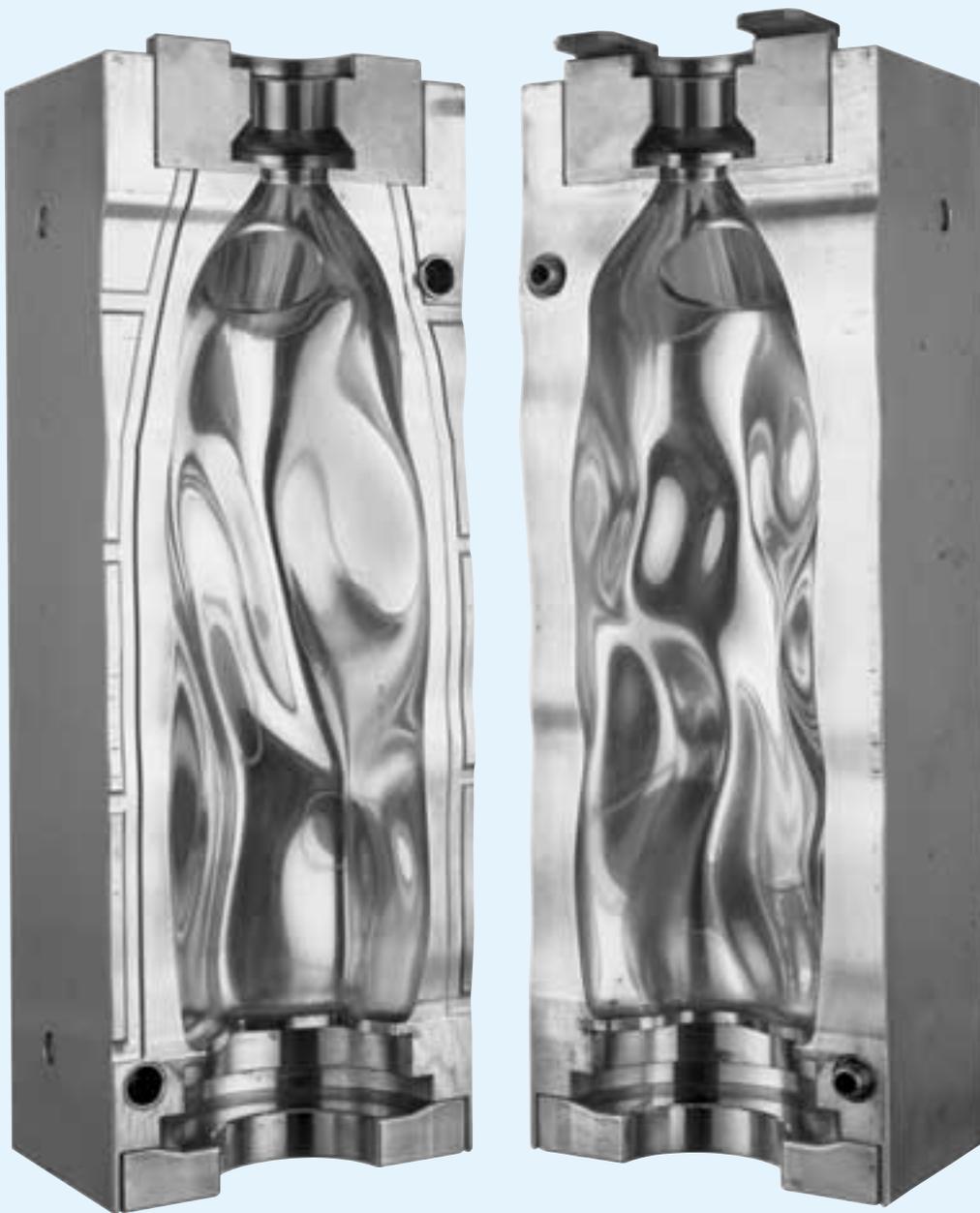
Such constant questioning, supported by the belief and understanding of the client, opened up my mind to discover a three dimensional image. What was required was not a cannibalism of the existing

brand, but a completely new aesthetic approach. The packaging should reflect the integrity of this magical transparent liquid.

...Wales must have once been joined to Italy, and was now only separated as a result of plate tectonics

The transportation of this dense liquid across the length and breadth of our planet is truly remarkable. Clouds carry water better than any container. Water manifests itself in a multitude of improbable ways, from the powdery lightness of snow to the hard crystalline solidity of ice. It can float as fluffy white clouds or darken our skies with the menace of satanic blackness bursting with bulk.

It can fall as balls that can penetrate a car roof, or sprinkle its droplets onto flowers so gently as to stay there as invisible moisture with imperceptible lightness, evaporating gently into the air. It can float as a bubble or open a rock as an iceberg. It can shower us with warmth in the mornings in the privacy of our own homes, or can swell up as a death defying tsunami with waves of destructive force. It can brighten the eyes of all cultures and all ages as a rainbow in the sky composed of the purest transparent stained glass colours.



Machine tool developed for factory production for the new Ty Nant bottle. Molten plastic is blown into the mold which produces the distinctive shape

It can be an ocean, a lake, a stream, a pond or the trickle from a tap with its own fluttering mind. Indeed, without it life as we know it could not exist. Dependence on its preservation and purity in supporting the biosphere we call earth is something all living organisms share. To capture its spirit requires a non-commercial approach. A container should be akin to sculpture born out of open arms and the solidification of a fleeting impression seen and imagined, but with no fixed moment or definition.

My form for the new bottle, said to be incapable of improving upon the old, was stimulated by two books. One contained the water studies of Leonardo da Vinci and the other the designs of Issey Miyake, a Japanese master of the process and understanding of materials in our contemporary world. They helped condense my thinking around a shape which satisfied the material, functional, philosophical and aesthetic requirements I sought.

The result combined a minimum of materials with a stretching of the boundaries of the technological manufacturing processes – against much opposition by the industry. It is tactile. It fits hands that are large, small or arthritic. It loses nothing of its silent, ergonomic appropriateness through volumetric change of scale. Its tessellated surface provides integrity from its minimum use of material.

The structure encourages the use of the last drop of liquid as it flows towards the cap. The surface of the water interacts with the walls as it is poured. The result is an asymmetry of form that guarantees that no two bottles will be perceived the same way. In turn this promotes a sense of unique experience at the moment of consumption – a kind of mass individualism through the repeated use of a mass-produced product in distinctive ways.

The bottle cross-migrates from the public to the private domains. It is not perceived as strictly utilitarian, even though its production comes from the same origins as more engineered and unemotional industrial solutions. The employment of crystal transparent polymer, without false blue tinting, also anticipates the need when creating to use pure materials. Colouring contaminates later recycling.

Finally, after listing more than nine legitimising factors for use of the humble plastic bottle, the final justification is its sculptural form. Created from modern technological processes it nonetheless displays an optical beauty that is instantly recognisable as the embodiment of the life giving and life supporting substance we call water.

- Brought up in Penarth, Ross Lovegrove is product designer based in London who has exhibited across the world, including New York, Paris and Japan.

welsh by design special ii

Halen Môn

david lea-wilson says
successful marketing
entails combining
a local with a global
image

two brands dominate my life. One is Halen Mon, pure white sea salt from Anglesey. The other is the much larger brand of Wales itself. Halen Mon is an exciting product being exported to twelve different countries. The thinking behind the brand for the sea salt is straightforward. However, its long-term success will depend on the global brand of Wales.

Brands are not easy things. They have to be rooted in something tangibly different from their competitors. They also have to have an emotional element that can't be quantified. If they don't work on both levels they won't be successful.

I am writing this in Nice in the south of France, only four hours travel time (via Liverpool) from Anglesey. This region's brand is so strong that it needs few branding devices. Bright hot sun, blue sea, Mediterranean terra cotta roofs and good food and wine are the products almost everyone would mention if asked to paint the ambience in ten words. Branding devices such as logos and strap lines are almost unnecessary.

The stronger the product, judged by its unique selling points and image, the easier it is to brand. The key issue in Wales is that there are lots of branding devices, many with dragons woven into them (Countryside Council for Wales, Wales Tourist Board, Welsh Development Agency, National Botanic Garden and the Institute of Welsh Affairs all come to mind). However, the core essence behind the brand is much harder to pin down – there aren't ten words that many would agree on.

When we started Halen Mon we just had the idea of extracting white flakes from the sea. The product was tangible and well rooted. The Romans made salt here and there is a Salt island on Anglesey. Branding merely had to give the product an identity.

With the help from Menter Mon (a European-funded Leader group) and Design Wales we developed a brief for prospective designers. No one inspired us. But Design Wales gave us the confidence to reject what we were offered at that stage and search for someone who shared our aspirations for the quality of the product. The nearest role model we could point to was Ty Nant mineral water. Eventually we found a designer in Wales who understood the brand we visualised. Packaging, typefaces and the colours were carefully thought out and proved highly successful. For instance, during a recent demonstration and talk we gave on site to 20 members from a local WI we found that six of them had already bought and given the product to relatives and friends abroad.

They were responding to our vision that the product was much more than sea salt in a cardboard tube. It is pure and white, has organic certification and a local provenance. At the same time it reflects some of the qualities of the Isle of Anglesey and Wales, making it an ideal gift.

Success was also happening at different levels. Spanish Michelin 3 star restaurants and French delicatessens were buying and France and Spain have plenty of their own sea salt.



Our product is good quality and made with care; branding merely enhances it. The proof has been our resistance to producing own-label sea salt for major customers. Instead, we have insisted on joint branding. This has culminated in working with Harvey Nichols and Marks and Spencer. Both have accepted that local origin or 'terroir' is now important. As a result Anglesey sea salt is on the front of both these companies "house" sea salt. We have been happy to work with both of them because their quality values are similar to our own and so help our brand emerge onto a wider stage.

The power of getting the brand and the marketing right was brought home to us when the American 'home style guru' Martha Stewart flew a film crew over to do pieces on Portmeirion, Bodnant, Crug Farm Plants and ourselves. Despite never making it over herself because of well publicised tax problems, the TV footage of Anglesey and our production process on her own TV channel led to a twenty fold increase in orders on our web shop and new outlets in Canada. One spin-off for Anglesey and possibly Wales was that an American curriculum designer saw the piece and now Anglesey will be one of ten places that many American children have to identify as part of their coursework. Apocryphally, only 10 per cent of Americans have passports, so projecting Wales into the American consciousness in this way can only be helpful.

As an idea or brand Wales has many good things going for it. However, it lacks the instant iconography or the core products that characterise our the other nations of the British Isles. The challenge, I believe, is to find out what those core products are or could be and then seek the right communication channels to get them into global consciousness. The nearest thing we have to a core brand or identity, of course, is the dragon and we should be



David Lea-Wilson finds plenty of the stuff on the Menai Straits.

proud to use it. Products need to be identified simply and succinctly, and their branding repeated with numbing frequency until it is lodged in the global consciousness.

Changes being stimulated by the WDA and WTB are wholly laudable especially the True Taste campaign. The raising of quality seems essential if we are to be a tourist country of choice for residents and incomers. But what is the Wales brand? What does the dragon mean? What is the essence of Wales? The saddest occasions are when you hear commentators refer to an area 'the size of Wales'. I want Wales to be identified with something as recognisable and good as Guinness, or Smoked Salmon or Malt Whisky or Roast Beef. We do have amazing lamb for example but it is more a perception we have inside Wales than one that others globally recognise.

It is the sea that offers one area to be internationally differentiated. We have 80 per cent of the UK's blue flag

beaches, unpolluted sea water, and accessible marinas. Think of our many coastal villages and the activities that we can offer: kite and wind surfing, sailing, snorkelling, ribbing, sea angling, coastal footpath walking. In France they are eating mussels from Wales. But on the menus they are just Moules Marinières.

The future for Halen Mon's brand is now something we are debating. Spiced salt, smoked sea salt and a gift pack of sea salts have been successful. So has working with Anglesey wood turners and a slate producer to make complementary regional sea salt containers. Should we follow brand extension into a range of other quality items incorporating sea salt? Anglesey sea salted butter, cheese biscuits and crisps would be the food avenues.

Should we develop a range of quality bath and beauty products? Alternatively, should we leave these to others and concentrate on meeting global demand for Halen Mon by building a state of the art 'green' expansion plant on the shores of the Menai Strait?

After all, we are a tiny company employing just eight people with a tiny output compared to every other sea salt producer in Europe.. A compromise is likely as both avenues will generate the long-term growth in sustainable jobs and income that we seek. It would be a missed opportunity not to ride the brand (and the dragon) and develop with all the help now available.

- *David Lea-Wilson is Managing Director of Anglesey Sea Salt.*

welsh by design special iii

whisgi cymreig



brian morgan on how
a Welsh spirit has
been conjured out of
Penderyn

In developing the Penderyn brand, the Welsh Whisky Company had to think beyond simply packaging and graphics in order to develop a viable marketing strategy that would build customer loyalty and generate repeat business. We had to ask ourselves what are the key communication issues for creating a successful Welsh Malt? What is the *raison d'être* (or 'unique selling proposition') for choosing a Welsh malt in the market place – and in particular for choosing a new, untried Welsh brand?

Whisky is an interesting global product. Though the malt whisky market is dominated by Scotch malts their brand environment is highly complex. The malt brand is influenced commercially by perceptual issues such as heritage and provenance. Some of the more mature, classic malts – Glenmorangie, Glenlivet, Macallan, Talisker, and Lagavulin – have an almost entrenched position in the market.

In addition, as with all branded products, pricing plays an important role and malt whisky sells for at least twice the price of an ordinary blend. This is partly because its production costs are greater. Barley is more expensive to purchase than other grains used as the base for blended whisky and it has to be 'malted' prior to fermentation and distillation. Also, grain whisky in Scotland does not go through the second distillation given to malt whisky.

Because of these unique differences malt whiskies produce an interesting range of flavours and aromas that emanate from the hundreds of chemical elements that make up the

final whisky – including various acids, esters and phenols as well as other not so pleasant substances such as carbon and sulphur. The addition of a drop of water helps to release the flavours – phenols for example produce the peaty taste found in Islay malt whiskies.

We had to decide where and how a Welsh malt could fit into this picture. We were also aware that some 'entry level' malts, such as Glenfiddich, are marketed very aggressively to first time whisky drinkers, while the Classic malts have to be 'discovered' rather than forced down the customer's throat through marketing hype.

We firstly thought long and hard about the name. The marketing company we engaged came out strongly against 'Penderyn' and instead preferred the name 'Beacon'. They insisted Beacon was easier to ask for at the bar – the 'bar call' – and were sceptical of the benefits of focusing too much on a Welsh name.

We argued that Beacon was neither very evocative nor intriguing and was underwhelming emotionally. Beacon is not Wales-specific and it did not link into the provenance of the distillery's



geography. It said nothing about the whisky and was simply too bland and emotionally barren to form the basis of a story or provide provenance for a new single malt. Despite the reservations of our marketing experts, the Board decided on 'Penderyn'.

The marketing company did however, come up with some good ideas on packaging and bottle design which fitted our brief. We had asked them to produce a design that was contemporary, creative, credible, confident, and challenging. We also wanted the design to be minimalist – in contrast to some of the more pretentious 'heritage wall paper' that too often surrounds Scottish malts. But the design wasn't to be simplistic. It had to be capable of credibly supporting our claim that a relatively young single malt from Wales could command a premium price along side the classic malts and sell for around £30 a bottle.

Having studied the Scottish market for malts it was important to understand the issues around brand access. 'Malt Whiskies' are inherently challenging and encourage a sense of mystery. One needs a certain amount knowledge to join the malt whisky club. At the same time the marketing campaigns of the big Scottish distillers seek to make them accessible and even try to impart a veneer of knowledge to the entry drinkers to enable them to confidently ask for a 'malt'.

With little provenance surrounding Welsh malt whisky we have had to focus on communicating a reassuring story about the quality and accessibility of Penderyn single malt. To be successful in the market place we had to maximise our brand assets and minimise barriers to entry by getting the 'Price, Positioning, and Status' of the product just right in order to locate Penderyn at the top end of the malt whisky connoisseur market.

Our first hurdle is the link between 'Scotch' and 'whisky'. The term 'Malt' is



The Welsh Whisky Company have more than a thousand barrels maturing in these Jack Daniels bourbon casks in its bonded warehouse in Penderyn in the Brecon Beacons.

a known designator of product quality and will undoubtedly help us market Penderyn. However, we also have to remember that 'Scotch' adds value to 'Malt' – and is heavily marketed as such. We are starting from a position where Wales has no known whisky association or geographic provenance with 'malt' and has difficulty projecting itself into the quality market. In the absence of heritage, knowledge, or provenance we needed to create a strong emotional reassurance that suggested heritage and proven quality. 'Malt' alone would not enable us to achieve the £30 price point.

Welsh Whisky is unlikely to be successful in the market place if we are seen as producing an identical product to Scotch, except that it is 'made in Wales'. Welsh Whisky has to be different and it has to be top quality.

One important point of differentiation is distillation. We use an innovative production process, unique in the world, which enables a very high quality single malt whisky to be

produced. The still at Penderyn was designed by Dr David Faraday of the University of Surrey. Unlike the Scottish stills, the Penderyn still is based on the most modern technological methods of distilling used in the chemical industry. It utilises a continuous distillation process (rather than the 'two pot method' used in Scotland) and achieves a much higher level of distillation. A much greater volume of 'fats' is burned off during the distillation process, producing a mellow product of the highest quality.

Another point of difference is the beer. Whisky is essentially distilled beer and Brains brewery in Cardiff produce the wash (a specially fermented malted barley liquor brewed exclusively for the company). Each day the pot still is charged with 2,500 litres of wash and this produces an average of 200 litres of pure whisky spirit. The minimum maturation period for whisky is three years and we now have over 1000 barrels in our bonded warehouse – maturing in Jack Daniels bourbon casks.



Jim Swan, renowned 'noser', reckons that when fully matured Penderyn will be "in the top twenty of single malts world-wide".

By uniting time-honoured distillation and maturation methods with modern technology we believe we have produced a whisky that captures the spirit of the new, contemporary Wales. As the world renowned 'noser' and taster of malt whiskies, Dr Jim Swan, has judged, "The distillation and maturation process at Penderyn produces a whisky that has a smooth, unique style and is easy to drink, delicate and full of flavour ... When fully matured it is likely to become one of the best single malt whiskies on the market – certainly in the top twenty of single malts world-wide."

Having convinced ourselves that we had a quality product for sale, the next stage was marketing it to a sceptical public. These were some the key ideas that emerged from a brain-storming session:

- The Brand name, the bottle, and the packaging will need to demonstrate credibility, communicate provenance, engender trust and authenticate the relevance of Penderyn single malt whisky.
- The labelling will have to offer support by becoming the custodian of the brand story – most great malts have a story that underpins their individuality and value.

- A sense of place is vital for a single malt – location, location, location is the message to highlight the geographic and historical aspects of Penderyn.
- Quality of the ingredients should be stressed – the malted barley wash from Brains and the unique water source under the distillery.
- Artistry of the production process is another factor, the unique continuous distillation method. So, too, is the ageing of the whisky in oak barrels, particularly the Jack Daniels and Evan Williams bourbon casks that are used and their links to previous generations of whisky distillers in Wales.
- The delicate, full flavour of the whisky makes it 'dangerously easy to drink'.
- Finally the Welsh connection is important: 'Penderyn' equals Welsh Whisky, where 'Welsh' is our unique selling point.

With all these ideas in mind we came up with the idea of 'Welsh Gold', Aur Cymru. Since Celtic times Welsh Gold has been mined in Snowdonia. Celtic Chieftains wore gold collars to denote their rank and, of course, the Royal family wear wedding rings fashioned in Aur Cymru. Hollywood legends Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta Jones have also fallen under the spell of Welsh Gold and used it for their own wedding rings.

Gold makes a good story, has great provenance and various derivatives are then possible, such as 'Golden Welsh Malt Whisky'. Aur Cymru, AC, is a unique brand monogram, distinctive and evocative, denoting a quality product. Also, AC offers an opportunity for an allegory of heritage by association. Symbolism is very important here:

- AC = Rarity = Special Welsh Gold = Exclusivity
- AC is evocative of 'XO' and 'Appellation Controlle'

So the perceived provenance of the product brings together the ideas of the Penderyn brand, individuality, location, water source, Aur Cymru (AC), and the scarcity value of Welsh Gold. Together they form the basis of the brand. Then it has to be created, produced, packaged, fashioned and crafted so as to ensure that the finished product becomes greater than the sum of its parts – the Welsh Gold Standard for malt whisky.

In this way the Welsh Whisky Company aims to create a modern Classic – the 'Absolut' of Malt Whisky. Absolut provides a good benchmark. The smart, minimalist adverts for Absolut supported its famous clear bottle but both the ads and the bottle were dreamt up long before the vodka was fermented. According to Absolut's president Goran Lundqvist, the main reason for its success is that: "Absolut is a personality". Penderyn malt whisky will be launched on 1 March 2004 at St David's Hall, Cardiff.

- *Brian Morgan is Chairman of the Welsh Whisky Company.*

madoc batcup says we should take another look at Llanwern's potential to become a major international airport

flights on our door step

although there are still some thousand people employed rolling steel at Llanwern, it is inevitable that there should be concern over their future. Cessation of steel manufacturing on the site, the closure of the Ebbw Vale Corus plant and the recent announcement of closure of the AvestaPolarit plant at Panteg, near Pontypool next March, are not comfortable precedents.

Meanwhile, the future use of this uniquely situated 1,300 acre site remains a key to the transformation of the south Wales economy. It is essential that appropriate contingency plans are put in place to make the most of its potential in the event of steel processing coming to an end. So what are the potential uses for the site? Four possibilities come immediately to mind, but each has serious drawbacks:

- 1) **Retailing** There is scope for a large out of town retailing unit comparable say to the Cribbs Causeway near Bristol. But is such an out of town shopping centre needed? Certainly, it would have a detrimental impact on the Newport and Cwmbran shopping centres, and perhaps Cardiff and beyond. Neither would such a use be in line with government guidelines.
- 2) **Office development** Similar concerns would apply to the development of a large office complex. There is already a very large amount of office space available along the M4 corridor from Reading through Swindon to



In the 21st century Wales economy, airports are liable to replace steel making.

- Cardiff as a result of the collapse of the dot.com bubble. It is likely to be some time before demand would be sufficient to attract office users from outside Wales into a significant new office complex.
- 3) **Manufacturing** Since the site is so large there would need to be a massive development of industrial units. This would be contrary to the extensive drive to ensure that more activity is based away from the M4 corridor. Moreover, it begs the question of how much additional industrial activity we could or should attract to Wales and how long it is likely to stay, given current global trends.
- 4) **Housing** Faced with the alternatives housing seems the most likely option planners will choose. Yet this would be unlikely to result in the area east of Newport becoming a destination of choice or an economic magnet distinct from other locations in the south west of the UK. Nonetheless, developing the site for housing would inevitably result in large-scale population movement. It could well be that it would end up as a commuter belt for Bristol and a further drain of the valleys population as people move closer to job opportunities. The effect would be to move economic

activity from one part of south Wales to another rather than being a significant creator of additional growth in its own right. Is this the strategic vision we want to promote for south-east Wales?

However, there is one other potential use of the Llanwern site which could transform the economic prospects of Newport and south Wales as a whole. A new airport would be economically, financially and environmentally more advantageous than the comparable expansion of the capacity of existing airports in the south east of England. At the same time it would make south Wales a magnet for high value added enterprises.

There is widespread support for the full examination of the construction of an airport. Both Newport City Council and the Secretary of State for Wales have expressed interest in a feasibility study to thoroughly evaluate the potential. In addition the South East Wales Economic Forum which includes the local authorities together with such organisations as the CBI, the Wales TUC and the Welsh Development Agency have issued a briefing paper announcing their support for such an airport, subject to further studies being

carried out. This stands in marked contrast to the popular opposition to expansion of airport capacity in south east England.

The government has recently finished conducting a consultation exercise in respect of airport provision in the United Kingdom over the next 30 years. They anticipate that the number of air passengers in the UK will rise from the present 180 million to 500 million by 2030.

At Manchester the north of England has a regional hub airport with the capacity to provide a large proportion of its air transport requirements. Some 19 million passengers use Manchester each year and this is estimated to grow to as many as 70 million by 2030. In contrast the south west of the United Kingdom has no such facility.

The geographical location and logistical constraints of Cardiff and Bristol Airports severely restrict their ability to act as regional hubs for the south west Britain, either now or in the future. This is recognised by the anticipated growth figures for these airports. Cardiff Airport's capacity is estimated to grow from 1.5 million passengers per year to 4.5 million by 2030. By a remarkable coincidence this would mean that its

present share of just under 1 per cent of the UK's air passenger traffic would remain virtually unchanged.

In the case of Bristol Airport it is anticipated that it could grow from its current 2.5 million to some 8.5 million. But this would still be well below the critical mass that Manchester has already achieved. It is acknowledged that the position and layout of Bristol Airport means that it might not have sufficient capacity to meet future demand if flights from south east England are constrained and more passengers seek to travel from a local airport.

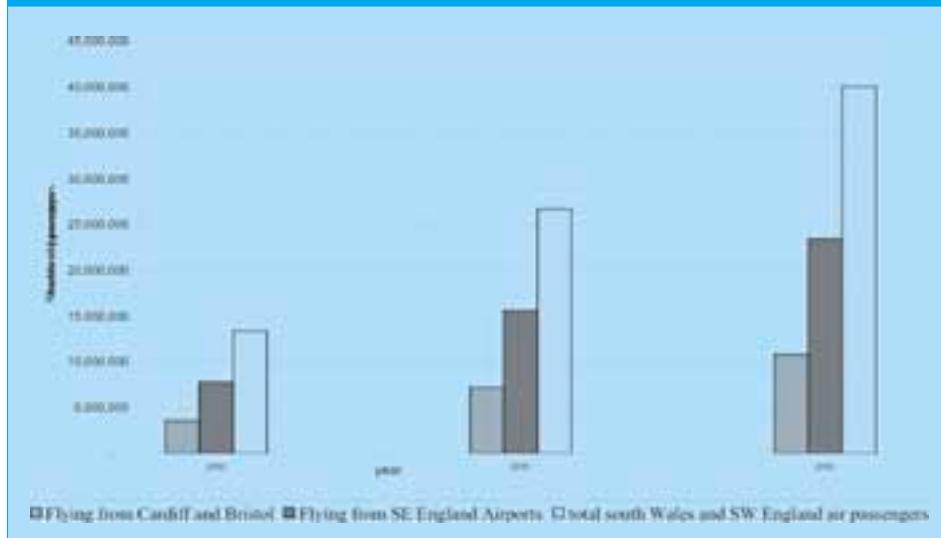
Due to the limited destinations offered by Cardiff and Bristol two-thirds of passengers from south Wales and the south west of England take flights outside their own area, mainly from Heathrow and Gatwick. This is not only inconvenient for the thousands of passengers concerned, but acts as an economic brake on the whole of south west Britain. If it remains the position there would be some 25 million passengers per year from Wales and the south west of England travelling from airports in the south east of England by 2030 (see Figure 1).

This background indicates the potential for an airport to serve south Wales and the south west of England which would enable passengers from both areas to fly to many of the destinations of their choice without having to go to the south-east of England.

Llanwern has the size and the ground infrastructure to act as a regional hub airport not only for south Wales and the south-west of Britain, but for a wider area still. The site is situated alongside the mainline railway and is connected to the M4 motorway, not far from its intersection with the M5. Consequently it already has easy access to road and rail in both a north/south and an east/west direction.

