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NHS 70

Heléna Herklots
Sally Holland
Jonathan Cox
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Jennifer Dixon

Wales and Whitehall

Daran Hill
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Alun Cairns

talks to
Anthony Pickles

Image: Michael Hall

Will the NHS still be there for Aneira?

Owen Sheers *talks to Merlin Gable* | **Georgina Campbell Flatter** *talks to Gareth I. Jones* | **Ben Rawlence** *on Black Mountains College*

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Editorial

What kind of nation do we want to be?

Auriol Miller

Over the summer, we've watched three party leaders fall and three new ones take their places. The coming weeks will see yet another change at the top of Welsh politics when the new leader of Welsh Labour becomes – probably – only the fourth First Minister of Wales in over twenty years of devolution. Immediate analysis and political commentary will inevitably focus on personalities, as well as the potential fallout within and beyond parties, and how the new combination of leaders might configure and reconfigure before and after the next round of Assembly elections in 2021.

But it's not all about the politicians. We will be watching closely how the new group of party leaders conduct business over the next couple of years – and what they do to inspire and to bring people into conversations about politics. We think politics matters now more than ever before. We'll also be watching to see how the party leaders work across party lines in the collective interest of Wales' people in the run up to Brexit and beyond. Knowing when something matters more than a party political point takes both leadership and guts and we need more of both.

The new bunch of party leaders are taking the reins against a rapidly changing context, with lots of 'givens' being thrown up in the air. Political and economic uncertainty is the new normal. It's therefore more important than ever that we revisit, restate and in some senses rediscover our country's core values. In the last issue of *the welsh agenda*, we focused on soft power and how Wales is perceived around the world. It's time to remind ourselves what we are known for internationally, or to sharpen our understanding of this so that our areas of strength can become better known.

One widely agreed point of pride is the National Health Service, born seventy years ago out of a desire to provide universal healthcare free at point of delivery. This issue of *the welsh agenda* marks the anniversary with a series of articles that look at the past, present and future of the service. Our cover photograph features Aneira Thomas, the first baby born on the NHS seventy years ago, meeting her much younger namesake. Older People's Commissioner Heléna Herklots and Children's Commissioner Sally Holland consider how the NHS needs to adapt itself to protect the future for both Aneiras.

In his article about Nye Bevan's legacy, Jonathan Cox reminds us that the postwar Attlee government grappled with William Beveridge's five 'Giant Evils' – want, ignorance, disease, squalor and idleness – to which he adds another three for the modern age: loneliness, isolation and powerlessness. It is a recognition that social care now looms as the big issue to crunch. As with the NHS itself, in the severity of the problem lies the level of radical ambition needed to forge a solution. Again, Wales can lead the way. Gerald Holtham reasserts his recommendation to Welsh Government for a social care levy, a targeted mechanism that potentially solves a specific problem, but that goes far beyond this. Wales' first use of tax raising powers will send out a clear message. More broadly, can we use our assets ambitiously and wisely to try things out and show people what a small country focused on a sustainable, fair, future could look like? The most pressing question facing those in leadership is this: what kind of nation do we want to be?

Auriol Miller is Director of the IWA

Meet the Team

Editor
Dylan Moore
@_DylanMoore

Editorial Manager
Rhea Stevens
@rhea_stevens

Culture Editor
Merlin Gable
@merlingable

Design
Marc Jennings
marc@theundercard.co.uk

Cover Photographer:
Michael Hall

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Institute of Welsh Affairs
56 James Street, Cardiff Bay,
Cardiff, CF10 5EZ
Tel: 02920 484 387

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ARTICLES

CULTURE

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The summer of coups

Daran Hill *picks through the rubble of three leadership elections and looks ahead to the fourth and final piece of the Assembly's new configuration*

We are repeatedly told that the election of the next Labour leader in Wales is a foregone conclusion for Mark Drakeford. Hmmm. The summer of 2018 has certainly delivered surprises for the other parties in the National Assembly. Yet if you look closely enough then there were plenty of signs and patterns in politics that hinted of what was to come.

There is even a perverse similarity between the Brexit referendum and the recent election for Plaid Cymru leader that many will not want to admit: both contests were fought with many in the political establishment arguing they were unnecessary. But both results show conclusively that both questions needed asking, however unpalatable and unwanted the electoral decisions were for many people.

If that equates Leanne Wood and those around her with Brexiteers, so be it. Let me offend them a little more by suggesting that in hindsight there was a distinct similarity between Leanne Wood and Caroline Jones, the former leader of the UKIP group in the Assembly. Both of them were convinced they were doing the best possible job in challenging circumstances. Both of them decried external masculine forces for forcing an election upon them. Both of them crashed from leader to third place when the votes were counted.

And there – if you discard a feminist prism of analysis – is pretty much where the comparison between them ends. Leanne Wood has her reputation intact and a future in Plaid Cymru, a party she knows better than she maybe realises in the aftermath of her humiliation. Caroline Jones has realised that she doesn't know UKIP at all and now sits as an independent in the naughty row in the Assembly. There will be no need to fit an extra seat on to the end of that row to accommodate Leanne Wood. She is far more loyal to her party than it has been to her in recent weeks.

However, the reasons for their demises are remarkably different. Caroline Jones lost her temporary grasp of power because she fundamentally misunderstood her party. By her own admission they were moving to the right in a way she did not recognise (some of us might argue they haven't moved much at all). Her strategy therefore of espousing the virtues of the Assembly and co-working was precisely not what her party wanted

to hear. They wanted burka removal, Welsh language removal and Assembly removal and in pub politician Gareth Bennett that's exactly what they got.

Leanne's story is rather different. Many of those who switched allegiance were rather shamefaced about it. They wanted more energy and inspiration. Where in 2012 she was the radical, by 2018 she was the establishment. By any account her electoral success and appeal has been mixed. This is especially true when compared to the SNP over the same period, a comparison Plaid keeps wanting to make before an election but never afterward. But it was not that she didn't have a reciprocated affection within the party, but her platform was one without freshness and radicalism. Unfortunately for her, after six years at the helm, some of the best of her allies had defected to other camps.

In comparing Plaid and UKIP, I have deliberately excluded the Conservatives from the analogy. There the competition was not one of ousted leaders, challenges to ideology or shifting sands. It was simply one – irony alert – where an incumbent leader lost the confidence of the majority of his group and decided to resign. Another big difference, though, is that had Andrew RT Davies subsequently done a John Major in the Rose Garden and decided to stand again, he might well have regained his position. Because the causes of his downfall were all in the establishment of the party, rather than due to the discontent of the membership more broadly. In Paul Davies they now have a leader that both the party members and the party power brokers wanted. There was nothing radical about it.

In contrast, Plaid has just witnessed a revolution both of leader and of pace. By promising so much change and energy, the election of a new Plaid leader has also raised the bar in terms of expectation, much like Leanne herself did six years ago. That is not just amongst we waspish, sideline pundits but – far more importantly – it is amongst the party membership too. They voted expecting something to happen and that something must now translate in external electoral terms.

Adam Price. I've held back mentioning his name for nearly a thousand words simply because I'm bored of hearing it. That's nothing against Adam himself, whom I rate as a strong intellectual, a strong political performer

Leanne Wood has her reputation intact and a future in Plaid Cymru, a party she knows better than she maybe realises in the aftermath of her humiliation

[UKIP] wanted burka removal, Welsh language removal and Assembly removal and in pub politician Gareth Bennett that's exactly what they got

Where the others have expressed rapidity and brutal transition akin to the emergence of a new Sultan in the Topkapi, Labour has set a pace which suits only itself and, more particularly, its outgoing and bruised leader Carwyn Jones

and a strong debater. My issue is with the cult status he has long held. The election of this 'mab darogan' has been termed by some as the most important event in Welsh politics since the 2011 devolution referendum. I could write an entire article picking that apart, not least because that particular referendum wasn't as important as some of us pretended it was, but also because the same people who make such assertions conveniently ignore Wales voting for Brexit because it does not fit in with their political viewpoint and does not accord with their narrowly tuned political antennae.

Plaid is always at its least appealing when it gets all smug and messianic and arrow of history. I say that as someone who does indeed vote Plaid occasionally as part of my political promiscuity. But its appeal is always least when it gets all self-righteous and divine ordination. That silly Adam Price walking around Ammanford video is exactly case in point. That it went up so soon after his victory on the official Plaid feed and was taken down equally quickly shows that some people in that party have literally no idea how to communicate with anyone other than themselves. Bless.

Yet by electing Adam now, on a wave of urgency and despair, Plaid has played its biggest single card. For them, there simply has to be a gear change in electoral outcome or they will be left scratching their heads as to why exactly they performed so mediocrely. It is a pose they have been perfecting from 2015 onward but this time it is, to coin a vulgar phrase, simply 'shit or bust'.

Meanwhile, the Labour leadership election has finally begun. Arguably it is the one most necessary within any of the four parties, but it has taken a tediously long time to get shape and candidates. As Mark Drakeford, Eluned Morgan and Vaughan Gething present themselves to their electors they can reflect not just on each other and the campaigns they are embarking upon, but also upon the energy and zeal with which all three of their opponent parties have made their choices. Where the others have expressed rapidity and brutal transition akin to the emergence of a new Sultan in the Topkapi, Labour has set a pace which suits only itself and, more particularly, its outgoing and bruised leader Carwyn Jones.

But perhaps the most helpful thing to all three aspiring new Labour leaders is the one thing not in Labour's powerful gift. It is that despite the Conservatives having elected in Paul Davies the most coalition-friendly possible leader, the price of Price's landslide election was a commitment not to go into government with the Tories. Therefore, unless something huge and radical and shattering happens – and the realities of Brexit might well fit this bill, however it works out – then it is impossible to foresee any other party overtaking Labour come the 2021 Assembly election.

Yet at the same time, remember that Leanne Wood was only one vote short of becoming First Minister in 2016. Perhaps it will not need a coalition to replace a Labour government in 2021, it will just need a majority of anti-Labour votes on the floor of the Assembly. And in that scenario Paul and Adam need make no pledges to each other, only vote together again should such an opportunity present itself – a fact Mark Drakeford, Eluned Morgan and Vaughan Gething will be desperately aware of as they present their appeals to the party and the nation.

Daran Hill is the managing director of Positif Politics and an occasional political commentator

More on Click on Wales:

Read Daran Hill's assessment of the new leader of the Conservatives group in the Assembly, 'Paul Davies: A Careful and Considerate Politician'

> iwa.wales/click/2018/09/paul-davies-a-careful-and-considerate-politician/

Our cover image features **Aneira Thomas**, 70, from Glanamman, now relatively widely known as the 'first NHS baby', meeting another Aneira, born late 2017 in Cardiff. Aneira Thomas from Glanamman has written and talked about how the National Health Service has run like the lettering in a stick of rock through her entire life. Born at one minute past midnight on Sunday 4th July, 1948, she later became a nurse in a mental health hospital, where she worked for 28 years, and credits the service with saving her life eight times (she suffers from anaphylaxis). But following this summer's celebrations marking seventy years of the NHS, we wondered whether the NHS would still be there in another seventy years for Aneira Thomas from Cardiff, and given the rapid rate of technological and political change, what current policymakers need to do to ensure Aneurin Bevan's legacy adapts to meet the needs of Wales' public, who will continue to require its services from the cradle to the grave.

Will the NHS still be there for Aneira Thomas?

We asked **Heléna Herklots**, *Older People's Commissioner for Wales, and* **Sally Holland**, *Children's Commissioner for Wales, to consider how the NHS might reinvent itself*

1 NHS Wales for Older People

Heléna Herklots calls for vision to become action if the NHS is to future-proof itself by improving outcomes for our ageing population

The recent NHS70 celebrations were an important reminder of just how valuable, and valued, our National Health Service is. Across mainstream and social media, people from hugely diverse backgrounds shared their experiences of the ways that the NHS had touched their lives, caring for and supporting them and their loved ones, often at the most difficult times.

Alongside these stories, the celebrations also highlighted just how much the NHS has changed over the past 70 years, evolving as our needs have continued to change and new treatments and technologies have emerged.

But given how much the NHS has changed over these seven decades, and given that our needs as a society will continue to change in the years and decades ahead, can we take for granted the fact that the NHS will always be there for us, caring for and supporting us 'from the cradle to the grave'?

We are all living for longer than ever before, which is something that should be celebrated and reflects the positive and tangible impact the NHS has had on people's lives. However, an ageing population is also frequently cited as one of the key challenges facing the NHS. But as is so often the case, this is an oversimplification that does not reflect the true issues and reinforces negative stereotypes about older people, which can lead to ageism and discrimination.

Whilst it is true that we are living for longer, the focus should be on 'healthy' life expectancy, which has not kept pace with increases in overall life expectancy, a particular issue in post-industrial Wales. This is something that can and must be dealt with to avoid a considerable increase in the number of older people living with and being treated for multiple diseases, which will create additional pressures for health services that could otherwise be prevented.

That is why investment in preventative services, which have a clear and proven role to play in reducing demand on the NHS, is so important. Whilst Wales has increased its focus on prevention significantly in recent years, something to be welcomed, older people have reported to my office that they find it difficult to access the support they need to prevent deterioration in their health and reduce their need for healthcare.

In addition to investing in preventative services, it's also important to ensure that they are not defined too narrowly. Community services – such as public and community transport, leisure facilities and public toilets – and housing contribute significantly to older people's health, independence and well-being, and have a key role in helping to prevent them from needing to access statutory services. Despite their importance, however, spending on community services has been cut significantly in recent years.

Research has shown that healthcare itself only accounts for 10% of a population's health, so it is vital that wider services – services that have a positive impact on people's physical, mental and emotional health – are not precluded from investment as they do not meet an outdated definition of what constitutes a 'preventative service'.

One of Wales' many strengths is its third sector, which provides a wide range of services that make a positive impact on so many aspects of older people's lives. Third sector organisations are often accessible, flexible and well-placed to respond to local need, and should be seen as a key partner, alongside our social care system and housing, in improving older people's health, well-being and independence, which can reduce demand on NHS services.

Investment in the third sector is therefore essential, particularly as third sector organisations can offer significant returns on investment. It is estimated, for example, that every £1 invested in the services provided by Care and Repair Cymru, which works to ensure that

an ageing population is also frequently cited as one of the key challenges facing the NHS.... an oversimplification that... reinforces negative stereotypes about older people, which can lead to ageism and discrimination

NHS Timeline

5 July 1948
NHS launched by Health Secretary Aneurin Bevan at Park Hospital in Manchester (known today as Trafford General Hospital)

1952
Charges of one shilling are introduced for prescriptions

1953
DNA structure revealed by James D Watson and Francis Crick, two Cambridge University scientists, who describe the structure of a chemical called deoxyribonucleic acid in *Nature* magazine

1954
Smoking and cancer link established

1958
Polio and diphtheria vaccinations programme launched

1959
Mental Health Act built on the recommendations of the Percy Commission (1954) and repealed the Lunacy and Mental Treatment Acts (1890-1930) and the Mental Deficiency Acts (1913-1938); it prioritised community care and the principle of parity between physical and mental health conditions

1960
First UK kidney transplant at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, involving an identical set of 49-year-old twins

older people's homes are safe, secure and appropriate to their needs, saves £11.50 in health and social care costs.

Without the support offered by the third sector, older people would be far more likely to need to access statutory services and support. However, despite the fact they reduce pressures upon statutory services, many successful and effective third sector initiatives across Wales remain at risk as they are not providing a statutory service.

Alongside additional support for the third sector, it is crucial that carers are provided with the support they need. Without the care and support delivered every single day by unpaid carers across Wales, who do so much for so many and deliver care worth a massive £8.1bn a year, our health and social care systems simply could not survive.

Yet carers consistently report being unable to access vital support and respite, and I have seen first-hand the impact this has upon both their physical and mental health. This not only creates avoidable pressures when carers need to access health services, but also means the person they care for is likely to require additional support from the NHS.

When considering how a more holistic approach to improving health and well-being can reduce pressures upon the NHS, it's also important to consider the way that health and social care services interact with each other. Whilst work has been undertaken in recent years to improve integration between health and social care in Wales, with financial support from the Welsh Government's Integrated Care Fund, these systems are still often operating in distinct and structurally separate ways.

The issues that a lack of integration can create – such as poor information sharing, disputes over which system provides care funding and delayed transfers of care – all have an impact on the limited resources available and, more importantly, impact upon people's health, well-being and independence, again creating a need for additional support that would not have been previously required.

Whilst calls have previously been made for a new system that fully integrates health and social care services, restructuring services in this way would result in significant costs and disruption at a time when the system can afford neither. Instead, building upon the innovative approaches to delivering closer integration that are currently being explored and delivered on a small scale in different parts of Wales – such as joint governance structures, specific integrated services, joint planning and pooled budgets – would offer a cost-effective way to deliver significant

improvements and better outcomes for older people, particularly in the short term.

Finally, effective planning across health, social care and housing is another essential part of ensuring that health services are able to meet the population's needs and are sustainable in the long-term.

The demographic changes often highlighted as creating pressures within the system have been expected for many years, yet there has been a failure to plan effectively for the future. Without effective planning, there is a risk of funding shortfalls, a lack of appropriate services and issues around ensuring that Wales has the right number of staff with the right skills and experience to deliver high quality care and support.

The need to deal with the issues and challenges set out above is now widely recognised and accepted, but action is needed immediately to deliver change before health and social care in Wales reaches a potential crisis point. The findings and recommendations of the recent Parliamentary Review of Health and Social Care echo this position, calling for a 'revolution from within' to ensure that health and social care is fit for the future.

In response, the Welsh Government has published 'A Healthier Wales', which sets out how it aims to transform the delivery of health and social care so that services will be able to meet the changing needs of our population. Whilst there is much to welcome in the document, particularly its focus on partnership working and a commitment to ensuring that older people will be 'valued, supported to live independently and treated with dignity and respect', much more detail is needed on how the proposals within the document will actually be implemented. It is essential that the ambition set out within the document becomes the reality for older people and my office will continue to scrutinise the Welsh Government as it works to transform its vision for health and social care into action.

Wales must be bold and take the opportunity to lead the way in transforming health services, utilising the considerable good practice, innovation and expertise available. By doing so we can ensure that the NHS will be able to continue delivering outstanding care to us and our loved ones should we need it, and look forward to celebrating the NHS for years and decades to come.

Heléna Herklots is Older People's Commissioner for Wales

1961
The contraceptive pill is made widely available and between 1962 and 1969, the number of women taking the pill rises dramatically, from approximately 50,000 to 1 million

1962
Enoch Powell's Hospital Plan responds to criticism by the medical profession of the tripartite structure of the NHS – hospitals, general practice and local health authorities – and calls for unification, approving district general hospitals for population areas of around 125,000

1967
The Salmon Report is published, setting out recommendations for developing the nursing staff structure and the status of the profession in hospital management

1967
The Ely scandal, mistreatment of patients with learning disabilities at Ely Hospital in Cardiff, leads to money being especially set aside for these services and the establishment of the Hospital Advisory Service which had a remit to visit and report on conditions at these hospitals

1967
The Abortion Act passed on a free vote, making abortion legal up to 28 weeks

1968
Britain's first heart transplant

1968
British woman gives birth to sextuplets after fertility treatment

1969
The Secretary of State for Wales takes over much of the responsibility for health services in Wales, supported by the Welsh Office which had been established in 1964

1972
CT scans revolutionise the way doctors examine the body

1975
Endorphins are discovered by scientists John Hughes and Hans Kosterlitz of the University of Aberdeen, isolating what they call enkephalins from the brain of a pig

1978
The world's first baby is born as a result of in vitro fertilisation (IVF)

1979
The first successful bone marrow transplant on a child takes place

1980
MRI scans introduced and keyhole surgery used for the first time

1980
The Black Report investigates the inequality of healthcare that still exists despite the foundation of the NHS, including gaps between social classes in the use of medical services, infant mortality rates and life expectancy. Poor people are still more likely to die earlier than the well-off. The Whitehead Report in 1987 and the Acheson Report in 1998 both reached the same conclusion.

1982
Eight Area Health Authorities in Wales become nine District Health Authorities

1983
The Mental Health Act introduces consent

1985
The Welsh Health Promotion Authority launches Heartbeat Wales, a programme seeking to reduce the level of heart disease in the country

1986
First AIDS health campaign sets out to shock, using images of tombstones and icebergs

2 NHS Wales for Children

Sally Holland argues that to survive, the NHS needs to become 'a different beast', with more multi-agency, multidisciplinary working, responsive to children and families' complex lives

The first baby born under the NHS was named Aneira in homage to Aneurin Bevan. If the NHS is to be there for babies like Aneira, born now and in the future, it will need to become a creature of adaptation and seamless multi-agency working. The NHS cannot stand alone as an institution when it comes to the complex needs of the population. The needs of an individual child can involve several agencies across several disciplines. At the core of these services are health and education, but it also includes social care, the voluntary sector, youth services, the police and others.

Social care is often perceived as being an older people's service, but it is also a vital service for our children and young people. Like the NHS, social care is under severe financial strain amidst rising demand. Both services, in my view, still work too much in parallel rather than pooling expertise and resources to support children and meet their needs.

The guiding principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child state that the convention applies to every child without discrimination; that the best interests of the child must be a priority; that every child has a right to life, survival and development; and that every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them. Wales has built these human rights of children into its laws and they provide a vital message to our children: 'We provide support and services for you because all children have the equal *right* to achieve their potential'.

Here I would like to explore how these guiding principles can be better served by a multidisciplinary approach to the needs of vulnerable children.

Mental health and well-being

The Welsh Government has, in recent years, invested in several initiatives designed to address children and young people's mental health and well-being. My concern with these programmes is that they mainly try to improve the existing system of separate health, social and education services and have not adequately addressed the need for preventative services, and early intervention. This includes meeting the needs of the 'missing middle' (*Mind Over Matter*, April 2018): those children whose mental health needs

are not viewed as 'serious enough' to require specialist help but who display clear signs of distress. We need to provide a 'no wrong door' policy for children and young people whose everyday lives are constrained by their feelings and behaviour – without labelling them into too many separate boxes. Far too often, I hear that children are told they do not meet the required threshold, and are therefore unable to access support of any kind until they reach crisis point. Surprisingly, those turned down for mental health support can include those that we know have experienced serious trauma in their lives, but their expression of that trauma is seen as mainly a behavioural issue.