The airport would have a very significant potential catchment area, stretching

figure 1: air passengers originating in south wales and the south west of england, 2000, 2015 and 2030





A new International Airport at Llanwern would not necessarily result in the closure of Cardiff Airport at Rhoose (pictured here) – Liverpool's John Lennon Airport 'has continued to flourish in the shadow of Manchester Airport'.

eastwards towards Reading and north-east towards Birmingham. For instance, with current railway timetables it would be possible for a passenger from Swindon station to be in the airport without changing trains in just 45 minutes. Travel time from Reading by train to a Llanwern airport of a little over an hour would be comparable with the Heathrow link because there would be no need to change trains.

It is difficult to imagine any other location in the southern half of the United Kingdom that has such potential to be developed as a fully integrated transport hub of the premier rank at a very competitive cost and with such limited environmental damage. It even has access to a deep water port.

The existence of first class road and rail facilities alongside means the cost of developing a prime multi modal hub would be substantially lower than sites in the south east of England. The 'brownfield' character of the site provides additional cost advantages.

The site is situated close to the coast, thereby limiting the amount of flying over land. The orientation of the runways south-west/north-east means that noise pollution would be much lower for Newport than the position of the site might suggest.

Airports are important creators of jobs. A general rule of thumb is that one million passengers per year create about one thousand direct jobs. If a new airport at Llanwern were to grow to 20 million passengers over the next two decades, which is perfectly feasible, this would result in the creation of some 20,000 jobs on the airport, and a considerable additional number of jobs elsewhere.

Although views vary widely on the multiplier effect of an airport a Fraser of Allander report in 2000 estimated the employment multiplier to be over three times. The same study also showed that indirect employment attributable to (Scottish) airports is geographically very widely spread. The benefit of such an airport would therefore be felt over a large area of south Wales. It is difficult to imagine any alternative use for the site that could be as economically advantageous, capable as it would be of generating in excess of 50,000 jobs. Not only that, these jobs would be much less susceptible to being transferred to lower wage cost countries. Compared with the other uses to which the Llanwern site could be put, an airport is likely to provide the greatest potential for additional job creation and the least potential for job transference.

It has been suggested that any such new airport would result in the closure of Cardiff airport. Although it would certainly have an impact on its business prospects this is not necessarily the case. The example of the Liverpool John Lennon Airport which has continued to flourish in the shadow of Manchester Airport shows that neighbouring airports can co-exist.

The consultation document on airport development in the UK, issued by the Department of Transport in conjunction with the Welsh Assembly Government, states that it is a central objective to achieve high and stable levels of growth and employment. The construction of a new airport on polluted land connected to a mainline railway and linked to the motorway network, which is near the coast and situated next to some of our most deprived communities would fulfil these policy priorities as well as meeting environmental and sustainability requirements.

- *Madoc Batcup is a barrister and Managing Director of New airPort Ltd., a company formed to promote the merits of an international airport in south east Wales.*



barnett squeeze

r. ross macKay argues we should measure need when allocating spending across the UK

It is accepted that equal citizens should be treated equally in terms of tax and public spending, no matter where located within the United Kingdom. It is accepted that your child's education should not suffer, just because you live in one of the poorer parts of the nation state. It is accepted that relative levels of need should determine devolved expenditure in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Unfortunately, this remarkable agreement on underlying principles is rendered worthless by a reluctance to identify and measure need. We are told needs are difficult. They are contentious territory. Your concept of need is different from mine. Since there is no perfect approach, the argument is that it is wise to avoid controversy.

True, there is no ideal measure of need. But, the reality is that the strict application of the Barnett Formula – which distributes spending between England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland – will ensure that devolved spending in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland moves towards English levels. Wales and Northern Ireland are much poorer than England, but without an agreement on measuring need, devolved public spending will decline relative to England.

A 'Barnett Squeeze' would ensure that the Welsh, the Northern Irish and the Scots all lose. Spending on medicine, education and on law and order will be confined. Standards of public goods and public services will be difficult to maintain. Needs are difficult, sensitive territory, but we cannot afford to ignore a search for agreement. In this, as in other areas of practical political economy, some rough compromise is better than pure agnosticism.

Most families are heavily dependent on income from work. The reach of work (Figure 1) and the return for work (Figure 2) vary enormously as between regions. In the Inner Region Core (IRC = London, South East, and East) work levels are high and average earnings are

comfortably above the UK average. In Wales, Northern Ireland and the North East, many adults discover that work is out of reach. For those in work, earnings are lower than in the rest of the country.

Figure 1 shows Full-Time Equivalent work as a percentage of the working population. One full-time job (employed or self-employed) = 1; a part-time job (employed or self-employed) = 0.5. Working age is 16 – 64 for males, and 16-59 for females. Per 100 males of working age, Full-Time Equivalent Work (FTEW) is 19 jobs higher in the IRC (Inner Region Core) than in Wales. Per 100 Females of work age, FTEW is 13 jobs higher in the IRC than in Wales. In regions where regional opportunity levels are low for males, they are also low for females (see

figure 1: work contrasts 2001 – full-time equivalent work by design

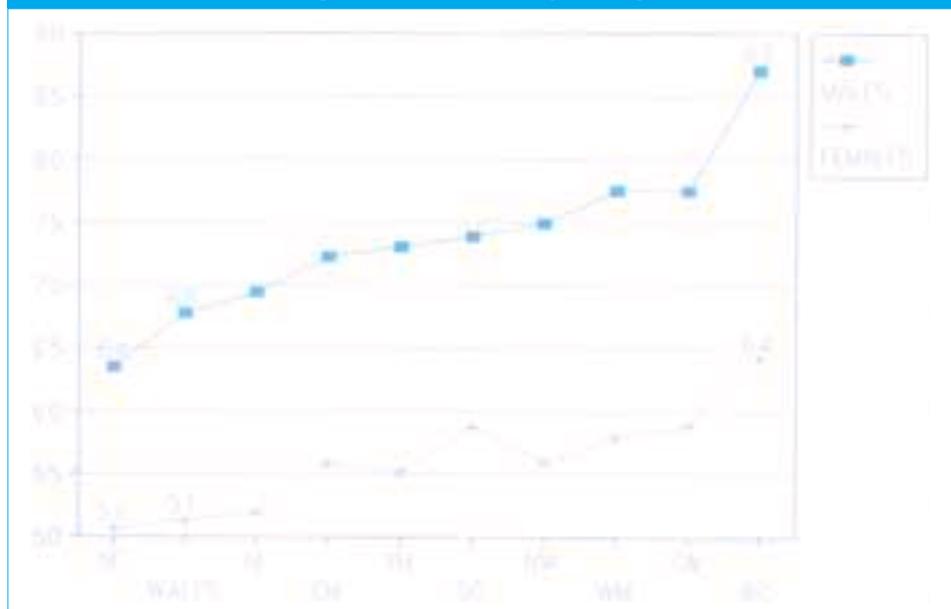


Figure 1). Opportunity levels are notably low in Wales, Northern Ireland and North East England.

Figure 2 shows relative regional earnings, male and female. To encourage comparison, in Figure 1 and Figure 2 the regions take the same order – lowest work levels on the left, highest on the right. The regions with the lowest levels of work have the lowest levels of pay for those in work. On average, male earnings in Wales are 71 per cent of the IRC level. On average, female earnings in Wales are 79 per cent of the IRC level. If regional earnings are low for males, they are also low for females (see Figure 2).

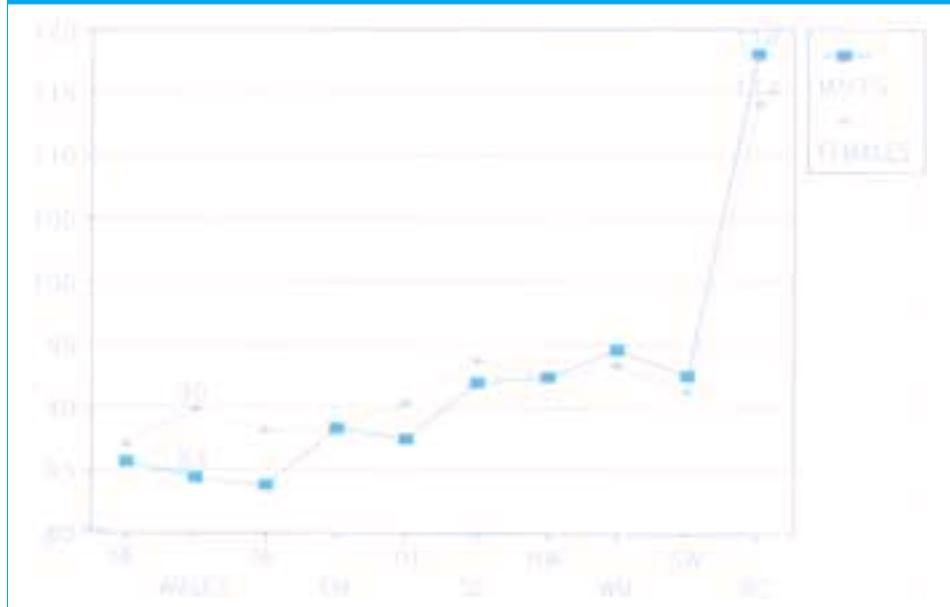
For those in work, earnings are particularly low in Wales, Northern Ireland and North East England. Low levels of work connect to low levels of pay for those in work. The obvious explanation for both is low levels of effective demand for the goods and services produced by low opportunity regions.

In regions with low levels of effective demand, it is more difficult for individuals and families to function effectively. In such regions it is more difficult to identify and develop potential. Market forces can and do leave some regions with low levels of opportunity, while resources are more than fully stretched in others. The relief of want and the provision of benefits to poorer households can ease the problems in poorer regions, but work is the positive signal for individuals and families. Training and work are the best way to develop and encourage human capital and also to promote communities.

Health, education and law and order account for 8 out of every 10 £s of devolved spending. Health is the major component – 4 out of every 10 £s – with education the next most important – 2.5 out of every 10 £s.

Health, education and law and order needs connect to poverty and lack of opportunity. Poverty increases the risk of

figure 2: pay contrasts – full-time earnings by region 2001



bad health and bad health increases the risk of poverty. A growing and impressive literature argues that, in affluent societies such as the United Kingdom, health and life expectancy depend on degree of equality. Being poor by the standards of the society one lives in does not merely hurt, it kills. Health standards are socially determined and hierarchy promotes distance and discomfort (see, for example, Marmot M., and Wilkinson R.G., *Social Determinants of Health*, Oxford University Press, 1999).

Education demonstrates that equality of opportunity is difficult to reconcile with growing inequality of income and wealth. Learning is a struggle for children in households that lack the resources to support education. Davies in *The School Report* (Vintage, 2000), goes so far as to claim that the detrimental impact of child poverty is the key to differences in school performance. Growing inequality adds to social distance and weakens the social fabric. Inequality adds to crime and crime concentrates on the poor. A small minority of the population suffer a disproportionate incidence of criminal damage.

Regional need connects to regional income. Low opportunity and low income regions have particular

problems with regard to health, education and law and order. These three dominate devolved spending. One way to determine need would be to use GDP per head as the guide. The lower the level of income (GDP) in a region, the higher the level of need and the higher the level of devolved spending (see McLean I., McMillan A., 'The distribution of Public Expenditures across the UK Regions', *Fiscal Studies*, Vol.24:1, 45-71, 2003). An alternative approach, favoured in this paper, is to look for a poverty rather than an income measure. It is concentrations of the truly disadvantaged that add to the difficulty of providing the social basis for self-respect.

Prosperity and opportunity are unevenly distributed across the twelve United Kingdom regions. Work income per person of working age in Wales is only 58 per cent of the Inner Core average. In difficult labour markets individuals and families have greater difficulty in developing their internal resources. In regions with low levels of effective demand, capabilities may remain latent, concealed, potential.

In all parts of the country economic misfortune, or accident, or illness leave individuals and families dependent on the

transfer payments provided by the nation state. However, dependency levels are highly variable across (and indeed within) regions. Dependency (social security) levels identify those unable to rely on the market. The payments and terms and conditions for social security are identical in different parts of the United Kingdom. This uniformity ensures that dependency levels are “simple, but plausible indicators of relative need” (Bell D., Christie A. ‘Finance – The Barnett Formula: Nobody’s Child?’ in Trench A (Ed.) *The State of the Nations*, 2001, Imprint Academic, Thorverton, 2001). The different levels of need develop, to a substantial extent, from the labour market. Taking dependency payments as a rough guide to relative need allows us to test whether devolved spending in a

regions where expenditures on public services are much too low are the North East and the North West of England.

In searching for a compromise on need, expenditure levels in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are particularly important. Figure 3 suggests that devolved expenditure is too high in Northern Ireland and Scotland but slightly too low in Wales. Dependency levels are not the only possible measure of relative regional poverty, but they are a useful guide. Table 1 outlines the implications of avoiding the Barnett Squeeze by replacing the Barnett Formula with an approach that takes dependency (social security) levels as the appropriate guide to increases in devolved

Welsh devolved spending levels are 16 per cent above English. The strict application of the Barnett Formula would (over time) ensure that spending levels in Wales move close to those in England. Taking 2000-01 expenditure figures as a rough guide, this would mean a reduction of over £500 per head in Welsh devolved spending. The substitution of a dependency based approach for the Barnett Formula could (over time) raise devolved spending per head in Wales by as much as 19 per cent. Taking 2000-01 expenditure figures as a guide, this would imply an extra £600 per year per capita devolved spending in Wales.

Taking dependency (social security) levels as a measure of relative need suggests that devolved expenditure levels should be roughly one-fifth higher in Wales and Northern Ireland than in England and roughly one-tenth higher in Scotland than in England. In Northern Ireland and Scotland, public expenditure would continue to be squeezed, but instead of convergence on English levels of public spending, more realistic targets would be introduced. A dependency formula would adjust over time to reflect changes in relative regional poverty. Devolved expenditure would become an important part of the automatic stabilisers that adjust regional spending and regional tax according to changes in economic fortune.

In the absence of an agreed approach to identifying and measuring need, public expenditure in Wales would move closer to the English level and be severely squeezed. There would be substantial problems in improving standards of public service in Wales.

With a poverty based formula, public spending in Wales would rise relative to England. The substitution of a poverty based formula for the Barnett approach

table 1: avoiding the barnett squeeze

	Actual Spending Levels per Head*	Convergence Targets	
		Barnett Formula	Dependency Level Formula**
England	100	100	100
Northern Ireland	141	100	122
Scotland	121	100	112
Wales	116	100	119

* calculation based on years 1998/99 – 2000/01

** calculation based on financial years 1998/99 – 2000/01

Source: Treasury, 2002.

region is too high or too low.¹ In regions where relative devolved spending per head is greater than relative dependency expenditure per head, devolved expenditure is over generous.

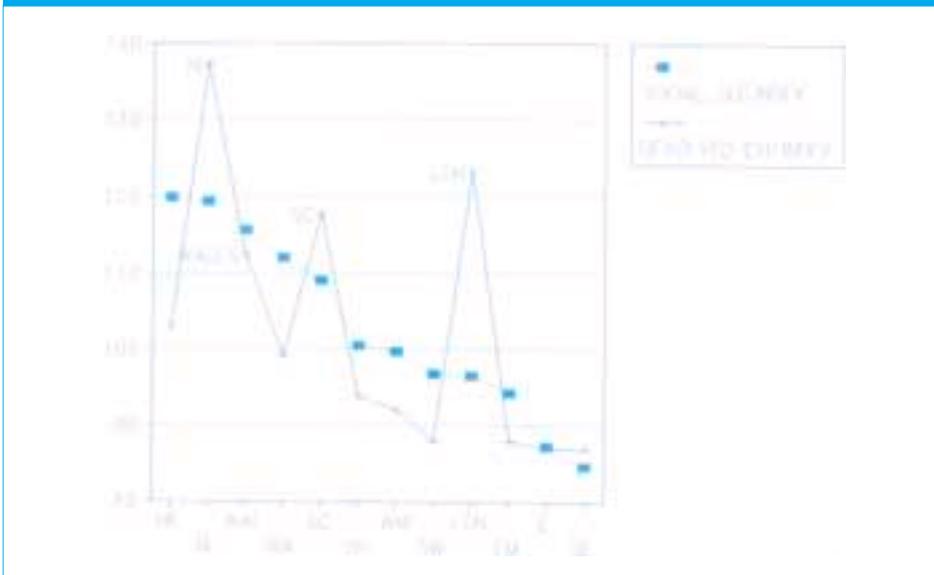
In regions where relative devolved spending per head is lower than relative dependency expenditure per head, devolved spending is too low. Figure 3 suggests that there are three regions (London, Northern Ireland and Scotland) where devolved spending is too high and seven regions (North East, North West, South West, West Midlands, Yorkshire and Humberside and Wales) where devolved spending is too low. The two

spending.² As dependency levels adjusted over time, the dependency based formula would also change.

With a strict application of the Barnett Formula, devolved spending in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland would move towards English levels. Pace of convergence would depend on rate of increase in devolved spending. Inflation, as well as real increases in public expenditure, would contribute to convergence. With the Barnett Formula, there would be no attempt to identify need, or to compensate for differences in relative poverty (or relative prosperity).

1. Spending is only devolved to Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, but it is possible to estimate spending by each English Region on the programmes of expenditure devolved to the three countries.
2. The Barnett Formula is applied to annual increases in devolved spending. In rough and ready terms, for every increase of £100 in English spending on devolved programmes, Welsh spending increases by £5.90 (Wales’s population is approximately 5.9% of England’s). With a dependency-based formula, for every £100 in English spending on devolved programmes, Welsh spending would increase by close to £7.00 (Wales’s social security spending is approximately 7% of England’s).

figure 3: soc. sec. and devolved exp. compared – by region 1998-99 to 2000-01



would play an important role in supporting Welsh living standards and in compensating for a soft labour market.

The Barnett Formula is a puzzle. It was intended to be temporary, it has lasted for more than twenty years. It was designed to produce convergence, the reality is divergence.³ If it is followed religiously from now on (and that appears to be the intention), it would bring public expenditure levels in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland below the levels implied by relative need. Nobody loves the Barnett approach, not even Lord Barnett. But there is no agreement on a substitute. Whatever replaces Barnett cannot and need not be perfect. However, without a framework for considering need, an arbitrary and misleading target, convergence on English levels of spending continues to be accepted.

Needs and poverty imply limited access to basic goods. They also imply limited choice. Poverty connects to educational disadvantage, to poor health, to above average crime that concentrates on the poor. Four fifths of devolved expenditure

goes on health, education and law and order. Extra needs develop from poverty. But recognising and responding to needs that develop from poverty should not simply imply additional conventional expenditure on medicine, on schools, on extra police. The impact of medical care is not one of the major contributors to improvement in health and years of life. Social influences are more significant. Medical care, it has been suggested, "is the ambulance waiting at the bottom of the cliff" (Daniels 'Justice, Health and Health Care' in Rhodes R., Battin M., Silvers A. (Eds.) *Medicine and Social Justice: Essays on the Distribution of Health Care*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002). Early life interventions, changes in lifestyle, childcare and improved early education may be more important to health and quality of life than extra emergency services.

In education, as in health, the importance of habits and lifestyle established early is critical. "Give me the boy until he is seven and I will give you the man" is the popular claim. The pre-school years may be just as important as the primary school. A statistical study of

international crime confirms the importance of early social intervention (Fajnzylber P., Lederman D., Loayzan N., 'Inequality and Violent Crime', *Journal of Law and Economics*, XLV, 1, 2002). Violent crime waves are difficult to contain and control once they have built momentum. There are strong imitation effects. British research on crime prevention underlines the importance of unorthodox approaches, and particularly the role of early years programmes designed to reduce the tendency to commit crime.

The interrelations between poverty, ill health, educational disadvantage and anti-social behaviour point to the importance of intersectoral policies, partnerships and working with local communities. Social programmes that change behaviour patterns and build trust are unlikely to achieve immediate returns. They need room to breathe, freedom from year by year targets and long-term monitoring.

The claim that locals know best is central to the case for devolution and points to one of the potential advantages of the National Assembly. It is better placed than central government to identify the wishes of local communities and to work with them.

The key argument in this essay in persuasion is that poverty and low regional incomes add to the problems faced by medical services, education and by law and order. An appropriate measure of need should be sensitive to downturn or expansion in the economies of Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. With such a measure, devolved expenditure would be one of the automatic stabilisers that serve to counter regional decline and contain regional inequality. It would be one of the stabilisers that keep the Kingdom United. Convergence on English levels of expenditure would depend on improvement in the Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish economies.

3. For an explanation of why and how a formula designed to produce convergence on English levels of expenditure actually produced divergence, see R. Ross MacKay, *The Search for Balance: Taxing and Spending across the United Kingdom*, Institute of Welsh Affairs, 2001.

• R. Ross MacKay is Emeritus Professor of Economics at the University of Wales, Bangor.

greening the economy



roger thomas
 recommends practical
 steps to make progress
 with sustainable
 development

Tir Gofal, and its predecessor Tir Cymen – schemes which reward farmers for investing in the environmental quality of their land – epitomise how jobs can be created and sustained in rural Wales. In the first three years of Tir Gofal, payments of £16.1 million were made to 1,500 farmers. In addition the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) invested £2 million in more than 600 agreements to manage land of special scientific interest, payments that helped sustain the viability of associated farms.

Much of the work that is undertaken under these agreements is labour intensive. Examples include hedgerow management, stonewall building, and the maintenance and repair of footpaths. This is why Tir Cymen, for example, generated an additional 29 days per year of environmental work for each participating farm, as well as sustaining an existing 19 days of environmental work each year. The work is normally carried out by local people, by sons and daughters or workers already employed on farms, or by local contractors.

The attractive appearance of the Welsh countryside maintained by this work, and the opportunities for public access, are a magnet for visitors. Some 80 per cent of the £7.5 million spent by visitors to just three of our 62 National Nature Reserves occurs within ten miles of those reserves. And the million visitors to the Pembrokeshire Coast Path, one of our three National Trails, spend over £14 million locally. In turn, this work has a knock-on benefit for local business who, for example, supply interpretation signs and leaflets or stiles and gates as well as a whole host of other goods and services.

CCW's grants programmes to voluntary, public and private sector

organisations in Wales to a tune of over £2.5million. These in turn support 90 jobs. The grants enable larger projects to go ahead, and so the overall impact of the spending is much larger – over 500 jobs are supported in total. The largest proportion of grant payments are made to organisations in south Wales and support a variety of schemes – from helping local authorities manage Local Nature Reserves and supporting free educational access to a massive cave complex and to a community furniture and health-related walking projects.

It has benefits for communities through creating employment and improving amenities for the communities and for the thousands of visitors who come to enjoy rural Wales every year. The last example also shows how the green economy contributes to cost reductions in healthcare in Wales.

But the question remains: how do we ensure that the environment continues to be an economic asset to Wales, without destroying its special qualities? The answer lies simply in sustainable development. If the whole economy was to adapt to become environmentally sustainable then we could make big strides forward. Amongst the things that we can achieve now are:

- Implementing the recommendations in *Farming for the Future* as fully as possible. Government, the farming industry, individual farmers and consumers must pull together – to ensure that we have better food labelling so that consumers know where their products are sourced, larger farmers' markets selling Welsh quality produce, and more farms in Tir Gofal. The launch of Hybu Cig Cymru at the Royal Welsh Show this year was a first step in the right direction.
- Our fishing industry needs to be managed sustainably. If we don't act

now fish could be permanently off the menu, and out would go an industry that is worth more than £100 million to the Welsh economy. There have to be massive changes in the Common Fisheries Policy. We know that of the 70 big vessels registered here in Wales half of them don't use any of our ports and so don't contribute anything to the Welsh economy. Local processing will help ensure that economic returns do not suffer, while fish stocks have a chance to recover.

- We must use the Assembly Government's duty to promote sustainable development to create a massive step-change in the public procurement of locally-sourced, environmentally friendly goods and services. Hospitals, schools and other public bodies should purchase their food and services locally.
- We need to turn the table on environmental challenges to make them into economic opportunities. For example, if we all reduced, re-used and recycled waste properly we could create thousands of new jobs in rural and urban Wales. For instance, 2,762 jobs are associated with waste management in Welsh local authorities.

- Growth in GDP is one indicator of the strength of the Welsh economy, but it takes no account of the costs of growth – in terms of environmental degradation, use of irreplaceable resources, pollution and social externalities. Nor indeed does it tell us about the distribution of resources in society. That is why we are urging the Assembly Government to adopt a more comprehensive indicator – the index of sustainable economic welfare (ISEW). If it is combined with the other standard Government measures – such as GDP, educational attainment or housing conditions – then it is possible that the Assembly's progress towards its sustainability duty can be more accurately assessed.
- Make money work harder in the local economy – use local businesses but demand high environmental standards. It's not just the Assembly or the environmental and economic development organisations that can have an impact. Every individual and organisation can make a difference.

Explaining how they can make a difference and convincing people that the economy and the environment are intertwined is the greatest challenge. At the moment people still tend to think of

the environment as an optional extra, to be considered once our basic needs for jobs, incomes and homes have been fulfilled. Yet more than 117,000 full-time jobs in Wales depend heavily on the environment. Other indirect jobs take the total to 169,000. That's one in six Welsh workers, making the environment one of the largest employment sectors in Wales, second only to the manufacturing industry, which is declining. This translates into the production of goods and services that are worth around £9 billion every year. This work itself generates income that adds up to £1.8 billion each year.

The management and use of the environment underpins the whole of the Welsh economy, and not just in the obvious areas such as tourism and agriculture. It has rightly been said that, whilst it is possible to have a natural environment existing without an economy, it is impossible to have an economy existing without a natural environment. There is an incontrovertible case for ensuring that looking after our environment becomes an integral part of our economic development strategy.

- *Roger Thomas is Chief Executive of the Countryside Council for Wales.*



One of the farm environmental schemes funded by the Countryside Council for Wales – building a dry stone wall at Cefn Isa Farm, Llanbedr near Harlech in Meirionnydd.

alan trench says the Richard Commission should address constitutional principles not questions about service delivery

peter's question for ivor

Peter Hain will soon be a man with a dilemma. With the Richard Commission's report due in February 2004, the Secretary of State for Wales has been thinking about how to respond. The report will be addressed to the Assembly, and widely debated within Wales. But how the report plays in London will be equally important if its recommendations are to become reality. As Secretary of State, Peter Hain will be the UK Government's gatekeeper. He is the one who will lead Cabinet discussion on it, and have to pilot any bill changing Wales's constitution through Parliament. His response and his involvement will be crucial if the report is to do more than gather dust on the shelf.

The Commission's report will address two key questions: the powers of the Assembly, and its electoral arrangements – how many AMs there should be and how they should be elected. By the time it is finished, the Commission will have taken a huge amount of evidence and tried to find a constitutional way forward for Wales that commands wide support.

Peter Hain has set out his stall on several occasions – in his speech to the IWA's conference on the National Assembly's second term in July 2003, in his own evidence to the Commission in May, and in other speeches. The key factor, he says, is whether altering the Assembly's constitution will improve the delivery of public services in a practical way. Linked to this are several

subsidiary questions. Will any change that Richard recommends create more jobs? What would be the implications for resources or its effect on related services? However, Peter Hain's essential question remains: will tinkering with the 1998 Wales Act, for instance by giving the Assembly primary legislative powers in some areas, improve the delivery of services? For the Secretary of State democratic legitimacy is important, but comes second to this key criterion.

The issue works well inside the Labour party, and perhaps beyond. It provides a way to deal with the split in Welsh Labour over devolution. Opponents of devolution can hardly sustain that opposition if it means public services get worse not better. It also helps make a strong case in Whitehall for taking on all the difficulties that will follow changing the devolution arrangements – not just getting political support and Parliamentary time, but exposing the government to what may be a difficult passage through Parliament for a new Government of Wales bill. Parliamentary problems will be reduced if opponents have to accept poorer public services as the price for their principled stand. Added to that, it means that the circle of public service improvement through a strong central lead can be squared with transferring control from the UK Government to Cardiff Bay.

The problem with this approach is that it is aimed at three limited constituencies: the anti-devolution

wing of the Welsh Labour party; the policy-driven tendency in the UK Government, mainly in and around 10 Downing Street; and (much less important) the Tory opposition in Westminster. But the existing, profoundly problematic arrangements are themselves the product of an internal Labour party compromise. That compromise has hardly helped resolve the issue within Labour, and certainly pays no attention to the broader constituency within Wales which wants to see much wider powers for the Assembly. That includes Plaid Cymru, the Liberal Democrats, some Tories, and many aligned with no party. This argument goes unheard when the spotlight is just on Labour.

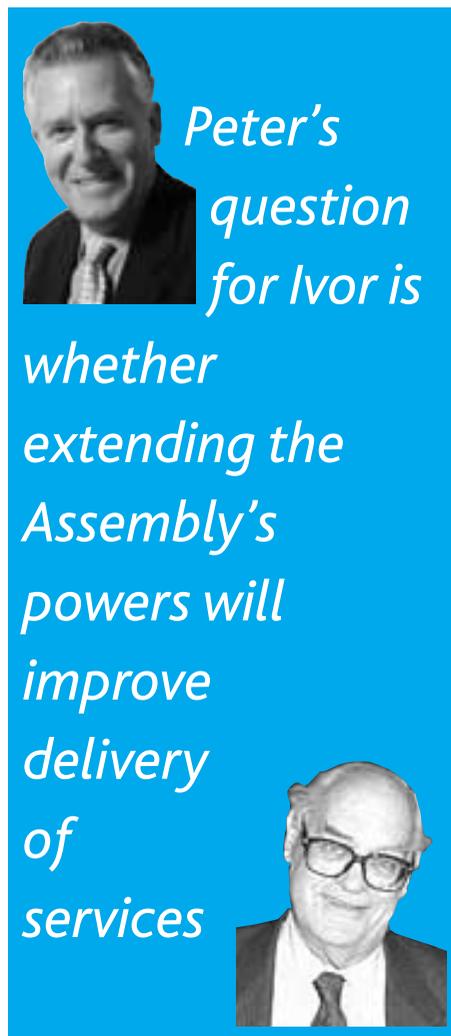
Besides excluding many interests, Hain's approach has two big, inherent, problems. The first is that it is unclear what the criterion – whether increased powers will improve the delivery of services – means. The Richard Commission tried to get Hain to clarify it when he gave evidence to them, but with little success. Does it mean that if the Commission couch their recommendations in terms of how these will improve service delivery, Hain will try to get Whitehall to deliver? Or does it mean that each and every recommendation will be scrutinised in the Wales Office, and perhaps in Cabinet Committee, for how exactly it will improve services, and only those that pass muster will get taken any further? Hain has consistently avoided saying which

approach he will take. That makes the Commission's job of deciding what to recommend and how to frame its recommendations much harder. It is playing a game of constitutional poker in which it has to lay all its cards on the table, while having little idea what is in the other player's hand.

Even on a practical level, detailed evaluation of each recommendation raises great problems. Let us assume that, to make its recommendations, the Richard Commission takes a variety of views and concerns, and produces from them a carefully-assembled and balanced constitutional package for Wales. That package will have its own logic; some parts will be more acceptable to some parties, others less so. However, overall, the package may command support among the members of the Commission and the various interests that nominated them. But if Hain second-guesses the Commission, that bargain will last only until the recommendations reach the Wales Office. At that point, they risk being undone by Hain and his advisers, who may choose what they will take further and what they will drop.

Effectively, it means that the views of the broadly-based Commission, seeking to outline the main features of a new constitution for Wales which can command general support, are to be picked apart by someone whose eye will inevitably be mainly on Labour's concerns – and, in particular, those of Labour MPs whose jobs will decline in importance if there is further devolution.

The second problem with Hain's criterion is greater. This is, quite simply that improvement to service delivery is the wrong measure to judge the efficacy of constitutional change. While it may cause delight in Downing Street and spike the guns of anti-devolutionists in Labour's own ranks, it has little appeal beyond those circles. It is a technocratic, policy-driven approach to a quite different sort of question.



The real questions that need to be addressed are constitutional in nature. How do the people of Wales want to govern themselves in the first part of the twenty-first century? What sort of institutional arrangements give effect to that wish? How will those arrangements relate to other parts of government, whether within Wales or at UK or EU level? How can those arrangements be put in place given what already exists – how do we get there from here?

These are the questions that lie behind the Commission's terms of reference, and they are the right ones. Any new arrangements need to make sense in terms of service delivery, but that is a technical issue, to be resolved after the issues of principle have been decided. If

the National Assembly thought that a technocratic policy-driven fix would solve the problems arising from the half-way house of devolution created by the Government of Wales Act 1998, there would be plenty of quicker and simpler ways of doing so than by a comprehensive inquiry carried out in public by a Commission with such wide membership. While the Secretary of State needs to look at what the Commission recommends, he should do so in the same way as the Commission itself approaches its work. The Richard Commission is dealing with an issue of constitutional principle, and what it has to say deserves to be evaluated in the same way.

The Commission has only a little time now to finalise its report. As it does so it should keep the courage of its convictions. It should produce a report that matches the aspirations of Wales as it understands them, expressed in terms of constitutional principle not Hain's utilitarian, second-guessing criterion. If the government of Wales is to change, the people of Wales are entitled to know what is intended and why. If it is not to change, the people of Wales are entitled to see what was rejected and to understand what were the reasons for its rejection. Then they can express their views at the ballot box.

For Hain, the question is partly whether he wants to protect the status quo, or to go down as the architect of a new and durable settlement. But he also has to decide whether he is going to put the interests of Welsh Labour ahead of the interests of Wales more broadly, and whether he thinks constitutions are about more than short-term pragmatic considerations. Richard Nixon once said that you had to be a politician first in order to become a statesman. Hain is already a politician; now he has to decide whether he is ready to be a statesman.

- Alan Trench works in the Constitution Unit at University College London, concentrating on inter-governmental relations.

leashed watchdogs

leighton jenkins
argues that the
Assembly's
Committees lack the
powers to do their job

the Hutton Inquiry has led many to take a fresh look at Parliament's abilities to hold governments to account. Parallels are being drawn between the Inquiry's forensic abilities and the more prosaic feats of Parliament's established watchdogs. Departmental select committees have been Westminster's main tool for holding the government to account for almost a quarter of a century. As the Assembly gets into gear for Rhodri Morgan's second term, can the Assembly's own watchdogs - the Subject and Standing Committees - learn anything about scrutiny from their older Westminster cousins?

Both breeds of committee have essentially the same categories of powers: the ability to send for persons, paper and records. What differs is the strength of that power. At the same time, the Assembly's subject committees have some unique characteristics such as ministers as members which can only be indirectly compared with Westminster.

The power of select committees to summons 'persons' is 'unqualified.' With the exceptions of the royal prerogative, diplomatic immunity, and parliamentary privilege, they can call anyone they wish. However, Assembly committees are limited by the 1998 Wales Act to calling officials from the organisations shown in the Panel alongside. The result is that they can call officials from the Welsh Development Agency or the Welsh Arts Council, but are powerless to order the attendance of any of the three thousand departmental civil servants in the Welsh Office.

In Westminster, more than a decade ago, the Westland affair saw the leaking of a confidential letter by the

Solicitor-General in the Margaret Thatcher government in order to undermine the then Trade Secretary Michael Heseltine's advocacy of a European rescue of Westland. The Defence Committee sought oral evidence from the officials most involved as well as from the Prime Minister's Press Secretary - Sir Bernard Ingham - and her Private Secretary, Charles (now Lord) Powell. In the end, political pressure was brought to bear on the Conservative members of this committee, and the government Chief Whip persuaded the head of the Civil Service to attend.

In a Welsh version of Westland the absence of a check on the power of Cabinet Ministers is a fundamental flaw in the powers of Assembly committees and goes against the spirit of the Assembly's own ministerial code. Under the Act the committees are empowered to call named officials and those who work for them, including staff within a private office of the Welsh Joint Education Council, for example, but they would have no power to call members of a Minister's private office or seek to call any Minister to account. Both the code and standing orders confirm the committees' central role in scrutiny. Yet neither of them empower the committees to conduct 'Westland' type investigations where the Government's decision making process itself is under scrutiny.

These limited powers have already caused problems. In November 2001 the Audit Committee took evidence on the Auditor General for Wales's report into the £9 million spent on the failed Centre for Visual Arts in Cardiff. After a presentation by one of its prominent 'scrutineers' - Alison Halford AM - the committee decided to hold an historic

bodies that can be required to attend assembly committee hearings			
	Public Bodies / ASPBs	Bodies and Offices	
Economic Development & Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welsh Development Agency Welsh Industrial Development Advisory Board 		
Health, & Social Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health advisory committees Welsh National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clinical Standards Advisory Group Community Health Councils wholly in Wales Standing Dental Advisory Committee Dental Practice Board Committee on Dental and Surgical Materials A Health Authority for an area of Wales Standing Medical Advisory Committee Mental Health Act Commission Standing Pharmaceutical Advisory Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Biological Standards Board A NHS Trust consisting of hospitals in Wales Standing Nursing Midwifery Advisory Service Board A Special Health Authority Central Council for Education & Training in Social Work UK Transplant Support Service Authority
Education & Life Long Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Further Education Funding Council of Wales Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority Higher Education Funding Council for Wales 		
Environment Planning & Countryside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment Agency committee for Wales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The British Waterways Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Environment Agency
Culture, Welsh Language & Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wales Tourist Board Welsh Language Board Arts Council for Wales National Library of Wales National Museum of Wales Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments The Ancient Monuments Board for Wales The Historic Buildings Council for Wales Library and Information Services Council (Wales) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The British Tourist Authority Trustees of the National Heritage Memorial Fund The United Kingdom Sports Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Museum and Galleries Commission National Lottery Charities Board
Agriculture & Rural Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Countryside Council for Wales Agricultural dwelling-house advisory committees of Wales Agriculture wages committee for Wales Welsh Sub-Committee of under the Hill Farming Act 1946 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Advisory Committee on Pesticides Agricultural Wages Board, England & Wales Food from Britain Sea Fish Industry Authority Committee under the Hill Farming Act 1946 Horticultural Development Council Joint Nature Conservation Committee Meat and Livestock Commission National Biological Standards Council Sugar Beet Research & Education Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee on Agricultural Valuation The Apple & Pear Research Council Committee on Aquaculture Research and Development Home Grown Cereals Authority Joint Nature Conservation Committee Milk Development Council British Potato Council

second hearing. They were fortunate that people previously involved with the Centre, one of whom was retired and another who had moved to England, agreed to do so. However, as Dafydd Wigley, a later Chair of the Audit Committee, pointed out in his submission to the Richard Commissions in December 2002, the Committee should not have to depend on the goodwill of witnesses.

Also during the first term the Environment, Planning and Transport Committee conducted an investigation into health concerns caused by the Nantygwyddon landfill site in the Rhondda. In his submission to the Richard Commission, the Committee's chair at the time, Richard Edwards, said they were hampered by their inability to obtain information about the affairs of the waste disposal company that had operated the tip. He said there was a case for giving the Assembly power to require the attendance of witnesses who had information relevant to the Assembly's functions.

With the increased role of the private sector in carrying out public policy there has been greater use of 'commercial confidentiality' as a justification for governments withholding information. The Assembly's Audit Committee found itself on new ground when taking evidence on the Auditor General's report into the Assembly's computer system (Osiris) set up under a PFI agreement with Siemens Business Services. The Committee was refused access to the exact profit made as it was deemed 'commercially confidential.' As Alison Halford AM asked at the time, was this sensitivity more to do with the interests of the Assembly Government or the company in question?

After protracted negotiations the Permanent Secretary eventually agreed to release the information on a confidential basis in a private session of the Audit Committee. However, there was no provision for such a meeting in the Assembly's standing orders. For backbench AMs the episode has set a

precedent, but one that will undoubtedly be tested in another situation where the Assembly Government resists full disclosure.

Unlike Commons select committees whose membership is comprised entirely of backbenchers, Assembly Government Ministers are members of their relevant subject committee. The result is that scrutiny is mixed in an organic way with policy development to an extent that it is hard to tell when the committees are in 'scrutiny' or 'policy' mode. In practice, because of the prominence given to Ministers' reports to the committees, they largely decide the topics upon which they are scrutinised.

Committees should scrutinise the Assembly Government, yet lack the powers to do so.

Each week the committee chairs could provide a list of issues the Ministers should address in their reports. Although this occasionally happens, it is not the norm. One option, favoured by Plaid Cymru, is for committee sessions to be divided into those devoted to scrutinising the Assembly Government, with questioning of the Minister, and others to policy development.

As things stand there can often be confusion between these two roles. This was demonstrated during the Environment, Planning and Transport Committee's investigation into Nantygwyddon. At one point the investigation was used as evidence against the Environment Minister's

alleged breach of the EU's Waste Framework Directive. The UK government, defending its position, sought from Sue Essex, the Minister involved, a critique of the Committee's report, which she herself had helped to investigate and compose.

The presence of Ministers and deputy Ministers on the Subject committee for the portfolio they manage is unacceptable by Westminster standards. The role of deputy Ministers is especially problematical since there is no reference to them in the 1998 Wales Act. Their position has emerged as part of the 'devolution process'. In effect their role is analogous to Westminster Personal Private Secretaries. Together with 'Opposition spokespersons' these individuals were banned from sitting on committees by the Committee of Selection in 1980, resulting in the expulsion of two MPs. It was said that the presence of such people "might lead to doubts about the course of the enquiry or the content of the reports". The same is true of the Assembly. For instance, with the present Economic Development Committee's Labour Chair, Labour Minister, and Labour Deputy Minister, can we expect a strenuous examination of the Assembly Government's economic policies to be a top priority?

In the House of Commons the experience of Select Committees is that, from time to time, information is withheld, civil servants refuse to attend, and Ministers are difficult and uncooperative. Given their comparative lack of powers the Assembly's Subject committees are in an even weaker position. They lack the formal powers to insist on civil servants attending hearings and submitting papers or records. They are intended to scrutinise the Assembly Government, yet lack the powers to do so.

- *Leighton Jenkins, a researcher in the National Assembly working for Jeff Cuthbert, Labour AM for Caerphilly, writes here in a personal capacity.*

legal wales

keith bush reports on how Welsh incorporation into England is being reversed

When Lord Bingham of Cornhill became Lord Chief Justice in 1996 he adopted the practice of always describing himself not as Lord Chief Justice of England, as his predecessors had invariably done, but of England and Wales. Many in the legal fraternity will have regarded the change, if they bothered to take notice of it at all, as a meaningless eccentricity. After all, did not Henry VIII, over 450 years ago, so thoroughly incorporate Wales into the English legal system that as far as the law is concerned it is truly a case of 'for Wales – see England'?

At the end of September 2003 Lord Bingham, now the senior law lord, was in Cardiff for an event which proved that Wales is fast reclaiming the status of a distinct legal entity within the world of common law. The highly-successful 'Legal Wales' Conference, held at the St. David's Hotel and attended by 160 lawyers from Wales and further afield, heard Lord Bingham warmly endorse the establishment and growth of indigenous legal institutions in Wales.

What is 'Legal Wales'? It has been described as a renaissance in all aspects of legal life in Wales, encompassing not only the practice of law in and for Wales but also the study of legal topics from a Welsh perspective.

Why, over the past six years, has the idea of 'Legal Wales' become so attractive? Primarily, of course, it is a

spin-off of devolution. That is not to deny that some strands of the movement go back beyond 1999. For some years far-sighted judges, of whom Lord Bingham was one of the most prominent, had regretted the traditional London-based centralism of the English legal system. As part of an effort to reverse the trend, Lord Bingham was instrumental in instituting regular sittings of the Court of Appeal in Cardiff. In common with a number of English provincial cities, Cardiff also became a centre for mercantile and chancery courts which provide litigants with access to specialist judges who, only a few years ago, would not have been found outside London.



Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales, Lord Bingham, warmly endorsed the growth of indigenous institutions in Wales.

But the strong link between the growth of Legal Wales and devolution is illustrated by the revolutionary step, taken on the eve of the establishment of the Assembly, of providing regular sittings of the Administrative Court in Wales. An influential figure in this development, as in many others in the Legal Wales project, was the then presiding judge of the Wales and Chester Circuit, Mr. Justice Thomas. As a court which scrutinises the legality of government action through judicial review and similar proceedings, the fact that the Administrative Court was previously confined to London, the sole home of central government in the United Kingdom, was perhaps understandable, even though the administrative court also reviewed the actions of local government.

By this logic, the imminent establishment of devolved government in Wales demanded that Cardiff should emerge as a second focus of the court's activity. It would not have been consistent with the status of the Assembly as an autonomous body possessing powers parallel, in devolved fields, to those of the UK government, for the legality of the Assembly's powers to be adjudicated upon in London as if it were no more than a glorified English county council.

In his key-note speech to the Legal Wales Conference Winston Roddick QC, the outgoing Counsel General to the National Assembly, and a major proponent of 'Legal Wales', identified

the ever-growing legislative output of the Assembly, which has already created an impressive corpus of bilingual secondary legislation on devolved subjects, as a driver of further developments in the organisation of the courts. Despite the continued existence of what he described as "devolution blindness" amongst many decision-makers, he predicted a continued process of legal devolution, tracking the progress of administrative and legislative devolution.

These trends have begun to have profound effects on the legal profession in Wales. The recent trend for legal work to leak away to Bristol and London has been reversed. Both bar and solicitors have benefited. The steady flow of administrative court and other work generated by the Assembly has helped to encourage local lawyers to specialise in these areas. The raising of the profile of Wales has further spurred a number of firms of solicitors specialising in commercial work to market their services on a European or even world-wide basis.

The potential for economic benefit to the Welsh economy flowing from these developments has not been lost on government. The Assembly Cabinet recently re-affirmed its support for the Legal Wales concept, recognising the economic importance for the Welsh economy of the development of legal services based in Wales and serving not only Wales but a much wider client base.

Legal Wales should not be seen however as a concept limited to legal practice. One of its features has been the establishment of a number of societies dedicated to the study of subjects such as Welsh legal history, human rights, and public law as well as the more practice-orientated fields of commercial and personal injury law. A highly successful feature of the Legal Wales conference was the wide diversity of subjects on which



Mr Justice Thomas, influential in the Legal Wales project, brought sittings of the Administrative Court to Wales.



Despite "devolution blindness" the inaugural Counsel General Winston Roddick QC predicts Legal Wales will be a continuing process.

delegates could choose to hear presentations. These ranged from ecclesiastical law to freedom of information and from international commercial law practice to the life and work of Lord Elwyn-Jones.

One of the best-attended sessions was that which, under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice Evans, a long-standing supporter of the increased use of the

language in the courts, discussed the future role of the Welsh language in Welsh legal life. He drew attention to the apparently effortless way in which the Canadian legal system accommodates the needs of both main language groups in that country.

Whilst the assimilation of Wales into the English legal system began in the Tudor era, it was not until 1830 that it reached its high point with the abolition of the Court of Great Session. This was a distinct system of courts covering the whole of Wales and separate from the English circuit system. Although it administered purely English law, the Court of Great Session was at least a recognition that the geographical and, to some extent, the social and cultural characteristics of Wales could not easily be forced into the English mould. For all its faults the Court of Great Session was at least able to respond more flexibly to the needs of the Welsh community than that which came after it. The practical benefits of a court system tailored to the needs of Wales is perhaps illustrated by the fact that one of the main arguments used to justify the abolition of the Court of Great Session was that its accessibility encouraged litigiousness amongst the Welsh and an unhealthy growth in the legal profession.

Whilst the focus of the Legal Wales movement over the past four years has inevitably been the establishment of devolved government in Wales, it may well shift during the next few years to the courts and the desirability that courts generally, and not just those operating in specialist fields, should respond positively to a developing Welsh legal identity.

- Keith Bush is Assistant Counsel General, National Assembly for Wales.

virtual majority



leighton andrews
reports on his first six
months as an AM

As Labour backbencher, one of the most frustrating aspects of my first six months in the Assembly was the failure of the Opposition parties to accept that things had changed since the election. Two parties did well in May. Labour won its four target seats of Conwy, Islwyn, Llanelli and Rhondda. A little local difficulty saw the loss of Wrexham, and we were a few votes short of electing Wales' first ethnic minority Assembly Member in Mid and West Wales. The Conservatives also made gains.

On the other hand Plaid Cymru lost nearly one-third of its seats, and the Lib Dems stayed where they were. Labour emerged with 30 out of 60 seats – and with the election of the Presiding Officer from Plaid Cymru and the independent as his Deputy, a working majority: what I call a virtual majority.

Despite this, in the period to the summer recess, the Opposition parties in the Assembly sought to disrupt the Assembly business on no fewer than ten occasions, when they objected and filibustered on the business statement, causing the loss of important business

on at least one occasion and the fore-shortening of debates on others.

From November, one half of the Chamber will be occupied by the 30 Labour Members: the other side of the Chamber by the Opposition. This is a simple, sensible arrangement that could have been agreed at any point earlier in the year. This was what Labour was seeking. Yet the Opposition sought to use the change to disrupt Assembly business. As Mario Basini rightly pointed out in the *Western Mail*, it could strengthen the image of the National Assembly as a proper parliamentary-style forum. This proposal was on the table from May onwards. Why it could not be agreed until the summer recess, after an absurd and deeply damaging public game of 'chicken', you will have to ask the Opposition parties.

Of course, the seating row made the headlines in Wales and beyond. You are only likely to read or hear about the Assembly if there is a row or a scandal. Yet every day, were you to read the Assembly website's news section you would find the Assembly delivering for



Musical chairs in Plenary Session took time to settle down following the May 2003 elections.

Wales across the range of policies. With a few noble exceptions, the state of political journalism in Wales is depressing. The loss of the *Welsh Mirror* – for most of its recent life less a Labour paper than a *Blaenau Gwent Labour* paper – removes another outlet for coverage of Welsh events at a time when Scottish titles seem still to be marching onward.

A simple example will illustrate the problem of political journalism. As Assembly Member for the Rhondda, I am the constituency member for the Pop Factory. An inordinate amount of my time since May has been taken up with the issue of ELWa's grant to fund the Pop Centre MP3 Café project, run by Learn to Live Ltd, a subsidiary of the Pop Factory's owner, Avanti. Since I also sit on the Assembly's Education and Audit Committees, I feel I have overdosed on ELWa.

In September, ELWa came before the Assembly's Audit Committee. The Assembly's Permanent Secretary, Sir Jon Shortridge, also gave extended evidence. Given the extent of public interest, column inches and airtime previously generated by this story, you might have expected that Welsh political journalists would have been there. In the end, the coverage was marginal: a few minutes on *Good Evening Wales*, references on TV so brief that you would literally have missed them if you'd blinked, and short summaries of ELWa bosses' apologies in the papers.

It was left to the old warhorse himself, Clive Betts, to pick up on the real story that came out of the Audit Committee hearing: that Sir Jon Shortridge had discussed with the Government's employment lawyer whether there were grounds for dismissing ELWa's then Chief Executive. Where did Clive Betts' story run? In the *Times Educational Supplement*. If the conventional outlets in Wales can't pick up something as significant as this, perhaps it's time for an enterprising soul to resurrect *Rebecca*.



The Rhondda's Pop Factory young people's project led to the Audit Committee "overdosing" on ELWa decisions.



ELWa is a civil service crisis and worryingly suggests a colonial not a democratic culture. The civil service clearly aspires to be modern, strategic and proactive. The Welsh Assembly Government now has a Strategic Policy Unit, but across the Government departments one might still question the depth of the strategic advice available to the Government.

To take another example, I asked at an Education Committee whether there was any research available on how pupils in Wales decided on their university choices. Did they decide on their favoured universities in a Welsh or in a UK context? The Education department was unaware of any such research. Frankly, when I worked in a public sector organisation trying to modernise itself – the BBC in the 1990s – we sure as hell wanted to know that our policy decisions were based on sound market research. Are officials really formulating advice on tuition fees and student funding without knowing why pupils make decisions on their university choices?

Earliest impressions confirm the view that the committees are where the Assembly's real work is done. They remain a slightly strange hybrid as vehicles for both scrutiny – which is apparently what Opposition spokespeople are doing when they grandstand on the issue of the day – and policy development. Certainly debates in the Assembly Chamber perform a more theatrical – I nearly wrote therapeutic – function.

Meanwhile Labour could perhaps think about its own mechanisms for internal communication. While relations between Labour Ministers and the Labour Group are warm and open, we could probably develop a better informal two-way flow of ideas in one or two policy areas. We also need to hold more regular discussions between Labour Assembly Members and Labour MPs.

But the overall challenge the Assembly faces is building genuine popular support for its achievements. In 1997 Sir Robin Mountfield reported on UK Government Communications and made it clear that the communication of policy needed to be considered by officials alongside the development of policy. As an outsider, it's not obvious to me yet that the Assembly Government's communications strategy has drawn on those proposals.

Finally, there are still unanswered questions about the Assembly's powers and functions, which Lord Richard's Commission will address. But it seems inevitable that as the Assembly demonstrates it is delivering, its powers and responsibilities will grow. Six years after the referendum, Wales is a different country.

- Former Head of Public Affairs at the BBC and co-founder of the *Yes for Wales* campaign, Leighton Andrews is AM for the Rhondda.

clear welsh water



nick bourne outlines
new directions for
Welsh Conservatism

before the ink was dry on the 1997 referendum result, close as it was, there was no doubt in my mind that the political topography in Wales was changing, and changing forever. The Welsh Conservative Party – not a body that then existed in reality – would need to accept these results and move forward.

It was obvious to me that we would need to establish clear Welsh water between Conservatism in Westminster and Welsh Conservatism in Cardiff. There is, of course, a coherent set of values and principles that unite Conservatives in both places. However, Welsh Conservatism would need to adjust to a different, though not necessarily contradictory, set of values in Wales. For instance, the very strong sense of Welsh community makes Wales different from much of England. Early on we opposed tuition fees for Welsh students whereas our Westminster colleagues had no similar policy for Westminster. We also called for a St David's Day Bank Holiday and were fully supportive of the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

There may have been some misgivings amongst our Westminster colleagues, but I was determined that we develop specifically Welsh policies appropriate for Wales. At the same time, what does unite both Welsh Conservatives and Westminster Conservatives is a distrust of bureaucracy, a belief in small government and a commitment to devolving power to local institutions, be they hospitals, schools or local police forces.