Different services cater for mental health, physical health, social needs and education, despite these issues often being connected to each other. Navigating them can become a full-time job for some families. Indeed, parents tell me of having to give up work to care for their child. Change is needed at all levels, from school and community-based prevention, through specialist teams, right up to in-patient and residential care. All of these need the NHS and other services to pool their collective expertise and resources.

A whole-school approach

There is an increasing consensus that a 'whole-school approach' to emotional and mental health should be at the core of prevention and early intervention for school-aged children. I have been urging the Welsh Government for two years to bring its education and mental health reform programmes together to develop this approach. A whole-school, and even better, a whole-system approach at last seems to be gaining momentum within Government, although the products are still not evident.

I am pleased that the new Curriculum will have a specific focus on Health and Well-being, as a core 'Area of Learning and Experience' (AOLE). A whole-school approach incorporates the curriculum but is not limited to it. I see the 'whole-school approach' as a set of expectations around mental health and well-being provision in schools, which covers both what children learn in school (for example mental health awareness, child and adolescent development, relationships and sexuality education), and the supportive environment of the school (which should include anti-bullying measures, school counsellors, support groups, evidence-based preventative and early intervention programmes and nurture areas or other safe areas for children and young people to receive support). Some schools have also successfully introduced universal activities into the school day, including daily 'check-ins' of feelings, mindfulness, or systematic additional physical activity such as the Daily Mile or yoga, recognising the links

1988
Breast screening introduced

1989
The Welsh Health Planning Forum published the Strategic Intent and Direction for the NHS in Wales which pioneered the concept of 'health gain'

1990
NHS Community Care Act

1990
The 'Internal Market' or 'Purchaser/Provider Split' further introduces business and market principles into the organisation and delivery of health services

1991
First 57 NHS trusts established across the UK

1994
NHS Organ Donor Register is set up

1996
Fresh Start document merges the District Health Authorities and Family Health Services Authorities into five Health Authorities covering the whole of Wales

1998
NHS Direct launched

1998
Better Health, Better Wales published, explicitly linking poverty with ill-health

2001
Improving Health in Wales – A Plan for the NHS with its partners proposed new structures and organisational change for the NHS in Wales; the five Health Authorities in Wales are dissolved in this new structure

2009
Major reorganisation of NHS Wales: the NHS now delivers services through seven Health Boards and three NHS Trusts in Wales, responsible for delivering all healthcare services within each geographical area

Sources: nhs.wales.uk and nhs.uk

between mental and physical health. School staff also need to be able to be more easily able to access support beyond the school gates – some have to go to inordinate lengths to secure mental health and social support for their students.

Multidisciplinary services

Some children and young people will need additional help for their emotional, behavioural and mental health needs, however nurturing their school environment. It no longer makes any sense for the NHS to deliver CAMHS separately from other services; they should be integrated into multidisciplinary teams similar to those established decades ago in adult mental health services.

The fairly new Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs), seven statutory boards set up with the focus of delivering integrated health and social care services on a regional basis, hold the valuable position of having influence over those services essential for children's well-being, but to date their agenda has been dominated by the challenge of meeting adult care needs. I believe it is time that RPBs were under a duty to ensure that their local areas support children's emotional, behavioural and mental health needs through a whole-system, child-centred multidisciplinary approach. Some RPBs in Wales have established partnership groups which have a specific focus on children and young people. I believe that all RPBs should have such groups to inform their work.

I've chosen to focus on children's emotional, behavioural and mental health needs, but exactly the same principles apply for disabled children. Most children with learning or physical disabilities, or neurological conditions such as autism will require additional health, education and social care services, but at the moment most families have to navigate and often battle for each service separately. They have to work out where their child can 'fit' into each pathway in each of those systems rather than services coming together to work out together what they can do for this child. Even within the health service, paediatric and neurodevelopmental services can be organised completely separately, although this is slowly improving under the recent mental health reforms. Often exhausted families need the support of coordinated and wherever possible 'one-stop' services. There are examples of 'early help hubs' and 'single point of access' centres in pockets across Wales, but much more must be done to make comprehensive multi-agency services accessible to all children and young people, wherever they live in Wales.

So will the NHS still be there for a future baby Aneira in another 70 years' time? I am optimistic that it will, but to be sustainable it will need to be a different beast to the one we have now. The Government's new 10-year vision of *A Healthier Wales* is certainly ambitious, and this ambition is to be welcomed. However, it is no more than a vision in its current form. Our Government needs to be radical in recognising that just as children and their families' lives do not fall into compartments of 'health', 'social need' or 'education', nor should our public services. ➤

Sally Holland is the Children's Commissioner for Wales. A registered social worker, previously she was a professor at Cardiff University's School of Social Sciences, where she set up CASCADE Children's Social Care Research and Development Centre

London Calling

Photo Credit: Hayes Davidson

Russell Harris *says that, after Brexit, closer economic ties with London are essential for Wales*

Wales on the edge of Europe

Europe's western seaboard was once one of its most wealthy regions. The perils of inland travel meant that being on the Atlantic fringe and having access to its seaways for trade gave its peoples a significant comparative advantage. The communities of Bronze Age Atlantic Europe traded healthily and wealthily with each other. The links between Wales, Cornwall, Ireland, Brittany and Iberia were economic, cultural and linguistic. The closely related forms of Celtic languages still spoken across these western fringes are a reminder of this economic and cultural success.

The study of these heady and fascinating times is now the preserve of the linguist and the archaeologist. See, for example, Barry Cunliffe's *Facing the Ocean* (OUP). Today, the *economic* centre of gravity of Europe has shifted far to the east, to the Rhine/Ruhr and the Thames valleys. The regions still 'facing the ocean' are now among the poorest and most economically isolated in the European Union.

Large parts of Wales (and Cornwall, Portugal and Atlantic Spain) are designated by the EU as 'less developed': the status reserved for the EU's poorest and most needy regions. They are all, until Brexit at least, entitled to Objective 1 assistance from the EU Regional Development Fund. Its aim is to secure the economic convergence of Europe's regions by ensuring that the most disadvantaged regions are not 'left behind' by the more prosperous.

The most recent annual Chief Economist's Report for the Welsh Government (WG) (October 2017) helps explain why, even pre-Brexit, large parts of Wales are placed by the EU in the same lowly economic category as Bulgaria, Sicily and Estonia.

The Report identifies that Wales (as a whole, including its more affluent south east) has the lowest GDP and productivity per head of all of the countries or other regions of the UK. It has amongst the lowest employment levels and the highest dependency rates too. It makes bleak reading.

Brexit will make this existing situation significantly worse for Wales. In its wake, the Chief Economist forecasts a general slowdown in growth and potentially a recession as a result of uncertainty and devaluation. The loss, post-Brexit of both Objective 1 status and cash and the linked EU political support for the integration of the 'fringe' regions will also make things worse. Wales will be poorer and potentially more politically isolated.

The reasons for this sorry position are manifold. But one structural, pre-Brexit reason for the weakening state of the Welsh economy is clear and is now fully understood by the WG. Wales lacks a sufficiently large city or City Region. In the relevant economic academic jargon, it lacks 'access to economic mass'.

It is now a recognised economic fact that higher rates of GDP per capita, productivity and employment are, in post-industrial societies, linked to the existence of large cities or integrated City Regions.

Large cities can now be demonstrated to create virtuous circles of enhanced productivity and innovation, increased employment, reduced dependency and higher rates of economic and infrastructure growth. The larger the city or integrated City Region, the more profound the economic benefits. Critical mass is all important.

Research reported by central government in England (Department of Transport 2014) has established that a city of 5 million people is likely to have a productivity level up to 26% higher than one of half a million and that the impacts of such an uplift are transformational.

In European terms, put simply, Wales has no large cities or integrated City Regions. Neither in the short to medium term is there a realistic prospect of it creating one. Cardiff has about 370,00 inhabitants and doesn't even feature in the list of the largest 150 European cities.

So how should this structural absence of 'access to economic mass' be addressed, post-Brexit? How does Wales, sitting on the edge of Europe, outside the EU improve the lot of its people?

How does Wales, sitting on the edge of Europe, outside the EU improve the lot of its people?

Contrasting Economies:	
London	**Wales**
GVA for 2016	
£408bn *(23% of UK GDP)*	**£60bn** *(3.4% of UK GDP)*
Fiscal balance	
£32.5 bn *(surplus)*	**£13.2 bn** *(deficit)*
Tax revenues per capita	
£16,545	**£8,371**

In the longer term, the creation of a significant integrated City Region centred on Cardiff will be part of the solution. The Cardiff Capital Region Board has begun this work. But given the existing absence of economic mass and the limited and lessening availability of European, state and local authority funding, realism is needed. Structural change generated through Cardiff's growth is a very long way off.

In the short to medium term, there is realistically only one means of accessing significant economic mass.

London, England

London is one of Europe's economic powerhouses. It has at present almost 9m inhabitants and productivity rates about 40% higher than those achieved in Wales.

In economic terms, its sheer economic scale and power compared to the UK's other regions, is difficult to comprehend. London really is a different country.

The new London Plan (2018) explains that even post Brexit, 'London's population is set to grow from 8.9 million today to around 10.8 million by 2041. As it does so, employment is expected to increase on average by 49,000 jobs each year. This rapid growth will bring many opportunities, but it will also lead to increasing and competing pressures on the use of space.' This is economic mass and growth of the type about which other regions can only dream.

And not all of the economic activity generated by this economic mass can ever viably find a home within London itself. Those investing in the UK's capital city also require significant office, research and development, logistics, tech,

Investors often speak of 90 minutes as the highest sustainable journey time between their London and out of London workforce. By that test Cardiff is too far away. But it needn't be

and ancillary employment space outside London. These are not second order opportunities. They represent the potential for investment and growth of exactly the type needed by Wales.

Cardiff, Wales

Cardiff and its region is potentially well placed to meet some of these needs.

It is, itself, a capital city with the economic and social cache that brings for inward investors. Land is comparatively inexpensive. Wales has the benefit of having no meaningful class system, a system that many international investors find puzzling and alienating. Despite the parlous state of the economy, Wales and Cardiff punch well above their weight in sport and culture, language and landscape. Wales has an improving and well respected university, research and technology sector. It is a good place to be.

But there is much to do if this potential to 'access' London's economic mass is to be realised.

What needs to be done?

Wales needs a much more flexible, transparent, ambitious and responsive spatial strategy. The planning system in Wales is underfunded, unresponsive and slow compared to London. Cardiff lacks the strong political hand of a powerful Mayor with wide spatial powers.

Large areas of brownfield land in and around Cardiff should be the subject of the lightest and most responsive of policies to encourage inward investment. The planning system should protect what demonstrably needs protecting in terms of landscape and built and natural environment but otherwise make it clear to inward investors that the barriers are limited.

Planners should be bolder and seek in Cardiff city centre to create iconic buildings of high quality, befitting a brave, confident city.

The Welsh Government needs significantly to enhance its presence in London yet further. Wales and its Government does need to have a more global presence post-Brexit. But let us be very clear: a rapidly growing London is the best and most likely source of inward investment into Wales. WG should seek to monitor potential new investment in London and to forge relationships early with those who would also need space outside of the capital. A firmer relationship with the Mayor and Greater London Authority must be created so that on issues of mutual interest (such as transport into and out of the capital) there can be joint working.

And, the very ability to gain 'access to economic mass' must be improved. The train journey from London to Cardiff on average still takes significantly more than two hours which is unacceptably slow for a 212km journey. A fast, clean, non stop train to and from London is essential if Wales is to profit from the remarkable economic growth of Western Europe's largest city. Investors often speak of 90 minutes as the highest sustainable journey time between their London and out of London workforce. By that test Cardiff is too far away. But it needn't be.

Finally, care must be taken to ensure that the political drive for further devolution from England (which by and large is well aimed) does not create differences or a culture which act as barriers to entry for the new investment, new jobs or the new people which Wales needs and which London can provide. Unshackling the country politically from Westminster must not come at the price of cutting or stifling its links with the economic powerhouse of London. That would be an empty and tokenistic victory for politics over well-being and growth.

Conclusion

After Brexit, Wales will still sit on the western fringes of the continent: no politician can change that geographical fact. It won't be able, any longer, to look to the EU to bring its 'fringe' economy into line with the rest of Europe via the convergence programmes. Neither in today's world can it look to its Atlantic edge Celtic cousins for help. Rather, for now, Wales needs without shame or fear to look east to Europe's biggest and fastest growing economic mass. It needs to look to London.

Russell Harris QC was born in Pontlottyn and read economics and social and political science at Cambridge University. He has, as a QC, promoted every version of the London Plan for Mayors Livingston, Johnson and Khan and acted for the developers of Heron Tower, The Shard, One Blackfriars and the Walkie Talkie in London. He gave evidence to the Welsh Government's Task and Finish Report on City Regions

The Territorial Secretaries of State – *a view from outside*

Bill Jeffrey *picks through the arguments for and against the need for territorial secretaries of state in the age of devolution*

The magnificent asymmetry which characterises the governance of the UK nations extends to the so-called 'territorial Departments', which have radically different histories and functions. To illustrate the point, the Home Office which I joined in 1971 had dealings with a Scottish Office which had existed in some form since 1885, overseeing very substantial administratively devolved functions, including historically separate justice and education systems; and a Welsh Office which had been formed by the Wilson Government only six years earlier, with limited administrative devolution. (My new colleagues in 1971 had, for example, only very recently transferred responsibility for as devolution-ripe a topic as childcare to Cardiff, and policing was then, as now, managed on an England and Wales basis.) Elsewhere in the Home Office, a long-neglected Division responsible for relations with Stormont was supporting Ministers in grappling with civil disorder and the terrorist threat in Northern Ireland, and was still six months away from direct rule and the creation of the Northern Ireland Secretary and the Northern Ireland Office (NIO).

Today, although the fact of devolution changed the functions of the territorial Secretaries of State dramatically, the differences between the three nations are just as marked. To take the most obvious, the Northern Ireland Secretary and her Department are the main UK Government players in a political process which didn't end on Good Friday 1998 (or even with the breakthrough in 2007) and shows no sign of ending any time soon. If their current efforts to restore the political institutions in Belfast are unsuccessful, undesirable as that outcome would be, UK Ministers in the NIO could again become responsible for the administration of Northern Ireland under direct rule. They are also important interlocutors with an Irish Government still bruised by the Brexit vote and fearful for its consequences for the peace process. There is, in my view, no foreseeable prospect of there being a plausible case for abolishing the role of Northern Ireland Secretary and/or absorbing the NIO into the central Whitehall machine.

That leaves Scotland and Wales. On the face of it, the Scottish and Welsh cases are more similar, and indeed they are. But even here, and even after the move to a reserved powers model in the Wales Act 2017, there are substantial differences in the devolution settlements, which have a bearing on the functions of the Secretaries of State. The description of the responsibilities of the Secretary of State for Scotland on the Gov.uk site is a terse 34 words – his 'main role is to promote and protect the devolution settlement – other responsibilities include promoting partnership between the UK Government and the Scottish Government and relations between the Parliaments'. The equivalent text for the Welsh Secretary describes him as responsible for 'the overall strategic direction of the Wales Office', followed by a long list of specific responsibilities, ranging from economy and business and foreign affairs to steel, the Swansea City deal, the North Wales Growth deal and broadcasting. This may be a consequence of a devolution settlement which, while closer to the Scottish model than it was in 1999, is nevertheless still significantly less 'complete', with much more of the domestic policy terrain reserved to Westminster and Whitehall.

The conclusion I draw from all this is the unremarkable one that the enthusiasm which some tidy-minded constitutional experts have shown for a one-size-fits-all Department of the Nations is misplaced, not least because of Northern Ireland. The three cases are different, and are best considered individually on their merits.

In considering these merits, as is clearly happening in Wales now, I would offer two observations. One is that, although the UK Government is not the only interested party, and others have an interest in how best

the enthusiasm which some tidy-minded constitutional experts have shown for a one-size-fits-all Department of the Nations is misplaced

to conduct the relationship between central Government and the devolved administrations and in the maintenance of the Union, whether to have a Scottish or Welsh Secretary in the Cabinet is, in the end, a matter for the Prime Minister of the day.

The other is that, although there is obviously a significant political dimension to this issue, my Cabinet Office training tells me that, in designing the machinery of government, there is never any harm – and indeed some benefit – in starting with an analysis of the actual functions to be carried out. Form should follow function.

Three questions relevant to such an analysis occur to me. First, how significant, from both standpoints, national and devolved, is the function of representing Scottish/Welsh interests in Cabinet and in Whitehall? There is a political dimension to this, because when the governing party is poorly represented in Scotland and Wales, as is the case now, there is a stronger case for having a Scottish or Welsh voice at the Cabinet table.

Second, is there a function of contributing to the cohesion with which the UK Government and the devolved administrations collectively govern the country? Cohesion matters, because our devolution settlements reach into so many aspects of national life, and the risk that the three (or four) systems drift apart with unintended adverse consequences for all needs to be actively managed, in a manner that fully respects these settlements. This issue has recently been brought into clearer focus by Brexit, because the importation (or perhaps more accurately repatriation) of regulatory and other functions currently within exclusive EU competence will increase the likelihood of divergence where these functions will in future be devolved.

This has led to substantial activity at the centre of the UK Government to identify policy areas where Common Frameworks will be desirable, and to calls from commentators, including, in a recent report, the Select Committee on Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs, for more formal machinery to handle inter-Governmental relations in the UK, to replace the Joint

Secretaries of State for Wales in the age of devolution

Ron Davies
1997–8

Alun Michael
1998–9

Paul Murphy
1999–2002
2008–9

Peter Hain
2002–2008
2009–10

Cheryl Gillan
2010–12

David Jones
2012–14

Stephen Crabb
2014–16

Alun Cairns
2016–

Ministerial Committee (JMC) structure. The question for these purposes is what part the territorial Secretaries of State could usefully play in such arrangements. They are not members of the JMC, but are free to attend meetings. Scotland and Wales Office officials are part of the Constitution Group in the Cabinet Office, which leads on this work within the Civil Service. It would be interesting to know how active a part the Scottish and Welsh Secretaries have played, or whether the political leadership in this area rests, in practice, with Cabinet Office Ministers and other Whitehall Departments.

Finally, is there a function related to remaining domestic reserved matters, notwithstanding the fact that these matters are, by definition, covered by the relevant Whitehall Departments? To take the most obvious examples, what role, if any, does the Welsh Secretary have within Government in relation to policing or the administration of justice in Wales; and is there value in the Home Secretary and the Justice Secretary having a Cabinet colleague able to bring a specific Welsh perspective to these matters?

Without offering any conclusion (which I'm not well placed to do), these are among the questions which I would suggest are worth addressing in assessing the case for abolition. The last is in some ways the most interesting, because if there is a substantial role for a territorial Secretary of State in relation to remaining domestic reserved matters, it would suggest that there is a stronger case for abolishing the Scottish post than the Welsh one, although in practice – notwithstanding what I've said above about the three cases being distinct – the politics of abolishing the one but not the other make that pretty unlikely! ➤

Bill Jeffrey is a semi-retired senior civil servant who served in the Home Office, the Cabinet Office, the Northern Ireland Office and the Ministry of Defence. He wrote the arrival briefs on constitutional matters for the incoming Prime Minister in 1997, and was Political Director under three Secretaries of State for Northern Ireland between 1998 and 2002

Alun Cairns: Work, Wales and Whitehall

Anthony Pickles *meets a bullish and energetic Secretary of State for Wales to talk business, Brexit – and the Bridge*

Alun Cairns has been Welsh Secretary for over two and a half years. In that time, the UK voted to leave the European Union, the Prime Minister changed, there's a new Welsh Tory Leader, and soon, a new First Minister. Oh, and a change in the name of the Severn Bridge, but more of that later.

When we meet, Cairns is on the eve of a cabinet meeting to discuss a possible 'no deal' Brexit. On his desk in Gwydyr House, the HQ of the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales in Whitehall, stands a red despatch box with half a foot of briefings and papers ahead of the meeting. 'A trade deal with Europe. We must have one,' he says when I ask what the best outcome is for Wales. 'But we have to take the opportunities of Brexit because I am genuinely excited by it, especially the new interest in the UK.' The tone is more positive than some of the other cabinet ministers who like Cairns voted remain. Since his appointment, he's made it a mission to take Welsh businesses overseas, with visits so far to Hong Kong, South Africa, USA, Japan, Kuwait and Qatar. 'Wales is the fastest growing nation in the UK, Cardiff is the fastest growing city, and after NATO, the Champions League, Cardiff City, Swansea City...' It sounds like the First Minister's message sheet, I interject, but he continues, 'and despite the various viewpoints, Wales is recognised because of the Prince of Wales.'

Cairns believes that Welsh businesses have to get out and sell their wares in the new markets of the world. He's equally emphatic about Wales' chances of shaping a fourth industrial revolution. 'The compound semi-conductor cluster between Cardiff and Newport universities is stand out and has the potential to be our Silicon Valley of the future.'

Well known in Westminster as much for his seven completed London marathons as his role as a cabinet minister, Cairns fizzes with energy. When I arrive in his grand office overlooking Whitehall and the corner of Downing Street, he leaps out of his seat, where he'd been meeting with his special advisers. 'This morning I was in Bedford speaking about electric vehicles, and later I've got a reception with the Welsh and Scottish press lobbies, before getting on with these papers.' A seemingly typical day in the role.

It hasn't been the easiest of years for Alun Cairns. A number of UK Government decisions have led to disappointment and in some quarters even anger. The mothballing of the Swansea Bay tidal lagoon on the back of the decision not to electrify the line from Cardiff to Swansea (previously an agreed Conservative Government policy under David Cameron) even resulted in Plaid Cymru tabling a motion of no confidence in him in the Assembly

Personal life
Married to Emma with one son, lives in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Brought up:
'a Welsh speaking corner of the Swansea valley.' Attended Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera near Neath Port Talbot.

Became interested:
'I was a news junkie, I used to watch Newsround as a kid, and we talked politics at home.'

Key moments:
Elected to the National Assembly for Wales in 1999 as a regional member for South Wales West. Then elected as MP for the Vale of Glamorgan in 2010. He served as the parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Wales Office, and Government Whip until his promotion to Welsh Secretary in 2016.

Media:
'When I wake up, I read the *Times* Red Box, *Telegraph* business pages, I flick through BBC Wales online, and listen to BBC Radio Wales.'