The development of Welsh Conservatism represents work in progress. The challenge for Welsh Conservatism has been to adapt without altering our core principles. A core principle of Conservatism is a belief in the value of

the United Kingdom and that it has contributed massively to all the component parts of the Union – Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. That is a constant. This is one reason that we are vehement in maintaining that Wales needs a full-time Secretary of State in the Cabinet. Underlining the importance of the union has been the involvement of myself as Leader of the National Assembly Group, and David McLetchie as Leader of the Scottish Parliamentary Group, in Shadow Cabinet meetings at the UK level.

There is no contradiction between this continuing belief in Unionism and our developing distinctive policies at the Welsh level. Since the 2003 Assembly elections I have established two Standing Committees, one to look at public services in Wales, and the other at the Welsh language and culture. The committee on public services, chaired by David Melding AM, is examining how we can concentrate resources at the sharp end of delivery and how the public, voluntary and private sectors can work in partnership. The basis of our appeal is true compassion rather than barren egalitarianism. Labour talks repeatedly about delivery but waiting lists are growing, the ambulance service needs crucial investment, and a massive number of care home beds have been lost. Meanwhile, Labour's top up fees will deter students, especially from poorer backgrounds. The public services committee will concentrate on two main questions:

- How we can reverse trends on waiting lists and slash the numbers waiting
- How we can prevent Labour's plans for tuition fees.

The committee on the Welsh language and culture, chaired by Lisa Francis AM, will focus on the following concerns:

- How we can preserve the language, not just as a second language but as a community language.
- How we can help people, and particularly young people, purchase homes in their communities.
- How we can protect local community services such as schools, medical services, post offices, and shops.

Assembly if it simply produces expensive photocopies of policies that are being applied at Westminster. That is not what the Party in Wales is about.

One of the key questions in the second Assembly term is going to be the powers of the Assembly. I think this is to be regretted. I foresaw that this

of public services, and also to say that the powers of the Assembly should be extended. The former argument to me has much more strength than the latter.

Having said this, I think that there is a case for looking at particular functions moving to the Assembly on a case by case basis, in much the same way as happened under the old Welsh Office. We have argued for animal welfare powers to be transferred to Cardiff. We have argued for large energy projects to be transferred to Cardiff. This is happening, although too slowly. There is also a strong case to be made out for police functions to come to the Assembly, just as issues relating to the Fire Service have in the wake of the Bain Report. All four Chief Constables in Wales are in favour of this, and it is something that is being actively discussed within the Party.

It is not without its ironies that the Welsh Conservative Party has prospered under the devolutionary settlement. We opposed the institution initially, and most of us have been elected by an electoral system which we certainly oppose for Westminster elections. However, the essence of Conservatism is a belief in pragmatic change. It is no surprise to me that the future of devolution is safer with Conservatives than with other political parties.

Our Party has become more Welsh focused. It is already much more rooted in Wales than many people realise. We have our own Chairman, Carole Hyde, who represents Wales with great force and verve on the National UK Party Board. We have our own separate Party Headquarters with our own Director, Leigh Jeffes. We have our own Board of Management in Wales, on which I sit. Much of our funding is derived from Wales, and we are becoming more Welsh focused in our candidate selection for Westminster. No doubt all these are processes that will continue.

- *Nick Bourne is Leader of the Welsh Conservatives in the National Assembly.*



Nick Bourne meets a few of the fifteen children at Trecastle Community School near Brecon. Reprieved from closure threats in 2002, it is again under threat along with several other small schools in Powys.

These and other policy committees will work alongside a Welsh Policy Forum being established with the help of Lord Griffiths of Fforestfach, Lord Roberts of Conwy, Jonathan Evans MEP, Nigel Evans MP, and our Vice Chairman in charge of policy, Catrin Edwards. This will help in developing distinctly Welsh Conservative policies in advance of the next Assembly elections. Just as in the first Assembly term there will be the fullest consultation with affected bodies and with the Party membership in Wales.

The policies that emerge will no doubt differ from Conservative policies from Westminster while remaining consistent with Conservative aims and principles. It would indeed be surprising if they were not different. There is little point in having a Welsh

would happen, and indeed predicted that if the Assembly did not deliver on the quite impossible expectations that had been hyped up by some politicians in the referendum campaign, there would be siren calls saying that this was because it did not have enough powers. Similar arguments were made about socialism in the 1980s, that Labour was not winning elections because it was not sufficiently left wing.

It is my belief that the Assembly will be judged by delivery on public services, on economic performance, and on fighting Wales's corner on key issues, and not by the rather barren question of powers. It does seem to me to be contradictory to argue both that the Assembly is a new institution and that this is why it has not yet delivered on some of the key aspects

nation building

cynog dafis explores Plaid Cymru's future in the wake of its May 2003 election set-back



Coming after a period of unprecedented success, the reverse of the 2003 Assembly elections delivered a blow to the solar plexus of Plaid Cymru. The Party is seeking answers to the particular questions that inevitably arise at times like this – about leadership, organisation, effective communication, relations with the media, resources, external factors impinging on its performance and so on.

However, underlying the poor electoral performance, not confined in fact to the Assembly election, deeper issues are lurking. Among the members and the core supporters there is unease. There is the disappointment with devolution in practice, and Plaid's identification with it. Even more disturbing is a sense, stronger in some regions than others, that the distinctiveness of Wales, those elements that underpin our very identity as a people, are being

eroded at the very time when some of the necessary structures of nationhood are being put in place. The party's failure to address the immigration issue in the face of Labour's grotesque attacks has for many been a real crisis of confidence.

One danger in these circumstances is that the party revert to a total concentration on its ultimate constitutional aim. The new commitment to terminological accuracy by owning the word "independence" is of course to be welcomed. A confident, clear-thinking Plaid leadership can easily make Labour's UK nationalism and its poverty of aspiration for Wales, evidenced in its depiction of an independent Wales as an unmitigated disaster, boomerang to good effect. The time for evasiveness on this issue is past.

However to make independence the centrepiece of Plaid's campaigning over the next few years would be a disastrous mistake, first for the simple reason that support for independence is confined to some 10-12% of the electorate; more importantly because it would remove the party from relevance to present realities and concerns; and thirdly because it would divert attention from the task of putting in place the conditions necessary to promote the constitutional advancement of Wales in the shorter term (thus making possible, incidentally, in some future circumstances about which we can currently only speculate, the achievement of independence!).

There seems to me to be an urgent need now for the party to redefine its message, so that it can carry conviction in the reality of contemporary Wales. This must be done in such a way as to reinvigorate the membership by convincing them anew of their party's unique and historic role, to broaden its membership, and to fire a new generation with enthusiasm for the cause of Wales. And it must be done so as to enable the garnering of sufficiently widespread support to undermine the stifling dominance of Labour.

Plaid Cymru exists to advance the development of Wales as a nation. This is a task that demands, but cannot wait upon, constitutional change. And it must be undertaken in the full knowledge that the concepts of 'nation' and 'nationality', alive and kicking as they are, must find a new definition in a world of rapid change, migration and mobility.

It was Mushaq Ali, then a leading member of Wales's ethnic minority communities, whom I heard, in a fringe meeting at the Plaid Cymru National Conference two years ago, describe the task facing Wales in the wake of devolution as "nation-building".

The phrase seems to me to express exactly what Plaid Cymru is, or should be, about. Commonly used to refer to the task of rebuilding after ethnic conflict, it is also eminently applicable to a country like Wales where identity is ambiguous, diverse and – let's face it – in many ways fragile; where the

components of nationhood are, to put it mildly, incomplete; but where, through the 1997 Yes vote and subsequent events, a decision was made to become, as it were, a proper country and embark on a process of democratic self-government.

It is within the framework of the nation-building project that a constructive debate about national identity can occur. There are of course those, particularly within Welsh Labour, who will pooh-pooh as either romantic or sinister any discussion of the identity issue. It is as well, therefore, to remind ourselves that it is important, not just because many of us hear it in the deep heart's core, but because it is necessary to provide that solidarity and mutuality of interest which enable progressive social change and the implementation of policies that place the general good above short-term sectoral interests. In other words, without a robust sense of national identity, Welsh self-government, however much of it we get, will achieve little.

In the most recent IWA Gregynog Paper, *The Psychology of Distance*, the late Phil Williams, a passionate proponent of independence, describes the slow and painful process of nation-building so far. In the absence of any serious commitment from any other party, with Labour by all indications backsliding on the whole project, it is the unique role of The Party of Wales to put new momentum into it. Building the nation must be its driving motivation and constant concern. In so doing it can seize the political initiative and invigorate itself with a new sense of purpose. It can also significantly broaden the base of its membership and support, nation-building being by definition as inclusive as it is positive. More of this later.

What then are some of the key components in the nation-building project, from which the Plaid Cymru leadership could select as appropriate

for campaigning/implementation at different levels of government, and outside government?

- 1) The demand for a legislative parliament must of course be central, self-government being a powerful agent of nation-building as well as its product. For Plaid there will always be a presumption in favour of the transfer of further powers from Westminster. However the underlying principle being the sovereignty of the people of Wales, the call must be to go beyond devolution to entrenchment of powers.
- 2) An independent education system, with a truly national curriculum at its heart, is fundamental, and, as the Blair government speeds up the Thatcherite revolution, an opportunity for a radically different Welsh approach.
- 3) The Welsh language is by no means the whole of Welsh identity, but it is crucial. The need to move from warm words to a real strategy for growth is evident, and Plaid should work with others to lead the way.
- 4) Culture policy is a powerful tool in nation-building. Wales, its people, its diverse communities, its past and its present, its traditional and contemporary forms, its artists, should be its starting point, rather than the afterthought that they usually are.
- 5) Visualising a truly national broadcasting system is as challenging as it is necessary. Plaid Cymru should call for a national debate on this in the context of the far-reaching technological changes that are even now transforming the field with both threats and opportunities.
- 6) Already it seems the existence of the National Assembly is spawning a Welsh civic society. The greater the Assembly's powers, the more

far-reaching will be this process, but there is scope for active encouragement in the meanwhile.

- 7) Forging the territorial unity of Wales for the first time in history must be an urgent priority. Failure to do so and thus counteract the pull of Merseyside, the English Midlands and Severnside could yet effectively dismember Wales, devolution notwithstanding. Plaid should press, and plan, for major investment in intra-Wales road and rail as well as electronic connections. Along with this must go a continuing process of networking our institutions, for example our Higher Education sector.
- 8) The development of powerful economic regions and urban centres throughout Wales is also essential in order to provide a diversity of opportunities for career options and upward mobility.

Most important, and probably most challenging of all, is the need to lay the foundations, also for the first time in history, of a national labour market. For too long Plaid has repeated the mantra about creating employment to "enable our young people to remain in their local community". For many of our most ambitious young people this is simply not feasible, nor indeed does it accord with their preferences. The creation of a national labour market, linked with the regional development approach mentioned above, linked too with the education and training and careers advice services, should be right at the heart of a National Sustainable Development Strategy.

Only thus can we begin to tackle the chronic outward flow of our best qualified and most upwardly mobile young people which has been so damaging to our cultural, social and economic vitality, and our identity as a nation, and which has become so ingrained in our mindset as a people.

Divided we stand? New Plaid leaders facing battle for unity

Martin Shipton ■ Chief Reporter ■ martin.shipton@wales.on.co.uk

Ieuan has wafer-thin majority in Assembly group vote

TWO men who did not vote for each other – and who had to exchange mobile phone numbers after the results were declared – last night won the task of running a divided Plaid Cymru.

Four months after Ieuan Wyn Jones resigned the party presidency in the aftermath of disappointing National Assembly elections, when it lost five of its 17 seats, he was back as Plaid's Assembly group leader with a wafer thin majority of 71 over Helen Mary Jones, the woman he accused of plotting a coup against him.

Mr Jones quit the party in July, before the Rhodri Glyn Iwan was eliminated. Mr Jones was initially ahead by 11 votes, but the president is now seen as a regular contender.

How they voted

Presidency	
Dafydd Iwan	2,980
Cynog Dafis	2,125
Assembly group leadership	
First ballot	
Helen Mary Jones	2,089
Ieuan Wyn Jones	2,078
Rhodri Glyn Thomas	1,014
Second ballot	
Ieuan Wyn Jones	2,603
Helen Mary Jones	2,532

he had lost the confidence of half the party's AMs.

It emerged that a decision to inform Mr Jones he should go was taken during a party evening at Helen Mary Jones's Cardiff home. Mr Jones quit and the process of electing a replacement was begun.



How the Western Mail reported Ieuan Wyn Jones's return to the leadership of the Plaid Cymru group in the Assembly on 16th September 2003. The shake-up resulted in Dafydd Iwan being elected to the Presidency. As the Mail reported, the two men did not vote for each other and had to exchange mobile phone numbers after the leadership election results were declared.

It is in the context of this last issue, along with the other elements in the nation-building project, that the vexed question of in-migration can be constructively debated, as indeed it must. Difficult though it may be at times, there is no incompatibility between considering ways of dealing with the major displacement of population brought about by simultaneous inward and outward migration on the one hand and an absolute commitment to inclusivity in the nation-building process on the other. If The Party of Wales does not lead this debate, it will inevitably be dragged into it and find itself constantly firefighting.

The call to nation-building is poles apart from *We'll-Keep-a-Welcome-in-the-Hillsides* sentimentality. It is an invitation to participate, but it is also a challenge. A precondition of success is that the diverse strands and ethnicities in Welsh life respect each other, and this should be a key Plaid message.

In particular, there should be no nervousness about calling upon English people moving to Wales, members as they are of the overwhelmingly dominant group in these islands, to recognise that they now inhabit a different country with its own politics, aspirations, problems and culture – and on that basis to actively seek their participation. Providing them with the means to learn about Wales, and particularly in some regions to learn the language, should be a significant component in public policy.

Plaid Cymru is well placed to encourage members of the ethnic minority communities to identify with the nation-building project. The party has an impeccable track-record on issues of concern for these communities. A successful recruitment strategy here would be a powerful indicator of the kind of enterprise that Plaid exists to promote.

Welsh-speakers, among whom the Party has established a remarkable

degree of support, naturally enough see themselves as uniquely important to the enterprise. Indeed, some such sense is probably necessary for the survival and growth of the language. But to them, also, there is a challenge: to recognise unequivocally that other groups, whether indigenous or of more recent arrival, have equal status in the Wales that is to be built.

Putting nation-building at the heart of Plaid's message would mean that the diverse groups that make up our society can each see themselves as bringing their unique contribution to the development of Wales. How can that possibly be seen as other than positive and inclusive? Let Labour's UK nationalists fulminate as they certainly will. Plaid will have seized the high ground.

- Cynog Dafis is a former Plaid Cymru MP for Ceredigion and AM for Mid and West Wales.

backlash

simon brooks explains why 8,874 people in Ceredigion are demanding a mayor

Where the new world order has 'failed states', rural Wales has 'failed councils'. I wouldn't want to take the comparison any further. Nepotism, corruption and parochialism have been some of the distinguishing features of the first phenomenon. But of the latter?

In rural Wales, the distinguishing characteristic of local democracy has been the comparative weakness of political parties and political accountability. Only in Gwynedd is there a majority administration headed up by a political party elected on a clearly defined political programme, and even here the Plaid Cymru majority is only two.

Councils in rural Wales are otherwise 'independent', or mixtures thereof. Independents are elected on the very premise that they have no guiding ideology. In reality, of course, they have ideologies galore, but they are often well-hidden, self-serving and never declared at Customs. As Independents claim that they have no political programme, it can become very hard to press for political change.

Very many Independents are returned unopposed. If an Independent Councillor of fifteen or twenty years standing has never been challenged at the ballot box, it is hardly surprising that he (and it is nearly always a 'he') may become immune to the opinion of

the electorate. Increasingly people are coming to see this situation as not only inherently conservative, but also unaccountable and undemocratic.

It is the issue of political accountability on big policy decisions that has convinced one group of political activists in independently controlled Ceredigion to try and replace the current Councillor-led Cabinet system with a directly elected Mayor. If the campaign is successful, Ceredigion will become the only county in Wales to elect its council leader directly. This will open up Ceredigion to a county-wide vote on the policies and integrity of its Executive.

The Local Government Act 2000 dictates that the executive of a local authority "may consist of an elected mayor of the authority, and two or more councillors of the authority appointed to the executive by the elected mayor". The Act enables electors to petition a local authority for a referendum on establishing a Mayoral system. Regulations set out by the Secretary of State required 10 per cent of a local authority's electors to sign the petition before November 5. In Ceredigion, this amounted to 5,306 electors. In the event the Ceredigion petition achieved 8,874 signatories. As a result the county will now hold a referendum, probably on 22nd April 2004. A Yes vote would trigger a Mayoral election, probably in the early summer.

Ceredigion is on many counts the most unpopular Council in Wales. It is the Council's misfortune that it sits astride one of the great fault lines of rural debate: planning. The rural housing crisis means that most people favour an expansion in the affordable housing stock for local people. Yet the same

people fear overdevelopment: the Welsh for cultural and linguistic reasons; the English because of environmental and quality-of-life concerns.

In its controversial forward planning document, *Ceredigion Unitary Development Plan 2001-16*, the Council has made a hash of the whole issue. The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) forecasts up to 6,500 new 'units' for the county, with a projected population rise from 75,000 to 90,000. Yet despite embarking on this huge house-building programme, the 'homes for locals' element of the Plan is weak. For example, it makes no use of local residency conditions, in stark contrast to the Development Plans of adjacent planning authorities, like Pembrokeshire Coast and Snowdonia National Park, and Gwynedd County Council.

Matters were complicated by the revelation on the BBC Wales's *Week In, Week Out* current affairs programme that the Independent leader of the Council, Dai Lloyd Evans, owns land earmarked for development in the UDP. Dai Lloyd Evans is currently being investigated by Dyfed-Powys Fraud Squad.

There are other signs of discontent. The two statutory consultation stages to the UDP attracted 11,000 objections. Despite the level of public concern with the Plan, Ceredigion has refused to alter the main thrust of its proposals. Most controversially, the Council has announced that it considers the draft UDP to be a 'material consideration' in large planning applications. As a result, developers who are quick off the mark can get their housing estates approved

before the Public Inquiry into the UDP, due to be held next Spring and Summer.

Despite the pleas of many groups in the county, the Assembly Government has refused to 'call the plan in', thus engendering a last-chance saloon mentality among many objectors that they are 'on their own'. So the reasons for the Ceredigion Mayoral campaign are threefold:

- The county's planning policy is resented by a majority of the population, on both sides of the language divide.
- This same majority feels disenfranchised by a Council leadership which is perceived to be both unaccountable and arrogant.
- The Leader of the Council appears unable to provide transparent leadership because of an obvious conflict of interest.

And if this were not enough, Ceredigion also faces the first serious tax strike in Wales since the Poll Tax debacle, with over a hundred residents promising to withhold their Council Tax until the Council's planning department cleans up its act.

The most likely political outcome of a mayoral contest would be a Plaid Cymru anti-UDP candidate winning, probably Penri James, the current opposition leader on Ceredigion County Council, or perhaps Cynog Dafis. But were the Lib Dems, or even the Tories, to come out strongly against the UDP, it is not impossible that either party might turn in a good show. Finally, were all the political parties to wobble, there is always the possibility of an anti-UDP Ken Livingstone-style candidate running.

Such a Mayor would enjoy the following advantages. He, or she, would have been elected by direct vote in a County with a traditionally high turn out. He would have been elected on a clearly defined political programme in a high-profile election in

the most transparent manner. He would publish a Manifesto, and be given a mandate by the people of Ceredigion to deliver that Manifesto. His first act as Mayor would be to scrap and re-write Ceredigion's planning policies.

Of course, arguments have been presented against plumping for a directly-elected Mayor. The current leadership of Ceredigion County Council is fighting the petition on the



Emyr Hywel and Gwilym ab Ioan do the donkey work, whilst a thoughtful Simon Brooks looks on.

cost issue, which they claim would be £86,000. Dai Lloyd Evans surely gave the game away when he told *The Cambrian News* that "democracy costs money". For those with more political principle, there are arguments about centralising too much power in the hands of one individual. One also gets the feeling that the political parties fear the unknown.

For grass-root activists, the Mayoral petition option is a godsend. It offers a chance not only to protest about local government, but also to change it. It enables this to be done outside the confines of party politics, which is weak in rural Ceredigion in any case. The Ceredigion Mayoral campaign is being run by a steering committee, Llais y Cardi, which brings together Cymuned with a number of smaller groups, including tax refuseniks, Cant Ceredigion, and a number of residents associations and individual

environmental activists. Getting the signatures of 10 per cent of the electorate in a short period of time is a huge logistical challenge for any voluntary group, but it is possible for a dug-in and well organised movement like Cymuned with a local branch structure, and a committed community base.

Where else in Wales could the 'Ceredigion experiment' take root? A successful Mayoral campaign would

require an unpopular leader, or emotive grievance, coupled with an organised opposition. A directly elected Mayor for Cardiff might be a good way for Cardiffians to kick out the unelected by direct election Lord Mayor for Cardiff, Russell Goodway. The threat of a local Mayoral petition might make Councillors in Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire or Powys re-think their unpopular rural school closure programmes. What about Crymlyn Burrows Incinerator near Swansea? It is not only in Ffos-y-ffin, Plwmp and Synod Inn that developments in the wilds of Ceredigion will be watched closely.

- *Simon Brooks is a spokesman for Cymuned, and Editor of the current affairs magazine, Barn.*

two cheers



neil macCormick
reveals what the
European Convention
is achieving
for Wales

The European Union is trying to re-design itself prior to enlargement, with the final accession of ten new member states occurring shortly before the European Parliamentary Election of 2004. The old method of treaty renegotiation had proved inadequate to the task. What came to be called a constitutional Convention (strictly, “the Convention on the future of Europe”) was established by the Laeken Declaration of December 2001. The Convention first assembled on 28 February 2002, and delivered a Draft Constitution back to the Council of Ministers in June 2003 at Thessaloniki.

As a representative of the Greens and European Free Alliance Group (EFA) in the European Parliament my role in the Convention was to present the case for a ‘civic nationalist’ or ‘regionalist’ vision for the future of the European Union. There were other stout supporters of the cause, among whom I remember most vividly Erwin Teufel, Minister President of Baden Württemberg, Mme Claude du Granrut from Picardy and Manfred Dammeyer from North Rhine Westphalia who took part as observers from the Committee of the Regions.

Various others spoke up from time to time, including Commissioner Michel Barnier, whose Commission responsibilities embrace regional issues and constitutional ones. Peter Hain, in his role as Secretary of State for Wales, spoke trenchantly in the debate about regions on 7 February 2003, and my old friend Robert MacLennan (Lord MacLennan of Rogart) as an alternate from the UK Parliament, offered another Scottish voice. He and I did some work together about subsidiarity, trying to strengthen the idea of the necessity of local discretion to apply local knowledge.

Members of the Convention were able to submit written contributions. Together with colleagues in the European Free Alliance, through a series of meetings in the spring and early summer of 2002 in Strasbourg, Brussels, Berlin, Seville, Bilbao, Barcelona, and Brno, I produced a contribution to the Convention under the title *Democracy at Many Levels: European Constitutional Reform*. This represented the position of the EFA fraction within our Parliamentary Group, including Plaid Cymru, but also took account of the wider concerns of EFA parties not represented in the European Parliament. It is interesting to look back on that and see how far matters turned out as we argued they should.

The basic theme was one of wholehearted support for the constitutional development of the European Union in a way that is favourable for democracy and thus for the flourishing of all the peoples of Europe in a context of peace, security and sustainable all-round prosperity. The governing principle to which we appealed was that of self-determination for all the peoples of Europe. This, we pointed out, implies acknowledging the possibility of “internal enlargement” of the Union.

As a principle, self-determination can operate at more than one level in the construction of a new and better European Union. In Europe, it ought to include full recognition of the right to self-government of all those territorial entities in the Union whose citizens have a strong and shared sense of national, linguistic, or regional identity, whether such entities are already recognised as states or as self-governing entities of one kind or another, or remain for the present unrecognised in the constitutional structure of state.

The Draft Constitution, I must say, does not unequivocally acknowledge the principle of self-determination in this sense. The presupposition on which the Constitution rests is the sovereignty of the Member States who together sustain and empower the Union. The Union leaves all questions about governmental structures at this level exclusively to the States. As a confederalist myself, I cannot fairly object to this.

Moreover, I much welcome the opening sentence of Article I.5(1), "The Union shall respect the national identities of its Member states, inherent in their fundamental structures, political and constitutional, including for regional and local self government." I note also, according to Article I.57 (1) of the Draft, "The Union shall be open to all European States which respect the values referred to in Article I.2, and are committed to promoting them together." This opens a door to internal enlargement, but it must be carefully noted that a new state's acceptance into membership is dependent on unanimity in the European Council. The second sentence of I.5 (1) somewhat counterbalances its above-quoted first sentence, and has provoked concern in some quarters: The Union "shall respect their essential state functions, including for ensuring the territorial integrity of the state, and for maintaining law and order and safeguarding internal security."

Going beyond the claim of self-determination, we in the EFA supported the idea that the Convention's essential task was to produce a constitution for the European Union. Already, we said, the Union has a constitution in the same functional or informal sense as is found in states like, for example, the United Kingdom. The task was to transform this into a formal constitution with adequate guarantees for democracy, subsidiarity, cultural and linguistic pluralism, human rights and the protection of minorities in the Union. The Charter of Rights would be one

corner-stone in this, and the establishment for the future of an acceptable process of constitutional reform replacing the present *ad hoc* approach another. I would unhesitatingly claim that the Convention has risen to this task that we considered essential.

That Europe should have a constitution did not and does not for us imply that Europe is or ought to become a state, far less a 'super-state'. It is a supranational union of a unique kind that acknowledges shared and divided sovereignty rather than its concentration, and that accommodates

struck in Part I, the Convention Draft matches this demand of ours.

The Council of Ministers, we argued, ought to be redesigned somewhat to reveal its role as one of the two chambers of the legislature of Europe, that which represents the states and territories of the Union, and which reaches its decisions typically by qualified majority voting. The European Parliament, which is the other legislative Chamber, ought to have power of co-decision with the Council on all matters within the legislative competence of the Union. This we



The Inaugural session of the European Convention on 28 February 2002 met in the hemicycle of the European Parliament at Strasbourg.

at least four significant levels of government (Union level, member state level, internal territorial level, and local authorities, themselves very varied in kind and scope of action).

A critical question we saw was whether the Council or the Commission should be the principal bearer of the executive power of the Union. For the Union to have a democratic character with fair participation by states and entities varied in size, we took it to be vital that the Commission bear this role, under the strategic guidance of the European Council and answerable to the European Parliament. In essence, despite the slightly tricky compromises

considered an essential step in building a fully democratic scheme of European self-government.

Here again, the Draft Constitution matches up to the proposals we put forward. The ordinary legislative process under it will have just this character, and will apply very generally, though not yet quite universally, in the Union's lawmaking activities.

Subsidiarity, along with democracy and self-determination, was for us the major issue for the Convention. The Constitution had to give it a better and stronger definition, one that the courts could elaborate as a constitutional

principle in the light also of the decisions of political decision-makers. For countries or territorial entities like those represented by EFA in the European Parliament (Andalucia, Catalunya, Euskadi, Flanders, Galicia, Scotland, and Wales) in their present constitutional situation, a satisfactory understanding of subsidiarity was essential. Appropriate recognition of their role as partners in the governance of the Union, was a requirement of a satisfactory constitutional settlement. So important was this that I subsequently submitted a separate Contribution on *Subsidiarity, Common Sense, and Local Knowledge*, and some amendments aimed at strengthening early drafts of the Constitution on this point.