(a motion which was defeated). The criticism doesn't seem to faze him. 'The Twittersphere appears to be fierce when they think I've done something wrong, but when I do deliver some seem to think it's almost in spite of efforts.' Criticism was particularly vocal earlier in the summer at the decision to rename the second Severn Crossing the 'Prince of Wales Bridge'. An internet petition to stop it was signed by over 40,000 people and led to accusations of 'servile toadyism'. As it turned out, the renaming went ahead without fanfare or protest on the day.

Gwydyr House is best known to some as the backdrop of the Department for Administrative Affairs in the BBC's famous series, 'Yes, Minister'. Walking up the 18th century cantilevered staircase, the visitor passes framed photographs of all the previous Welsh Secretaries, starting with Jim Griffiths in 1964 all the way through to Stephen Crabb. The building also houses the London lieutenancy, alongside the fifty or so civil servants, many being constitutional experts navigating the complex settlement. In Wales, the minister will – with his Cardiff Bay based team of officials – move to Central Square in 2020 to a new UK Government hub – the largest office scheme in Wales.

'It's about ensuring that Wales is at the heart of the UK Government. Not all of Whitehall understands every part of the country all of the time,' says Cairns when I ask what the job is. Prior to joining the cabinet, he had been the junior minister in the department, and a whip keeping order and discipline amongst MPs in the House of Commons with a majority of twelve seats. His appointment came following the promotion of Stephen Crabb to the Department for Work and Pensions in a minor reshuffle in March 2016. 'I'd actually just come out of the shower, and the Downing Street switchboard came through on my mobile.'

Given he'd been caught unaware of his sudden elevation, he couldn't have known what was awaiting in his in-tray. 'I was told immediately that there was – and it wasn't public at the time – a crisis facing Tata Steel.'

'I spoke to Stephen on the Sunday, and then at 9am on the Monday I was in Number Ten for a meeting with the PM, the Chancellor, Business Secretary and Chief Secretary for the first talks on what we'd do. We looked at things like a Development Corporation – such as the Cardiff Bay model and what legislative things were possible. Cameron told me that steel was of strategic importance to the UK.'

At that time, Cairns would have known more than most the importance of Port Talbot to communities in south west Wales having been brought up in a Welsh-speaking area of the Swansea valley to a steelworker father.

Another key figure in his tenure so far has been the First Minister, Carwyn Jones, with Cairns describing the relationship as being 'a bit like a chess game between us where we both gently advance our causes.' Both men had been elected to the Assembly in 1999 and had a loose pairing arrangement with each other in the early days. By the time of Cairns' departure from Cardiff Bay following his election in the Vale of Glamorgan parliamentary constituency, Jones had become First Minister. 'He's dominated politics in Wales for the best part of eight years, but he's also crafted a position where he is believed in some quarters to represent the view of Wales. Of course that is not the case: he represents his governing party in Wales in devolved areas. But he's managed to get himself to a position where he was looked to about a much wider range of things, beyond the remit of the Assembly.'

The new First Minister takes over at a time where

significant powers stand ready to be used, especially those of devolved taxes. 'It's hugely significant. They are now accountable for what they spend.' Some commentators have pointed out that the income tax base of Wales renders the powers unusable with 1.2m out of 1.4m taxpayers on the basic rate. 'I'll be disappointed – and all of those commentators who called for the powers will be disappointed if they're not used. Everyone assumes that taxes will rise, but just look at the forty per cent rate. To cut it by a penny would cost just £15m, so you could reduce the forty per cent rate for Welsh police, teachers, firefighters and entrepreneurs. We could have the lowest tax rate… and the message it would send to the whole of Europe and the UK would be that Wales is a great place to invest.'

I put it to Cairns that most of our discussion has focused on those who are in work. What about those who aren't?

'The Welsh Government has said no to welfare because they haven't got the capacity. That argument was used with business rates. Experts will have looked at these issues and ruled it out because of the proportion of claimants over the level of income raised. I don't see it, but it's strange that as soon as one constitutional settlement is agreed, there are demands for the next thing like justice and policing – issues which are never brought up on the doorstep.'

He also has a keen eye for the regional devolution England is witnessing through the election of metro mayors: 'the quality of the people and their effectiveness at driving investment into their cities shows what Wales is competing with.' Could they come to Wales? Only if they are given the executive powers and feel that change can take place, he says.

Since 1997, when the Tories were left without a single MP in Wales, the brand has changed and devolution accepted if not enthusiastically embraced in some quarters, and Cairns has been at the heart of the project. The party now has eight MPs and is the official opposition in the Senedd. However, there's yet to be a female Welsh Tory MP. I ask whether this will change at the next election. 'It has to,' says Cairns, 'it must. We cannot go another five years.'

At the 2016 Assembly elections, both Plaid Cymru and Welsh Labour saw former and current MPs choose the Assembly over Westminster. The Welsh Conservatives haven't seen this trend with six former AMs becoming MPs, and no single MP choosing Cardiff Bay – including Cairns himself. 'I think movement is healthy because it's important for Whitehall to understand the Assembly and vice versa.' Will we see Tory MPs follow suit? He's clear it'll happen in time.

Alun Cairns' personal politics are interesting. He's the most pro-devolution Secretary of State of either party, yet firmly economically right-wing. He voted remain, and yet seems optimistic for a good Brexit. His first political memory was the election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979, when the eight-year-old Cairns ran to the family breakfast table to inquire whether Plaid Cymru had won – possibly a clue to the environment he was brought up in. He's a fluent Welsh speaker, saying that he thinks in both languages and pleased that it offers him differing perspectives on communities across Wales. Spending part of his summer in Ceredigion at his parents' caravan, he says 'everyone speaks Welsh whilst I'm there and there's a greater familiarity because of it.'

We end our conversation with me asking him what Whitehall would look like if there was no Welsh Secretary. Bullishly, he says if it hadn't been for the the Office of Secretary of State for Wales, Severn tolls would still be in place next year, Wylfa investment wouldn't be on the table, and the Welsh Government wouldn't have backed the EU Withdrawal Bill. 'If my department didn't exist, there would be a demand for one to make sure that Wales is understood in Whitehall.' He's philosophical about the historic structural changes to the office since devolution. Once, many of the current powers of the Welsh Government resided with the Secretary of State, but he's emphatic about what the office delivers. 'The Prime Minister's main priority is the protection of the Union. Very early on in any cabinet meeting, she'll call on the Secretaries of State for Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland for a view.'

What is clear as I leave Gwydyr House is that Cairns' energy and enthusiasm is compelling. His enemies see him as a Thatcherite throwback, but what that misjudges is his pragmatism around the devolved settlement and his lived experience of the Assembly. The son of a shopkeeper and a steelworker, his journey has taken him to the Cabinet table. 2018 will close with a new First Minister and potentially a new Brexit settlement and the man navigating Wales' future role will be Alun Cairns. ▶

Anthony Pickles is an IWA Board Member

What do we expect from a First Minister?

As the race to replace Carwyn Jones enters its final phase, **Paul Griffiths** *takes a step back to consider the nature of the job*

I worked daily with Rhodri Morgan for over seven years as his Senior Special Adviser. What did he do? What did I do? What was the point? The answers should be obvious. Rhodri was the most important man in Wales, was he not? He was there to change Wales, surely?

In moments of intellectual haze we have this vision of the heroic political leader whose ideology is world-shatteringly novel, whose strategy is transformative in reducing complexity to a series of simple steps, whose oratory aligns a nation to its true goals.

More prosaically, if you gave an HR consultant the First Minister's daily activity list, the conclusion would be that this job was that of a 'Relationship Manager', that is 'the supervision and maintenance of relationships between an organisation and its partners'.

For perhaps an average of twelve hours a day a First Minister is 'managing relationships'. This may seem a disappointment for those yearning for the Trump style authority and charisma which shifts mountains with the post of a tweet – but ultimately managing relationships is the essential core activity of a political leader.

I recall a typical weekly diary: the Assembly political group meeting; First Minister's Questions; meeting with the Secretary of State; the Cabinet meeting; the weekly meeting with the Permanent Secretary; meeting with a senior executive of Airbus or a Health Board or a local authority leader; a briefing on a proposed transport investment; addressing the conference dinner of a professional association; a visit to a university launching a newly funded research project; meeting a group of volunteers who have transformed the ecology of a former industrial wasteland; visiting a pioneering new enterprise that transforms sewage into healthy fish food; attending a televised sporting or cultural event; walking the street of some unsuspecting town or village.

At each engagement the First Minister is sharing with others the confidence that the Government has a clear purpose and direction; and that those he meets are valued for having some essential contribution to achieving this shared purpose.

The attributes of a First Minister include that open personality and lively mind which makes other people feel crucially important, whilst having the imagination and communication skills that can suggest courses of action which align disparate activities into some shared purpose. Relationships are being made, nurtured and managed.

If anyone is not convinced of the importance of relationship management for a successful political leader, I would point to what happens when it is absent. Theresa May is a failing prime minister for a number of reasons. Some, like the Brexit inheritance, are largely beyond her control, but crucially she lacks the skills to maintain her relationships with her cabinet colleagues, her political party and the public at large. After some years in office Tony Blair began to believe in his own omnipotence and omniscience – he stopped investing in his relationships with his own political party and ultimately his cabinet colleagues; and once those relationship fractured he ceased to be a political leader.

if you gave an HR consultant the First Minister's daily activity list, the conclusion would be that this job was that of a 'Relationship Manager'

The two most successful political leaders in modern

Britain, in their own terms, have been Clement Attlee and Margaret Thatcher. Both created profound shifts in the nature of British society, our expectations of each other and the role of Government. Attlee worked through his cabinet colleagues, a challenging mix of strong personalities, and his wider political party; quietly making and maintaining relations to shift our whole political discourse. Thatcher was clearly more divisive but in her most successful period she worked effectively to maintain core support in her own party and shift expectations in the wider society.

Rhodri Morgan worked assiduously in maintaining all the relationships necessary for achieving effective government. It was no accident that he was one of the very few political leaders, along with Carwyn Jones, who chose the timing of his own retirement – neither death nor failure being causal factors. He used those relationships not just to retain office but to achieve his key strategic purpose of embedding the expectation of a significant measure of self-government into the political culture of Wales. So successful was Rhodri in shifting political expectations in Wales that there are those who remain blind to what has happened. Back in the 1990s, the dominant view was that self-government in Wales would either not happen or that it would fail. There was a fundamental lack of confidence in the ability of people in Wales to enhance control over their own affairs. Rhodri created a profound ideological shift by aligning relationships in support of the practice and expectation of self-government.

Welsh Labour leadership candidates

Mark Drakeford

Political roles

AM for Cardiff West since 2011

Cabinet Secretary for Finance since 2016

Nominations from AMs

17/29 **58.6%**

Vaughan Gething

Political roles

AM for Cardiff South and Penarth since 2011

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services since 2016

Nominations from AMs

6/29 **20.7%**

Eluned Morgan

Political roles

AM for Mid and West Wales since 2016

Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning since 2017

Nominations from AMs

6/29 **20.7%**

A key feature of how Rhodri Morgan achieved this remarkable change in Welsh politics was the balance he achieved in his relationship with the UK Government and his relationship with people in Wales. Rhodri Morgan worked assiduously in maintaining a working relationship with Tony Blair as Prime Minister and Paul Murphy as Secretary of State, but it was the management of a deliberately detached relationship. Wales had its own policy agenda which did not involve the marketisation of public services such as health and education; there would be no extension of the Private Finance Initiative. Because he managed a detached relationship with the UK Government, Rhodri Morgan was able to place himself and his colleagues at the fulcrum of political relationships in Wales. Elections would come and go but Welsh Labour would remain the dominant political force, able to make coalitions with other political partners.

It is worth contrasting the experience of Welsh Labour with that of Scottish Labour. In the Blair decade Welsh Labour managed this detached relationship with the UK Government, extolling the virtue of a distinctive policy agenda. In contrast, Scottish Labour allowed itself to become a Scottish arm of the Blair Project. When Scottish Labour sought to develop its relationships with other political groupings within Scotland it failed and became irrelevant. It was because the First Minister in Wales had developed appropriate relationships within and outwith Wales, that he was able to sustain his own Government and its own purpose.

We need an economy that both increases and spreads prosperity by harnessing the energies of the hitherto most deprived

Looking to the future, how will the next First Minister build on the experience of the past? We need to refresh our strategic purposes. We need an economy that both increases and spreads prosperity by harnessing the energies of the hitherto most deprived, building on the experience of Merthyr Tydfil to show how public investment can stimulate innovation and achieve greater equality. We need to harness the ambition of individuals to share responsibility for good health between the Welsh Health Service and active citizens. We need to harness the undoubted energies of our schools, colleges and businesses to develop and use the skills that allow Welsh business to succeed in Europe and the wider world. We need to value and nurture the strength in our local communities as citizens are empowered to work in support of each other.

As the next First Minister develops the relationships necessary to achieve those goals, he or she will focus on political relationships within Wales. The First Minister will manage a purposeful but detached relationship with political parties and governments across the United Kingdom. We will not assume subservience to Corbyn or May or their successors. As others in the UK assume 'with us or against us' factional divides, the First Minister of Wales must remain detached, whilst building bridges across political relationships within Wales.

Paul Griffiths has been a university lecturer in public finance and administration, a councillor, a bureaucrat and a public service consultant, as well as Senior Special Adviser to Rhodri Morgan. He is currently researching the contrasting trends in local democracy across northern Europe, having registered as a doctoral student at Aberystwyth University

Parting of the clear red water

Huw Lloyd Williams *indulges in some blue sky thinking about where divisions in the Labour Party might lead*

As an academic, the opportunity to write something a little more whimsical, or even fictional, is always welcome – although some might comment this is my stock in trade. Maybe this is why I was asked to reflect on the notional idea that for the good of Wales, Welsh Labour must split into two. Or perhaps it was because someone from the Labour Party was being sought to voice an opinion on a 'taboo' subject, and there was a very short list of members silly enough to entertain the idea; one, in fact.

Either way, it's an idea I'm happy to explore, particularly as the last article I wrote on Welsh Labour – an attempt to explain the intricacies and implications of the OMOV debate – ended with the thought that should Vaughan Gething be voted in as leader through an Electoral College system, a split in the party would not be entirely inconceivable. Why would large swathes of a numerous membership – largely motivated by the more radical politics of Jeremy Corbyn and the promise of Mark Drakeford following his lead – want to devote themselves to five years of what one presumes would be 'more of the same' in ideological terms?

At the time of going to press, with reforms to the voting system in the offing, it seems this scenario is becoming less likely. What other possibilities might we dream up for such a seismic shift? Could it be that after a narrow Corbyn defeat in a snap General Election there's a right wing coup in Westminster's Parliamentary Labour Party, and as a consequence Momentum decides to continue its radical movement with its own party – and that its home in Wales, Welsh Labour Grassroots, follows suit? Or perhaps the leadership debate in Wales leads AMs to discuss their principles and ideas (this really is getting fanciful) and they suddenly realise that the left and the right actually have little in common and should part ways. If recent events have reminded of us anything, it is that one should never say never with respect to politics, so regardless of the imaginary train of events in question, it is legitimate to ask what good might come of such a split.

In this respect it is first worth considering the ill effects of what critics refer to as the 'one party state' we have had in Wales since 1999. Without doubt, even the most ardent loyalist would find it difficult to deny that nigh on twenty years of power has its downside, related in large part to the lack of challenge and lack of renewal that should drive any political party in a healthy democracy. It's openly acknowledged that many regard the One Wales coalition with Plaid as the most effective and productive period of power for Labour, benefitting as they did from some healthy competition in the cabinet itself.

It might be extrapolated that the relative ease with which Labour have been able to stay in power has created a culture where there is little perceived need for robust internal discussion – the kind that usually results in the sort of forward thinking policy and determination to implement genuine positive change. From the outside looking in, there appears to be very little, if any, cerebral activity – certainly very few policy documents or think pieces to engage with or excite the public.

A more speculative remark is that with the bedding in of the Assembly, and also the tendency of Labour (for good reason) to attract careerists focused on power – rather than politicians interested in principle – there are simply fewer interesting people with anything to say for themselves. Of late, with the more frequent appearance of tales of waste, profligate spending, and misjudged projects, it can also feel as if the government and its civil servants have become more and more slipshod. Those in the party in the Bay Bubble may protest, but I'm afraid

even the most ardent loyalist would find it difficult to deny that nigh on twenty years of power has its downside

this is a realistic assessment from the perspective of an average member, rather than the one-eyed ranting of a political opponent.

These issues are exacerbated, somewhat ironically, in the one area where the Labour Party continues to surpass its opponents by a stretch – namely party discipline. Their ability to ensure that their AMs abide by the whip, and its unwillingness to lift it to allow a free vote on certain issues, mean that less robust policies often appear to be passed through without the requisite opposition or amendments, whilst the policies of others – even those of Plaid that seem worthy of support – are undermined purely, it seems, in order to score political points. Where there is little challenge from without, and an unnecessary dampening down of internal dissent, the effectiveness and robustness of a government is bound to be affected.

Let us suppose, therefore, that the Party split along left/right lines. It is somewhat difficult to say which side of the line some would fall, but we might estimate on current form that between eight to twelve Assembly Members might go to the left in support of a follower of Corbyn and with the backing of Welsh Labour Grassroots (WLG), and that the remainder would become (or should that be *remain*?) part of a more centrist social democratic party. This scenario in itself demonstrates the difficulty of envisaging the change, given that the possible leader of the left – Mark Drakeford – was also a key figure in the configuration of Rhodri Morgan's leadership around the soft left vision of the 'clear red water'. However, we will suspend our disbelief for a moment and consider the possible electoral consequences of a split Labour vote. Let us suppose as well that the centrists remain part of the British Labour Party (thus benefiting from its resources) and that the left take with them the people power of WLG.

Some very rough guesswork, based on a projected 50/50 split where neither 'new' party would gain ascendancy, would presumably see at least half of the 29 seats currently held by Labour coming under threat, although a steep reduction in constituency AMs would be compensated for to some extent by more regional seats. A possible scenario, it would seem to me, would be the two polling somewhat less than Plaid Cymru or the Conservatives, each of which would be beneficiaries, leaving the most likely scenario for government as a Plaid-led coalition with both 'new' labour parties as junior partners. It is possible that one of the two might garner enough success to be the senior partner, but either way it is unlikely each of the two would gain sufficient seats to govern without Plaid (assuming here that the centrists would not entertain a coalition with the Tories for the same reasons that have prevented Plaid from doing the same).

Intuitively, such a situation would more likely create the dynamism that could address the issues outlined above, with perhaps little change in terms of the guiding political values we have become used to. Depending on the incumbent with Plaid and the new left party, however, there would be potential for greater radicalism and a push for further autonomy. This is where we must also consider, however, the other axis present within Welsh Labour that is often considered secondary, but might be of greater import in this scenario.

A Nationalist/Unionist divide might be more prevalent within the membership than within the

Labour really is the establishment, attracting people who pursue power rather than principle – with radical change far from their minds

Senedd, if we allow for the presumption that all politicians want power and so will at least back the status quo. However, one of the characteristics of many Labour Party members attracted by Corbyn is that their compass in this context is not aligned with that of the people initially involved with Welsh Labour Grassroots. The group has traditionally been home to those who are most pro-devolution, comfortable in coalition with Plaid, and most inclined towards further autonomy. Radicalism for them includes a more radical devolutionary settlement. However, this is anecdotally not the case with those who have swelled the ranks. And it is this, in my view at least, that calls into question the contours of any future split.

As a member of the nascent 'Labour for Welsh Independence' group – a sister group of the long established Labour for Indy in Scotland – I am aware of the groundswell of interest and support for the prospect of an independent Wales (whatever that means), especially amongst the younger generation, and so splits along this axis within the more radical, and possibly the more centrist group too, are a very real possibility. In this context, the centrists remaining part of the British Labour Party would be an equally powerful force as the Corbynites in pulling the centre of gravity towards London; indeed these forces might make coalition with Plaid for either a difficult prospect. That being said, with the nightmare scenario of Brexit ahead, the notion of a future sovereign Wales finding its way back to the EU may become an eminently more reasonable prospect, acting as a counterweight to these tendencies.

In concluding my speculations on whether a split would be good for Wales, it's as well that I provide full disclosure. For me, the 'good' that we must aim for at this point is a radical alternative to what we have now. This includes pushing for far greater autonomy to extract ourselves sufficiently from a UK state that is – as Anthony Barnett has persuasively argued – affected by an English nation in ongoing crisis, of which Brexit is the worst symptom. This state will not allow a leader of Corbyn's radical nature to take power, in my opinion, and so Wales must forge its own future in a way that recognises fully the reality of the environmental crisis, automation and the crisis of work, and the likelihood and need for the supplanting of our stagnating consumerist economy.

The splitting of the Labour Party would, to my mind, provide us with a better chance of this 'good' being aspired towards; eight years in southern Wales has been an eye-opener in revealing how Labour really is the establishment, attracting people who pursue power rather than principle – with radical change far from their minds. That being said, I am more persuaded that Welsh Labour under a Drakeford leadership – shorn of the moderate rhetoric he seems to be employing to secure his place – can be the vehicle for that change. That, however, will require those within the party who put social justice and the national interest first to raise their game, and ensure the prevailing orthodoxies push him and his cabinet in the right direction. ➤

Huw L Williams is the author of books on global justice and Welsh intellectual history, and has written widely on contemporary Welsh politics. He lives in Grangetown, Cardiff

From the outside looking in, there appears to be very little, if any, cerebral activity – certainly very few policy documents or think pieces to engage with or excite the public

A silver bullet for social care?

Prof Gerald Holtham *says it's time to seize the opportunity to properly fund social care in Wales*

Social care for the elderly presents Wales with a problem – but also an opportunity. Consider the problem first. Currently, local authorities in Wales spend over £550 million a year on social care for old people, including care in their own homes and residential care. It is not enough. Care homes find it hard to cope on the fees paid by local government and the number of care home places in Wales has fallen in recent years. Moreover, care staff need to be paid a living wage if care standards are to be maintained and that will cost still more. Meanwhile public spending per head of the population aged over 70 has fallen over a decade by nearly 20 per cent in real terms. That surely implies conditions have been tightened up for providing care support, no doubt sometimes causing hardship.

For all three reasons, cuts in spending relative to population have at least to be restored – but it gets worse. The proportion of the population over 70 is currently about 22 per cent of those aged 16-69 but over the next 20 to 30 years that proportion will rise to over 35 per cent. In 2016-17 111,000 people were receiving care in Wales. In 2040 that number will be about 188,000, up nearly 70 per cent. That means at current prices, i.e. in real terms, spending will have to rise by 90 per cent.

The Welsh government's budget is not going to rise by 90 per cent over the next 30 years. We'll be lucky if it is up 30 per cent in real terms so there is a big funding gap to fill. And it can't come from health, education or other areas where spending is already tight. The Welsh government needs to raise some £300-£400 million a year from elsewhere. There is just one other possibility: that the UK government raises taxes and spends on social

£550m Total annual local authority spend on social care in Wales

70% Predicted rise in number of people needing care by 2040

£3bn Potential fund by mid 2030s based on 1.5% income levy

care in England so the Welsh budget gets the money via the Barnett formula. It could conceivably happen but is unlikely to do so on the necessary scale.

Wales could turn a problem into opportunity by starting a system of compulsory insurance for social care. Contributions would be paid into a fund and invested – Wales own community fund. It could be partly put into profitable infrastructure and other investments in Wales. But all the proceeds would be hypothecated to social care so Welsh citizens would know where the money was going. There is survey evidence that the public is readier to accept taxes or levies if these are hypothecated to services where it knows extra spending is needed.

If the average contribution amounts to 1.5 per cent of income and the proceeds are invested reasonably shrewdly, the fund could amount to some £3 billion by the mid-2030s.

Contributions could be collected by a moderate surcharge on the basic rate of income tax, which the Welsh government gets the power to vary from 2019. The surcharge would be proportional to income but ideally it would also depend on age cohort. If you start paying in your 20s you pay a lower rate than if you start paying in your fifties with a sliding scale between. Youngsters who will pay for forty years before retirement might pay 1 per cent. Those in their fifties who will pay for only ten years could pay 3 per cent. This would ensure intergenerational equity and mean today's youngsters would be paying for their own care not just subsidising their elders and hoping for fair treatment when their time comes to be cared for.

What would people get for their contributions? First, higher standards of care when receiving public support. Second, more favourable means tests. Currently, as well as an income test, people have to pay for their own residential care if they have assets of more than £50,000, meaning an elderly person's home might have to be sold to meet care costs. The fund should mean that people will be able to keep a higher proportion of their wealth.

Ideally, the system would be contributory; it would provide full benefits only to people, or their dependents, with a record of contributions. People retiring to Wales from elsewhere would get the same quality of treatment but they could not expect to get the same levels of public support. For them, the means test would stay aligned with the English system. Making the system contributory would raise administrative problems and HMRC might want to charge too much to administer it. If it were non-contributory, however, tax-paying contributors would be subsidising people retiring to Wales and indeed creating an incentive for more retired people to move in.

The Welsh government is also concerned that the existence of the fund does not jeopardise existing entitlement to individual benefits. So if Wales decides to go ahead and take the opportunity, some hard talking with the UK government and HMRC will be necessary.

Yet whatever the difficulties, the time has come for the Welsh government to tackle the problem and, let's hope, to seize the opportunity. ➤

Gerald Holtham is Hodge Professor of Regional Economics at Cardiff Metropolitan University. He authored *Paying for Social Care,* a report for Welsh Government proposing the levy detailed in this article

A 'Modern Mecca' for the World

In 1948 Wales made a defining contribution to the founding of the NHS and made our nation a 'Modern Mecca for the World'. **Jonathan Cox** *asks if can we show the same moral leadership on social care seventy years on*

It was in the long, hot Olympic summer of 2012 that I came to a true appreciation of the National Health Service. As Danny Boyle's tribute to the NHS in the London 2012 Opening Ceremony was beamed around the globe, my wife and I sat waiting for our first child to be born. Much time was spent waiting for routine appointments in the hospital. A junior doctor tried to bully us into inducing the baby before we were ready. When admitted to hospital we barely saw a nurse, the water birthing suites were all booked up, and we ended up in a mildly decrepit bathroom trying to make the best of it.

As labour began, midwives came to help with advice, support and pain relief. As things dragged on, expensive equipment was deployed to observe the baby's vital signs. When proceedings took a turn for the worse we were rushed from the down-at-heel ward to a state-of-the-art theatre. A small army of consultants, doctors, midwives and nurses worked in harmony to deliver our baby and stop a haemorrhage that threatened my wife's life.

Despite the frustrating insensitivity of the NHS machine, when push comes to shove and life is endangered a first-class service is available to all, free at the point of use. Had the man who did most to create the NHS as we know it, Nye Bevan, been alive to hear our experience, he would have rejoindered: 'I would rather be kept alive in… efficient if cold altruism… than expire in a gush of warm sympathy.' Or as he said in his 1951 book, *In Place of Fear*: 'Man must first live before he can live abundantly.'

Needless to say, we named our son Nye.

The vast majority of us have known nothing other than the NHS, and as with any historic social advance, complacency sets in as the social evils it banished recede into distant memory. It is easy to forget the scale of Bevan's achievement, though he was under no illusions, declaring on the eve of its establishment: 'The eyes of the world are turning to Great Britain. We now have the moral leadership of the world and we shall have people coming here as a modern Mecca.' As Nick Thomas-Symonds, noted in his recent biography of Bevan: 'This was not only the state taking responsibility for providing a service, it was a cultural shift in attitudes to health in the UK. Health care free at the point of delivery was now a right, an expectation, not a luxury.'

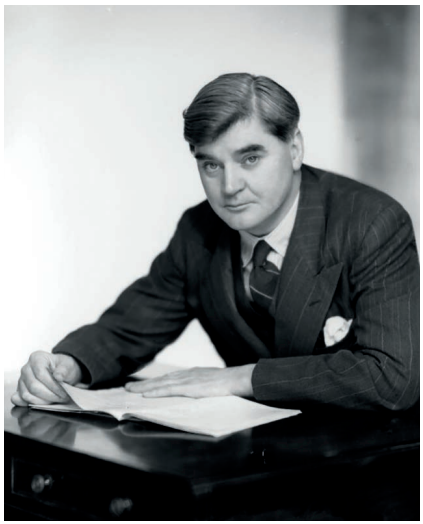
In 1942 the Beveridge Report laid out a vision for the welfare state and identified five social evils which afflicted the British people: want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness. Were he able to write a contemporary addendum, doubtless Beveridge would add today's social evils of loneliness, isolation and powerlessness, for these loom as large for us as did disease in Bevan's day. Professor Holtham sets out the challenge facing social care and offers a viable solution that resonates with the asks Citizens Cymru Wales made of the First Minister and Opposition Leaders ahead of the 2016 Assembly elections. A Real Living Wage for care workers. Consistency of care for recipients. The creation of a new National Care Service. All funded by a new levy. Seventy years ago Wales provided the Minister, the model, the moral force, and the movement behind a radical new solution to disease and ill-health. Does Wales have it within itself to take the radical action needed to provide sustainable and high quality social care to the elderly and vulnerable?

First, let us consider the Minister. In the aftermath of World War II there was a cross-party consensus that there needed to be a new health service, but that did not make it inevitable. As Health Minister, Bevan was stubborn and tactically adroit, enabling him to overcome widespread opposition in the medical profession and outmanoeuvre powerful opponents in Cabinet to realise his vision. Moreover, throughout his adulthood he relentlessly and unashamedly sought the power to realise his aims, as he once described in the House of Commons: 'So I worked very hard, and… I got on to the council. I discovered when I got there that the power had been there, but it had just gone. So I made some inquiries, being an earnest student of social affairs, and I learned that the power had slipped down to the county council… So I worked very hard again, and I got there – and it had gone from there too. Then I found out that it had come up here [to Parliament]. So I followed it, and sure enough I found that it had been here, but I just saw its coat tails round the corner.'

Wales will need brave, talented and persistent Ministers to realise Professor Holtham's vision, not least to integrate health and social care. But they will have a major advantage over Nye Bevan: they will not have to chase power up the Great Western Railway. The devolution of health and social care to the Senedd, and its imminent ability to vary income tax, means Wales is simultaneously small enough and big enough to do something radical. The power is (very nearly) in our hands.

Secondly, Wales not only provided the Minister who created the NHS, it also provided the model. In the 1920s, Bevan had sat on the hospitals committee of the Tredegar Workmen's Medical Aid Society, a remarkable endeavour that at its height provided 95% of local residents with medical care, free at the point of use, funded by the weekly subscriptions of working people. In 1947, as the NHS took shape, Bevan boasted that 'All I am doing is extending to the entire population of Britain the benefits we had in Tredegar for a generation or more. We are going to *Tredegar-ise* you.'

We catch glimpses of a future social care system in Wales, but too often they are snuffed out by the lack of money. A few years ago a social care company in rural Wales took the radical step of accrediting as a Real Living Wage employer, guaranteeing their careworkers excellent training, permanent contracts and a wage 20% higher than the sector average. Sadly, they later had to withdraw their Living Wage Foundation accreditation, because, as the owner told me, 'Almost three-quarters of our business comes from the local council, and they are facing huge cuts. They like our work, but we have to bid



Beveridge's five giants

1. *Want*
2. *Disease*
3. *Ignorance*
4. *Squalor*
5. *Idleness*

Jonathan Cox's three further giants

1. *Loneliness*
2. *Isolation*
3. *Powerlessness*

we need to offer a new model where instead of poverty pay, we stuff the pockets of careworkers with a wage that allows them to live with dignity, not just survive

for contracts and we won't succeed next year if we don't bring our costs down beneath the Living Wage.'

By contrast – and this shows how Wales can once again provide a model – every NHS employee in Wales is guaranteed at least the Real Living Wage (£8.75 an hour). If, as in Scotland, the money was provided to fund local authorities to build the Real Living Wage into commissioning, or if the social care workforce was incorporated into the NHS, then the impact would be transformational. 'I stuffed their mouths with gold,' Bevan famously boasted of how he bought off the opposition of consultants in the battle to form the NHS. For different reasons, we need to offer a new model where instead of poverty pay, we stuff the pockets of careworkers with a wage that allows them to live with dignity, not just survive.

Thirdly, in the 1940s Wales provided the moral force which propelled a radical proposal into reality. The South Wales coalfield was a solid red wedge at the heart of Attlee's 145 seat majority in 1945, and the call to reform what Bevan described as the 'patchwork quilt of local paternalism' that masqueraded as medical provision was urgently felt. Radio 4's serialisation of A.J. Cronin's semi-autobiographical novel *The Citadel*, whose protagonist is a doctor in the South Wales Valleys in the 1920s, provides some insight into this. Nye Bevan makes a cameo appearance in the radio version, but the purpose of the book is to provide a window into the 'horrors and inequities' of medical care for ordinary working people prior to the NHS. While Labour MPs and Cabinet colleagues who (by dint of their middle class upbringing or wealthier constituencies) lacked Bevan's desperate experiences in Tredegar in the 1920s and 1930s and cavilled at the grand ambition and vast cost of the NHS, Bevan swept all before him with the clarity of a moral vision forged in the crucible of the south Wales valleys.

Today there is a powerful moral force urging a more just system of social care provision. It is rooted in self-interest, not just altruism – as more and more of us experience the current system's inadequacies, and the realisation dawns on every family that they will have cause to rely on social care. Still more, we see the poor pay and training provided to those looking after the people we love the most. For those who experience it, the current system is indefensible. As baby boomers, whose sway over our media and political discourse shows no sign of diminishing, grow old, the demand for change will increase. The moral force behind better social care is latent, but it would not take much to rouse it into political life.

Finally, Bevan could not have built the NHS without a powerful social movement that operated outside of the levers of state control. The Britain of 1948 was a heaving mass of civic participation and a social movement had grown up around the issue of healthcare from as far back as Beatrice Webb's Minority Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law in 1909. Galvanised by the trials of the Depression and the rigours of World War, the local mutual and co-operative health providers, unions, religious congregations, and multifarious civil society associations that were part of this social movement provided a powerful constituency to back Bevan's vision of the NHS, encourage the population to register, and support the case for the national insurance contributions that funded it. A tragic irony of the NHS is that its universality and success squeezed out successful, innovative organisations with strong community roots, such as the Medical Aid Society which inspired it.

The health system still struggles to innovate and it still struggles to engage local communities. The state needs participation from civil society to deal with the scale of the social care challenge, and while there are pockets of community-based innovation in the Welsh NHS, including in the field of social care, these need to be encouraged and spread. Most notable is the *Pimp My Zimmer* campaign led by a nurse, Tanya Strange, who is using community organising to bring medical staff, care workers, school children and local manufacturers together to pioneer dementia-friendly walking frames. *Pimp My Zimmer* originated in Tredegar and Tanya works for Aneurin Bevan Health Board – if the model spreads, the medical world could be 'Tredegar-ised' once again!

Yet these examples are few and far between. The social movement that supported the NHS at its creation is hollowed out. More broadly, our communities face a crisis of association that hinders the development of social movements – the union lodges, institutes and non-conformist chapels that were the engines of democratic participation for working people in communities like Tredegar are defunct, remote or in deep decline, and they have not been replaced by new institutions of popular participation.

I can conceive that Wales has the men and women capable of the Bevan-like courage needed to reform social care. There are glimpses of the model in Wales. The moral force lies latent in the experience of every family who encounters the inadequacy of social care of a loved one. It is the movement to demand radical reform we are lacking, and it is a movement we must build.

Nye Bevan was pragmatic in allowing local councils some continued role in delivering healthcare alongside the NHS – clearly turf wars are not just a modern phenomenon! Responding to criticism of the messy division of responsibility between the NHS and local councils, Bevan quipped: 'Day is joined to night by twilight, but nobody has suggested that it is a contradiction in nature.' It is harsh to criticise Bevan in light of his achievement, but social care is in crisis because it has fallen into the twilight zone of public policy and it is going to take a courageous Minister, a new model, moral force and a vigorous movement of civil society to get it out and create a system which will make Wales a 'modern Mecca' once again.

Not all of us can be Ministers, but the work of building social movements belongs to us all. As in Bevan's day, politicians need the people to clamour for change, and to make the case for the funds (and therefore the extra taxes) to pay for a social care service that evokes the same pride as the NHS. Citizens Cymru Wales will be joining with those of goodwill who want to build the movement to back Professor Holtham's vision, in the hope that by the time that Nye Cox has to take responsibility for the social care of his loved ones (which I hope will include me!) outstanding social care will be viewed, as the NHS is now, as a right, an expectation, and not a luxury. ▸

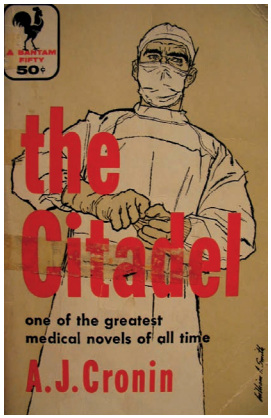
Jonathan Cox is Deputy Director of Citizens UK and Lead Organiser of Citizens Cymru Wales

Storming the Citadel

Colin Thomas *revisits a novel and film that has been credited with laying the arguments for the introduction of the NHS*

'I expressed the hope that I would not be much longer in Treherbert – the dead end of all my ambitions.' So wrote A.J. Cronin in his unpublished autobiography. But his experience as a GP in south Wales provided the inspiration for *The Citadel*, published in 1938. Cronin's novel and the film based on it highlighted the problems of the Britain's health system of the 1930s and played a part in creating the momentum that was to lead to the creation of the National Health Service.

Cronin's gloomy picture of his first medical post in Treherbert is apparent from the first page of his novel – 'this strange disfigured country' he calls it and a few pages later refers to its peoples as having 'the air in their self-contained aloofness of being a race apart.' But then he adds: 'Yet they were a kindly people'. And the novelist conveys a sense of indignation about the medical service they have to put up with through the words of Philip Denny, a fellow GP: 'Damn it to hell... Don't they ever want to *change* the system?'



The author's move to take up a post with the Tredegar Medical Aid Society in 1922 gave him an insight into the possibility of a better system. In Aneurin Bevan's hometown, workers had banded together in friendly societies to provide for themselves and their families' medical aid scheme was well above the bare facilities then available to impoverished patients. Bevan was the chairman of the Society's hospital committee and may have been the model for Owen, the sympathetic secretary to the Society in Cronin's novel.

At first Cronin's creation, Dr Andrew Manson, took to his new job – Manson 'loved his work in the Society because it was an expression of his ideal'. But Manson, like Cronin, had an arrogant view of the miners who were now his employers – 'they were too biased, too unintelligent ever to administer such a scheme progressively'. It was a perception Cronin himself reflected in a newspaper article – 'the miners as a body had often been fickle in the past, stubborn, reckless and stupid'.

Although Cronin did not altogether share Bevan's admiration for the Tredegar scheme, both were united in their disgust with the health system that prevailed in the 1930s. When Manson is summoned before the British Medical Council for

Although Cronin did not altogether share Bevan's admiration for the Tredegar scheme, both were united in their disgust with the health system that prevailed in the 1930s

breaching their rules, he denounces the exploitation that he had been tempted to become part of – 'the useless guinea-chasing treatments, the unnecessary operations, the crowd of worthless pseudo-scientific proprietary preparations we use…'

The Citadel had huge sales, a hundred thousand copies in three months, and it was then reprinted at ten thousands copies a week, so its strident criticism of private medicine reached a wide audience, in America as well as in Britain. Two hundred copies were circulated at the British Medical Association's conference in 1937 and a session was devoted to discussing it. Whether delegates were impressed or appalled is not recorded, but when MGM decided to turn the novel into a film, some of the British Board of Film Censors certainly were concerned. 'There was so much that was disparaging to doctors' wrote a Mrs N. Crouzer. 'I think it is dangerous to shatter what faith the general public has in the medical profession.'

The film keeps the morality tale structure of the novel – from idealistic novice to sell-out exploiter (indicated by actor Robert Donat acquiring oiled hair and a pencil moustache) through to redemption as a visionary critic of the status quo. But in the film his wife Christine, played by Rosalind Russell, killed in a car accident in the novel, survives unscathed. It is his friend Denny, a role taken by Ralph Richardson, who becomes the victim of the disastrous operation that opens Manson's eyes to what he has become.

The tracking shots into the south Wales valleys that open the film effectively convey the sense of the young doctor entering what he sees as an alien world. But it cannot put over convincingly the most powerful scenes in the novel which seem to reflect Cronin's own experience – saving an apparently stillborn child and witnessing a bodged operation by a colleague he thought was a surgeon. The American director King Vidor makes a more convincing job of the scene in which Manson has to carry out an amputation underground.

Although there is some dilution of the novel's anger in the film script, enough of it survives to lead the producer to begin the film with a caption assuring the audience that it 'is in no way intended as a reflection on the great medical profession which has done so much'. The local medical officer of health is described in the film as a 'lazy, evasive, incompetent swine'. Manson conveys outrage about the fact that miners get no compensation for breathing in anthracite dust and is even more indignant about the bungled operation he witnesses - 'this wasn't surgery, it was murder'. His final speech to the BMA is almost as forthright as that in the novel. 'It's high time we started to put our house in order… doctors have to live but we have a responsibility to mankind too.'

Earlier this year audiences were reminded of a time when a south Wales town had 'no hospital, no ambulance, no X-rays, no nothing'

By 1944 a Gallup poll recorded that 55% of the UK population favoured the idea of a national health service, and four years later Bevan was able 'to Tredegarise Britain' with considerable popular support, at least in Wales. It is of course impossible to say to what extent *The Citadel* contributed to that support, but the impact of its powerful storytelling worked not only for audiences at the time but also subsequently – the BBC ran it as a television serial in 1983 and as a radio serial in 2018. Earlier this year audiences were reminded of a time when a south Wales town had 'no hospital, no ambulance, no X-rays, no nothing.'

But those audiences are all too aware that the National Health Service did not bring a health Utopia to Wales – Tredegar's current life expectancy is just 75, well below the UK average. Cronin's Dr Manson could see some of the potential problems of excessive state control: 'bureaucracy, chokes individual effort – it would suffocate me.' His wife Christine convinces him that it is possible with 'hope in your eyes, courage in your heart' to be positive about the future. We desperately need to hold on to that kind of optimism now – and to achieve the funding to make that optimism realistic and achievable.

Colin Thomas is an award-winning television producer/director and the author of the book *Dreaming A City* and the enhanced ebook *The Dragon and the Eagle/ Y Ddraig a'r Eryr*

A revolution from within

Jennifer Dixon *gives an update on transformational change in Wales' health and social care systems, finding encouraging signs but the jury still out on delivery*

By any measure, planning and managing the nation's health and social care services is daunting. In Wales NHS and care services now comprise half of government spending, are the largest employer of the population, are highly complex and risky, are used by most of the population, are at the top of public concerns and rarely out of the public eye, and are, of course, highly politicised. Clearly demand and supply pressures on these services are growing, as are the opportunities – for example from new technologies.

These pressures are similar across most OECD countries where health care costs have exceeded GDP growth for much of the last two decades. To be sustainable in future, significant change is needed. All countries – whether Switzerland, Germany or the UK – sooner or later will have to act. In the UK's case because of obvious resource constraints, the case is urgent.

To help chart the way forward the Welsh Government (WG) set up an independent Parliamentary Review Group to make recommendations for the next five years for the NHS and social care system. The report – *A revolution from within: Transforming Health and Care in Wales* – was the result of a year's deliberations by a panel following widespread engagement with stakeholders and members of the public.

The report's ten recommendations were essentially built on a 'quadruple aim': better outcomes following care; greater health and wellbeing for the population; improving the health and care workforce; and better value for money. Central features included developing bold new seamless (integrated) models of care based on prevention, boosting and supporting the workforce, harnessing technology to increase productivity and value, and supporting continuous quality improvement to allow frontline teams to make the changes they see are needed every day.

These messages will sound too familiar, having appeared in several previous reports on health care and the wider public sector. The system knows what to do, concluded the Review team, so what's stopping progress? The conclusion was lack of clarity, will, ability to make decisions, robust implementation and evaluation. These echo the conclusions of the OECD's review of the UK health system published in 2016 in which 'a stronger guiding hand' from the centre in Wales was needed on the direction of strategy and initiatives. To which one might add, decisive and robust implementation locally.