Taking together Article 1-9 and the Protocol on Subsidiarity and Proportionality, I would say now that we made a lot of progress. Still, however, the Constitution locates the element of decentralised Parliamentary control of these principles in the central parliaments of the member states. It then leaves the further iteration of the principles to them: "It will be for each national parliament or each chamber of a national parliament to consult, where appropriate, regional parliaments with legislative powers."

It was a matter for regret that the Praesidium of the Convention did not accede to the many requests that it should establish a working group to examine the place of self-governing territorial entities ("regions") and local authorities in the European architecture and similar issues. One day of debate at the Convention was dedicated to this issue, but without the benefit of the kind of working group report that was available for other important issues. In the upshot, we succeeded in persuading the Convention to express more prominently than ever before its commitment to respect for territorial entities within member states.

In addition to the broad orientation I have just described, EFA laid nine

specific practical proposals before the Convention. Let me run through them here, more or less as we originally stated them, with a brief comment on the outcome in each case.

1) There should be consideration of improved terminology to avoid the inappropriate use of the term 'region' to refer to territorial entities within the Union, which their citizens regard as 'nations'. The ideological use of concepts like 'nation state', especially in contrast to 'region', should be avoided.

We did not win on this one. The terminology of 'national' and 'regional' is used throughout in its ideological sense.

2) There must be genuine reform of parliamentary representation in the European Parliament by securing that in all save quite small states there are electoral constituencies that recognise areas with a distinctive sense of national or regional identity, and that take particular account of existing territorial entities that have achieved constitutional recognition.

No fresh advance was achieved on this. Article I.19 (2) says '...Representation of European citizens shall be degressively proportional, with a minimum threshold of four members per member state'. In fact, member states have already agreed to adopt constituency systems, but these are very variable in style and in many cases disappointing judged by EFA's criterion concerning the recognition for Parliamentary purposes of real communities regions and nations. It would be good to see the idea of 'degressive proportionality applied somewhat within states, as for example in the UK's rather limited concession to it in the form of the rule that Northern Ireland's representation in the European parliament should not go lower than three members.

3) The Committee of the Regions (CoR) should either be reformed or be abolished. Its membership must be based upon regions not states, and should include recognition of significant cross-border regions,

especially where state boundaries do not coincide with linguistic ones. The states' shares of parliamentary seats is not a relevant model for representation on the CoR, where the basis should be the regions themselves, with some reasonable proportionality of representation to population, though retaining minima for very small states and nations. The different roles of the CoR in facilitating input from local authorities and in creating a forum for constitutional entities with legislative powers should be adequately reflected.

We did not make headway here. There was relatively little discussion of the Committee of Regions at the Convention, and none about its composition. Malta and Luxembourg, for example, will continue to have more representatives at this committee than Wales or Galicia. However, under Article I.31(5), 'The rules governing their composition [i.e., the composition of the Committee of Regions and the Economic and Social Committee] shall be reviewed at regular intervals by the Council, on the basis of a Commission proposal, in the light of economic, social and demographic developments within the Union'. The door thus remains a little open for further developments without major constitutional upheaval

4) The Treaties should make clear that the Commission has an obligation to consult in relation to forthcoming legislation with all legislative authorities at whatever level within the Union that have responsibility for transposing and implementing European law.

Here, we have success to report, as witnessed by the Protocol on the Application of the Principles of Subsidiarity and Proportionality: Paragraph (2) "Before proposing legislative acts, the Commission shall consult widely. Such consultations shall, where appropriate, take into account the regional and local dimension of the action envisaged."

5) The Treaties should be clarified concerning rights of participation in the legislative deliberations of the Council.

There must be clear provision whereby the states can in appropriate cases be represented by ministers from that level of government which has, within any particular state, legislative responsibility for the subject of proposed Union legislation. A state's votes in qualified majority voting need not always be cast as a single block vote, but could be split if internal territories decide to pursue different lines on a particular topic.

Here, there was neither advance nor retreat. Article I.22 (2) provides: "The Council of Ministers shall consist of a representative of each member state at ministerial level for each of its formations. Only this representative may commit the Member State in question, and cast its vote."

6) There should be appropriate rights of access to the Court of Justice for all territorial entities exercising legislative and governmental powers within a state and under its constitution; they must be enabled to seek judicial review of Union legislation that invades their constitutional competences, with a view to ensuring due respect for the principle of subsidiarity in their case.

We did not gain as much as we sought. The Committee of the Regions will be able, under the subsidiarity protocol, to challenge subsidiarity-infringing legislation of the Union, as will "national parliaments", which can in turn make whatever arrangements they see fit to involve "regional parliaments with legislative powers". The general right of access to the court for all natural and legal persons will, however, be somewhat extended, and this will create an opportunity for internal-territorial governments and parliaments to challenge Union legislation in certain cases.

7) Subsidiarity should be better defined and supported by better institutional mechanisms. In particular, there should be criteria for preventing diminution of constitutional powers of internal territorial entities without full prior consultation and agreement, and there



Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Chairman of the Convention, oversaw "a robustly statist vision of the Union".

should be better ways of protecting the discretion of local agencies to enable them to bring about sensible implementation of European law having regard to local circumstances.

Some advance achieved. By Article I.9 (3) "the Union shall act only if and in so far as the objectives of the intended action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the member states, either at central level or at regional and local level."

8) The Parliaments of self-governing entities in member-states should be better involved in the European institutional system. Those exercising legislative powers should be able to participate in the parliamentary trans-European network known as COSAC – Conférence des Organes Spécialisés dans les Affaires Communautaires (Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees).

No advance was achieved. The provisions concerning COSAC in the Draft Protocol on the Role of National Parliaments in the European Union relates solely to Parliaments at member state level, and does not envisage any mechanism for involvement of other parliaments within the states. Networks of such parliaments with legislative powers are coming into

existence by independent effort, without any constitutional recognition at Union level (except in so far as sub-sets of the CoR are involved).

9) The linguistic diversity of the European Union must be protected. All languages must be recognised as essential elements of the rich heritage of the EU, and all languages and cultures should have equal rights, as stated in the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights (Barcelona, 1996). All official languages in the territory of the European Union must be given proper status at the European level. We therefore support the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages proposals to the Convention.

Here we had success. Article I.3 (3) fourth indent says: "The Union shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded."

This draft Constitution, though still subject to final amendments and adjustments, represents a robustly statist, and to that extent, confederalist, vision of the Union. It is a Union whose powers are conferred on it by member states whose internal constitutional arrangements remain entirely their own affair. To the extent that these arrangements empower stateless nations or other territorial collectivities in the form of legislative or administrative regions, the Union's institutions are obliged to take account of these, and of local authorities as well. Linguistic and cultural diversity is more generously recognised than hitherto. Subsidiarity is better defined and will probably be better policed and observed. This is worth two cheers, if not yet the full three.

- *Sir Neil MacCormick is an SNP MEP and Regius Professor of Public Law on University of Edinburgh. This is an edited extract from his Inaugural Lecture for the Wales in a Regional Europe research centre at the Institute of Welsh Politics, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 3 November 2003.*

only connect

jan royall discusses the work of the European Commission's Office in Wales

most people have no notion of how the EU impacts on their lives. Many see 'Brussels' as an alien power, an amorphous mass of bureaucrats constantly creating red tape that ordinary people have to deal with. My job is to blow such myths away. There's a direct correlation between people's knowledge about the EU and their attitude towards it. The more people know about it, the more positive they tend to be.

Now with its own government, Wales is part of a vast and growing single market which from May next year will have 450 million citizens with common rights and responsibilities. The opportunities for government at all levels, for businesses, for trade unions, for non-governmental organisations and for individuals are huge. In many ways, however, they remain a well hidden secret.

Many of the opportunities stem directly from European legislation and a European system of governance that is often not understood or misunderstood. Throughout its life the European Union and its institutions have failed to connect properly with the people they are there to serve.

Their partners in member states – at national, regional and local levels – have often been reluctant to engage citizens in a dialogue on European issues. The good news is that there is a will to change throughout the Union. Things are certainly changing in Wales.

With devolution and the forthcoming enlargement of the European Union,

there is a real need for an articulate and assertive voice of Wales in the Commission. There is also a duty to raise awareness and nurture understanding of the EU and the impact of its policies on our daily lives. The Commission itself has an obligation to explain what it is doing and why.

The key objectives of the European Commission's Office in Wales is to report to the Commission, at the same time as keeping Welsh legislators informed about European policies and raising public awareness. In an enlarged Union of 25 Member States it will be essential for the distinctiveness of Welsh needs to be understood in the European Institutions. Wales is well served in Brussels by the offices of the Welsh Assembly Government, the Welsh Local Government Association and the Wales European Centre. However, the Commission office can provide added value by advocating and articulating the needs of Wales at the highest level in the Commission and at the earliest stages of the policy making process.

In the past the Commission has tended to be rather reactive, responding to requests for information and defending its position. Member states, the European Parliament and the Commission have now agreed that we must strive to work in partnership in a more proactive way. Since 1979 Welsh MEPs have been working tirelessly to strengthen links but theirs has often been a lone voice. We have to act together to bring Brussels closer to the

people, breaking down the barriers between the institutions and citizens, demystifying the legislative process, and making Europe more relevant to our daily lives and concerns. We have to explain that Bridgend, Bangor and Barmouth are as much part of Europe as Brussels.

In Wales many people naturally tend to associate the European Union with funding. This is certainly an important and tangible demonstration of links with the EU. The structural funds provide invaluable support for economic regeneration, enabling individuals and communities to develop their potential. With the help of research and development funds our academic institutions are working in partnership with people throughout Europe to find sustainable solutions to problems, and their work often has a global impact. There are literally hundreds of initiatives now taking place in Wales that would not have happened without the leverage of European funding. Crucial discussions are now taking place in the Commission to try and ensure that an adequate level of funding is sustained from 2007 onwards.

But Europe isn't just about funding. The policies of the European Union now touch many aspects of our lives – environmental protection, water quality, waste disposal, consumer rights, health and safety regulation, entitlements to paid holidays, the freedom to live and work in 15 – soon to be 25 – different countries ... the list goes on. People simply don't realise –



Jan Royall started work as Head of the European Commission Office in Wales in May 2003. Fluent in French and Spanish – and now learning Welsh – she has worked for the European Commission since 1995. She spent the last two years in the Press and Communication Directorate General where, amongst other things, she was responsible for developing the Commission's proposal for an Information and communication strategy for the European Union. Before that, she was a member of Neil Kinnock's Cabinet (the small group of hand-picked officials which all Commissioners call on for advice and support), initially when he was Transport Commissioner and later when he became Vice-President of the Commission.

often because they have not been informed – that much of the legislation enacted by the Welsh Assembly Government and local authorities stems originally from decisions taken at European level by our elected representatives in the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament.

With enlargement, the signing of a new European constitution and the European elections all taking place during 2004, it will be especially important to improve the flow of jargon-free information and to connect with people throughout Wales. In the Commission office we are working in partnership with the Welsh Assembly Government, local government, the TUC, the CBI and non-governmental organisations to 'mainstream' Europe. We support the Wales European Information Network

that includes a wide range of organisations from professional information providers (Libraries and European Documentation Centres) to rural information centres ('Carrefours') in Anglesey and Carmarthen. One of our common aims is to foster understanding and to engage people in a debate about the European Union.

Sometimes in its efforts to communicate the Commission is accused of peddling propaganda. This is most definitely not the role of the office in Wales. We strive to provide decision-makers, opinion formers and the general public with factual information that is relevant to their specific interests and concerns. We also welcome feedback and constructive criticism, believing that they play an important role in the

shaping of future policies alongside building on best practice.

The European Union is not yet 50 years old and its evolution has been swift. Its achievements to date are extraordinary but they are often taken for granted or forgotten. The enlargement of the Union will bring new challenges and opportunities but the full potential of Europe and its nations and regions can only be fully realised with the engagement of its people. That is why we have a duty to connect with citizens so that the European Union can continue to bring peace, prosperity and security to its people and to be a strong force for good in the world.

- Jan Royall is Head of the European Commission's Office in Wales
www.cec.org.uk/wales

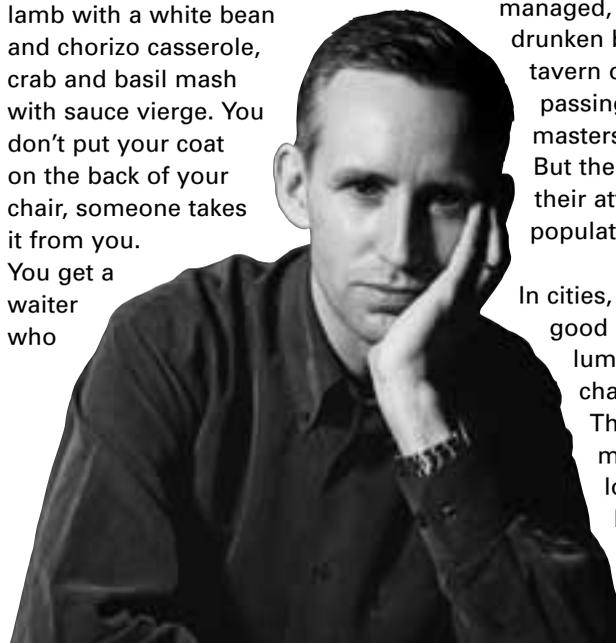
cardiff, kairdiff, caerdydd



peter finch probes the literary output from the capital's clash of cultures

From where I sit I can see the slate roofs, stone balustrade with sprouting buddleia, western sky beyond. Old Cardiff. Oldest there is. I'm at Undeb in Womanby Street, the curving street of pirate battles, horse manure, cattle market, clubs and pubs, distress and overdrinking that has gone on now for almost a thousand years. Womanby snakes its narrow way from the Castle to Westgate Street where the Taff once flowed and the Town Quay imported wine in exchange for cannon. Red light for decades but now improving. Until recently Undeb was the CF1Club, *Every Friday American Table Dancing At The Devil's Lounge*. Now it's Sunday supplement modern. Slate floored lift. Chrome front door with intercom. Owned by music biz operators, full of Welsh stars.

I'm taking lunch with Grahame Davies. The place is a new experience for both of us. Fine dining: pan-fried seabass with roasted scallops, herb-crusting lamb with a white bean and chorizo casserole, crab and basil mash with sauce vierge. You don't put your coat on the back of your chair, someone takes it from you. You get a waiter who



Grahame Davies – Welsh Language Writers in Cardiff have yet to develop "a comfortable urban discourse."

brushes the crumbs from the tablecloth. The menu has slices, goujons, stacks, wedges, pendants, portions, medallions, dollops. There's music in the background but it stays there.

We're in the city, the real city, heart of the city, and it's new. Wales has no tradition of cities, of course. Until the nineteenth century the largest conurbation we had was Carmarthen with a population of over five thousand. Cardiff's total was less than two. Twenty-fifth in the pecking order. In towns and villages you can know everyone. The alienation that wrecks bus shelters, bombs phone-booths and puts name tags on all available wall space is an industrial disease. A product of density. Something that happens because we don't know our neighbours, don't care, can't win, can't see anyway on or out. In Wales of the hill farm and the scattered community such pain hardly exists. Best we've managed, down the centuries, is a drunken brawl outside a market day tavern or a bit of thieving from a passing stranger or our richer masters. The Welsh, the underdogs. But the arrival of iron and coal and their attendant explosion in population ended all that.

In cities, where the great and the good mix with the lollard and the lumpen, proximity to the mass changes the way you think. Things are faster and there are more of them. You can no longer know everything because there is far too much of it. The thirty streets of your town become the three-thousand of your boomtime capital. Your village poet serving a few

hundred houses becomes three hundred-and-fifty bards, novelists, dramatists, fictioneers, scribblers, hacks, journos and pad scratchers serving the surging mass of a recently arrived city horde. Perspectives shift, culture and exposure to it increases, writing alters. Distance changes. The horizon is built on. The streets are lit. The night sky goes dark.

In the eighteenth century the scattered parishes of Y Rhath, Llys-faen, Rhymni, Treganna and Yr Eglwys Newydd were monoglot Welsh. At least half the 2K living inside Cardiff town's crumbling walls were able in the language. Despite these origins a massive influx of outsiders has made the city today an overwhelmingly English-speaking place. How has it served its writers? Until recently not brilliantly well. Meic Stephens' 1980s *A Cardiff Anthology* collected the historical view of the city. Docks, smoke, coal, cockle markets, Arms Park, arcades, Western Mail, rap-tap-ginger in the slums. Some written by people not born here, not living here now, never lived here. Alexander Cordell, Jan Morris, Idris Davies, Alun Richards, Gwyn Thomas. More by those who didn't know each other, or didn't want to, separated by culture and language or by the nine miles of the city's breadth. No sense of community. Literateurs operating in self-contained boxes. Mutual antipathy. Welsh writers divided from their Anglo fellows by miles of linguistic fence. My Cardiff not your Cardiff never ours.

Grahame who is an outspoken satirist of the incongruities and follies of the Welsh-speaking media class to which he belongs tells me that he thinks Welsh language writers in Cardiff have yet to develop what he calls "a comfortable urban discourse". The responses are disparate, there's no consensus yet. City life is still new. Walk down the street and hardly anyone recognises you. The rain here is so different from the rain in Flintshire. This is another world. Grahame should know. He's from Coedpoeth near

Wrexham in Wales' north east, been in Cardiff for a mere seven years.

To paraphrase Adrian Mitchell, most writers, it seems, have ignored Cardiff because Cardiff ignores most writers.

For the nineteenth and most of the twentieth century those writers there were either operated in total isolation (Dannie Abse's *Ash On A Young Man's Sleeve*, Bernard Picton's *Tiger Bay*) or indulged in episodes of nostalgic *ark, the lark* typified by Frank Hennessey and Pete Measey. Billy the Seal, Clarks Pies, Brains Dark. Tôpher Mills is their natural inheritor (although to be fair to Tôpher he has tried to update their line). Until the 1980s you could count the successful women writers from Cardiff on the fingers of one hand (Bernice Rubens, Gillian Clarke – both moved out because this city didn't suit them). No black writers either. Amazing for a place with the largest ethnic population of anywhere in Wales (eight per cent).

In recent times things have improved, for the poets at least. Clustered around the Cabaret 246 performance group, Happy Demon, Pandora's Box, Sampler, Chris Torrance's *Adventures In Creative Writing* night classes, Seren's *First Thursdays*, or one of the many readings in the city's clubs, cafes and bars poets have always ensured that their voices can be heard. But are these genuine Cardiff voices? Not really. The poetry could be from anywhere.

I talk to John Williams about this in the Cottage, an old-style Brains pub on High Street. This is barely a stone's



John Williams, leading light of the late 1990s Cardiff fiction boom, says monoglot speakers of Kairdiff English are second class citizens in their own city.

throw from Undeb but a completely different world. Here the air is fog dense with tobacco, the 28-inch TV relays non-stop soccer and the locals look like they've just reached here from a lie down in the park. I've got a little digital recorder on the table between us but when I get it home all I can hear is the sound of goals roaring and the voice of the bloke at the table next to ours as he tries to get his roll-up alight, bloody thing, won't go. John is one of the leading lights of the late

nineteen-nineties Cardiff fiction boom. He reckons that the city feels more a south Wales Liverpool than the nation's capital. Cardiff is a place which mixes many nationalities with the Welsh being only one of that number, he tells me. The language, while appearing to be a left-wing cultural idea usually succeeds in alienating the largely monoglot English-speaking local working class who can't see the point of it. What relevance does it have to their lives? Instead, Welsh has become the would be lingua-franca of Cardiff's new media and governing elite. "Cardiff, once an overwhelmingly working-class city, is now becoming a city of haves in a land largely of have-nots. The further irony is that the most prosperous of the haves seem to be the incomers, the Welsh-speaking government and media types, while the monoglot speakers of Kairdiff English start to feel like second-class citizens in their own city." Despite this we have still managed a fiction boom, and that's new. Des Barry, Sean Burke, Lloyd Robson, John Harrison, James Hawes, Anna Davis, and John Williams himself have all written about the city and have done so, often, in each other's company. Cardiff rather



Composed by the Cardiff-based poet Gwyneth Lewis, the giant two language inscription at the front of the Millennium Centre in Cardiff Bay reads *Creu Gwir Fel Gwydr o Ffwrnais Awen* (translated as, Creating Truth Like Glass from the Furness of Inspiration) with the English, *In These Stones Horizons Sing*.

than Kairdiff or Caerdydd pulls this group together.

Grahame, as one might expect, sees things differently. Between spoons of broccoli and stilton soup he explains that in many ways Cymry Caerdydd share the experience of some Jewish communities, whose members are seen as being more prosperous than their gentile neighbours – literate, articulate and with ready access to the media. Or to vary the comparison, if blacks are a "visible minority" then Welsh speakers could be termed an "audible minority." Every time they speak Welsh to one another in public their difference is manifested. In such a position, any incongruous or unacceptable behaviour by a member of that community runs the risk of being used as a means of criticising that community as a whole. "You see one West Indian taking drugs and decide that they all take drugs. See one Welsh speaker with shades and a fast car and assume everyone else is the same. They are not. Most Welsh-speaking communities are poor." Is this in the literature yet? James Hawes touches on it in *White Powder, Green Light* but the issue, a real one for Wales

of the committees and the communities, has yet to be decently explored.

In terms of critical mass – that hard to pin down meeting of population density, cultural institution and contemporary acclaim – Cardiff has arrived. Much of its new fiction – *Cardiff Dead, Five Pubs, Two Bars and a Night Club* and *The Prince of Wales* (John Williams), *Deadwater* (Sean Burke), *Melting* (Anna Davis), *Middleman* (Bill James) – appears from London publishers. Cult works – Lloyd Robson's *Cardiff Cut* and Leonora Brito's *Dat's Love* have been published by local houses. Herbert Williams' *Punters* has been a success for west Wales-based Gwasg Gomer. Trezza Azzopardi's retread of Bute Street through Maltese eyes, *The Hiding Place*, was a Booker shortlist in 2000. The arrival of the National Assembly, even for its detractors, has given Wales as a nation the credibility it formerly lacked. Shirley Bassey, the one famous Cardiffian who loved us and left as fast as the money could take her, has even been seen wearing a dress made from the flag's red dragon. It's cool to be Cardiffian (even if the word cool itself is now suspect).

Whether this means that Cardiff is now a city state trying to rule the rest of Wales or a cultural epicentre with spokes that run to our far regional reaches is a matter for debate. The Wales Millennium Centre, with its six-foot high windows across its enormous front forming a bi-lingual line from the poet Gwyneth Lewis, and the Academi, with its structure of devolved literary provision, both exemplify the latter. Our publishers are not here – they are in Bridgend and Cardigan and Llandysul. Our leading literary magazines are in Porthcawl and Aberystwyth. All is well and fair right across the literary world. But try saying that in the villages on Llyn, or in Pwllheli, or in Bethesda where everyone knows each other, or in Llanystumdwy where they all drink in the same pub. Cardiff? It's in another country.

- Peter Finch is a poet and Director of Yr Academi, the Welsh writers association. He is working on a follow-up volume to his acclaimed *Real Cardiff* (Seren, 2002).

language special i

turning the tide?

john aitchison and
harold carter unravel
linguistic messages
from the 2001 census

Writing in the late 1980s, and basing our conclusions on the evidence of the censuses from 1961 to 1981, we suggested that “numbers of Welsh-speakers will continue to decline until the year 2001, but thereafter there will be a notable reversal of the trend, with numbers increasing sharply.”

This advance, we argued, would be based on a “major reshaping of the geography of the language.” While decline might well continue to apply (albeit at a reduced rate) within the traditional heartlands of the north and west (Welsh-Wales), this would be more than compensated for by a surge in numbers of speakers in Anglo-Wales. As a result, and for the first time in over a century, it would be possible to look forward to a veritable renaissance of the language – at least as portrayed in census enumerations.

As has been widely reported, this predicted overall increase in numbers of Welsh speakers has been confirmed with the publication of the first results of the 2001 census. Our objective here is to consider some of the main trends and patterns that have emerged from the census enumeration, focussing in particular on the numbers of Welsh speakers at the ward level.

At the 2001 census 575,640 claimed an ability to speak Welsh. This represents 20.5 per cent of the population aged three and over. These simple figures are of major symbolic significance for they confirm the predicted turning of the tide – at least in terms of crude numbers. For the first time, since census enumerations were undertaken

at the end of the nineteenth century, both the number and percentage of Welsh speakers at national level show an inter-decennial increase. Indeed, the advance in absolute numbers of Welsh speakers is such that the total now exceeds that recorded for the census of 1971 (542,425). The 20.5 percentage figure may be lower than that applying in 1971 (20.8 per cent), but not greatly so. Between 1991 and 2001 the numbers of Welsh speakers increased by a momentous 13.3 per cent.

In terms of the proportionate dominance of Welsh speakers, figures for local authorities affirm the continuing strength of the traditional heartlands in the north and west. However, Table 1 shows that only in one area does the percentage of Welsh speakers actually exceed 65 per cent – Gwynedd’s 68.7 per cent. For the other main core regions – Ynys Môn, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire the figures are 62.0 per cent, 59.1 per cent, and 50.1 per cent respectively. Significantly, in each of these local authorities the percentage of Welsh speakers fell between 1991 and 2001. In the case of Ceredigion the 7.3 per cent fall was especially marked.

A negative, but more marginal, change applied in only three other areas – Conwy, Denbighshire and Swansea. As far as increases in percentage values are concerned, these are widely recorded, with strong advances being returned for Torfaen (8.2%), Newport (7.3%), Blaenau Gwent (6.9%), Monmouthshire (6.9%), Caerphilly (4.9%) and Cardiff (4.3%).

census
2001



HWA

table 1: population able to speak welsh: percentage differences and change, 1991 –2001*

Local Authority Area	Number Able to Speak Welsh 1991	Number Able to Speak Welsh 2001	% Able to Speak Welsh 1991	% Able to Speak Welsh 2001	Difference in percentage points 1991 – 2001	% Change 1991 – 2001
Blaenau Gwent	1,523	6,141	2.2	9.1	6.9	303.2
Bridgend	10,159	13,155	8.2	10.6	2.4	29.5
Caerphilly	9,714	17,825	6.0	10.9	4.9	83.5
Cardiff	18,080	31,944	6.6	10.9	4.3	76.7
Carmarthenshire	89,213	83,802	54.8	50.1	-4.7	-6.1
Ceredigion	36,026	37,772	59.1	51.8	-7.3	4.8
Conwy	31,443	31,042	30.6	29.2	-1.4	-1.3
Denbighshire	23,294	23,540	26.7	26.1	-0.6	1.1
Flintshire	18,399	20,227	13.5	14.1	0.6	9.9
Gwynedd	78,733	77,495	72.1	68.7	-3.4	-1.6
Merthyr Tydfil	4,237	5,428	7.5	10.0	2.5	28.1
Monmouthshire	1,631	7,428	2.1	9.0	6.9	355.4
Neath/Port Talbot	23,711	23,182	17.8	17.8	0.0	2.2
Newport	2,874	12,608	2.3	9.6	7.3	338.7
Pembrokeshire	19,759	23,686	18.3	21.5	3.2	19.9
Powys	23,590	25,516	20.5	20.8	0.3	8.2
Rhondda Cynon Taf	20,042	27,505	9.0	12.3	3.3	37.2
Swansea	28,557	28,581	13.3	13.2	-0.1	0.1
Vale of Glamorgan	7,755	12,734	6.9	11.1	4.2	64.2
Torfaen	2,128	9,425	2.5	10.7	8.2	342.9
Wrexham	15,990	17,895	13.7	14.4	0.7	11.9
Ynys Mon	41,240	38,709	62.0	59.9	-2.2	-6.1
Wales	508,098	575,640	18.7	20.5	1.8	13.3

* Not adjusted for changes in boundaries and census base populations.