The report, like others before it, argued for urgent action. It concluded there needed to be much more clarity from the centre on new models of care and a purposeful programme of implementation and evaluation. Three of the ten recommendations addressed thornier issues of how to make change in such a complex system. These included aligning far more closely regulation, financial and other incentives, targets, performance management and other system 'levers' better to achieve objectives. There were strong messages about strengthening authoritative and dynamic leadership, echoing recommendations in 2014 by the Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery in Wales. And finally the report argued that the Welsh people should have the opportunity to see the results of progress against agreed metrics after one, three and five years, compared with those used across England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, as well as internationally. It has become harder over time to compare the performance of the NHS across the four UK countries – this must change for

policymakers to be properly accountable to voters and taxpayers for their stewardship.

The report has been well received across the spectrum of stakeholders and by the WG, who have responded with a new Health and Social Care plan for Wales. Published a few months later, it is the first to cover Health and Social Care together. The new plan embraced the Review's call for a clear vision for the future, set out service design principles and adopted most of the recommendations. Much of the response focused on the need for effective implementation, and the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services, the Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care and the Director General for Health and Social Care have shown active leadership in developing and promoting the new plan.

A Transformation Fund has been established – the challenge will be to ensure the vision is fully understood and that the whole system is involved, along with service users and citizens, to develop and adapt services at the front line. This will mean different approaches to decision making and accountability, but it will be important for WG to focus on their role in 'system design'. A stronger 'guiding hand' need not just mean top down directive, but also the intelligent design of nudges and incentives towards key aims.

As discussions continue, the scale of the change needed is sinking in. For example, the ambition to change the clinical models of care towards more integrated care and a heavier focus on upstream primary and home care would need to be supported by fundamentally changing the way of making financial decisions and allocating resources, investments in technology and the way the current financial incentives in the system operate.

recommendations were… built on a 'quadruple aim': better outcomes following care; greater health and wellbeing for the population; improving the health and care workforce; and better value for money

Interestingly as the NHS in England is now constructing a ten year plan on the back of a commitment by the government to boost NHS funding by £20bn by 2023/24, these issues are also a priority.

What should the public expect to see? The prize would be faster access to high quality multidisciplinary care, technology enabled, with more proactive care management and prevention support mostly supporting people in their own homes. In short, coordinated care across the NHS and social care boundaries, and across primary and secondary and community NHS care, with shared electronic information and assistive technology such as telehealth and care and online services with face to face facility. The aim would be for waiting times to see a GP or practice/community nurse to drop, use of A&E for avoidable conditions to decrease (especially from people receiving social care), and more people developing the confidence to self manage their condition. This would not be at the expense of lengthening waiting lists for elective care.

Will this time be different? Writing in *the welsh agenda* last year, Peter Martin warned that 'inevitably health and social care services will respond by drawing up their own local and regional plans, repeating the rhetoric, and setting out in detail how they intend to achieve requirements' and that 'without cultural change the only real tangible difference is likely to be a rearranging of the deckchairs'. And again in these pages former Welsh NHS chief Sir Paul Williams has warned of the culture of complacency and resistance in the public sector.

The prevailing environment is now harsher: economic growth in the doldrums since the EU referendum vote; productivity limp especially in Wales; uncertainties about Brexit affecting the NHS and social care workforce from the EU; and the opportunity cost of yet higher spending on the NHS on other areas of the public sector such as housing, education and early years support. All these may be fertile ground for populism. Taking a stronger grip of such a large element of expenditure is surely more urgent than ever.

It is too early but the signs so far are encouraging. As the Review notes, Wales has huge strengths and assets to build on, but can it step up to greater action this time? Let's see. ▸

Jennifer Dixon is Chief Executive at the Health Foundation

Who will care for Granny?

Charlotte Whitney *explores alternative solutions to the coming care crisis, arguing that it can't all be about creating more carers*

In just ten years the number of people aged over 65 in Wales will have increased by 250,000. Statisticians predict there will be 90,000 fewer people of working age. Even if political murmurs of increased financial allocations to Health and Social Care transpire, where will the care come from and where will it be delivered? There is already a recruitment and provision crisis across the care industry. Add in the effects of Brexit, and you might find you'll be looking after Granny yourself!

The recruitment struggles within the sector are nothing new, with all services fishing in an ever decreasing candidate pool. Despite campaigns to increase sector recognition and the introduction of workforce registration the situation does not look set to improve. People are not attracted to care work when other sectors such as retail offer lower risk, increased opportunities and often better salaries. Recruitment is the fastest-growing industry in the UK, but numbers of care vacancies are still on the rise. The time has come for some pioneering recruitment approaches, supported rather than hindered by the regulators, to enable innovative thinking to become reality.

Recruitment is seen as the major challenge, but do we need more workers? Hafod has been exploring the opportunities around a social prescriptive model of Virtual Street Hospitals. Using Community Asset based approaches, local citizens are empowered to care and support others within their own localities, increasing skill sets and community cultures. The model looks at cost, time and delivery efficiency benefits whilst promoting small care delivery teams, independence and multi-disciplinary working. The idea is that commissioning would be collaborative across health, social care and housing sectors, and in locality zones, removing the multiple occurrences of duplication currently in existence, increasing both proficiency and capacity.

While this approach promotes individuals retaining independence for longer there is still the issue of how this will be achieved with a restricted workforce. Assistive technology has been an independence buzzword for several years, yet it has not transpired to become the household norm as once predicted. This is down to several factors including lack of practical success sharing, levels of trust in automation and prohibitive pricing. We are still a few years away from the robotic nurse; however, with developments in verbal responsive technology we may not be so far away from virtual friends – in fact they could already be here.

Voice Service Devices, popular and affordable –

such as Amazon Echo – are a first step towards the 'new age' care solution. With the ability to set up reminders, ask questions and to make hands-free calls they can complete informal care support with no time-versus-task cost. Examples include medication prompts, which can not only be set to alert the user that medication is due, but can also reference reminders about which medication, how many tablets and to take with water.

The use of Voice Service Devices for those living with dementia is something that has the potential not only to ease the distress and isolation felt by those living with the progressive condition, but could also reassure family members and increase capacity within residential settings. One of the main manifestations of dementia is repetitive assurance seeking, asking the same questions again and again: 'Where am I?', 'Where is my husband?', 'What time is it?'. Answers to questions can be programmed into the Voice Service Devices, and they additionally have the ability to make general 'conversation' around topics such as the weather, the news, or even a daily brain teaser. Not only will these systems save on capacity and cost pressures for community services, they also have the ability to create savings in the NHS, reducing the number of GP appointments and hospital admissions for social welfare rather than medical issues. These devices will change the lives of those living alone in the community, reducing loneliness and increasing the capacity for people to remain in their place of choice, in familiar surroundings.

Housing is also a concern for the future ageing population. With Welsh Government initiatives to enable people to remain within their own communities regardless of the need, the call for suitable adapted

Recruitment is seen as the major challenge, but do we need more workers?

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and accessible housing adds to the wider national housing shortage. According to the *Community and Town Councils Survey* (Welsh Government, 2010), Wales remains one of the few places within the UK where there is a society of family culture within local communities. It is not uncommon for three generations of a family to live within the same village, if not on the same street. However, when it comes to increased care needs there is often a lack of local provision available meaning many of those requiring care are relocated outside of their lifelong communities. This raises interesting questions about the future of housing allocation policy. The cost of doing away with traditional housing policy in favour of needs-based allocations, whilst having its merits, has been at the detriment of building social capital.

With housing innovation at an all time high, new and cost-effective solutions which offer a long term contribution to the housing shortage are achievable. Hafod is looking to the possibility of modular housing pods that can be easily installed, and subsequently removed, in average family gardens. These pre-furnished units provide an accessible and care-adapted dwelling for those with emerging needs, without the need for 24/7 support. They are able to be positioned with little labour intensity and are fully self-contained. The pods will be an effective solution for retaining independence yet having family or support on hand if required, as well as joining up with local community provision and freeing up under-occupied housing stock.

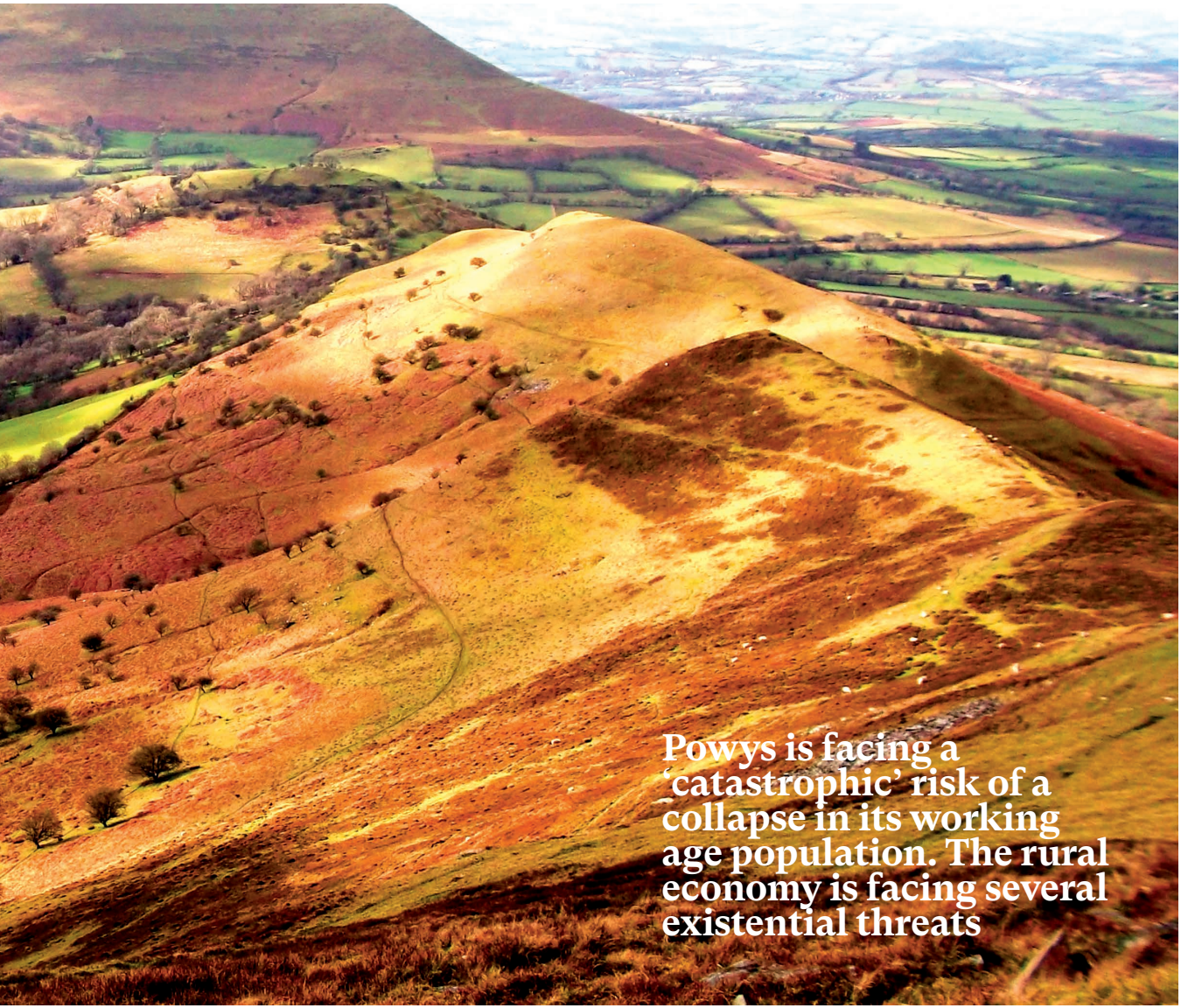
It would be ambitious to believe that the care workforce shortage could be supplanted by new technologies, but with innovation and freedom to challenge to the norms of both Housing and Care provision it can certainly be managed. We have known for a long time these challenges were coming, and now they are here they are only set to grow. Rather than consuming ourselves with the barriers, it is time to act – we need effective cross-industry collaboration to tackle caring for the future. ▸

Charlotte Whitney is Hafod's Executive Business Manager driving to practically and effectively integrate Health & Housing provision across Wales, working together to make lives better

Black Mountains College: A college for the future

Ben Rawlence *explains the innovative offer at Black Mountains College, a proposal for a new higher education institution in the Brecon Beacons National Park*

One of the first things Hitler did when the Nazis came to power in 1933 was close the Bauhaus – the experimental art school that combined craft, design and fine art. The artists dispersed. One, a shy but brilliant artist called Joseph Albers, found his way to the United States and to a position on the faculty of another experimental institution – Black Mountain College in North Carolina. Albers spent fifteen years teaching at Black Mountain and then Yale developing and elaborating his vision of artistic education as a means of 'opening eyes'. Albers was not an overtly



Powys is facing a 'catastrophic' risk of a collapse in its working age population. The rural economy is facing several existential threats

political person, but he was insistent that in order to change the world one first had to see it clearly.

At the inaugural Times Higher Education Teaching Excellence Summit this year, Richard Arum, the keynote speaker, excoriated the leading universities of the world for placing too much emphasis on research and not enough on teaching. Not only had universities skewed investment towards research but the quality and quantity of teaching was, in his view, also wanting. Professor Arum, who has researched undergraduate outcomes for many years with startling results found that, for example, average classroom time has declined since the 1960s from fifteen hours a week to five, the amount of time that students spend studying alone has dropped to less than an hour a day, and, most astonishingly, a significant proportion showed no improvement in cognitive ability after three years of study. Arum warned that the discourse and direction of higher education in preparing students for the workforce is not only failing in its intended goal but also failing a larger one: the responsibility of the university to produce not just a workforce but engaged citizens: over half of graduates

In an age of fake news and unprecedented threats to the liberal order... engaged graduates who can substantiate a fact, defend an opinion and correctly appreciate the national interest are needed more than ever

Buckminster Fuller at his Black Mountain College, North Carolina, studio with models of geodesic domes, 1949.

read no news at all, and voluntary and civic activity among graduates is at an all time low. In an age of fake news and unprecedented threats to the liberal order, he warned, engaged graduates who can substantiate a fact, defend an opinion and correctly appreciate the national interest are needed more than ever. No wonder Hitler wanted the Bauhaus closed.

But populism is not the only threat we face. The Well-Being of Future Generations Act identifies three grand challenges for the future: a warming climate, an ageing population and a rapidly changing economy. Overcoming denial and meeting these challenges is going to require creative and imaginative thinking like never before. Children now entering primary school will be doing jobs that have not been invented yet. They will need to be prepared for high levels of uncertainty, insecurity and rapid change. The necessary skills of the future, the UK government has highlighted, will be cognition, critical thinking and collaboration as well as the ability to master technology. Universities and the Government are waking up to the fact that the future of education is not STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Manufacturing) alone. The latest UK government forecasts show that growth in creative industries will be double the UK average over the next decade. Creativity, though, is an elusive quality. No one is quite sure how it works. How do you teach imagination?

Wales has some experience in this field. Alongside the Well-Being of Future Generations Act, Wales is acquiring an international reputation for its pioneering Lead Creative School Programme that sends creative practitioners into schools to work with teachers and students in all disciplines. We know that the human brain is associational – it learns through pattern recognition, and we also know that it assimilates information through all the senses, and the body. This is not news to primary school teachers but, as Arum noted, universities have been slow to implement pedagogical advances and much recent research in neuroscience about the biology of learning in their own teaching practice. Departmental interests, research agendas and management structures make radically different pedagogical approaches difficult, not to mention expensive, to deliver.

What if we could have a new kind of college, with no departments, exclusively devoted to pedagogy and

teaching, not research, with tiny class sizes of no more than twenty in a seminar, where students learn five days a week, where they study not the received canon of one department, but are exposed to a wide ranging common curriculum based on all five senses, and where the national park is the classroom rooting experiential learning in the landscape?

At Black Mountains College, we believe that in order to meet the challenges that threaten the very survival of future generations, a new kind of education is needed that 'opens eyes', trains students in new habits of mind, and unleashes creativity not simply to design better things, but to imagine kinder, healthier, more sustainable ways of being. We believe that the pathway to stimulating transformational learning is the arts. Thus, all students will be required to take a 'core' training in the senses: visual arts, sound, making and using, drama and movement, narrative and story to be supplemented by additional units in science and the humanities before specialising in a final year project leading to a single BA or BSc.

The college of the future cannot be a college on the hill, an ivory tower divorced from its environment

The college of the future cannot be a college on the hill, an ivory tower divorced from its environment. BMC will also offer further education and apprenticeships in partnership with local businesses and organisations in future-oriented skills: new approaches to food and farming, computer programming, traditional rural skills, sustainable construction, electric vehicle maintenance, renewable energy technologies and creative arts. Both undergraduates and FE students will study at sites of learning in the National Park and the wider region with classroom time as a last resort. They will study side by side in some cases, abolishing the traditional hierarchy of academic/vocational. Not only are learning outcomes improved when students are engaged in real word problems, but employability and well-being too. And, best of all, they will be trialling and apprenticing their skills and hypotheses in local businesses and organisations, boosting innovation, productivity and growth.

Powys is facing a 'catastrophic' risk of a collapse in its working age population. The rural economy is facing several existential threats. Not only is BMC exactly the kind of dynamic educational institution needed in rural areas recommended in the Welsh Government's Hazelkorn Review of Post-16 education (2016), it is, potentially, an essential element in the economic future of the county. It is an opportunity that the most significant efforts to forge a new critical direction in teaching method and practice have been in Wales: the Lead Creative Schools programme, and the Donaldson Review that has led to a new creative-centric curriculum currently in pilot phase. BMC will work with some of the pioneers of the LCS programme and the Institute for Writing and Thinking of Bard College, USA, to mainstream the progress of the LCS programme in schools across mid Wales and to bring those same lessons to bear on teaching practice in HE too.

BMC opened its doors this September (2018), partnering with Facebook Foundation to deliver a free digital skills bootcamp to 18-30 year olds across mid and south Wales. In September 2020, we hope to be offering a handful of niche FE courses in partnership with other organisations: new approaches to food and farming with the College for Real Farming, sustainable construction in partnership with the Wood Knowledge Wales and Ty Mawr Lime Ltd., seasonal catering in partnership with The Mill in Talgarth among others in development. And, in 2024, subject to an ambitious capital programme, we hope to be welcoming our first class of undergraduates to the most radical and necessary new college in the UK. ▸

Ben Rawlence is Director of Black Mountains College. He is a writer and activist, a former researcher for Human Rights Watch and the US Social Science Research Council and a former speechwriter on foreign affairs for the Liberal Democrats in the House of Commons

The national question... *again!*

Huw Davies *talks to two prominent devosceptics and a psephologist and concludes that the abolition of our National Assembly is a genuine possibility*

Almost five years ago, I was working with a now elected Assembly Member and out of interest I asked whether they thought the Welsh Assembly would ever be abolished. They were quick to answer that devolution would never be reversed. I disagreed then and even now I think the abolition of the Assembly is possible. The difference is that all that time ago I had nothing really to substantiate my thinking.

That was until 2016, the year of many political earthquakes, Donald Trump and Brexit. In Wales, there was a small tremor of a political revolution which didn't really register on the political Richter scale belonging to academia, the media or even those in the 'Cardiff Bay Bubble'. This foreshock was the electoral performance of the Abolish the Welsh Assembly Party,

Could Abolish ride the anti-establishment wave to get rid of the Assembly?

which scored 4.4% of the vote in the Assembly election that year. Now, you may say that is such a tiny percentage of the overall vote, it isn't worth concerning yourself about it. But when you look further into the results of the party's performance in that election, you see something quite remarkable. Abolish defeated the Green Party in all five of the electoral regions for the list ballot; they also succeeded in beating the Liberal Democrats in two of those regions (North Wales and South Wales East). Two well-established parties, which have been on the political scene for decades, had been pipped at the post by an 11-month-old toddler of a party.

The Greens and the Lib Dems had the advantage of having a place at the TV debates and numerous other media appearances, along with party political broadcasts. Abolish, however, had none of this, just a small thirty second clip at one debate, and a BBC interview with the party's leader David Bevan on election night, an hour after the polls had closed. Overall, the national result for Abolish was very encouraging: they came sixth on the regional list ballot and scored almost 50,000 votes. Surely, that should tell us something? A party set up less than a year before the election came from nowhere to make progress. UKIP in its early days would envy such a result.

It has long frustrated me that academia and the media have not really looked into devosceptic groups in Wales, even more so when I don't see them looking into Abolish's 2016 result. So I went to speak to two influential members of the devosceptic movement in Wales: David Bevan, and the lead campaigner of True Wales, who argued for a 'No' vote in the 2011 powers referendum, Rachel Banner. I wanted to know why they think they have had so little coverage, and where they see the future of devoscepticism in Wales. I also spoke to Wales' leading psephologist, Professor Roger Awan-Scully, to hear academia's side of the story.

Bevan was a founder member of the Abolish the Welsh Assembly Party back in June 2015. Once Treasurer of UKIP Wales, he became disillusioned with the party when it dropped its opposition to the Assembly in 2014. I asked him why he felt the media and academia weren't interested in his party. He believes that academics and journalists don't like knowing they are there, and that they live in a bubble where they feel the existence of the Assembly is a settled affair. I got a similar response from Rachel Banner, who I met on the day the consultation on the McAllister report was published. Banner used it as an example to say that it was a typical consultation on behalf of the Assembly. In other words, it gave them the results they wanted: a sort of bad rubber stamp on their plans, when in reality those who probably wrote a reply to the consultation were not at all representative of

ABOLISH
THE WELSH ASSEMBLY

Abolish defeated the Green Party in all five of the electoral regions for the list ballot; they also succeeded in beating the Liberal Democrats in two of those regions

the public at large. When I asked Professor Awan-Scully if he felt there was an inbuilt bias in academia and the media, which would explain why there has been little to no coverage of devoscepticism, his reply was that he wouldn't 'rule it out', but that he thought the situation was far more nuanced. He felt that the timing of Abolish's growth coincided with other tumultuous change in Welsh and British politics, examples being UKIP's success along with Leanne Wood's shock win in the Rhondda at the same election. A month later we had the EU Referendum, so in his view there hasn't been the time to look into their electoral performance. Serious analysis of Abolish was perhaps victim to, in the words of Harold Macmillan, 'Events, dear boy, events'.

Turning to those events, that is to say, primarily, Brexit, I asked David Bevan whether he felt the UK exiting the EU would aid his party. Could Abolish ride the anti-establishment wave to get rid of the Assembly? He wasn't really interested in it, and said that Abolish was neither a 'Leave' or 'Remain' party. Taking a side on that question would mean alienating potential supporters. Rachel Banner's answer was, however, particularly interesting. Before the referendum, she was very pessimistic about the state of the Union. She thought that Wales was on a slippery slope to separation from the UK. Brexit has changed her mind, and she is far more optimistic that something seen as impossible, like the Assembly being abolished, is now possible. This interested me greatly, so I put it to Professor Awan-Scully and asked whether he thought abolition of the Assembly was more likely to happen because of or in spite of Brexit. He replied that the volatility of politics currently does make the unthinkable happen, but added that there was consistent double-digit polling showing support for the National Assembly's abolition even before the referendum.

So, what is the future for devoscepticism in Wales? David Bevan is hopeful his party will grow as more people become aware it exists. In his words, the party 'are not in the business of persuasion'. Their main focus of campaigning is on social media. According to Bevan, it helps Abolish bypass the media and get directly to the electorate. They are expecting to win seats in the 2021 Assembly election, and even potentially do as well as UKIP did in 2016. Professor Awan-Scully thinks it is definitely possible for them win seats, but they will need to up their campaign tactics. If they are allowed to participate in the TV debates, perhaps a few more policies would get them over the line. Bevan, however, is relishing the opportunity, if he is allowed on the debates, to answer every question saying that they don't have a policy on the subject matter because they just want to abolish the Assembly. New UKIP Assembly Group Leader Gareth Bennett wishes to take his party back to its devosceptic roots, so it may well be that we witness more devoscepticism at an Assembly level even before the next election in 2021.

In her memoir, Margaret Thatcher wrote that after the 1979 referenda on devolution to Scotland and Wales she thought that, 'For the moment, devolution was dead'. At that point in time it was certainly seen as a closed issue, but 18 years later further referenda provided different results. We seem to have that same attitude today on the Assembly: that is it a closed affair. Mrs Thatcher, however, was more aware that devolution would become an issue again; it was something which plagued her premiership. The existence of the National Assembly for Wales may soon return as a political issue once more, whether you like it or not. ▸

Gareth Bennett wishes to take his party back to its devosceptic roots

Huw Davies is a student at Cardiff University and stood as a Conservative candidate in last year's local government election @HuwDavies1998

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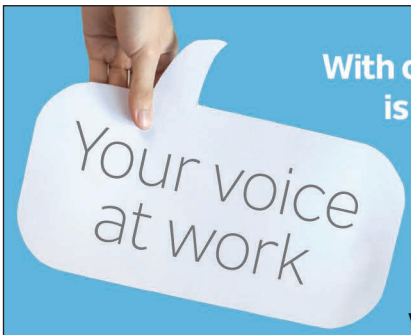

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Generation Z and the nature of networks

Phil Swan *looks back to a time of Old Boys' networks, deals in pubs and looking the bank manager in the eye, and reflects on how things might be different for the next generation of entrepreneurs*

Last year the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) Wales commissioned a five-year doctoral study to take place at the University of South Wales in order to better understand the behaviours of the next generation of entrepreneurs in Wales, known as 'Generation Z'.

Generation Z (otherwise known as post-millennials) are those individuals born in the year 2000 or afterwards. They will be our future competitors, business partners, customers, investors, and suppliers. It would clearly be very useful if we had a better understanding of their behaviours when setting up and running the next generation of entrepreneurial ventures in Wales, and to look at the landscape that Generation Z will inherit when it comes to entrepreneurship in Wales.

The timing of the research is fascinating. We don't have to look too far to see that the entrepreneurial environment and the opportunities available to entrepreneurs has rapidly changed. Technological developments have been a significant driver of these changes that are innovating and disrupting established markets like never before.

The changes in the entrepreneurial environment and the opportunities available are particularly visible when we look at the way entrepreneurs are using technology to build their networks. Historically, business networking has been characterised as taking place on golf courses, in pubs and between 'old boys' networks'. With technology proving to be such a disruptive force in this area, we are asking how the emerging generation of entrepreneurs in Wales are developing the networks essential to starting a business?

The study will help develop greater understanding of this emerging generation of entrepreneurs, setting the scene for future entrepreneurial behaviour over the coming decades. This will include looking at the way Generation Z entrepreneurs build and use networks to develop entrepreneurial ideas, identify and process opportunities, seek mentoring and support, raise finance, find customers, and develop supply chains.

When we look at past generations, networks for business and professional (mostly) men have long tradition and come in formal types such as the Freemasons, and more informal modes such as the 'old boys' network'. However, future generations of entrepreneurs are more likely to experience a more transparent, open, and accountable way of doing business, more focused on open competition and added-value through innovation.

Pubs have previously played a significant role in acting as hubs for local entrepreneurs to advertise and sell their products and services, as well as discuss business ideas and opportunities and innovate through the cross-pollination of ideas, resources and ways of working. However, pub numbers are now less than half what they were in 1905 in the UK (around 48,000 – down from around 99,000) with four pubs closing down every day.

Instead entrepreneurs are increasingly using websites to build their professional networks. Networking sites such as LinkedIn have seen significant growth,with 25 million members in the UK, accounting for 78 percent of the country's working population. Here professionals are able to share business ideas, advertise and sell their products, source supply chains, and seek entrepreneurial mentoring and advice. Start-up internet platforms and apps, such as Cardiff-based Simply Do Ideas, allow entrepreneurs to explore, develop and test early stage ideas, as well facilitate peer-to-peer support and give start-ups the opportunity to reach larger

organisations. Interestingly, early research into the effect of entrepreneurs' engagement with more generic social media platforms such as Twitter suggests that high levels of interaction with these social media channels can have a negative effect. It can cause an 'opportunity overload and churn' effect, which send the entrepreneur into a loop of assessing the means and effects achievable without actually progressing the idea or opportunity.

The way networks are used to raise start-up and growth finance has also changed. Previous generations of entrepreneurs will have almost certainly raised finance through personal savings, networks of friends, family and other informal investors, or even had to visit their local bank manager, look them in the eye, and convince them that they had a sound business plan and were a reliable borrower. However, future generations are increasingly likely to raise capital through virtual crowdfunding networks which involve funding a project or venture by raising many small quantities of money from a huge network of individuals. Technology is also allowing start-ups to tap into virtual angel investment networks through websites such as The UK Angel Investment Network, which allow entrepreneurs to pitch to and make connections with a network of over a million fundraisers and investors.

As these changes occur, interesting questions are raised. Will the success of the next generation of entrepreneurs be focused less on 'who they know' and more on how they are able to use technology to develop their entrepreneurial venture through virtual and distant networks of mentors, suppliers, customers, and funders? Will the importance of geographic location and being co-located with your network become less important or even insignificant? How will increasingly de-localised, distant and dispersed entrepreneurial networks affect the embeddedness of future entrepreneurs into their communities? And will more far reaching networks see entrepreneurial ventures started by Generation Z more resilient to localised economic disturbances, for example in supply chains and customers?

Phil Swan is a Business Development Manager at Cardiff University

Have your say: use the hashtag #GenZEnt on Twitter to share your thoughts.

Can Wales' regions ever keep up with the cities in entrepreneurial success?

Gareth I. Jones talks to Georgina Campbell Flatter *about how we build an economy that supports a more entrepreneurial culture to the benefit of all regions in Wales*

According to Georgina Campbell Flatter, for Wales to succeed, there's one necessary factor: human capital. 'Good ideas can come from anywhere, she says, 'but it's the talent behind an idea, and their drive, leadership skills and values, that will maximize the likelihood that an idea will reach the market and positively impact the local economy'.

Campbell Flatter is Executive Director at the MIT Legatum Center and Senior Lecturer in Technological Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Strategic Management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She grew up in Wales and is now at MIT where she has spent the last ten years trying to understand how to enhance local ecosystems through entrepreneurship.

And where better to do this? MIT has an enviable reputation for developing entrepreneurs. A 2015 report claimed that if its entrepreneurial graduates were a nation, that nation would have one of the world's top ten largest economies, employing over 4.6m people with over $1.9 trillion in annual revenues.

'One of the major insights from my time at MIT is actually quite simple. People matter. And by investing in people, and their entrepreneurship education, great things can happen'.

She continues: 'Just as Mitch Kapor said, "genius is evenly distributed across ZIP codes but access and opportunity are not". In other words, there is opportunity for the next big idea to come from anywhere. It's just a matter of ensuring that those with the good ideas are equipped with the right skills and mindset to realize their full potential'.

'Good ideas can emerge from years of research by a team of curious scientists or an individual's exposure to a market failure through a personal or professional experience, but the birth of an idea is just the beginning. What really matters is the path to impact, the people on that path, and the choices they make along the way as they secure that first customer, refine their business model, and build and manage their team. It's our people that we need to invest in and celebrate – their skills and values, so they can build a bright future for Wales'.

Recently, a group of Wales' most active entrepreneurship advocates have worked with MIT through their Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program (REAP) to design and implement a strategy to promote and support entrepreneurs. Be The Spark emerged from that process and has developed a focus on bringing together academia, risk capital, corporates,

A 2015 report claimed that if MIT graduates were a nation, that nation would have one of the world's top ten largest economies, employing over 4.6m people with over $1.9 trillion in annual revenues

government and of course, entrepreneurs, to create more opportunities and economic growth.

But the key lesson from Be The Spark is that it isn't the responsibility of a single body to encourage entrepreneurship. You must have participation from all key stakeholders in the system. In Wales, we have a tendency to look only to government, but this must change if we are really to make a significant step up.

Campbell Flatter is the former Director of MIT REAP. Passionate about Wales and MIT, she was eager to unite key Welsh stakeholders through this MIT initiative and make sure that entrepreneurs had a seat at the table. She explains: 'At the core of REAP is this idea of systems. Systems thinking is the basis of MIT's business philosophy and our approach to ecosystem development. It's a way of thinking about, and a language for describing and understanding, the forces and interrelationships that shape the behavior of systems. It helps us to see how to change systems more effectively. Wales' innovation and entrepreneurship activities (inputs and outputs) can be viewed as a system. A small change to the system can trigger positive feedback loops and have significant impact over time'.

She continues: 'Human capital is a powerful systems input. If all pillars of our society could invest just a little in the development of human capital across Wales, entrepreneurs will emerge from all corners. The good news is that this is already happening. We just need to incentivise all major stakeholders in our system to continue to add value, including the government, corporate sector, risk capital community, academia and, of course, the entrepreneurs themselves'.

Welsh universities and colleges have an important role to play in supporting entrepreneurship, as do our schools at the primary and secondary level. Campbell Flatter says 'there's no doubt in my mind that you can teach the entrepreneurial mindset at any age and any level – I think we're learning how to do that. We have a good idea of how to teach the basics of entrepreneurship, business model innovations, and the specific skills that entrepreneurs need to execute. But we also need to teach entrepreneurs how to develop and integrate values that will allow for their business, workforce and ecosystem flourish'.

She continues: 'Let's not forget why entrepreneurship matters. Entrepreneurship is a vehicle for bringing a product or service to market and creating jobs but not just any product and not just any job. We need to teach our entrepreneurial leaders to bring products to market that will have a positive impact on society, create good jobs and make leadership choices that are ethical and sustainable.'

It's not just the formal education sector that has a responsibility to develop human capital. One pattern Campbell Flatter has spotted in her work internationally is the tendency for larger, regionally important companies and increasingly startups, to develop entrepreneurship skills through their culture. Companies that create jobs not just in quantity but in quality. 'You've got to turn your staff into graduates of your company culture,' she says. 'If you have this attitude of "how can you bring out their potential" over their time with you, it's very powerful.'

A great example of this are the entrepreneurs who have grown out of Mitel and Admiral, and the incredible talent that was released when Yes TV's futuristic plans didn't work out. These larger companies – when run well – create a healthy competitive environment that develop the right kind of growth mindset in its staff. MoneyPenny in Wrexham are another example of a company that is run with a spirit of entrepreneurship and significant reinvestment into the workforce.

But companies in Wales could potentially continue to improve by learning from global best practice from startups as well as larger firms.

Campbell Flatter cites MAX and SOKO as worth

In 2016, workplace Gross Value Added (GVA) for Wales was £59.6 billion – the lowest level of GVA per head of any UK region
(Welsh Government)

Despite its low GVA, between 2012-14, just over half of Welsh businesses were defined as 'innovation active'
(UK dept for Business, Innovation and Skills)

Codwch lais dros natur yn ymgynghoriad Llywodraeth Cymru 'Brexit a'n Tir' sy'n cau ar 30 Hydref

amphibian and reptile conservation

Bat Conservation Trust

WDC WHALE AND DOLPHIN CONSERVATION

cadwch keep gymru'n wales daclus tidy

Ymddiriedolaeth Genedlaethol National Trust

Ymddiriedolaeth Natur Cymru Wildlife Trusts Wales

marine conservation society

yha

WWF

UKELA Better law for the environment

Campaign for National Parks Keeping beautiful places safe

Butterfly Conservation Wales Gwarchod Glöynnod Byw Cymru

rspb yn rhoi cartref i fyd natur giving nature a home

Council for British Archaeology Cyngor Archaeoleg Prydeinig Wales/Cymru

Ymddiriedolaeth Cwm Elan Elan Valley Trust

COED CADW WOODLAND TRUST

Afonydd Cymru AC Caring for Welsh Rivers

The Vincent Wildlife Trust

Bumblebee Conservation Trust

Freshwater Habitats Trust

Salmon & Trout Conservation Cymru

Open Spaces Society

Cymdeithas Eryri Snowdonia Society

Pont Pori Natur a Threftadaeth

Plantlife

BMC Cyngor Mynydda Prydain

buglife Cymru

Mae Cyswllt Amgylchedd Cymru'n rhwydwaith o 29 o elusennau amgylcheddol sy'n cynrychioli mwy na 328,000 o aelodau a chefnogwyr ledled Cymru.

taking a look at. 'These companies are powerful examples of how a startup can make make a huge contribution to their local ecosystem though the development of human capital'.

MAX, for example, offers a last mile motorcycle delivery service to SMEs and residents across Lagos City in Nigeria. Campbell Flatter explains that 'using optimised routes, geotagged addresses and innovative incentive schemes for motorcycle drivers, MAX has significantly improved mobility across Lagos. In a city of 21 million and with traffic as a major barrier to doing business, MAX has made a significant contribution to the economy. And not just through improved mobility. They now have 600 drivers in their network and have created 6,000 indirect jobs through the SMEs they serve. To add to this local impact, drivers get paid three times the average, they have health benefits, financial literacy support, well-designed training programs and asset financing options so drivers can own their motorcycle within two years of being with the company. MAX is literally creating pathways out of poverty for their employees."

SOKO, an ethical jewelry brand based in Nairobi and San Francisco, has had similar impact on their 100+ employees and 2,000+ Kenyan artisans in their network. Campbell Flatter explains that 'through SOKO's incentive schemes, asset financing programming and educational training activities, especially for women, not only have their innovative strategies help attract and retain talent, they have had significant impact on the local ecosystem'.

She adds: 'These business decisions are not mandated or as a result of regulation. The founders are eager to have a positive impact on society and they make business sense.'

Hiring strategies, employee incentives and good management also really matter.

'My strategy has always been to hire people with the right attitude and values and who are willing to learn and then enhance the specific skills needed.'

Campbell Flatter continues: 'People also need to be compensated in a way that makes them feel valued. And that might mean equity, but that might also mean a decent salary. You can't discount someone's compensation just because they're working for a young company or there are less regulatory constraints. Especially today, because it's too competitive. And it's also not respectful of their time or skills. If you don't have the cash, you don't have the cash – and that's where equity is helpful. But startup leaders have to think very carefully about the financial incentives to make sure that the team feel valued. That becomes more and more important as the team grows.'

We need to teach our entrepreneurial leaders to bring products to market that will have a positive impact on society, create good jobs and make leadership choices that are ethical and sustainable

Georgina Campbell Flatter

Access to skills is one of the first barriers to entrepreneurship in the regions. Larger cities tend to have two factors in their favour: a bigger talent pool, and a greater number of larger employers. The bigger talent pool and larger employers create a competitive cycle for staff that drives standards. Companies have to work harder to attract the best talent, and employees have to work harder to get the best opportunities.

So how could regions across Wales tackle the issues of lower population and lesser economic diversity?

One way that the regions of Wales could benefit is through smart specialisation – a strategy based on taking advantage of local potential in a key sector or industry. By focusing on targeting skill development, these skills can be used to specialise in industries that we can see growing opportunities. 'If you're a US software startup,' says Campbell Flatter, 'You're likely going to want to move [specifically] to Silicon Valley because it's easier to hire people and it's easier for talent to flow from one startup to another... but actually, what you find is that startups in the biotech space will stay in Boston, startups that are hardware focused will stay here in Cambridge. Fashion startups will go to New York.'

Smart specialisation acts as a beacon for interested companies to gravitate towards, knowing that talent, supply chains and capital are well established to support continued growth. 'That's where Wales can promote and think about what its competitive advantage is for different startups and really invest in the talent pool here. If you're a startup in the agriculture space, why wouldn't you want to move to be near Aberystwyth or one of the universities or colleges who are focused on environmental engineering with strong science and tech graduates? Why wouldn't you want to be near that talent pool? And obviously there is a strong biotech hub in

Cardiff. Startup founders are smart, and they go where good people are, and Wales has good people – it's just a matter of making it clearer.'

I put it to Campbell Flatter that with devolution we have the capability to do this, and maybe it is time that we as a community made more of a concerted effort to make sure that the support was targeted and focused. 'I think that all stakeholders have a responsibility to think about skills development,' she says.

School and formal education are undergoing changes right now, but maybe we've missed the point. Skills development doesn't just refer to the changes coming in the next couple of years thanks to the Donaldson Report on the new school curriculum.

Campbell Flatter says: 'If we look at the fact that founders could do ten years in a corporate or SME before they decide to start a business, ten years in that ecosystem... that's where the real investment is needed. If all companies just do that little bit more to upskill their teams – their future leaders, we will create a positive feedback loop, the flywheel will turn and all regions of Wales will prosper over time.'

So no more 'middle manager meetings' – we need to ensure that everyone can see the opportunities and rewards that come from growing within regionally important organisations.

And are business owners likely to get on board with this mission? According to Campbell Flatter, yes: 'Entrepreneurs don't have a responsibility to give back, but they often choose to. Entrepreneurs tend to be driven by the idea of creating a legacy, and not just through their product or service. Entrepreneurial leaders that survive and become successful, often have principles and missions that outlive the product. Ultimately, entrepreneurship is about serving people. I actually don't think it's necessarily an entrepreneur's responsibility to give back, but there is an inherent calling. I think giving back is the wrong term, it's more about serving people. You don't have to give back, but entrepreneurs have this tendency to want to do good and help people.'

Gareth I. Jones is Founder and CEO of Town Square Spaces. He is also one of the IWA's 'Next 30'

How good are Welsh Universities?

Malcolm Prowle *and* **Caitlin Prowle** *provide an overview of the different ways universities might be considered successful, then run that rule over Wales*

What makes a university 'good'? A starting point might be to suggest that a good university might be seen to be one which does the things it is supposed to do and does them well. Which begs an important question. What should a university be doing? Why do universities exist?

There could be many answers to that question, including to enable scholars to meet together and pursue human learning; to educate the next generation of human beings; to enable young people to gain the skills and knowledge they need for the workplace; to undertake research and increase the sum of human knowledge; to meet the needs of business, public services and the economy; and to contribute to the community in the locale. Some of these activities can be easily assessed, but others (scholarship, community contribution) are more difficult to measure.

Traditional Measures

The more traditional measures of assessing the performance of universities concern research and teaching. In UK universities, every five years or so, universities are subject to what is termed the Research Excellence Framework (REF), previously known as the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). This is a cumbersome, time consuming and flawed process which attempts to assess the volume and 'quality' of research being produced by universities. Universities collate their research output for the period involved (mainly published academic papers) and have them assessed by an expert subject panel. The results are aggregated into overall research scores for each university. The other problem with the REF concerns its introspective nature. Research quality is largely assessed by other academics, with only limited input from non-academics. Real world relevance may not be considered of much importance, and while attempts are now made to assess the practical impact of research outputs, the extent to which this counts toward the overall scores by which universities are judged is limited.

Universities are also subject to having academic standards and the quality of teaching and learning assessed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). The results of these assessments are publically available and, for example, the

QAA published a review of Aberystwyth University in April 2016. However, it is difficult to make comparisons of teaching quality from the QAA reviews and in 2017 and 2018 the Office for Students published the results of its Teaching Excellence and Student Outcome Framework (TEF). This exercise graded teaching quality and student outcomes in most universities (some did not participate) on the basis of Gold, Silver and Bronze.

	2017 (%)	2018 (%)
Gold	33	27
Silver	49	50
Bronze	18	23
Total	100	100

Teaching Excellence and Student Outcome Framework, Office for Students 2017-18

Suffice to say that these results caused consternation in the HE sector, with some highly prestigious and world-renowned universities, for example the London School of Economics, receiving a bronze score. The TEF results are controversial and the methodology will be reviewed prior to the round of 2019.

The problems with these traditional measures of university performance are threefold. Judgement of performance is narrowly based on just two items: REF score and TEF score; the data involved is several years out of date; and there is no consensus about the validity of the results since the methodologies are seen as flawed.

These problems therefore give rise to a range of other measures which could be considered equally relevant to the judging of a 'good' university: student satisfaction, student employability, teaching resource levels, contribution to the local community and widening access. Although these measures could be used independently, more often than not they are composited into league tables, which raises a whole new set of questions.

The Complete University Guide

- Entry standards – average UCAS tariff of students entering university
- Student satisfaction – score out of 5
- Research quality – score out of 4
- Research intensity – volume (rather than quality) of research, score out of 1
- Graduate prospects – employability score out of 100
- Student-staff ratio – shown as average number of students per staff member
- Spending on academic services – shown as spend per student
- Spending on facilities – spending on all student and staff facilities, shown as spend per student
- Good honours – percentage of students receiving a first or upper second class honours degree
- Degree completion – rate of completion of first-degree undergraduates

Sources used: NSS, REF, HESA and some individual universities

The Guardian University League table.