Table 1 also records percentage rates of change in absolute numbers of Welsh speakers for the period 1991 and 2001. Although based on the assumption that the two census enumerations are directly comparable, which very strictly speaking they are not, the resultant statistics can be viewed as broadly indicative of prevailing trends. They indicate that in three of the four traditional Welsh-speaking areas – Carmarthenshire (-6.1 per cent), Anglesey (-6.1 per cent) and Gwynedd (-1.6 per cent) – numbers of Welsh speakers actually declined. Ceredigion is anomalous, however, in that an increase of 4.8 per cent in absolute numbers was recorded (even though the proportion of speakers declined – see above). Without more detailed data on the possible impact of the student population and general migration trends it difficult to account for this particular regional difference.

Overall, within the heartland the situation is as predicted – a decline in both the absolute and relative strength of the language.

Elsewhere in Wales, and again as predicted, the picture is one of a general increase in numbers of speakers. Although admittedly starting from low bases, the advances highlighted in Monmouthshire (355 per cent), Torfaen (342 per cent), Newport (334 per cent) and Blaenau Gwent (303 per cent) serve to underscore the emergence of south-east Wales as a major growth area for the language. Other local authority areas returning strong increases are Caerphilly (83 per cent), Cardiff (77 per cent), Vale of Glamorgan (64 per cent) and Rhondda Cynon Taf (37 per cent).

Together, these eight regions recorded just over 125,000 Welsh speakers,

amounting to nearly 22 per cent of the total for the whole of Wales. While the proportion of the population speaking Welsh in these areas is admittedly still relatively low, it is evident that the actual numbers involved are considerable. They contribute significantly to the pool of speakers in Wales; indeed they underpin the very revival in the fortunes of the language at national level (at least in crude quantitative terms). As expected, the growth in these areas has been sufficient to outweigh the decline in numbers of speakers elsewhere, and their contribution is likely to be even greater in the years to come.

The linguistic centre of gravity in Wales is slowly shifting, and much has already been said as to the factors that underpin these trends. In particular it will be of interest, when the data are published, to examine the age profiles

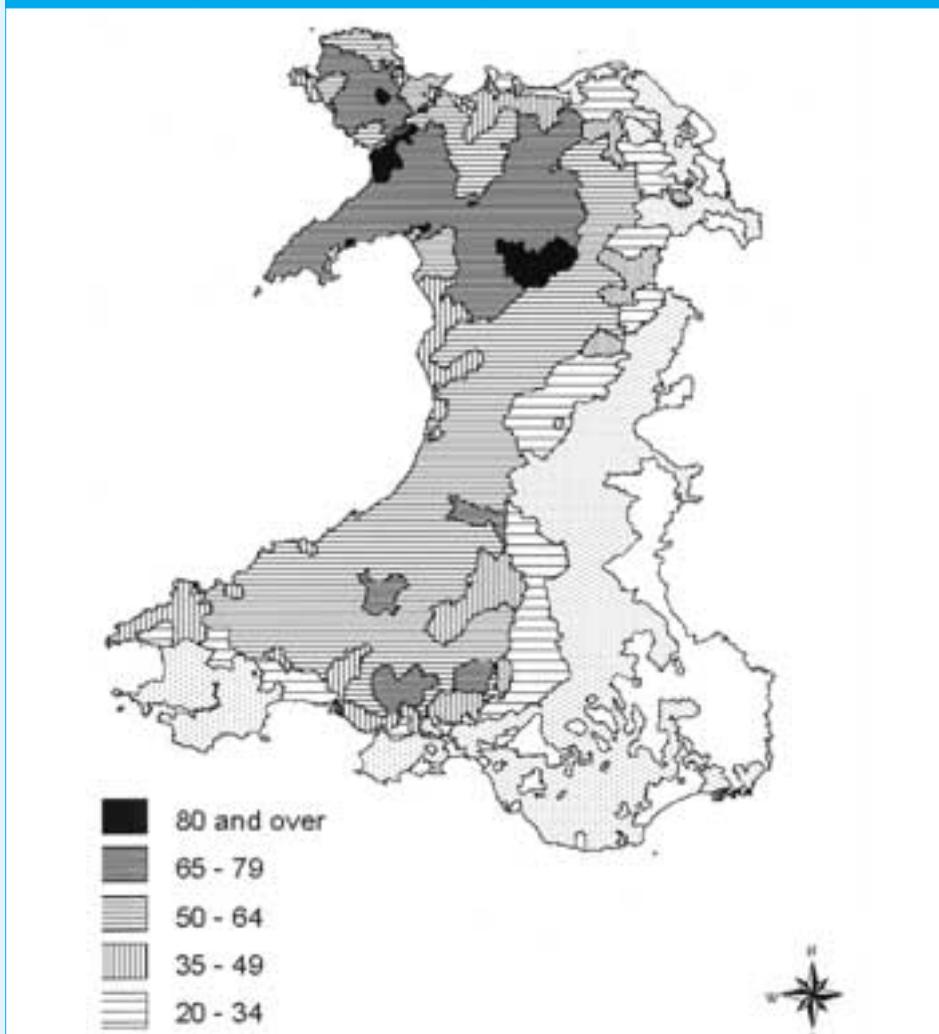
of speakers in these growth areas, for the promotion of Welsh-language provision in schools and centres of higher education is certainly a key driving force behind the expansion in numbers.

At the ward level the proportion of the population able to speak Welsh varies greatly. They range from a minimum of 6.3 per cent for St Mary's (Monmouthshire) and St Thomas (Swansea) to a maximum of 88 per cent for Peblig (Gwynedd) and Penygroes (Gwynedd). For nearly two-thirds of the wards proportions are less than 20 per cent. Together they account for nearly 42 per cent (239,814) of all Welsh speakers. Less than 10 per cent of wards (85) have Welsh-speaking populations of 65 per cent or more. They have nearly 19 per cent of all Welsh speakers.

It is evident that whilst there are some very strong clusters where Welsh speakers are locally very dominant, these are relatively small in number. The great majority of Welsh-speakers are widely scattered and live in wards where the proportion of Welsh speakers is still relatively low. A further observation is that the number of wards defining the strong clusters has fallen since the 1991 census, pointing to a continuing dilution and fragmentation of the heartland. Whilst this is the case, the increase in numbers of Welsh speakers nationwide over the decade has meant that more and more wards have returned higher proportions of Welsh speakers. Although for many they remain quite low, they are clearly rising. The situation depicted is one in which the Welsh language core is seen to be subject to a differential softening, while within the periphery there are clear signs of a widespread consolidation.

Figure 1 charts the proportion of Welsh speakers at ward level in 2001. At first glance the distribution broadly repeats the patterns described for the 1991 census. However, there are differences,

figure 1: % population able to speak welsh at 2001 census



and a number of issues warrant discussion. Due to changes in census definitions of the base population and shifts in ward boundaries, it is not possible here to record percentage rates of change or differences in percentages. Nonetheless, it is clear that the linguistic map of Wales has altered between 1991 and 2001.

As indicated above, the number of areas recording high percentages as fallen – the hard cores have both contracted and been diluted. This is the case in Anglesey where just three wards around Llangefni now have more than 80 per cent of the population with an ability to speak the language (Cyngar 84 per cent), Tudur (83 per cent) and Cefni (83 per cent).

The decline within the Llyn peninsula is even more marked. Here, the only ward with a percentage of Welsh speakers above 80 is Pwllheli North – previously the wards of Tudweiliog (74 per cent), Botwnnog (77 per cent) and Abererch (76 per cent) had also recorded percentages in excess of 80. These areas have since seen the percentages of Welsh speakers fall quite markedly. The situation in Tudweiliog, which stood at 84.5 per cent in 1991, is especially dramatic.

Interestingly, however, the strong core area that is mainly centred around the axis extending south from Caernarfon to Penygroes has maintained itself. In the ten wards that make up this prominent Welsh-speaking nucleus, percentages have fallen a little, but are

still over 80. The wards concerned are – Peblig/Caernarfon (88 per cent), Penygroes (88 per cent), Llanrug (87 per cent), Seiont (87 per cent), Groeslon (86 per cent), Cadnant (86 per cent), Bethel (86 per cent) Menai/Caernarfon (84 per cent), Bontnewydd (84 per cent) and Llanwnda (82 per cent).

Within the rest of Gwynedd only three isolated wards returned percentages over 80 – Porthmadog East (84 per cent), Diffwys and Maenofferen (84 per cent), and Llanuwchllyn (81 per cent). The latter two represent two former language redoubts, the one about Blaenau Ffestiniog, the other about Bala. Both have suffered losses, even if they are marginal. But significantly Bala itself has for the first time fallen below 80 percent and now just the one ward in Penllyn returns over 80 per cent. In 1991 there were a number of wards in south Wales where the percentage of Welsh speakers were more than 80; now there is none.

Surrounding the main core areas in north Wales, an extensive region embracing wards with Welsh-speaking populations of between 65 per cent and 80 per cent still prevails. However, it is noticeable that the area concerned is more limited than it was in 1991. Inroads have been made on the eastern flank around Llanderfl, and in the south around Corris, Glantwymyn, Llanbrynmair and Banwy. Here, the percentage of Welsh speakers is now less than 65 per cent. The incursion into the heartland along the Conwy valley has long been recognized, but it is evident that the process of Anglicisation that has typified the area has continued. Critically, values of less than 60 per cent now apply in the wards such as Caerhun (44 per cent), Trefriw (50 per cent), Eglwysbach (54 per cent), and Betws-y-Coed (56 per cent).

In 1991 across the central regions of Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire large areas could be identified where the proportion of Welsh speakers was between 65 and 80 per cent. By the 2001 census just three wards could match

these figures – Tregaron (77 per cent), Llandysul (70 per cent) and Llanfihangel-ar-Arth (66 per cent). The majority of wards in this extensive section of the traditional heartland could only muster figures of between 50 and 65 for the percentage of Welsh speakers. A similar dilution and fragmentation characterizes the old industrial region of south-east Carmarthenshire, particularly in the areas within the Amman valley. Once a stronghold of the language, in both relative and absolute terms, this region has suffered a worrying decline. Now, just two small separate clusters of wards have Welsh-speaking percentages in excess of 65 per cent.

As in 1991, a sharp discontinuity defines the divide between a predominantly Welsh-speaking region and an overwhelmingly Anglicised periphery. Wards with percentages of Welsh speakers ranging between 20 and 50 are limited in number and form a rather narrow band fringing the main core, mainly on the east but also including certain coastal tracts in the west (for example, from Aberystwyth to Dyffryn Ardudwy). Throughout much of the borderland, percentages of Welsh speakers are less than 20. However, whereas in mapping percentages for the 1991 census it was deemed appropriate to recognize areas where values fell below 5 per cent, for the 2001 census the lowest threshold needed to be raised to 10 per cent. This was because by this time no wards actually recorded values of less than 5 per cent. As has been noted, the minimum value for all wards was 6.3 per cent, for St Mary's in Monmouthshire.

The results of the 2001 census have prompted considerable debate among those concerned with the future well-being of the language. Some have used the data to paint an optimistic picture. Others have looked with foreboding at the trends unfolding and have questioned the sufficiency and efficacy of prevailing language policies. These matters have not been broached here, for they would require more lengthy and careful deliberation. All

that might be said in conclusion is that while considerable progress has certainly been made over the past decade, the 2001 census does highlight some serious concerns.

For instance, the simple summary description offered here raises the question as to where the emphasis for future development should be placed. Manifestly, the communities of the 'Y Fro Gymraeg' need support and measures via planning legislation and housing policies have been extensively discussed. But if the future rests on a wider spread of bilingualism then it is clear that policies of a different and perhaps of an even more controversial nature will be essential.

Language survival is closely associated with its social status, its economic value and its link to ethnic identity. As far as Welsh is concerned the old stigma of low social status has long gone and language facility can now even be regarded as an economic advantage in a greatly changed jobs market.

Yet as it broadens its geographical distribution, the third aspect of the link to ethnic identity presents a clear challenge. The association of being Welsh with speaking Welsh, and thereby to experience an immersion in the whole range of Welsh culture, arouses hostile, even violent, reactions; and understandably so. But if a wholly bilingual Wales is to emerge that association will become crucial for without it an essential dynamic in language maintenance will be lacking.

Faced with this issue most policy makers retreat, concerned with the passion it generates and alarmed at the possible destruction of the good will towards the language carefully built up over the last quarter of the last century. In the end, however, the imperative of language survival will demand that the dilemma be faced.

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language special ii

belonging



euros lewis reflects on
the heartland's
'invisible' identity
crisis

across the centuries the words 'Welsh', 'language' and 'crisis' have formed a natural association. Counter-balancing the resurrection myths of Arthur and Glyndwr are reference upon reference to 'threat' and 'loss' in terms of people and community. But the crisis now being faced by Welsh-speaking communities is different from the historical crisis which generation upon generation of Welsh-speakers faced up to across the centuries. The historical crisis was one that they perceived from the comparative safety of their own communities. Welsh speakers may have been looking apprehensively at an approaching threat, but that 'threat' was 'out there' somewhere. And the watchtower they were using was well within their own territory, built on the secure base of their own, separate, culture.

The current crisis – which we might well call the New Millennium Crisis (the roots go back much further, though its full effect has only become evident during the last few years) – has shattered the mould. No longer is the crisis 'out there' or 'encroaching'. Now it is now within, eating its frighteningly subliminal way through the cultural security zones of old. And as the cultural base fractures the complex infrastructure of community fragments.

That is the context in which we must see this crisis. Losing the heartlands of language means losing meaningful communities of people. Over the centuries these communities have – to varying degrees – developed mechanisms of sustainability based on the principal products of a dynamic of evolution: knowledge, creativity and trust (or belonging).

An integral part of the mechanism of sustainability is the cultural activist. Each and every Welsh-speaking community has its current and historical pantheon of activists – those who ensure that the creative drive of the individual is harnessed to the power station of the cultural co-operative, the energy produced being pumped back into the community (and beyond). Until the arrival of the New Crisis this model was remarkably resilient. However, coping with a fragmenting base as well as trying to sustain the historic levels of cultural regeneration means that the task of the (pre-dominantly voluntary) community activist is becoming very difficult indeed. In a nutshell: more and more effort is demanded of a shrinking base of activists.

It is against this background that Y Ffwrwm was formed. Its 15 members may be eclectic as regards ethnicity, age and profession. But they are all community activists. They all have first-hand experience of playing a pivotal role within the powerhouse mechanism that sustains Welsh-speaking communities. With the stated aim of standing back from the crisis – of securing precious time for honest discussion and developing rigorous research – the formation of the group was in itself a radical act.

The aim was to break the catch-22 of crisis-response-crisis. Being a community activist in a 21st. century Welsh-speaking community seems akin to working on an emergency ward, providing superficial medication in the face of a baffling array of symptoms; but never having the time nor the opportunity to operate on the root causes; or even to discuss them.

cultural activists

Y Ffwrwm was formed in 1999 under the auspices of Theatr Felin-fach in rural Ceredigion. The original group included the artist and Brith Gof director Cliff McLucas, who died in 2002. His influence was central to the determination of the group. In the words of the late Edward Said, they became determined to: "... introduce a longer sequence of thought and analysis to replace the short bursts of polemical, thought-stopping fury that so imprison us." Y Ffwrwm has 15 members:

- **Dilwyn Jones** Development Officer with Ceredigion Language Initiative. A former Primary School Head and trainer of several youth soccer teams in rural Ceredigion.

- **Cen Llwyd** Housing Officer with the Cantref Housing Association. Ceredigion County Councillor and an ordained Minister with the Unitarians. One of Cymdeithas yr Iaith's most prominent members.

- **Huw Emlyn** Architect, stage and television actor and stage and radio director. He lives in Aberaeron, Ceredigion.

- **Menna Elfyn** Author of eight volumes of verse. Her most recent work was co-editing (with John Rowlands) the Bloodaxe Book of Modern Welsh Poetry (Bloodaxe Books).

- **Robyn Tomos** National Eisteddfod's Art and Crafts Officer. Regular contributor to the Western Mail and Golwg. Well known as a ballad singer. Originally from the Neath valley now lives in Talgarreg, Ceredigion.

- **Llinos Dafis** A former Welsh for Adults tutor-organizer (the first to be appointed). A founder of Cwmni Cyfieithu Trosol (a translation company). Co-ordinator of the Bilingual Joint Working Committee in Dyfed. Founder and first Managing Director of Cwmni Iaith Cyf. Now a freelance translator.

- **Marian Delyth** Graphic designer and well-published photographer. One of the founders of Gweled and of the Ffotogallery in Cardiff. Winner of the Tir na n-Og prize.

- **Dr. Roger Owen** Lecturer in Drama at University of Wales Aberystwyth. His work can be read in *State of Play* (Gomer, 1998) and *Llwyfannau Lleol* (Local Stages) (Gomer 2000). Has numerous papers and articles in the process of publication at the moment including: 'A Powerful Simplification: Theatre in Wales in the 1990s and beyond' in the *Cambridge History of British Theatre* Vol. IV, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

- **Euros Lewis** Former Lecturer in Charge at Theatr Felin-fach. Now works as a producer-director for Wes Gleï cyf. (a community based production company), and as a freelance writer and director in the context of youth and community education. Born in Treherbert, Rhondda.

- **Dr. Lisa Lewis** Senior Lecturer at the University of Glamorgan. Previously Lecturer in Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1991-2002. Has worked extensively as director of mostly site-specific theatre projects. Has presented papers on Welsh Performance and Culture in Wales, England, Europe, and the USA.

- **Gareth Ioan** Executive Director of Cwmni Iaith Cyf., the Newcastle Emlyn and Colwyn Bay based Language consultancy. Has written numerous plays and community theatre scripts. Author of the Ffwrwm's manifesto.

- **Margaret Ames** Born in Southampton. One of the founders of Dawns Dyfed, the community dance company that has animateurs in Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion. Presently its Artistic Director. Contributed extensively, as performer and movement director, to the work of Brith Gof.

- **Dylan Iorwerth** Journalist and Managing Editor of *Golwg*. One of the founders of the first Welsh language Sunday paper, *Sulyn*. Former BBC Wales lobby correspondent. Has a regular column in the Western Mail.

- **Gudrun Jones** A registered Art Therapist. Has worked in psychiatry, oncology and palliative care. For the last 11 years has worked as an Arts Therapist in these contexts for the Pembrokeshire and Derwen Health Trusts. Has a special interest in language choice for patients. Organized a watershed conference at Felin-fach on 'Language Culture and Psychiatry' in 2000.

- **Emyr Hywel** Former Primary School Head. One of the founders of the Cnapan Folk Festival. A prominent member of the pressure group Cymuned. One of Wales' most experienced second language tutors, both for children and adults.

- **Dwynwen Lloyd Raggett** Head of Theatr Felin-fach. Born in Tregaron, Ceredigion, she has worked as a drama teacher in Gwent as well as a special needs teacher in New Zealand. As part of her work she writes and directs for theatre, radio and film, all in a community context.

- **David Hedley Williams** Born in Dorset and educated at Auckland University, New Zealand and Central School of Speech and Drama, London. Has been an actor, writer and teacher. Director and Project Leader at the Community Education run Theatr y Gromlech, Crymych, Pembrokeshire.

- **Daniel Nettle** received his PhD in Anthropology from University College London. His work has been concerned with linguistic, cultural and biological diversity in the human population. Pursuing these themes, he published 'Linguistic Diversity' (Oxford University Press, 1999), and, with Suzanne Romaine, 'Vanishing Voices: The Extinction of the World's Languages' (Oxford University Press, 2000). He conducted fieldwork on an endangered minority language of Northern Nigeria. He currently teaches at the Open University. He is a fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute and is on the editorial board of the Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development.

Proof of the seriousness of the internal discourse developed by the group is the fact that it took three years to bring the discussion to a public platform. The time was spent questioning assumptions regarding strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities. The debate brought us to an understanding that one of the main root problems facing these communities is their invisibility. One has only to look at the paucity of Community First areas in Welsh-speaking Wales to realise that there is no true recognition of the socio-economic crisis which most of these areas are facing. A quick look at the indices of need used in designating these areas confirms the view that the outsider looking in (in this case, the Assembly Government) is using the wrong pair of spectacles.

Indeed, even when need is recognised the help offered (or parachuted upon them) is almost always the wrong type of aid, spoken of in the wrong type of language (both literal and metaphorical). One often hears officials of 'outside' agencies venting their bafflement in the face of the apparent apathy of the Welsh-speaker. On the part of the Welsh-speaker the bafflement is with officials who talk of 'regeneration' (which, in Welsh translates as 'adfywio' – 'bringing back to life'). The use of such language reveals that the outsider has no understanding of the vibrancy of these communities. At the same time it confirms the negative attitude of the common perception – that is to say, that these living communities are dying, if not, in fact, already dead. Any hope of developing self-confidence within that community has been lost at the outset.

It is no surprise – in such circumstances – that the majority of active respondents in any public meeting to discuss 'the regeneration of your area' will be incomers. They may well have come to some sort of terms with the language. But only a small minority will have realised that that language is only the visible tip of a

mountain of community infrastructure, based on a common culture. To the insider it is self-evident. To the outsider it is invisible. It does not exist. And what does not exist – so the outsider stipulates – needs to be created.



Taking the view that such wholesale assumptions on the part of people outside the experience of belonging to these communities is misguided rather than predatory, the Ffwrwm sees the need for a sustained programme of education through discussion; so as the otherness of these fringe communities is openly recognised rather than air-brushed from the picture, and the potential which they harbour can be released, rather than repressed.

Working towards such a radical shift has no relationship whatsoever to measures of conservation or protection. It is all to do with developing models that are appropriate; that invest in the treasure-trove that is local knowledge and creativity; boosting confidence;

releasing energy; and promoting a meaningful inclusiveness. At root it means working with the enduring feature of Welsh-speaking communities, that is their propensity towards 'cyd-weithio' (working together); 'cyd-lawenhau' (enjoying together); 'cyd-ymdeimlo' (sympathising together); and 'cyd-ddathlu' (celebrating together).

The frequency of the prefix 'cyd' in our vocabulary is symptomatic of the ability of the culture to create and sustain an environment of belonging. And the history of our dynamic, ever evolving, never static communities shows us that that belonging is inclusive, rather than exclusive. The mechanisms are there. So is the challenge.

The Arian Byw / Live Culture conference held recently at Theatr Felin-fach, Ceredigion, effected the beginning of this process of change. The aim was twofold. First, to develop the self-awareness of Welsh speaking-communities regarding their strengths and positive attributes. And, second, to support a new approach on behalf of those agencies whose work impacts upon Welsh-speaking communities, wherever they may be based.

The very weight of the crisis, and the inability of the 'outside' world to see the urgency of the situation, will ensure that the politics of protest and pressure will have to continue. That scenario of crisis management only gives added impetus to the need to focus on positive responses, based on thorough research, rigorous and academic discourse and a determination to engage in an inclusive and an informative dialogue at local, national and international levels. The challenges facing the Welsh-speaking communities of the west and north of Wales are the challenges facing fringe, or deviant, communities throughout the world.

• Euros Lewis is Chair of Y Ffwrwm.



ned thomas argues that the time is ripe for a Welsh-language daily newspaper

"The commerce of the country is not done in the language, no business house uses it, there is no system of shorthand adapted to the language. The language does not possess words and terms for the Arts and Medicine, etc, it has never possessed either literature or author of international fame, neither does it possess a daily newspaper..."

the language referred to is Welsh and the words appeared in a letter to the press from a certain S. Barnes at the time of the proposal to drown Tryweryn in 1957. We have come some way since then. There is less ignorant prejudice, there is more use of Welsh in business, writers in Welsh tour the world and are translated into many languages. I seem to remember seeing a Welsh shorthand primer. But a Welsh daily newspaper? Barnes had a point. A daily newspaper is a fairly central institution in any self-respecting culture. In Jan Morris's words "A daily newspaper to my mind is critical to the well-being of a language and the confidence of a culture."

language special iii



Welsh had the advantage over many other minority languages of relatively high levels of literacy at an early date, and the late nineteenth century saw a thriving publishing scene, including the publishing of newspapers in Welsh. But they were weeklies, often confined to particular parts of the country, or had a religious affiliation. This reflected on the one hand the geography of communications (which also ensured that London dailies were more easily distributed throughout Wales than Wales-based English-language papers), and on the other the confinement of Welsh to a cultural and religious ghetto. Welsh periodicals are still heavily skewed towards the cultural sector but a daily newspaper has to cover all areas of a community's life and of course requires more resources. It is an industrial product, closely related to the economy as well as to culture. As speakers of Welsh became increasingly bilingual, the commercial press and advertisers found they could reach them without the additional expense of publishing in Welsh. Like many others I had come to think that in the absence of a philanthropic millionaire, a Welsh-language daily was not a starter. Broadcasting was another matter. It had grown up in the public sector and broadcasting policy was open to political pressure.

What made me rethink the possibilities was getting to know over twenty editors and publishers of European minority-language dailies (see panel on opposite page). Our Mercator Centre at Aberystwyth runs a number of European projects, all connected with smaller languages in the field of press, media, publishing, and the Internet.

Together with the daily newspaper of the Slovenian minority in Italy we co-organized the first conference of daily newspapers in minority languages, which led over a number of years to the formation of an association. This now plans collaborative projects in which Wales can play no part unless and until we too have a daily paper in the national language.

As a former journalist I enjoyed visiting the newspaper offices, reading those papers which were within my capacity to read, and talking with editors and journalists. Standards vary, but some excellent papers are produced on relatively small budgets. The world is awash with raw information today, and the quality of selection and interpretation is all-important, finding what is relevant to your audience. But increasingly I found myself asking questions of the management: about costs, staffing, how subscriptions were collected, how distribution was organized, what grants (if any) were obtained and from whom. The point came at which I thought we should do systematic research on the possibility of establishing a Welsh-language daily. We were fortunate to obtain funding for the research, mainly from the European Union and the WDA.

In our research, which there is no space here to cover in detail, we had access to the accounts, structures and strategies of European models ranging from small to very small in their circulation. None of these, of course, is transportable in its entirety, but we learnt some very fundamental things about operating in a minority language context as well as gathering a great

many practical tips. The scale of the operations made things much more transparent than is the case where daily papers are subsumed in large groups. But most of our work took place within Wales: researching the market, the likely number of readers and their categorization by age, social group and so on; also the advertising potential, distribution questions, and technology of various kinds. The work was divided between outside consultants/market research companies (particularly the quantitative work) and ourselves, who concentrated more on the qualitative kind – what did our target group want and expect in a newspaper?

The research was carried out over eighteen months up to Christmas 2002 at which point we felt sufficiently confident of our findings to convert the project into a limited company and our research into a business plan. Though there is a great deal still to do we are now saying that publication before the end of 2004 has moved from the realm of possibility into that of probability. In the near future we shall begin looking for pre-publication subscribers and enough private investment by individuals to keep control in Wales.