- Course satisfaction – provided by final-year students in most recent NSS
- Teaching quality – provided by final-year students in most recent NSS
- Quality of feedback and assessment - provided by final-year students in most recent NSS
- Staff-student ratio – number of students per member of teaching staff
- Spending per student – excluding academic staff costs, given as a score out of 10
- Average entry tariff – typical UCAS scores of young (under 21) entrants
- Value-added – comparison of degree results with entry qualifications to measure value added, given as score out of 10
- Career after 6 months - % of students in graduate-level jobs or further education after 6 months
- Continuation - % of first year students continuing to second year

Sources used: National Student Survey and HESA

League Tables

Various league tables for ranking university performance are produced each year and are widely used to make judgements and choices about universities. Two of the most prominent are *The Complete University Guide* and *The Guardian University League Table*. Each identifies a range of factors which contribute to an overall ranking for a university.

The main differences in approach between the two guides are that only *The Complete University Guide* (CUG) measures research quality and 'good honours' outcomes, while only *The Guardian* measures quality of feedback, spend per student and value added. *The Guardian* measures course satisfaction and teaching quality as two different determinants while the CUG takes student satisfaction to mean 'a measure of student views of the teaching quality at the university'. On employment, *The Guardian* refers to the percentage of students in a career after six months, but the CUG simply refers to 'graduate prospects' (timeframe post-graduation unknown).

Stakeholder Views

There are many groups of stakeholders in a system of higher education and each hold vastly different opinions as to what the important factors are that contribute to a university being 'good'. It is not easy to obtain a clear picture of the views of different stakeholders but we suggest the following are important issues for each group.

Overall, it seems to us that the traditional and broader measures of university performance go some way to proving what stakeholders are looking for but there are some glaring gaps such as the practicality and value of research outputs or the skill base of graduates.

It will be noted we have included the term *perceptions of status* as being an important factor for many stakeholder groups. This is a difficult concept because it is not always clear as to what the perception of status is actually based upon. Sometimes the factors which contribute to perception of status are a relic from the past or may not be based on any objective evidence. This makes it a difficult factor for universities to deal with because if status cannot be defined, how does one improve it?

Academic staff

- Research excellence (REF scores)
- Perceptions of status

University managers

- Research excellence (REF scores)
- Teaching quality and outcomes
- Student satisfaction
- Student employability
- Perceptions of status

Undergraduate students

- Teaching quality
- Employability
- Value for money
- Perceptions of status

Employers

- Skills and knowledge of graduates
- Interpersonal skills of graduates
- Perceptions of status

Parents

- Employability
- Value for money
- Perception of status

Government and Society

- Numbers, skills and knowledge of graduates
- Practical research outputs
- Value for money

There are many groups of stakeholders in a system of higher education and each hold vastly different opinions as to what the important factors are that contribute to a university being 'good'

The Welsh HE system and its performance

If we start with the traditional measures of performance referred to above, we see the following picture in Wales:

Research	REF Research Power Score University Ranking (out of 128)	
	2014	2008
Swansea	42	36
Cardiff	18	15
Bangor	59	55
Aberystwyth	51	51
Trinity St David	118	n/a
Cardiff Met	115	95
University of South Wales	92	75
Wrexham Glyndŵr	120	124

Looking at these results, we can see that Cardiff is highly ranked as a strong research university, and that there exists a considerable gap exists between Cardiff and the other Welsh universities.

Regarding teaching excellence and student output, we see the following situation in Wales:

Name	2018	2017
Swansea	Gold	Silver
Cardiff	-	Silver
Bangor	-	Gold
Aberystwyth	Gold	-
Trinity St David	Bronze	-
Cardiff Metropolitan	-	Silver
University of South Wales	-	-
Wrexham Glyndŵr	No score	Silver

Overall, these results appear somewhat better for Wales, with three universities now holding a gold award. However, the reality is that only seven Welsh universities made submissions and such a small sample can be misleading.

However, if we consider broader based measures of university performance then we see a somewhat different picture of Welsh universities (right):

What we see here is that while Cardiff would still probably be seen as the leading university in Wales, the gap between Cardiff and Swansea seems to have closed in recent years. It should be noted, however, that the *Guardian* figures exclude research quality from their calculations and this penalises Cardiff.

Looking beyond this, the remaining Welsh universities fall well down the UK league table with barely any recent appearances in the top 50. In fact, some of the older Welsh universities now reside below some of the post-1992 universities, former polytechnics such as Nottingham Trent, Derby and Coventry.

Cardiff University

	Complete University Guide			The Guardian University league tables		
	2019	2018	2017	2019	2018	2017
Swansea	39th	44th	45th	31st	45th	39th
Cardiff	33rd	37th	35th	58th	42nd	33rd
Bangor	62nd	65th	62nd	47th	63rd	55th
Aberystwyth	65th	68th	87th	45th	81st	108th
Trinity St David	115th	119th	123rd	85th	112nd	N/A
Cardiff Met	77th	67th	72nd	99th	87th	91st
University of South Wales	107th	110th	99th	109th	116th	111th
Wrexham Glyndŵr	127th	128th	125th	97th	121st	119th

	Top 25	Top 50	Top 75	Top 100
United States	13	18	25	31
United Kingdom	6	9	11	16
Rest of the world	6	23	39	53
Total	25	50	75	100

Should Wales have a policy aim of getting a university in the top 100?

The Welsh HE system in a global context

Finally, we consider the position of Welsh universities in the global HE context. Various league tables exist showing an assessment of the top 100 universities in the world. The QS World University Rankings show the following picture.

If we look at UK universities, we see that of those in the top 100, thirteen are from England and three from Scotland. None are from Wales or Northern Ireland. The Welsh university nearest the top 100 is Cardiff (137) which has jumped up the global rankings in recent years. The remainder of the Welsh universities are nowhere near the top 100.

Should Wales have a policy aim of getting a university in the top 100? This would seem an achievable aim, but would require significant investment in Cardiff University and it is difficult to see where this funding would come from. In the context of the current HE funding system, it seems to us that the only way this aim could be achieved would to close an existing Welsh university and redirect the resources into Cardiff, with the aim of pursuing a top 100 slot. However, this would have implications for HE provision in Wales and it is debatable if this is a price worth paying for having a Welsh university in the top 100. ➤

Malcolm Prowle is professor of performance management at University of Gloucestershire;
Caitlin Prowle is studying social policy at the London School of Economics and works as an advisor on widening participation at the LSE

Our *smart* future

Keith Watts *outlines an IWA report that seeks to start an intelligent conversation about smart technology*

Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum, calls for leaders and citizens to:
'together shape a future that works for all by putting people first, empowering them and constantly reminding ourselves that all of these new technologies are first and foremost tools made by people for people.'

Smart technology is already beginning to change how we live, work and play. Whether we use a watch to tell us how active we have been, an app to see when the next bus is coming, or a *smart* meter to manage our energy use, we are increasingly using *smart*, data-driven technology to understand ourselves and our environments better – to make decisions.

As individuals we have been adopting these changes in our lives at an increasing pace. We've done so without much thought to the wider impacts of what, for us, may be small changes. But when added up across society the changes are significant. If *smart* technology is already making our lives easier in small ways by providing us with new information to make better choices, imagine the difference *smart* could make if delivered at scale to improve our public services, our infrastructure, and our economy, providing big data and offering even bigger opportunities.

Spotting the opportunity, villages, towns, cities and regions around the world are labelling themselves *smart*. From Rio to Helsinki, smart is being used to focus the minds of citizens and politicians on the future, and to attract external investment.

Across the world the goals of becoming *smart*

If *smart* technology is already making our lives easier in small ways... imagine the difference *smart* could make if delivered at scale to improve our public services, our infrastructure, and our economy

vary depending on political, social, economic and environmental factors. The particular blend of these factors drives unique approaches to technology, digital connectivity, *smart* transport and public engagement, to achieve a vision of the future community.

The IWA believes that the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal provides an excellent opportunity to drive technology and digital infrastructure across the Cardiff Capital Region. It is well placed to enable benefits for citizens and businesses, but only if the Cardiff Capital Region becomes a *smart* region. The approach taken here could be translated to other regions of Wales and the UK.

Seven organisations sharing that belief – Arup, BT, Cardiff University, Centrica, Microsoft, Next Generation Data and the Open University – came together to fund the IWA's *smart* region project and to investigate the possibilities. This diverse group of partners has brought a rich variety of experience and perspectives to the pursuit of digital innovation and improving citizens' well-being. There's plenty of willing enthusiasm of partners in the region to contribute and get involved.

The £1.2bn that has been made available to the City Deal creates the scope for lots of possibilities. £734 million will be spent on the South Wales Metro whilst £495 million will be used for investment in the region.

This money is being invested with the official goal of raising Gross Value Added (GVA) by 5%, bringing the region more in line with the UK average. But with a community of 1.7 million people, 10 local authorities, 3 universities and 50% of Wales' economy, including numerous burgeoning startups, there is serious potential through a *smart* agenda to achieve much greater things than just a GVA uplift.

The foundations of a great *smart* region are already here. One of the first tasks for the *smart* region project was to uncover what's happening in the region. We found evidence there is plenty happening in the region's technology and *smart* sectors, such as:

- the Park Cardiff app which uses sensors in the street to help drivers find parking. A first in Europe. The SmartSpot devices for the sensors could be a quick way to launch an Internet of Things network.
- trials of digital assistants in supported living in Rhondda Cynon Taff, the Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff by Innovate Trust.
- Monmouthshire being chosen as a 5G rural integrated testbed (5GRIT) site to improve internet connections in rural communities.
- Alacrity mentoring and training graduates as they establish tech businesses in south Wales.
- thethingsnetwork which is a growing network of tech minded people looking to establish a free to use Long Range Wide Area Network (LoRaWAN) which would allow low powered sensors to wirelessly connect to the internet across the Cardiff Urban Area.

Networks of tech community groups, like thethingsnetwork, are bringing people together to learn new tech skills and achieve goals. Meanwhile incubators, coworking spaces, and makerspaces are springing up to facilitate innovation. However, much of the region's innovation, training, and pilot projects are taking place in isolation from one another.

The City Deal presents an opportunity to help bring them together to collaborate and share learning. This could allow innovators to scale effectively and cross silos, achieving wider benefits in health, well-being and citizen engagement. We know the inability to scale up has been the death knell of many *smart* projects around the world. Let's make sure that doesn't happen here.

To highlight the possibilities the *smart* region project has been looking around the world for best practice. In Barcelona for instance, citizen data activists use data to improve their communities. Noise complaints due to the night-time economy in the Plaça del Sol were backed up by data showing noise levels exceeding 100 decibels, far higher than World Health Organisation limits. The data was collected by residents using sensors locally developed in the Barcelona Fab Lab – a makerspace. After showing the data to authorities in Barcelona, residents

With no clear routes for communication and engagement, we are concerned that the number and variety of ideas brought to the table will not reflect the diversity, talent and expertise within the Cardiff Capital Region

were empowered to make changes to the Plaça del Sol, including planters and play areas for children, which reduced noise levels. People empowered by technology and data to make changes which benefit the community, and improve their well-being and others' too.

As well as shifting power to people there is potential that *smart* will shift power to the machines, and algorithms. There is simply no escaping that some repetitive tasks can be more effectively performed by using AI and/or automation. Together they represent a huge global opportunity. PwC has highlighted that AI alone has the potential to increase UK GDP by 10.3% by 2030.

But this opportunity comes at a cost, with a third of current jobs in Wales at risk. In the immediate future the largest impacts could be on sectors like financial services and logistics. Algorithmic technologies and distributed ledgers – aka blockchain – can outperform humans and could lead to faster, more efficient analysis or contractual agreement. Wales cannot afford not to take urgent, focused action to make sure it is ready for the revolution already coming down the track, in particular by upskilling people to make sure they are ready for the economy of the near future.

We've observed that, to date, there has been little open engagement on the City Deal and the opportunity this presents to transform the region. In discussions we have had with stakeholders, it is clear that many do not know how to engage with the City Deal. This includes businesses, academic bodies, healthcare providers and community groups. With no clear routes for communication and engagement, we are concerned that the number and variety of ideas brought to the table will not reflect the diversity, talent and expertise within the Cardiff Capital Region.

We need only look to the Greater Manchester City Deal for an example of how it could be done. Creating Manchester's Green Vision saw 4,000 people contribute and 700 attend a summit including: environmental experts, interest groups, businesses, academics and local people. Together they informed and created collective goals, prepared by and owned by the wider community.

Our recommendations cover three main areas:

- *Smart* governance and leadership
- Communication about smart technology and spaces for collaboration
- Empowering everyone to play a part in building a smart region

To make progress in these three areas we recommend six specific steps:

1. Appoint a **Digital Futures Champion** to lead the region's digital strategy
2. Create a clear, meaningful and motivating **Vision Statement**
3. **Deliver a regional digital strategy** that makes open, transparent communication a priority
4. Build an **Innovation Hub** to co-create digital solutions that tackle regional challenges
5. Launch a **Challenge Fund** to encourage innovation and ideas from communities, businesses and organisations across the region, stimulating cross-sector collaboration
6. Build a **Digital Skills and Employment Platform** to upskill the regional workforce

Firm foundations for success have already been built organically by communities, businesses, universities and public services throughout the region.

We hope our report, by showing the art of the possible, acts as a catalyst for the region to come together and work towards a shared, strategic vision for the region's *smart* future. In order to catalyse the kind of collective vision required to drive a smart region, we need to provide spaces for the region's stakeholders in which they develop shared priorities and collective momentum. It's clear that if the Cardiff Capital Region is to achieve its *smart* potential, the conversation is only just starting. ➤

Keith Watts is the IWA's Smart Region Project Coordinator

gofod3

21 Mawrth
March 2019

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Cyfarthfa: *a crucible again?*

Geraint Talfan Davies *outlines ambitious plans to reassert the importance of the industrial heritage of Merthyr Tydfil*

In the 1980s I had the privilege of working with one of the great historians of Wales, the late Gwyn A. Williams, on a 13-part television history of Wales, *The Dragon Has Two Tongues*. I can recall the shots of Gwyn, in the pouring rain, declaiming to a crowd outside Merthyr Tydfil's Town Hall, with his fist held high. Our own Lenin. It was also the time of the miners' strike, when Gwyn described the plight of Wales in graphic terms as 'a naked people under an acid rain'.

You could not know Gwyn for any length of time without imbibing a belief in the centrality of Merthyr Tydfil to the industrial revolution and to the history of the working class in this country. Most of all he convinced me that the story of Merthyr was undersold, a habit that may have originated with Prime Minister Lord Melbourne who, when presented with a report on the Merthyr Rising of 1831, Gwyn contended, deleted the word 'rising' and inserted the word 'riots'.

What is beyond doubt is that Merthyr is still undersold. One cannot say that the world, or even younger generations within Wales, know that here is the town that in the nineteenth century was the world's largest centre of iron production, where Nelson's canonry and the iron railways of the world were made. Gwyn would contend, jokingly, that if Tolstoy's Anna

Karenina had been subjected to forensic examination having thrown herself under a train, they would have found 'Made in Dowlais' stamped on her crushed body.

More recently, another historian, Joe England, has written of Merthyr as *The Crucible of Modern Wales*: the place wherein the industrial revolution was forged, where the ironworks of Cyfarthfa, Dowlais, Penydarren and Plymouth employed thousands and propelled Wales into an emerging global industrial economy; Wales' first truly industrial town, its largest town from 1801–1861 and, arguably, the catalyst for the development of what is now Wales' capital city; not to mention being the place where Richard Trevithick developed the world's first steam locomotive.

It was with the idea of transforming the projection of a story that is central to our history that, in October 2017, more than sixty people gathered in a cold hall at Cyfarthfa Castle, as torrential rain and gale force winds battered away outside. We were drawn from different disciplines: architects, landscape architects, planners, museum curators, industrial heritage specialists, artists and community activists. Led by the Design Commission for Wales, with input from the Welsh School of Architecture and the full backing of Merthyr Council, the session was convened as a design 'charrette', a familiar term in the architectural world for a process of sparking and assessing ideas.

Carole-Anne Davies and Amanda Spence, of the Design Commission, and I produced a report on the proceedings earlier this year. Happily, in June the report was accepted unanimously by the council and the early steps to realising its recommendations are now under way.

What does the report envisage? The first recommendation – and everything else flows naturally from this – is that Cyfarthfa Castle and Park and the related estate west of Taff should be recognised as a National Centre of Industrial Heritage on a scale that its historical importance merits, and as an anchor project in realising the tourist potential of the south Wales valleys. This would tie it in with the recommendations of the Valleys Task Force report and its proposals for a Valleys Regional Park.

Cyfarthfa Castle itself, built by Crawshay in 1820, is in need of conservation and refurbishment, but there is also a need for new exhibition spaces that can make full use of modern display technologies to achieve a combination of high quality narrative and visual spectacle. This would likely require the creation of a new international quality building at the rear of the castle – replacing some of the now defunct school buildings that were tacked on in the 1920s. This, we thought, might require an investment of at least £50m over ten years.

One cannot say that the world, or even younger generations within Wales, know that here is the town that in the nineteenth century was the world's largest centre of iron production, where Nelson's canonry and the iron railways of the world were made

Done to the right quality this would have the potential to quadruple visitor numbers. Currently Cyfarthfa Castle attracts no more than 60,000 visitor numbers annually, which compares with 257,000 at Swansea's National Waterfront Museum and 147,000 at Big Pit National Coal Museum. In our view this is an entirely realistic objective, especially given Merthyr's strategic location at the crossroads of the A470 and A465.

There is no shortage of themes to be explored imaginatively in such a centre. In fact, we would be spoilt for choice:

- the growth of iron-making and the history of innovation
- the industry's international reach – to France, Russia and America
- the ironmasters and their relations with their workforces
- social conditions in Merthyr
- the extraordinary and dramatic story of the 1831 rising, and of Dic Penderyn, the rising's martyr
- social and political development, including the election of Keir Hardie, Labour's first MP
- the role of women, including Lady Charlotte Guest
- and by no means least, the story of Aberfan and the photography and art that it inspired.

Other ideas that have emerged are as a location for the National Museum of Wales' photographic collection or a landmark exhibition of industrial photography. Exploitation of the water resources of the site could be another attraction and an exemplar of sustainability practice.

But if such a centre were to be concerned only with Merthyr's past it would be doing only half a job. The past must be a springboard for renewal. For instance, taking the cue from Merthyr's history of industrial innovation, provision could also be made for a gallery dedicated to changing exhibitions of 21st innovation in art and industry that would help change public perceptions of Merthyr and the Heads of Valleys area. It would also need to reach out to higher and further education. Combinations of the above could also provide the foundation for an education centre of national importance, drawing comparisons with the Urdd's 120-bed residential centre at the Wales Millennium Centre.

Indeed, the toughest task ahead will be to choose between all these ideas.

And then there is the magnificent landscape – not only the 160-acre Cyfarthfa Park, that should be a major attraction in its own right, but also the now open area west of the Taff, going north from the magnificent 19th century furnaces to the Cefn Coed viaduct. This has the potential to become a magnificent open area for public events. There is also the challenge of connecting the two areas either side of the river, across or perhaps adjacent to a restored Pant-y-Cafnau iron bridge. And more could be made of the banks of the Taff.

This list of remarkable assets makes it all the more perplexing that in the past some in Merthyr have seemed pessimistic, arguing that too much of the town's industrial heritage has been lost. While that is undoubtedly true, the fact that the Titanic lies at the bottom of Atlantic ocean did not stop Belfast building a Titanic Centre – at a cost of £101m – that last year attracted nearly 850,000 visitors.

In the report we have listed a dozen other exciting industrial heritage comparators from France, Germany, Netherlands, America and Scotland. Developed in the right way, Merthyr could easily stand with these on the designated European Route of Industrial Heritage, and even allow, eventually, for the extension of Blaenavon's world heritage status to encompass Merthyr.

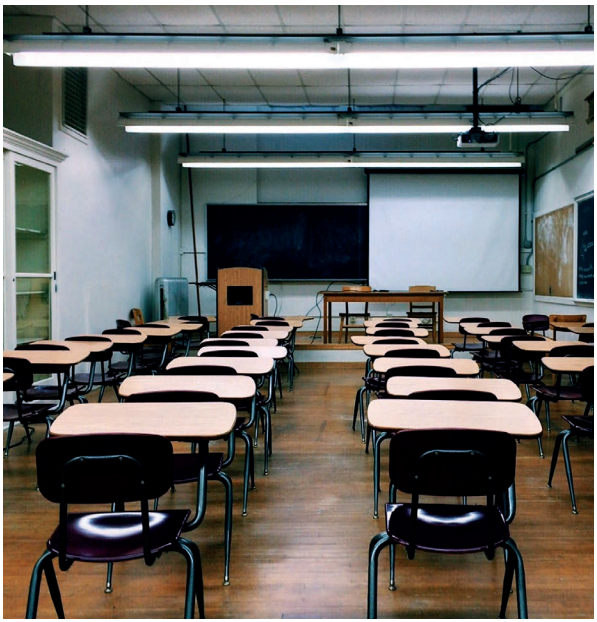
‘Whatever you do, try to make it the best in the world’

Done on an ambitious scale and at high quality, the benefits of the project have the potential to spread out like concentric rings, setting quality benchmarks that can influence what is done in the rest of the town; influencing, too, the quality of the marketing of industrial heritage throughout Wales and raising its status in the wider tourist offer. But on one condition – an important injunction came from one participant at the charrette: ‘Whatever you do, try to make it the best in the world.’

Is this just a pipedream? No. A small team, drawn from the Design Commission and Merthyr Council, has already started on the work of creating a special purpose vehicle to steer the whole project. This we intend to be a public trust with charitable status that could not only look to the council, the Welsh Government, the Heritage Lottery Fund and major UK charitable foundations for funding, but would also be a means of bringing together the representatives of the council and community organisations as well as the best national and international expertise. It will also need the active engagement of other Welsh institutions and agencies – National Museum Wales, the National Library and CADW.

In this age of austerity there will, of course, be sceptics, but it is our belief that the timing is right. The importance of Merthyr’s story for Wales, the tourism industry’s need for bold new ideas with international appeal, the opportunities created by the city region and its proposed Metro railway, and the pressing needs of communities at the heads of the valleys combine to make this a national project – the right project at the right moment. ▸

Geraint Talfan Davies is a former Chair of the IWA, as well as of the Welsh National Opera



Teaching the old watchdog new tricks

Philip Dixon *runs the rule over Professor Graham Donaldson's* A Learning Inspectorate, *questions the idea of Estyn leading curriculum development, and calls for wider debate about what we mean by school 'standards'*

Curriculum reform is now to Welsh education what Brexit has become to British politics – the only topic of conversation. Welsh education is now undergoing a period of significant change unparalleled for over half a century. Ever since the publication of Graham Donaldson's *Successful Futures* in 2015, which sought a complete overhaul of the school curriculum, discussion about the implications and implementation of these proposals have excluded almost all other issues.