We have a title – Y Byd – and the aim is to publish Monday to Friday inclusive, leaving room for other Welsh weekly publications. We do not intend to be printers. The format will be tabloid but mid to upmarket tabloid more like some continental papers and without the connotation of tabloid in Britain. We cannot rely simply on casual sales. Like every minority language newspaper we shall need a core of subscribers – people who will take the paper every day – and are confident of achieving 5,000 in the first year with a further 2,000 casual sales, and a total of 10,000 in year two. A ceiling will probably be reached at 15,000 or possibly 17,000. However, our model is based on heavy use of information technology which will allow output from a content management system into different media, making possible the

minority language daily newspapers in europe 2002*

Minority Group	Number of speakers	Daily Newspapers	Circulation
Swedish in Finland	300,000	10	5,000 – 60,000
Catalan	7,500,000	5	4,000 – 90,000
Italian in Slovenia and Croatia	13,500	1	5,000
German in the Südtirol, Italy	290,000	2	10,000 and 56,000.
German in Denmark	20,000	1	3,000
German in Belgium	100,00	1	13,000
Romansh in Switzerland	60,000	1	5,000
Sorbian in Germany	45,000	1	2,500
Slovene in Italy	100,000	1	11,000
Galician in Spain	2,400,000	1	5,600
Danish in Germany	50,000	1	7,500
Basque in Spain	560,000	1	17,000
Breton	300,000-600,000	0	0
Frisian in the Netherlands	350,000	0	0
Welsh	575,000	0	0

* An Irish-language daily was launched in April 2003 but is not included since we do not yet have established circulation figures. There are also one or two papers that are not members of the Association and a few that appear only three or four times a week. These are not included.

provision of other services. We expect to employ as many as 40 people, of whom not more than 16 will be journalists. We shall need small offices in north, south and the centre of Wales as well as a network of free-lance local correspondents. Distribution will be through the usual newsagent channels, with subscribers receiving a voucher redeemable against a regular supply over a given period. We found that about five per cent of our likely audience lives out of daily reach of a shop that sells newspapers of any kind. This is the result of the closure of village shops, and in those areas we may need to resort to direct distribution.

People often ask us which daily in English our project most resembles. The answer is none. Where there is only one daily newspaper in a language, it has to be seen as belonging to all, a meeting place, not aligned with any one political party or movement – which need not, of course, prevent campaigns on particular issues. Early on we secured support from members of all parties in the Assembly and, more recently, endorsements from a wide range of public figures in most areas of Welsh life, several of whom do not themselves speak Welsh. We are also in the process of establishing support groups outside Wales and indeed outside the UK.

We see this as a national undertaking for which we are the facilitators. M.Wynn Thomas, Jane Aaron and others have demonstrated in the field of literature interesting patterns of interaction between the two cultures of Wales. *Planet's* initial backers were very largely Welsh-speakers, I remember, and the Arts Council supported the magazine by analogy with what was already being done in Welsh. Who knows what interesting developments may not follow the creation of a Welsh daily? This is not simply a matter for speakers of Welsh.

The research exercise brought to light many things that are perhaps of wider interest. Several people told us that they would like to see a very popular kind of Welsh daily paper, but all our objective findings suggest that at the most popular levels – though more in some regions than others – there are problems of literacy in Welsh. While the paper will still need to bridge a fairly wide spectrum of readers, its appeal will have to be across the mid-market and up-market sectors. The actual language used will also need close attention. Despite the education system, standard written Welsh is not so well established as we would like to think, or as it perhaps once was. One of the long-term





The first generation to have a daily newspaper in Welsh.

Photo: Arvid Parry Jones

functions of a daily paper in Welsh will be to reinforce that standard through the daily creation of original material in a flexible, accessible, yet standard idiom.

Just as there are Welsh-speakers who are less than confident about reading Welsh, so there are learners of the language who are happier reading Welsh than holding more complicated conversations in the language. Good learners have stressed to us that while a daily paper would strengthen their knowledge of Welsh on a daily basis, they want to read for content and not be patronized by 'easy Welsh' sections or vocabularies, though something of this kind could be done outside the paper itself, say on the Internet. In other words we are in a time when it is too simple to speak of people as either 'speaking Welsh' or 'not speaking Welsh'. There is a spectrum of language skills, and increasing bilingualism from the English-speaking end can work in favour of a Welsh paper just as increasing bilingualism from the Welsh end worked against a press in Welsh.

Although we encountered strong local feeling – this most often took the form of

people complaining that their locality was ignored in the press or media – it did not translate into a majority view in favour of having different editions. This was just as well since the cost-benefit analysis of editions made them a non-starter. We had the impression that our target audience was more mobile and more various in employment patterns than we had perhaps assumed. They wanted news from different areas – where they had grown up, where they worked, and where they had previously worked and had friends. More than once the point was made to us that as Welsh-speakers became more dispersed and found themselves more often in minority situations, a daily newspaper could help give them a sense of keeping in touch and belonging. But the corollary of that is that the paper will need to reflect the many different communities and interest groups in which Welsh-speakers today find themselves.

Ideas become facts when their time has come. Many factors are now favourable to the establishment of a daily paper in Welsh. The Assembly provides a focus – though still a weak one – for political discussion, and in

turn needs as much coverage as it can get. Newsgathering within Wales and worldwide has become simpler and cheaper with the Internet, and while newspapers are no longer the main source of hot news, they are important as investigative setters of the agenda, and as providing immediate steer and discussion of the fast moving news.

Institutional bilingual policies ensure that large sums are spent on advertising in Welsh but at present this goes mainly to English language publications – which has a symbolic value but does little for Welsh in economic terms. Attitudes to Welsh have much improved among people who do not themselves speak Welsh but whose children perhaps go to Welsh schools. We shall count on their support too, since Welsh culture is not a static package which you opt for but something made and remade and hopefully expanded in each generation. We expect some element of public grant-aid, though channelled in ways that safeguard editorial independence. After all, the UK government undertook to support a newspaper in Welsh when it ratified the European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages and cannot be content to be at the bottom of the European league in this respect.

A further consideration which has driven us to act now is that if a Welsh daily cannot be established when there is substantial support for business start-ups and job creation in Objective One areas, it will probably never be done at all. Which does not mean that we shall not also have a substantial presence in or near Cardiff. Welsh-speakers in the capital and its surrounding areas in fact show the highest proportional level of interest in the paper.

- *Ned Thomas is Academic Director of the Mercator Centre at University of Wales Aberystwyth. He is a former journalist with Times Newspapers and was founder-editor of Planet magazine. He can be contacted at neges@nedthomas.plus.com*

culture versus commerce

alun davies reports on the establishment of Ofcom

the shape of the Office of Communications (Ofcom) is slowly emerging from the communications legislation, which became law in July 2003. It has been created by merging the five existing broadcasting regulators: the Independent Television Commission, the Radio Authority, the Office of Telecommunications, the Broadcasting Standards Commission, and the Radiocommunications Agency.

Ofcom has a distinctive and radical philosophy and approach which will be challenging for many in Wales. Its emphasis on the market and a light-touch approach will be shocking for those more comfortable with a more prescriptive approach to regulation.

The Communications Act demands that Ofcom establish an office in Wales and this is being achieved through the merger of the existing ITC and the Radiocommunications Agency offices. The new physical presence will be led by the new post of Director, Ofcom Wales. How this structure relates to the National Assembly and communities across Wales will determine Ofcom's ability to regulate the market while delivering on its commitment to secure "diverse and high-quality TV and radio ... through less formal regulation". In Wales we are lucky that two key figures who have close links to the country and a breadth of experience of Welsh issues have both been appointed to the main Ofcom board. Professor Ian Hargreaves, former Director of the Centre for Journalism at Cardiff University, and Ed Richards, former advisor to Number Ten who has been appointed as Senior Partner, Strategy and Market Developments.

One of the most controversial aspects of the parliamentary debates on the

legislation was the relationship between Ofcom and the nations of the United Kingdom. A sustained argument was made for national representation on the main Ofcom board. This was opposed by the Government which preferred a 'lean' board. It sought a functionally based organisation that could take decisions quickly. It certainly did not want it to become a forum for debates between competing interests. Against this the National Assembly not only argued for national representation on the board but also additional structures that would give voice to Welsh concerns throughout the new Ofcom framework.

At least in part, the structures of accountability and representation that have been established are a response to this debate. Ofcom's main board will be advised by two bodies, a Content Board and a Consumer Panel. Wales will have a representative on both. Sue Balsom has been appointed to the Content Board and the place on the Consumer Panel has been advertised. In addition, a Welsh advisory committee will be established. This concession, made by government at Third Reading in the House of Lords, will lead to a wider debate and scrutiny Ofcom's decision-making in Wales, strengthening its legitimacy. If Ofcom fails to accept the advisory committee's advice on any major issue, it will be required to justify itself.

Although Ofcom regulates functions which are not devolved, the whole of Ofcom's activities will impact upon the National Assembly and many of its sponsored bodies. The most obvious impacts are in culture, economic development and education. In addition, the extension of broadband networks is fundamental to a whole range of government policies. Taken together, all



Sue Balsom, managing partner of FBA, the Aberystwyth-based communications company, has been appointed to Ofcom's board responsible for content.

this means that very few of the Assembly Government's functions will be unaffected by decisions taken by Ofcom.

The practical requirement for a relationship of shared understanding between Ofcom and the Assembly is reinforced by a wider political imperative. This is because broadcasting is a political issue in Wales to an extent that it is not in any other part of the UK. There are echoes of the popular campaign to establish S4C in the National Assembly's interest in broadcasting. For instance, it regularly calls both regulators and broadcasters to give evidence during inquiries into cultural policy. It also debated the communications legislation in detail in both committee and plenary sessions.

By placing a far greater emphasis on this area of policy than the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly gave a renewed emphasis to the complexities of accountability and public policy-making in post-devolution UK.

The first, and arguably the most important issue on Ofcom's agenda will be its statutory review of public service broadcasting. Certainly the National Assembly can be expected to contribute forcefully to the review, especially in view of Ofcom's commitment to cultural diversity in the UK and the role of public broadcasters in reflecting that diversity. The National Assembly can be expected to demand a far greater visibility for Wales on the UK networks alongside increased investment in those services provided primarily for viewers in Wales. Ofcom's review will take place in parallel to the separate and independent DCMS review of S4C that will probably be underway at the beginning of 2004. It is inconceivable that Ofcom's conclusions will not impact upon either this or influence the BBC's Charter renewal process as it impacts upon Wales.

The news that the merger of Granada and Carlton has been given the green



Professor Ian Hargreaves, former director of the Centre for Journalism at Cardiff University is a member of Ofcom's main board.



Ed Richards, former advisor to Tony Blair at No.10 is Ofcom's Senior Partner, Strategy and Market Developments.

light will now create a wholly new context for the Channel 3 licence-holder. The public service remit of ITV is likely to be at the centre of a rigorous and thorough debate especially since the legislation also enables ITV to go into foreign ownership. It will be Ofcom's job to

ensure that the public service requirements will continue to be met whatever the ownership regime.

These immediate policy issues will be addressed within the context of wider and more long-term issues such as, for instance, the digital switchover. The reality of this policy in Wales will raise serious questions for policy-makers. The same is true of one of Ofcom's most eye-catching and radical responsibilities – to promote media literacy. In a country where many people still achieve only very low levels of educational attainment and where high levels of poverty have inhibited the growth and public adoption of new technologies, this will be an important question. Here again Ofcom will need to respond to a different policy environment in which the National Assembly Government has created a very different educational system with different structures, a different syllabus and different examinations.

Whilst broadcasting is always able to grab the headlines, in terms of overall workload it may be in the field of telecoms that Ofcom faces some of its most difficult tasks. New and different forms of technology mean that the goalposts are constantly changing. For instance, broadband access is considered by the Assembly Government to be essential. However, only about 40 per cent of the homes and businesses in Wales can access broadband through ADSL technology and cable modems. This compares with a UK average of about 70 per cent. Ofcom will need to determine how the growth that is needed can happen in Wales, given the country's difficult geography and population distribution. It will also need to recognise that Assembly Government investment makes the debate on regulatory issues around broadband access in Wales very different from other areas of the UK.

- Alun Davies is Director of Corporate Affairs with S4C.

physicians cure thyselves



jon owen jones
assesses the Assembly
Government's
response to the
Wanless review of
health and social care

Stark messages have been delivered to the Assembly Government by the Wanless report it commissioned a year ago on the future of health and social care in Wales. The messages were put together by a high-powered team made up largely of the Assembly Government's own officials. Despite this, in the response to the report published in early November these messages have yet to be turned into concrete proposals for action.

Tackling the long-term difficulties of the Welsh health service, and especially our rising waiting lists, will be very difficult. It will require taking on a range of vested interests. But unless we face up to the task, so clearly set out by the Wanless report, the standard of service people in Wales receive will drift further apart from the improving standards that are being experienced in England.

In considering the Welsh Wanless report it is worth reminding ourselves of its provenance, which is bound up with the UK-wide Wanless report. In 1999 the Prime Minister committed his government to matching European levels of funding for the National Health Service. The Chancellor Gordon Brown then commissioned the financial expert Derek Wanless to see how best this expansion could be managed.

The interim report discussed the great public expectations for the health service and the difficulties involved in raising sufficient resources. It also dealt with problems of choice and possible charging in the service.

The final Wanless report then prepared the arguments around funding, on the basis of which which the Government decided that direct funding through taxation was the most cost effective

and least disruptive system. However, it is important to recall that Wanless acknowledged that there were difficulties with this choice.

Because the systems in other western European countries are diverse and funded by various mechanisms, it is much easier to introduce or maintain competition and choice in those systems than in our health service. That should not be the crucial argument but it should make us consider what mechanisms we can employ that will provide sufficient responsiveness in our health system. That is why the Wanless report argues for a rigorous and regular audit to ensure value for money.

People are being asked to give a vast amount to the health service through taxation. Opinion polls show that they are glad to give. Nonetheless, they want to see that the money is being used wisely and delivering the goods.

The Welsh Wanless report was also commissioned by the Finance Minister – in this case Edwina Hart. However unlike Gordon, Edwina has not remained in post and her successor Sue Essex did not respond to the report, as Gordon Brown did in Parliament. I do not know why a report commissioned by the Welsh Finance Minister was not presented to her successor. However, I suspect if it had, the significance of key messages would have been heard more clearly.

The purpose of both the Welsh and UK Wanless reports was to ensure that vastly increased resources result in increased output, improved performance and modernisation of service delivery. The Welsh Wanless report concluded (i) that the current position is "unsustainable"; and (ii) that, in comparison to England, Wales

does not get as much out of its spending as it should.

Driving through reform against the short term vested interest is always going to be a political challenge. For a new institution this is particularly true. Under pressure from their coalition partners and the media the need was for quick wins and the avoidance of local unpopularity. Meanwhile, acute hospital activity declined from a peak of 151,182 patients seen by consultants in March 1999 to 134,707 patients seen in September 2002.

Wanless made it clear this performance could not continue and delivered a series of stark messages, some of which I highlight here:

- 1) **"Policies have been advanced without being costed, which makes it impossible to know their cost-benefit, or whether their implementation is affordable."**

A number of health commitments were made with little or no evidence to suggest they were cost effective in terms of health gains. Although as early as 1999 I raised the need to reconfigure services to better separate elective and acute care, this has yet to be implemented as it inevitably involves some locally unpopular decisions.

- 2) **"The Assembly should stop funding deficits."**

Similarly, deficits have continued to be funded, creating perverse incentives to managers to avoid difficult decisions and rely instead on an Assembly Government bail-out. Health authorities that did not control their budgets were underwritten year on year, while authorities that practised prudent management were penalised – their budgets top-sliced to fund the deficits of others.

- 3) **"Health funding is not connected at all closely to performance or level of activity. GP's remuneration is largely related to their list size."**

- 4) **"Trusts that are not able to deliver the treatments and balance their books have frequently received substantial additional funding... in other words failure has attracted more rewards than success."**

This policy should be replaced by one where:

- 5) **"Incentives and sanctions, which reward success, give greater freedom to good performers and are supported by the way in which resources flow."**



Derek Wanless

"Policies have been advanced without being costed, which makes it impossible to know their cost-benefit, or whether their implementation is affordable."

Although Wales has more than a third more beds per capita than England it uses those beds with less efficiency and therefore carries out less treatment. In part this is a result of having the wrong types of beds in the wrong places.

- 6) **"The current configuration of the Health Service places an insupportable burden on the acute sector and its workforce."**

As with the funding of deficits for Health Authorities, there is a general problem of rewarding success, or rather the lack of it. The UK Government has tried to approach this problem through the star status system, leading to foundation hospitals.

- 7) **"We have just over 11,000 general and acute hospital beds in Wales. This is 37 per cent more per head of population than England. But we do**

not have anywhere near the optimal mix of beds; over 3,000 of these are in community hospitals and are less effectively used than they might be, while acute general hospitals are struggling to meet demand. In March 2003 over 5,000 Welsh residents had been waiting more than 18 months for inpatient or day-case hospital treatment, whereas in England nobody had been waiting that long."

This problem is compounded by a poor throughput of patients. Too many patients are referred inappropriately and far too many remain in acute care beds when they should have left hospital for more appropriate care.

- 8) **"In 2001-02 there were an average of 806 delayed transfer of care at any one time, and fifty-seven per cent of patients were delayed for social care reasons arising from difficulty in arranging funding for care packages. By early 2003 the delayed transfer figure exceeded 1,000 – or more than twice the number of acute beds or bed equivalents which were needed."**

The Assembly Government's response to these stark financial and managerial messages has been downplayed and there are very few clear commitments to action. Incredibly, the clearest evidence of problems in delivery, the waiting times, are not mentioned in the response. There is no indication or target given as to when elective treatment times will be improved. Wanless calls for an "exploration and commissioning of out-of-Wales options to reduce unacceptably long waiting times". The report recommends sanctions should be applied by requiring organisations to purchase the services for the patient from elsewhere in the UK, EU or private sector.

Some or all of these options will have to be applied at least in the short term if waiting times are to be addressed. The Assembly Government may find

itself forced by the courts into this action unless it takes it willingly. The Health Service in Wales may be approaching the point where it becomes legally unsustainable.

The health Minister's response is also silent on Wanless's specific recommendations to deal with delayed discharges. Wanless suggests four options:

- 1) Hypothecating the level of revenue support grant to be spent on social care.
- 2) A single, integrated budget for older peoples services held by the local health boards
- 3) Joint consideration of health and social care budgets locally and nationally
- 4) Placing a responsibility on local authorities to pay the NHS the cost of delayed transfer of care.

The fourth option is about to be employed in England and the threat of it seems to have significantly decreased bed blocking. However, none of these options is mentioned in the initial response. This suggests oversensitivity to the views of powerful vested interests.

It should be obvious that any organisation whose funding has gone up from £2.5 billion in 1999-2000 to £3.8 billion in 2003-04, an increase of 50 per cent, and which in response produces large deficits and increased waiting lists, is in urgent need of reform. The general conclusion that Wanless reached is that funding must be linked to activity; productivity should be rewarded; and failure and inefficiency penalised.

The descriptions given of many present practices illustrate the culture change that is needed. The patient isn't incurable but must have faith in the physician and his prescription.

• *Jon Owen Jones is Labour MP for Cardiff Central.*



david reynolds says education spending is losing out

Education funding has become a matter of increasing controversy over the last three years. Is Wales spending as much per pupil as England? Can we see through what has been labelled a 'funding fog'? Is the rapid pace of educational change in the United Kingdom being facilitated by what are increasingly distinctive policies for the funding of schools in Wales?

In 2000-01, the most recent year for which relevant data is available, total identifiable managed expenditure on public services in Wales was 13 per cent higher in Wales than that in England. Yet, in the most recent year for which we have data, 2002-03, average pupil spend in Wales was not 13 per cent more than in England but the same, at £3,377.

Quite why educational expenditure is so much less per pupil than total public expenditure is unclear. It is likely that high health expenditure and above average rises on culture, media and sport have restricted the capacity of the Assembly

funding fog

Government to provide resources for education. It is also likely that the historic perception of the Welsh population that to be Welsh and to be well educated is synonymous may have generated complacency about resourcing.

Whatever the explanation, a national expenditure pattern that takes money away from the educational sector, to spend on others, needs public justification. As yet, no such justification has been produced by the Assembly Government. Furthermore, at local education authority level no additional education resources are being allocated to combat social and economic disadvantage. This is in marked contrast to the situation within the rest of the UK.

At the same time it is much to the credit of the Assembly Government that from 2000-01 Wales actually caught up with England in the amount per pupil that was spent on education. In 1999-2000 the average budgeted spend per pupil in England was £2,710, that is 2.6 per cent above the Welsh figure. By 2002-03 the average spend per pupil in England and Wales was the same in both countries. However, this progress appears now to be at risk. Total education cash budgets in Wales for 2003-04 (including local authority raised revenue, National Assembly funding and ELWa grants) are forecast to increase by 9.7 per cent compared to a forecast 11.6 per cent increase in England.

Quite what is now happening to offset the progress in relative resourcing between 1999 and 2002 is unclear. It is possible that the recent headline-grabbing crises in Welsh health and

social services provision have resulted in some further redistribution of resources away from education. It is also possible that the enhanced English expenditure reflects the additional resources associated with the workforce agreement (of approximately £300,000 per secondary school of average size) that has at the time of writing no Welsh parallel. This may be beginning to generate disparities in expenditure again. The expenditure allocation of £21 million for 2003-04 to 2005-06 that has been re-labelled as being related to the workforce agreement in Wales was in fact contained in pre workforce agreement expenditure plans in Wales.

All that we can conclude is that if there is no specific additional workforce resource available in Wales and if there is in England, all the good work of the Assembly Government in moving towards equality of resourcing in

comparison with England will be put at risk. Indeed the Welsh Local Government Association shows the scale of the issue in its estimates that £17 million in 2003-04 and £44 million in 2004-05 are required merely to stand still in terms of the increased resource requirements of workforce reforms.

Another issue is that the variation of education spending per pupil between local authorities in Wales greatly exceeds that in England. In 2002/2003 the range in Wales was between £3,051 in the Vale of Glamorgan to £3,981 in Ceredigion, a gap of £930. In England in the same year the range was only £339, with London excluded, or £1,389 if it was included. Across all local education authorities there is no doubt that variation in per pupil expenditure is much greater per pupil in Wales than in England, even though the heterogeneity of English society would have predicted the opposite.

The likelihood of this situation continuing has been increased by a number of the actions of the Assembly Government. Eighteen months ago the then Finance Minister Edwina Hart, announced that the recommended 'notional spend' per pupil was to be abolished, giving local authorities unfettered and unadvised freedom to spend as much or as little as their local democratic processes suggested they should. There is no evidence that spending disparities between local authorities have widened since then.

Nevertheless, there are grounds for concern that Welsh spending patterns present a lottery in which where you live determines your chances of educational achievement, assuming a link between the amount spent per pupil and the achievement of pupils. If one looks at expenditure per pupil, it is difficult to understand why in the current year (2003-04) the more disadvantaged authority of Newport (£3,417 per pupil) spends more or less the same as the more advantaged authority of Cardiff (£3,362). It is also difficult to understand

why the more advantaged Neath Port Talbot authority (at £3,698) spends more than the more disadvantaged Rhondda Cynon Taff authority (£3,423).

These variations are extreme when compared with England. It is possible to argue that they exist because of the exercise of the local democratic processes. This may be true. It may also be true that they reflect the distribution of population and resources at the time the former eight counties were dissolved into 22 new authorities in 1994. If that is the case they represent the position of a Wales of a decade ago.

Whatever the explanation, it remains the case that in England the Standard Spending Assessment régime provides a degree of territorial justice for pupils that has no Welsh equivalent. Based upon sophisticated formulae that relate resource provision to need, the SSA in England gives each local authority an estimate of what it should be spending upon education. Additionally in England the SSA is combined with central government power to force local authorities to spend up or down to a centrally determined level. In Wales the Assembly Government is involved only in default circumstances.

It is possible to argue that the democratic 'empowerment' of Welsh local authorities is worth the territorial injustice that Welsh pupils face. Such empowerment may be argued to be revitalising local democracies, engaging citizens and generating a better match between service provision and local needs. However, all one can conclude at the moment is that this case is unproven. It must be set against the case that across Wales pupils are exposed to an unfair variation in the resources that are behind them as they start their lives.

- Professor David Reynolds is Professor of Education at the University of Exeter and an adviser to the DfES in Whitehall. This article is based on research commissioned by NAHT Cymru, published in September 2003.

school spending per pupil in the 22 welsh counties, 2003-04

1	Ceredigion	£4,119
2	Carmarthenshire	£3,829
3	Anglesey	£3,818
4	Powys	£3,766
5	Neath Port Talbot	£3,698
6	Merthyr	£3,676
7	Gwynedd	£3,675
8	Pembrokeshire	£3,657
9	Blaenau Gwent	£3,608
10	Torfaen	£3,549
11	Conwy	£3,510
12	Swansea	£3,501
	Wales average	£3,499
13	Wrexham	£3,424
14	Rhondda Cynon Taff	£3,423
15	Newport	£3,417
16	Caerphilly	£3,410
17	Monmouthshire	£3,409
18	Cardiff	£3,362
19	Bridgend	£3,349
20	Denbighshire	£3,242
21	Flintshire	£3,203
22	Vale of Glamorgan	£3,185

Source: National Assembly Education Committee proceedings, July 2003.

we bought a mountain



catrin ellis jones
reports on a venture
that is breathing life
into upland Wales

the way you see a mountain depends on your perspective. Turn off the A55 expressway passing southwards into Snowdonia and the alluring beauty of Elidir Fawr, Pen-yr-oleu-wen and the Caerneddi might easily distract you from the one I'm talking about.

Compared with those heroic summits it is merely a wave of heather on a dark hill. Equally, Moelyci's unassuming grace and its status as a Site of Special Scientific Interest" may not be of interest. Neither may be the increasingly disadvantaged and dysfunctional villages on its slopes.

However, if you look closer, and think harder, you will see that Moelyci, derived from Moel Lleuci – 'Lucy's Hill'), is more than a mountain. It has heath, mire, wetland and woodland, together with fields of improved grassland that provide diverse habitats for a range of animals and plants. It also has a nineteenth century farm-house and buildings, as well as ancient settlements providing evidence of occupation dating back some 3000 years.

More especially, rooted in these 350 acres of rich and privileged land is a vision of community land ownership, linking shareholders of the Moelyci Industrial and Provident Society. Slowly, and not without difficulties, some 260 members, with more joining all the time, are following the vision of a commonwealth of re-localised social, environmental and economic opportunity that will help spark regeneration to create a healthier community with a sustainable future.

Until November 2001, Moelyci was a traditional farm with 600 Welsh mountain ewes. However, the tenant, who was born on the farm and had struggled over the previous years to make a living, decided with much heartache to relinquish the farm. The Penrhyn Estate, still in possession of significant tracts of land in this area despite having devolved assets to the National Trust, intended to capitalise on the change. It planned to sell the land off in blocks and convert the farm buildings into holiday accommodation. Rather than resigning ourselves to an accelerating and irreversible crisis, local residents have chosen to view these events as an

opportunity that might bring real improvement and well-being.

Instigators of the project set up a management company and made an offer to purchase the whole farm and mountain on behalf of the community, which the Estate accepted. To convince the banks that buying the farm for the community was a viable proposition, business plans had to be written and community support secured. With the help of the local Regeneration Officer, community meetings were held in the villages of Tregarth, Rhiwlas and Mynydd Llandygai that encircle the mountain.

The community centres were full to bursting, barely containing the response. This ranged from triumphant enthusiasm to a scepticism not altogether unsurprising in an area where the results of feudal traditions are etched in the landscape, consciousness and memory of indigenous residents. Nonetheless,



Some of the 260 members of the Moelyci Industrial and Provident Society who are buying the mountain.

popular opinion was far more positive than negative. A structure to ensure stakeholders an equal say in the enterprise was created in the form of an Industrial and Provident Society, a co-operative with exempt charity status.

Shareholders understand they are making a social investment. Any profit made by the company is ploughed back into its activities. Owners are entitled to one vote, regardless of the size of their shareholding. When the future of the venture is more secure, arrangements will be made for people on low incomes or young people to be part of the society by working for an agreed number of hours. Directors are unpaid and elected by the membership to take responsibility for everyday decisions.

Our vision is to provide a centre and supporting infrastructure, including a business centre, workshops, café and crèche, and an exhibition and performance space, created from the sympathetic restoration of the historic farm buildings. These spaces will benefit local families, children, people with disadvantages, and people seeking employment and training opportunities in traditional rural crafts, organic agriculture and food production, therapy gardens, equestrian activities, recycling schemes and other sustainable enterprises. Once these income-generating activities have a secure financial base they may become independent co-operatives, feeding skills and capital back into the society.

Already started are horticultural activities, with chemical-free vegetables produced by volunteer efforts on sale to members and in local outlets. There is a thriving tree nursery which was funded by Cydcoed (a Forestry Commission managed fund in Wales). Broadleaf woodlands are being planted, with improved access for users in the form of new paths and bridleways. There is a positive knock-on effect for the local economy, as local contractors are carrying out all works. We are developing a Gelli Barddoniaeth – a spinney of poems encompassing medieval to contemporary works that celebrate the union of our rich literary tradition with the natural environment.

Despite very limited financial resources, we are weaving an essential pattern of

education for all, regardless of age, ability, economic status, through our activities, where value is added by the contributions of our bilingual membership. Currently these activities range from poetry workshops in liaison with local schools, to days of conservation and study with ecologists and naturalists, and traditional crafts using natural materials. People join at a level with which they are comfortable and then move forward, empowered by these new opportunities and challenges, in turn contributing more to the venture.

A grant from Co-op Action has enabled the Society to create a part-time manager post, and with volunteers' help we have created two offices and a meeting room in the farm house, thus improving considerably communication both within and without the membership.



Bug hunting at Moelyci Farm.

The Moelyci Project is the first attempt made by a community in Wales or England to buy a significant area of land from traditional or estate landowners in order to protect and enhance local amenities and achieve a range of economic, social and environmental objectives. The greatest single challenge we face at present is to raise capital for the Society to buy the farm. We need some £480,000, with the banks – Triodos and Icof, a community development institution that invests in areas of deprivation – stipulating that the loan must be repaid

within two years. A further £500,000 will be required for renovation and development. Within three years, the project aims to be financially self-sustaining through the sale of shares and income from its activities, supported initially by grants.

At the first Land For People Conference held in Wales, in Gregynog in September 2003, delegates discussed the acute problems threatening increasingly marginalised communities in Wales and rural Britain more generally. These included:

- Exodus of rural population due to lack of employment opportunities.
- Demographic change exacerbated by in-migration.
- Lack of affordable housing and community cohesion.
- A significant proportion of children and the elderly living in poverty.
- Tensions arising between sectors that champion economic growth and those that give priority to environmental and cultural protection.

We heard how local initiatives contributing to sustainable rural development began in Scotland, with the purchase of the Lochinver Estate by the Assynt Crofters in 1993. Now the achievements of residents of Gigha, Eigg and Durness add to the inspirational examples of those who, through the purchase of land, have taken a greater degree of control over their own destinies. They have pioneered pragmatic solutions to the problems of social and economic exclusion by making their own villages and towns more attractive places to live and work.

These successes are supported very efficiently by the Scottish Community Land Unit (Highlands and Islands Enterprise), the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and millions of pounds from the Scottish Land Fund. There are up to 100 per cent grants available for feasibility studies and business plans. Also available are single grants for land acquisition of up to 75 per cent of the valuation, not normally exceeding £1



Iwan Llwyd taking a poetry workshop with local primary school children visiting Moelyci Farm.

million, with additional funding available in certain regions. There are further generous grants to invest in the management of natural resources and infrastructure, not to mention the all important guidance that can expedite the difficult processes of land purchase and project development.

However, in Wales and England initiatives with holistic solutions to community issues, such as the Moelyci project are being hindered, with funding generally available only for discrete parts of a project.

Consider the example of a permaculture of community allotments. This entails growing organic vegetables to be distributed locally, the fields fed by compost generated by the recycling of green waste from community households, who in turn receive training in rural land management and are encouraged to adopt zero waste life strategies. Yet to achieve this we shall have to apply for at least four separate funds. Each application is a laborious and lengthy procedure. It is unlikely that any fund will contribute to our capital costs for land purchase. And in the end they may reject our applications on the grounds that the land is not secure – *Catch 22!*

Objective One funding is an option for our proposed business centre and mosaic of local, sustainable enterprises. But again, with just one part-time employee and our own clock ticking, as well as the 2006 deadline for West Wales' eligibility to the European Social Fund we are feeling the strain.

It isn't easy following a multidimensional vision. Nevertheless, the Moelyci project is providing an impetus for a very diverse group of people to come together. They include gardeners and paragliders, quarry-workers and university lecturers, shopkeepers and farmers, civil servants and students, artists and geophysicists, carers and dry-stone-wallers. Previously they might never have talked to one another despite being neighbours. Now they discuss our aspirations for the land, the significance of its cultural and natural heritage and how new initiatives might contribute to increased local well-being for everyone.

Sustaining us are other stories of success of local initiatives established on plots of land of just a few acres, and of buildings bought to develop community facilities/services. Examples include Antur Waunfawr, Menter Fachwen as well as a string of national co-operatives providing a network of mutual support and partnership opportunities. And it is

uplifting to read in *Llais Ogwen* (our papur bro, community paper) that it isn't just doom and gloom. Whilst chapels and churches are closing, schools threatened and so on, there is an upsurge in community and voluntary sector action towards local solutions.

Moelyci is part of this innovative culture. The project is unique, it is Welsh, and its appeal and objectives are universal. Recent writings such as Graham Day's *Making Sense of Wales* and Jane Aaron's *The Welsh Survival Gene* argue that Welsh communities, firmly rooted in the land and by their sense of kinship, display an inherent tolerance not dominated by material possessions. Instead, they are inspired by an instinctive and spiritual wisdom that allows us to survive despite all the odds. Are we not then, all of us *gwarchodwyr cynnaladwyedd* (stewards of sustainability), the natural leaders of the gentle, enduring regeneration that must begin soon in Wales, before the decay is irreversible?

- *Catrin Ellis Jones is a doctor of geochemistry, recently returned from South America to her Welsh birthplace. She is part-time manager of the Canolfan Amgylcheddol Moelyci Environmental Centre*
www.riel.bangor.co.uk/moelyci

dislocated icon

william wilkins suggests a way forward for the National Botanic Garden

there are three principal threads to the discussion of the crisis now facing the National Botanic Garden. Where did it go wrong? How do we put it right? What should be the Welsh Assembly Government's attitude towards financial support?

Everyone knows that something went wrong. The simple answer is thought to be that visitor numbers are not what was predicted. But why not? Were the predictions wrong, is the marketing poor, or does the garden not live up to expectations? It has also been pointed out that other predicted sources of income have not developed, for example grants for research and educational work.

My involvement with the Garden ended seven years ago with the successful application for £21 million to the Millennium Commission and almost half the match funding raised. There were, of course, master plans and business plans in place. It has not seemed proper for me to either interfere or comment in the succeeding years as I would not know all the circumstances leading to particular decisions.

But as I have watched the present crisis unfolding I have become aware that many of those participating in the debate either do not know, or have forgotten, the principles on which the Garden was founded. In these circumstances my views may now be helpful.

First, the Garden was always seen as a botanic garden. In turn this meant that, by virtue of its unique site and design, it would draw sufficient visitors to run itself and support two posts over and above the operational staff. These posts, the director and one other, if I remember rightly, were expected to raise the revenue funding required for research and educational activities through programmes which they developed. In short, the garden was expected to raise both public sector and private sector revenue funding. However challenging this may seem, it was accepted by the great array of scientific, business and civil servant consulted as being possible.

It is worth bearing in mind that the creation of a national institution during the Thatcher era was, in itself, seen as a somewhat challenging idea. Three Secretaries of State for Wales presided, more or less neutrally, over the development of the project, though the inclination of the last, John Redwood, was clearly to leave the task entirely to the voluntary sector. It is therefore ironic that the rightly lauded initiative of the Welsh Assembly Government to create free entry to the National Museums and Galleries of Wales has put a further nail into the garden's

coffin. Apart from the fact that prior administrations forced the creation of the garden by voluntary effort, what difference is there between the National Museum and the National Botanic Garden? Structurally, there are obvious solutions to this problem.

For reasons which I don't entirely understand, the original master plan has been partly modified and partly abandoned. No doubt money has played a part in this, but the consequences have indubitably been damaging for the garden's revenue account. The great cascades, designed by the internationally renowned landscape architect Hal Moggridge, to descend from the Great Glasshouse to the Upper Lake have gone. The restoration of the spectacular 18th century Great Lake with all its attendant cascades, bridges and walks has never taken place. These were key factors, together with the complete restoration of the double walled garden, in the calculation of visitor figures. Many other changes have been made, no doubt for what seemed good reasons. However, the net effect is of a garden with greatly reduced public appeal.

If a product is not right no amount of marketing is going to make it work in the long run. Not only does the Garden lack a number of its key original features but it has also lost one of its unique selling points. The original plan was for outstanding modern design to be sensitively and imaginatively related to the great late 18th century conception. Architectural excellence

and landscape excellence were to create something which existed nowhere else in Britain and hardly anywhere else in the world. The combination of a complete Norman Foster development, in a landscape whose restoration and development was controlled by Hal Moggridge, would have been of outstanding long term value to both the garden and Wales.

The Great Glasshouse started to achieve iconic status, travelling the world as an exemplar of the spirit of the millennium in a British Council exhibition. But it is now isolated, neither philosophically nor physically as integrated with the Garden as it should be.

“Putting the garden right” is not just about providing it with money from the public purse. Neither is it about trying to “sell out” to the commercial sector. It is a complex problem which requires sophisticated solutions. At the moment no clear solution seems in view. Yet, at the risk of stating the obvious, the management and mid term funding issues have to be addressed. They can only be addressed if all sides develop a good understanding of the core proposition and also understand and respect the interests of the other parties. However, it does appear that there is already a strong case to be made for joint action in relation to Whitehall. There can be little doubt that



Sketch of the Great Cascades by the landscape architect Hal Moggridge that were to have descended from the Great Glasshouse to the Upper Lake. This vision was never implemented.

the Welsh Assembly Government could non-controversially make representations to Whitehall for support for the funding of suitable scientific work at Middleton.

No solution that does not go back to the original principles of the Garden is going to work, either in financial terms or for the reputation of Wales. Delivery of a successful Garden does not require large injections of money at this point. It needs steady, sustained support. It needs planned development, over the next ten years if

financial stringency requires it, and it needs confidence.

Without confidence in a programme of work which, year after year will deliver new, high quality features to the garden, no marketing campaign is going to work. The features in themselves may be quite modest: one or two new slip gardens, one cascade at a time if necessary. But, there has to be an agreed programme to allow good marketing to develop public interest and confidence that season on season, year on year, the Garden will be more interesting.

With a programme which will see the cascades coming on stream, the walled garden fully restored, the lakes and walks, historic cascades, “Woods of the World”, all starting to contribute to the variety and beauty of the place, there is no reason why the National Botanic Garden of Wales should not be a credit to the nation and deliver good value to the economy.

- *William Wilkins, founder of the National Botanic Garden, went on to direct the restoration of Aberglasney Gardens, and is the founder and chair of the Artes Mundi Prize for international art.*



Thomas Horner’s 1815 view of the Great lake at Middleton Hall. In the original plans for the National Botanic Garden this would have been re-created.

DNA database

anthony campbell unveils a project to survey the marine organisms of Pembrokeshire



Wales has an inspiring record over nearly four centuries of brilliant naturalists taking natural history into natural science – Edward Llyud, Thomas Pennant, Philip Gosse, T.H. Huxley, and of course Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace are obvious examples. Without Wales, where Darwin learnt his geology and Wallace learnt to identify species, their concept of natural selection might have had to await a century or more to be uncovered.

One lesser known naturalist is John Barrett. For some 40 years he lived in Pembrokeshire, establishing Dale Fort as one of the leading field study centres in Europe. Many young people, including myself, some years ago, have reason to thank him for the inspiration of one of the classic natural history books of the 20th century, *The Collins Field Guide to the Sea Shore* that he

wrote with Maurice Young. I still use mine, tattered and warped as it is by wetting at the rock pool surface.

Our aim is to develop a modern database at Pembrokeshire's new Darwin Centre of all the marine organisms around the Welsh coast, starting with Pembrokeshire. By modern, I mean that it will develop crucial information about the molecular and cellular biology of the organisms, supplementary to their natural history. Some natural history data is already available from the pioneering Dale Fort Fauna, and more recent reports triggered for example by the Sea Empress spill. What is now needed is to take such fauna, including cliff and coastal organisms, marine flora and microbes, into the 21st century. We need to study their DNA (chromosomes, size, and sequences); their structures; the proteins they produce; their cell biology, electrical activity and life cycles; the interesting small molecules they produce, for example toxins; and how to keep them alive.

Pembrokeshire is one of the most beautiful areas in Wales. Yet its economy is in dire straits. It desperately needs a flagship project that is in sympathy with the county's heritage and which has the potential to revitalise its community and economy. We believe the Darwin Centre is such a project, initiated through the Pembrokeshire Darwin Science Festival as part of the Millennium Festival. The Centre is a charitable trust and a company limited by guarantee. The Fauna database project fits the key

criteria the Darwin initiative has identified for a flagship project based in Pembrokeshire:

- It takes natural history into natural science in the great Darwin tradition.
- It has a vision for science, the economy and Wales in the 21st century.
- In the way it exploits the cutting edge of molecular and cellular technology, it addresses some of the big problems in science– biodiversity, evolution, global warming, and revitalising science education.
- It is sustainable over many decades.
- It has huge economic potential
- It will attract international scientists, teachers, students, and industrialists to Pembrokeshire and Wales.
- It is potentially fundable from a raft of sources – Research Councils, Wellcome, medical charities, the pharmaceutical industry, small business initiatives, and philanthropy.
- It can bring together scientists, medics, industrialists and teachers through a project not a committee. The Darwin Centre is run by a board, with a steering group for the festival, and local and international advisory panels for peer review. In just three years, supported by a fund raising programme of some £300,000, we have.
- Established one of the top five science festivals in the UK, the Pembrokeshire Darwin Science Festival, uniquely running throughout the year.
- Developed an innovative science education programme, through a partnership with Pembrokeshire College, recognised this year with prestigious Beacon award, the first time this has come to Wales for science education.



Walkers on the Pembrokeshire Coast path above Marloes beach south of St. Brides Bay make their way through some of the National Park's rich fauna and flora – a source for the proposed DNA database.

- Created a natural history programme, including glow-worm hunts and beach days.
- Achieved several international links, including the DaVinci-Linnaeus-Darwin initiative linking Italy, Sweden and Wales and funded through the EU.
- Built a road-show programme to take around the schools of Pembrokeshire. The bioluminescence project – Dr Darwin's Curiosity Shop – was originally funded by COPUS. A development from this was 'How to genetically engineer a Rainbow', selected to exhibit at the prestigious Royal Society Summer exhibition in 2002, and voted the best exhibit.
- Inaugurated school projects through the CREST national scheme, and an annual presentation day – Science Aglow
- Produced intellectual property through spin outs registered in Pembrokeshire, in partnership with the Pembrokeshire Business Initiative.
- Initiated a programme linking the arts and religion to science.
- Made links with several university departments and research institutes in Wales, the rest of the UK and the USA.
- Begun a programme for international conferences.
- Put in place a ten-year bioluminescence research programme.

The Dale Fort fauna, together with the special marine life of Pembrokeshire and

our tides, gives us a head start over most other marine areas in the UK and Europe. After all you don't have to go to the Galapagos Islands to see Darwin's finches. What else are the puffins, guillemots and razorbills but the Darwin finches of Pembrokeshire? This project is consistent with the great naturalist traditions of Gosse, Huxley and other Victorian naturalists, who were inspired by the rock pools of Pembrokeshire. Emma Darwin brought her children to stay with her aunts, the Allens, still based at Creselly. And, of course, there is the marvellous recent tradition set by Dale Fort and Orielton Field Study centres, led by people such as John Barrett.

What we need now is the formation of a team involving all the key players in Pembrokeshire, and Wales, to design a clear ten-year plan for the John Barrett fauna project, together with a strategy to fund it. An essential component of any science programme in the 21st century, absent in past centuries, is to ensure that it is developed through a two-way dialogue with the community. Public engagement is what is needed. But it should genuinely be two-way. Professional scientists need to be challenged by the public, whose taxes pay most of their salaries, to explain why we do what we do, what benefits our science will have, and how have we addressed the safety and ethical issues. The Darwin Centre has been established as a vehicle to achieve this.

The DNA revolution has already had a huge impact on biology and medicine. Yet in isolation DNA is completely sterile. To be active DNA has to get into a living cell. The last century may have appeared to be a great success medically. But in fact we only eradicated one disease – smallpox. Cancer, heart disease, diabetes, lung disease, and diseases of the brain are still scourges. And in spite of the huge success of antibiotics, our success at developing really affective substances to treat viral disease has been poor. We still can't cure a cold. These are some of the challenges in the 21st century.

The John Barrett project lives up to the inspiration of a man who was one of the founders of my subject, biochemistry. His name was Frederick Gowland Hopkins (1861-1947). He began his scientific career as a curious naturalist. When elected President of the London Natural History Society in 1936 he declared in his inaugural speech, "All true biologists deserve the coveted name of naturalist. The touchstone of the naturalist is his abiding interest in living nature in all its aspects."

- *Anthony K. Campbell is professor in Medical Biochemistry at the National School of Medicine, Cardiff University, and Director of the Darwin Centre.*

sustainable future

carys howell and sylvia davies examine proposals to extend the role of our National Parks

Cwm Eidal in Snowdonia

the first review of our National Parks since 1991, commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government, will be published shortly. At a superficial level, the consultants' initial recommendations for the review sounded sensible: giving the National Parks a 'sustainable development purpose', introducing elections to the National Park Authorities, and tackling local exclusion.

On the other hand, a closer look at each of these recommendations reveals that some lateral thinking is needed. Achieving the sought-after aims of sustainable development, better governance and accountability, and social inclusion is not as straightforward as it might appear.

The Brecon Beacons, Pembrokeshire Coast and Snowdonia national parks cover a fifth of the land of Wales. Over 80,000 people live within the Welsh Parks' and millions come to visit every year. At present they have two statutory purposes:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage of their areas.
- To promote opportunities for the public's enjoyment and understanding of the Parks special qualities.

In addition, whilst working to achieve these two purposes, National Park

Authorities have a duty to foster the social and economic well being of their areas.

The initial findings of the review proposed that 'sustainable development' should become an additional statutory purpose.

Charging the National Parks to deliver sustainable development is highly commendable, but is adding a new statutory purpose the best way to achieve this? Statutory purposes need to be clear, concise and specific. On the other hand sustainable development is not specific and is invested with a variety of meanings. Without an attendant explanation of what it means in practice, a new 'Sustainable Development Purpose' would be difficult to implement. It would create greater confusion and

panel 1: sustainable development in practice

- The National Parks Sustainable Development Fund supports innovative partnership projects, including:
 - The Beacons Bike Bus connects pedestrians and cyclists from towns and cities across south Wales to the Brecon Beacons National Park, providing opportunities for car-free visits to the countryside.
 - Harnessing the power of tidal streams in Pembrokeshire.
 - Llyn Tegid Compost in Snowdonia.

could easily become the source of conflict because of the different interpretations attributed to it by different sectors.

What is needed is a Vision Statement for the National Parks of Wales. This should clarify the role of all the stakeholders, not just the National Park Authorities in bringing about sustainable development, and it should be adopted across the whole of the Welsh Assembly Government and its sponsored bodies.

The National Parks Review has looked at whether the National Park Authorities should take on the delivery of economic development. The Council for National Parks and others have argued that they should not, because the WDA, local authorities and others are better placed and are already being funded by the Assembly to deliver economic development across the whole of Wales.

However, such agencies, by and large, do not recognise the purposes of National Parks. This needs to be addressed. Firstly, Welsh Assembly Government Ministers should ensure that each Assembly sponsored body and the local authorities fulfil their responsibilities to the National Parks as is required by the 1995 Environment Act. Secondly, the National Park

authorities should be given a co-ordinating role to help economic agencies become true partners in delivering appropriate development in the National Parks, as exemplified in Panel 2.

There are several ways in which the governance of Park Authorities could be improved. These include training of all authority members, strengthening links between the authorities and key agencies in Wales, including the Wales Tourist Board and the Welsh Development Agency, and establishing genuine and regular liaison with local communities.

However, rather than addressing these issues fully, the review has jumped ahead to recommend that direct election of National Park members should be introduced. This has not met with widespread support. There are concerns that a harmful political element might be introduced and that the electorate would be confined to National Park boundaries. In that event, people who are affected by the National Parks, but who live outside their boundaries, for example in



The Beacons Bike Bus connects pedestrians and cyclists from towns and cities across south Wales to the Brecon Beacons National Park, providing opportunities for car-free visits to the countryside.

Blaenau Ffestiniog, would be disenfranchised.

Since their designation over 50 years ago, National Parks have, in the main, catered for white, middle class, car-owning visitors. It is now being increasingly recognised that other audiences have been unintentionally excluded and have not been able to benefit from the National Parks. Work has been done to address this:

- The Council for National Parks, together with the Black Environment Network, is making opportunities available for ethnic community groups who live near the National Parks to become involved in the protection and management of National Parks.
- The National Park Authorities are supporting local communities in and around the National Parks through the Sustainable Development Fund and are working in partnership to increase understanding and widen participation.

Our National Parks were created from a movement driven by a passionate belief in social inclusion. It is disappointing therefore that the Review's initial findings suggested that

if the National Parks had a social inclusion role at all, it was confined to people living within their boundaries. This makes an unhelpful division between residents and visitors. The real division is between those who have the opportunity to benefit from the National Parks and those who do not. National Parks were created for the nation as a whole – rich and poor, resident and visitor.

In planning for the future it is vital to recognise that threats from inappropriate developments will continue, so the Parks must continue as planning authorities. National Parks are designated to protect some of the most beautiful landscapes in the country. At the same time we need to ensure that they are maintained as living landscapes, supporting vibrant communities and a strong local economy.

- *Sylvia Davies is Senior Policy Officer and Carys Howell a consultant with the Council for National Parks in England and Wales, the voluntary sector voice on National Parks.*

panel 2: impact of national parks on economic development

- The Pembrokeshire Coast National Trail makes an annual contribution of at least £14 million to the Pembrokeshire economy. For every £1 the National Park Authority spends on managing the path, around £57 is returned to the local economy – making it a very cost-effective asset within the Park.
- The marketing of premium Brecknock Cheviot Lamb was made possible by a grant from the Sustainable Development Fund in the Brecon Beacons.
- The voluntary sector also plays a vital role: a partnership including the National Trust has secured £1.8 million from Objective 1 funds for work on upland footpaths in Snowdonia, which will contribute to sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism reaps longer visits and higher spend by tourists.

harri webb's budgies



peter stead

I was fascinated by the recent BBC Radio Wales survey that asked listeners to name the person they regarded as the best Welsh MP. Of course, Lembit Opik came first with 64 per cent of the vote, but more surprising was the list of runners-up. Siân Lloyd with 30 per cent was second, followed by Owen Money (4 per cent) and Bob Humphrys (2 per cent). In a separate poll listeners were asked to name the actual Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Tony Blair duly won but only with 60 per cent of the nominations. Peter Hain did incredibly well with 30 per cent thinking that he was in No.10 already. He came ahead of Andrew Marr (5 per cent), Rhodri Morgan (3 per cent) and John Humphrys (2 per cent).

Basically what all of this proves is that most people give the media less than half of their attention. However, there are several useful

political pointers to be found amidst this seeming confusion. Clearly Lembit has cottoned on to the fact that there is no difference between the ways in which entertainers and politicians are now perceived by the public. His party leader, Charles Kennedy, won his position by using the panel game/talk show route and obviously Lembit hopes to follow in his wake.

Further reflection on these polls reveals how the whole context in which MPs operate has changed. When Harri Webb wrote his great poem in which he noted that his Budgie, a futile and squawking bird, possessed many characteristics suggesting that it would make 'a perfect Welsh MP', he was thinking largely of the old lobby fodder Labour stalwarts, a breed, the poet conceded, that had essentially given up the ghost in 1966. Since 'the days of the budgies' what has changed most is the degree to which individual MPs can no longer take refuge, and even disguise their own anonymity, within the broad identity of their particular parties. Essentially Parties have collapsed. Ideology has long been dead, spin and image rule, and the only problems that really matter, health provision, pensions and the railways, are essentially intractable whilst reform can never be anything more than

a chimera. Individual politicians, therefore, can no longer rely on mantras and shibboleths; they have now to invent their own issues.

In all of this the Great Lembit has led the way. We love him because we all know that the only reason he appears on every radio and television show, in every gossip column as well as on every page of WoS is that he wants to alert the world to the danger of us all being killed by comets. Other MPs have had to work a little harder to define their identifying issue and to find their niche. Ann Clwyd might well have been one of the anonymous budgies left only to rue the demise of coal had it not been for the fortuitous rise of Saddam Hussain. And who would have heard of the two Swansea MPs, Alan Williams and Donald Anderson, had it not been for excessive spending by the Royals in the case of one and the need to research the validity of Air Miles schemes with the other.

It was quite brilliant of Peter Hain to realise that the quickest way to the top is to pretend that you are there already. Paul Murphy had tried the same trick and surely would have been even more successful had he opted for religious rather than secular politics, or had been available to replace Cardinal Wolsey in an earlier era. Chris Bryant does not

yet look like a statesman and so, with some cunning, he has opted for the tactic of closely associating himself with the Prime Minister. He is currently busy editing and preparing for publication Mr Blair's speeches and memoirs and, of course, learning valuable lessons all the while.

Meanwhile, there is much to be learned from looking at the ways in which our most able MPs stake out their territory. Adam Price has brilliantly illustrated that the post-industrial experience of Wales still needs to be examined at the highest levels of British politics. Britishness is also the key to the politics of Paul Flynn and Kim Howells. I think of them both as Celtic wise men sent amongst the people to point out the absurdities and myths that stifle our national debate both at Westminster and in Cardiff.

The BBC flagship programmes are always the best pointer to the political future, and that would suggest that it is Kevin Brennan who has the best chance of climbing to the top of the greasy pole. It is essential that Wales competes with the rest of the UK, and especially Scotland, at that level. There were, of course, glorious moments when we threatened to run the whole show, but tragically they were squandered.