The proposed reforms are now well known. According to Donaldson the four key purposes of the curriculum are to produce ambitious, enterprising, ethical, confident learners. The curriculum itself should be comprised of six 'Areas of Learning and Experience' – arts, well-being, humanities, communication, numeracy, and science. Key in the building of the new curriculum, and often claimed as its unique selling point, is that the teaching profession will be the chief constructors. In public at least the proposals have received a warm welcome, though such cosy consensus breaks down in many private encounters. The silence of public debate has been deafening and deadening.

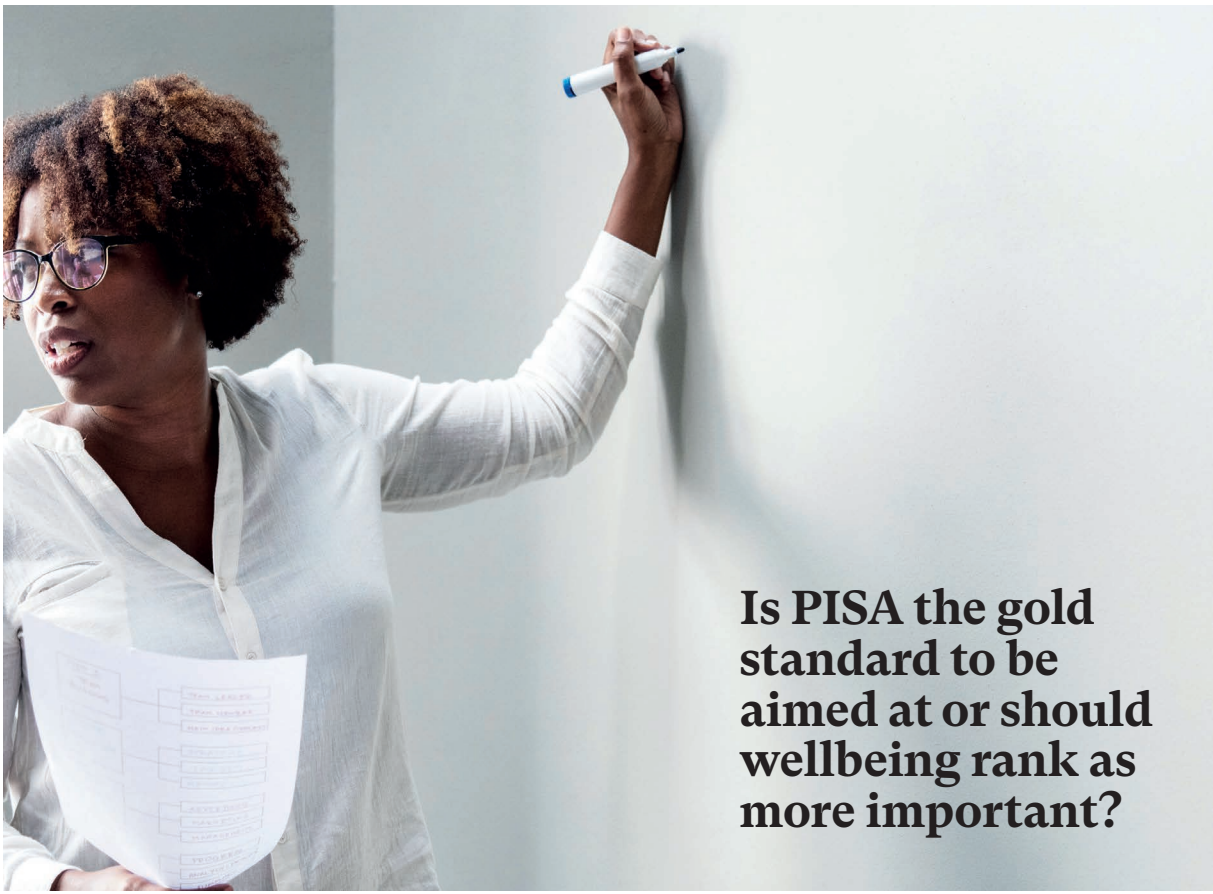
Because the curriculum is 'all of the learning experiences and assessment activities planned in pursuit of agreed purposes of education', it has now touched upon every aspect of school life. There has been an inevitable impact on thinking about qualifications and pedagogy, leadership and professional development, but Initial Teacher Training and accountability have also come into view. It was probably inevitable that Estyn, the school inspectorate in Wales, could not remain above the fray. Indeed, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Meilyr Rowlands, Professor Donaldson undertook a rapid review of Estyn, 'to allow Estyn and its school inspection work to contribute directly and constructively to the ambitious reforms currently under way'.

Based on engagement with Estyn staff, headteachers, pupils, parents, and other key stakeholders, and a Call for Evidence, undertaken by WISERD at Cardiff University, the resultant report, *A Learning Inspectorate*, makes for interesting reading. Despite the endeavours of some to demonise the inspectorate and tar it with the same rhetoric used until recently for Ofsted over the border, Estyn comes off very well as an organisation that is trusted because of its independence from government, the quality

of its thematic (as opposed to institutional) reports, and the quality of its staff. Although it is interesting to note that 'Governors, parents, higher and further education representatives and other members of the public were more likely to say Estyn is important for improving the quality of education in Wales than school practitioners', I suspect that is the case for every inspectorate! There was predictable welcome in certain quarters for the proposal to suspend inspections for a year (although those schools currently in special measures will not 'Get Out of Jail Free' it should be noted).

But despite this high praise, Donaldson is insistent that Estyn too has to become a player in what he labels several times the 'radical ambition' of his proposed curriculum reforms. This is partly to ensure their effective delivery but also to ensure that the emergent accountability regime reinforces the curriculum reforms, and that the alleged lack of coherence in the present arrangements are removed.

The main thrust of his vision for the future of the inspectorate is clear. The new accountability system must have 'self-evaluation' at its core. 'Establishing self-evaluation as a "built in" rather than a "bolt on" will be integral to success'. The role of accountability regimes in general, and Estyn in particular will be to verify that a school is sufficiently engaged in authentic 'self-evaluation' that it can enjoy 'earned autonomy'. As Donaldson points out, this set up functions already in several countries. Whether or not citing his own native land, Scotland, as one of them bolsters or weakens the argument depends much upon one's judgement of the Scottish education system – a judgment that will become particularly acute next year when the next PISA results are published. In any case I doubt that the Welsh



Locating regulation within government proved less than ideal, and after a series of debacles over GCSEs, part of ACCAC's function had to be revived and restored in the form of Qualifications Wales, our relatively new arms-length exam regulator. Perhaps it is time to give that body the overarching responsibility for curriculum reform and not Estyn?

Government would want any schools in Wales to go uninspected for a decade, as was recently revealed about some schools in Scotland.

Donaldson's proposals for Estyn's role in the medium and long term as the guarantor of authentic self-evaluation seem sensible. And it again seems sensible that Estyn should have a key role in the short term in ensuring that the new curriculum is being rolled out evenly across Wales. But that it should take a lead role in actual curriculum development as he proposes is more questionable.

Donaldson notes at least twice in his report that 'Unlike other countries such as Scotland and Ireland, Wales, since 2006, does not have a national body to support curriculum development nationally and locally. Responsibility for support is therefore spread across a range of national and local bodies with the Education Directorate usually in the lead'. We did once have such a body – ACCAC (Awdurdod Cymwysterau, Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru: Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales) – but this was culled in Rhodri Morgan's bonfire of the quangos in 2006. Locating regulation within government proved less than ideal, and after a series of debacles over GCSEs, part of ACCAC's function had to be revived and restored in the form of Qualifications Wales, our relatively new arms-length exam regulator. Perhaps it is time to give that body the overarching responsibility for curriculum reform and not Estyn? Qualifications Wales has had time to bed in and had proved its worth. Future curriculum development would sit far better within its remit than that of the inspectorate.

The report also quietly but firmly brings one of the big elephants centre stage. It is worth quoting at length:

> The ultimate tests of the reforms to Welsh education will be the extent to which they lead to higher standards of attainment... At present the definition of 'standards' varies according to who is asking the question. In some cases 'standards' take on a highly specific meaning, focusing on literacy and numeracy and performance in a defined range of national qualifications. PISA is also often cited as a measure of a country's 'standards'. And sometimes the term is used in an omnibus sense to convey a general impression of how well young people are learning. If the move to a self-improving system is to lead to real improvement for young people then there is a need for agreement on what standards will be used to gauge success.

My first reading led me to say: 'Well. Quite.' But I think one cannot just leave it glibly at that. If we have no consensus about what – and should not – be in the mix, then we will always have controversy about the actual state of our education system. For instance, is PISA the gold standard to be aimed at or should well-being rank as more important? (I use these as examples because while Wales' poor performance in the former is all too well known our relative success in the other – especially compared to England – is not). It is disturbing that this question can still be posed. More disturbing that Donaldson thinks we are some way from an answer. The question is now urgent. It is key to the whole endeavour. It's time for an open debate. ➤

Dr Philip Dixon is currently CEO of the Assessment Foundation, a commentator on Welsh education, author of *Testing Times*, and was Director of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers for over 12 years

Speak up for nature in the Welsh Government ‘Brexit and Our Land’ consultation - closing 30 October

amphibian and reptile conservation

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WDC WHALE AND DOLPHIN CONSERVATION

cadwch keep gymru'n wales daclus tidy

Ymddiriedolaeth Genedlaethol National Trust

Ymddiriedolaeth Natur Cymru Wildlife Trusts Wales

marine conservation society

yha

WWF

UKELA Better law for the environment

Campaign for National Parks Keeping beautiful places safe

Butterfly Conservation Wales Gwarchod Glöynnod Byw Cymru

rspb yn rhoi cartref i fyd natur giving nature a home

Council for British Archaeology Wales/Cymru

Ymddiriedolaeth Cwm Elan Elan Valley Trust

COED CADW WOODLAND TRUST

Afonydd Cymru AC Caring for Welsh Rivers

The Vincent Wildlife Trust

Bumblebee Conservation Trust

Freshwater Habitats Trust

Salmon & Trout Conservation Cymru

Open Spaces Society

Cymdeithas Eryri Snowdonia Society

Pont Pori Natur a Threftadaeth

Plantlife

BMC Cyngor Mynydda Prydain

buglife Cymru

Wales Environment Link is a network of 29 environmental charities which represent over 328,000 members and supporters across Wales.

Culture

A monument to the communal

Merlin Gable meets **Owen Sheers** to discuss the poet's televisual engagement with social issues

A tangle of pink foil balloons drifts across the skyline, passing rather than rising, released by a child who is probably now rather distressed. 'Oh isn't that beautiful… it's like a really cheesy thing from the end of a film but the fact that they're all moving around each other is kind of special.' It's the kind of moment one hopes for when interviewing someone like Owen Sheers: to test the strange ordinariness of the encounter, hoping that the veneer of normality might give way to a flash of the poetic.

For this process is at the heart of Sheers' latest works, two 'film poems' that, in the vein of Dylan Thomas' *Under Milkwood*, are a collage of voices, a chorus of community acted out on primetime TV by the likes of Michael Sheen (*The Queen*), Eve Myles (*Un Bore Mercher*) and later published as long poems by Faber. These works, *The Green Hollow* and *To Provide All People*, were premiered in October 2016 and June 2018 respectively as hour-long films produced by BBC Wales and Vox Pictures. They are obviously unusual, and this isn't even to mention their subject matter: *The Green Hollow* was commissioned and released for the fiftieth anniversary of the Aberfan disaster, an event burned onto the Welsh social consciousness; *To Provide All People* is a poem commemorating the National Health Service's seventieth anniversary earlier this year with a narrative weaving its founding story with the voices of patients, family members and practitioners.

Sheers is now a household name in Wales and beyond, a writer and public man of words whose eclectic back catalogue spans lyric poetry, novels, community art projects and drama. Even for such a varied career these film poems represent an interesting new direction. They are interesting for the lines they blur: popular television and poetry, documentary interview and the often neglected long poem form. They are insistently multi-modal – neither the film nor print versions can claim the status of *urtext* – and are the result of an unusual process of research and interviews that saw Sheers talking to survivors of the Aberfan disaster, on the one hand, and frontline NHS practitioners on the other.

'I should say at the outset that I still find elements of this form mysterious. I'm still exploring it and finding out what it can and can't do,' Sheers explains to me as we look onto the lake in Roath Park on a sunny afternoon. 'I suppose if we go right back the form began for me when I wrote *Pink Mist*' (Sheers' 2013 verse drama about the post-9/11 conflict in Afghanistan). 'I did this set of interviews with recently wounded service personnel for a project called *The Two Worlds of Charlie F*, which was a recovery project first and foremost and a piece of theatre second. And because of that, although I was going to create a play, the people in the cast had really experienced these situations and were playing characters, but the characters were incredibly close to them. That had a very unique power and as a piece of live theatre it did something that I think almost nothing else could because there was no wriggle room for the audience.' Sheers later revisited these interviews when writing *Pink Mist*: 'I suppose [it] was my first experiment in negotiating between the worlds of documentary and the literary… In

writing in that more lyrical way, it's very strange, it enables a sort of essential truth of those combined voices – because each character is normally a composite character – and it enables them to exist in a very authentic way.'

The cultural theorist Homi K. Bhabha wrote that 'remembering is never a quiet act of introspection or retrospection. It is a painful re-membering, a putting together of the dismembered past to make sense of… the present.' In the same way, Sheers' film poems are a powerful act of making something new out of a tapestry of past events – history, testimony, our collective cultural imagination. The defining feature of the Aberfan disaster is that it was the tragedy of a whole community – a shared and yet extremely private trauma. When Sheers was approached by the BBC, he was drawn immediately to this form: 'a series of dramatic monologues seems very well suited to the choral experience and to retrospective trauma and to bringing that into the immediate moment. Immediately I was thinking in terms of voice. What I first saw was a shape: one voice growing to a crescendo of 144 and tapering down to one voice again in 2016.'

I asked Sheers how he felt about inhabiting the voices of other people in this way. 'How did I deal with the literary-ness? With great trepidation. More so for some reason with Aberfan. It felt like a very fragile story, a grief that was very much still being lived in the community and in individuals. To be honest, my biggest fear was falling into a trap of emotional exploitation. When you are going to write lyrically like that it's easy to press the buttons. And I guess what you're trying to do to avoid that is create composite characters.'

Sheers described how Pip Broughton, who worked closely with him as the producer of the television productions, 'found a visual equivalent for this distancing because when we're going to go into really difficult territory she pulls back the camera and goes "look here's the cameras, here's the lights", which is actually what poetry is doing. What it's always doing is saying: look, this is being shaped, this is artifice, you are being manipulated.' For Sheers this is the extraordinary potential of poetry as testament to collective experience: 'In documentary or in prose it would have felt like too much, but there's something about poetry as an act of tribute and as an artificial form of speech that enables you to do it.' Of course, the poet can also create something new, 'that's why we have artists', Sheers tells me, 'to turn up and invent and make shape, otherwise we would all just be documentary-makers'.

'It's a strange grafting of voice,' Sheers admits. 'All of these pieces, they begin very much as the interviewees' voices in my words and they increasingly become my words in their voices... Because that's the other thing that this form allows you to do: because you are allowed to use metaphor and imagery, the most simple speech and idea can be heightened.' Take, for example, the way Sheers highlights the dispute over whether

'That's why we have artists... to turn up and invent and make shape, otherwise we would all just be documentary-makers'

‘The NHS exists in this double scale: on the one hand this massive social idea, a deep sense of cultural identity. But in terms of our experience with it, it’s our bodies and the people whom we love – you couldn’t get more personal, couldn’t get more intimate’

the children sang ‘All Things Bright and Beautiful’ or ‘There is a Green Hill Far Away’ on the morning of the Aberfan disaster. ‘I really, really wanted that in there because it’s a way of acknowledging [that] all of this is filtered through subjective memory.’ This for Sheers is at the heart of the form’s potential. He is animated at this point: ‘You accumulate and accumulate and accumulate and then it’s suddenly like you’ve got this weight of voice to draw upon which enables you to imagine an event. [It might be] something that I’m imposing but it’s okay because this is declaring itself to such an extent, like *this is shaped guys!* That’s what I mean by a lyrical licence – it does what it should do as a piece of literary work, as a poem.’

The poems are subtitled ‘a poem in the voice of’ Aberfan and the NHS – voice, singular, highlighting Sheers as this conduit for experience, and creator of the poetic. ‘An extraordinary occupation of the writer,’ Sheers muses. ‘But the singular feels okay to me there,’ I offer. ‘It feels okay to me too,’ Sheers replies, ‘because it’s a knitting together of those two parts of the form. It’s not in the voice of Owen Sheers, it’s not in the *voices* of the NHS [or Aberfan] because that to me would just be something more like absolute verbatim oral history. But as a choral experience, if you read this or watch this, what resonance you’re left with is, I hope, the voice of the NHS.’

To Provide All People is perhaps an even more impressive poetic feat than *The Green Hollow* for grappling with an idea instead of an event. I asked Sheers how he made narrative out of an institution like the NHS. ‘Well, as you can see, there’s a double narrative. There is the narrative of the birth of the Act, which is a big risk because it’s a lot of exposition, and I’m aware with

To Provide All People more so than in any other book I allow there to be a quite full-on political exposition. But it's heartfelt; I felt there was an opportunity to see if the form can sustain it. I wanted there to be this deeper idea that goes beyond the seventy years [of the NHS].' But there's also something personal in the piece. 'You'll have probably gathered that the narrative about the premature birth is our narrative. We'd just had this very intimate experience with the NHS and suddenly I realised this was about an idea. *Pink Mist*, *The Green Hollow* – both events. They had a very simple before, during and after structure... But that's partly why the personal narrative came in. I was trying not to write about our experience of having a premature birth but it was like a vacuum, it kept drawing me in, drawing me in, and I worried that this isn't the place to tell my story – how this form works is being a conduit for the voices of others. But I was becoming more and more interested in how the NHS exists in this double scale: on the one hand this massive social idea, a deep sense of cultural identity. But in terms of our experience with it, it's our bodies and the people whom we love – you couldn't get more personal, couldn't get more intimate, and I thought actually it's right to have a very personal story.'

'We need to become an incubator country, we need to be doing ideas first'

In the two works Sheers grapples with two great myths of modern Welsh history: the Aberfan disaster, which, with the flooding of Capel Celyn, is one of the defining moments of post-war Wales, and the NHS – our welfare state arguably much more integral to the Welsh structure of feeling than the English. That isn't to say that Sheers sees himself writing in any quintessentially Welsh mode here, he insists: 'I'm aware of a tension in myself that is that you don't want to be the writer who only writes on Welsh themes; I'm not interested in that. We live in a globalised international world and I suppose my aspirations with the form are to scale it up now to an international subject.' Sheers identifies climate change here. 'Pip and I are excited about how mainstream we can make this as a form. Can you edge it towards a three-part drama?'

Owen Sheers' continued experimentation with form is one of the more invigorating examples of Welsh public broadcasting, and indeed Welsh poetry, currently on offer. There is a feeling of the great informative programming of the 1970s and 1980s in Sheers' works: John Berger's *Ways of Seeing*, Dai Smith's *Wales? Wales!* or Raymond Williams' *The Country and the City*. It's exciting for Wales, Sheers thinks, that there is once again an openness to such experimentation. 'In a way we're able to do that because we're a small country. I think there are so many places where we can be inventive… because of our size. And I think we've got to make more of a virtue of that. We need to become an incubator country, we need to be doing ideas first.' For Sheers poetry has a central place in this. 'Before I did *Pink Mist*, [people] were anxious about the form; now all they want me to write is another verse drama ... this [form] makes something more accessible not less. Previous generations have known this. Why have we entered a period where we're scared of poetics?' ➤

Merlin Gable is Culture Editor of *the welsh agenda*

Creed

Margiad Evans
Honno Welsh Women's Classics, new edition 2018

Tony Brown

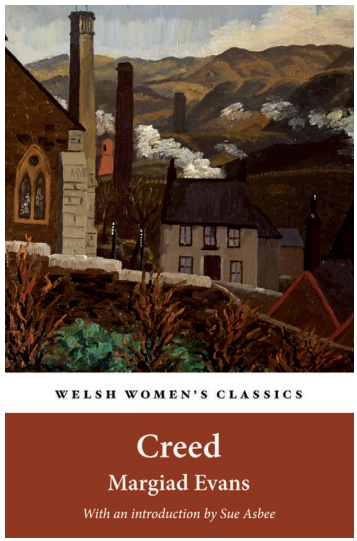
Recent years have seen a revival in the reputation of Margiad Evans (1909–1958), who was born Peggy Whistler in Uxbridge but who came to live in, and identify creatively with, the Welsh Border, especially the area around Ross. *Creed*, the last of her novels, had not been reprinted since its original publication in 1936 until this new edition from Honno. It is an emotionally powerful book and its very intensity makes it not an easy read. Indeed, its creator evidently feared as much; at one point the narrator, in one of several remarkable interventions in the text, comments strikingly: 'There are many, I know, who by this time will have picked up this book and put it down again. Having opened it, perhaps, read a page or two, they will pass their usual comment, "Why write about such people?" I wish they would read to the end'.

The people she writes about are the working-class inhabitants of Chepsford, a fictional Border town; indeed most of them live in a single street, Mill Street:

> It was a long, sloping street, rather narrow, having the mill at one end and the grey gas-works at the other. Many of the hovels were condemned but had not yet been vacated: they were old, filthy and terribly dilapidated with thick, grimy plaster peeling off the walls, laths peeping though gaps like bones through rotting flesh, and smashed windows bunged up with sodden newspaper.

It is against this bleak backdrop – one is frequently reminded in reading of Zola and indeed of the working-class London streets of Doré – that events are enacted, though this is rather more a book of ideas than of plot: about faith, love and, ultimately, pity. The central figure, Francis Dollbright, is a man of unbending Old Testament moral values; he quarrels at the opening with the local vicar, who is corrupt but possessed of a more charitable Christianity. The sense of personal guilt Dollbright experiences is exacerbated when his wife, Florence, is diagnosed with cancer. The disease which eats at her body becomes in fact emblematic of the inner tensions which gnaw away at several of the characters.

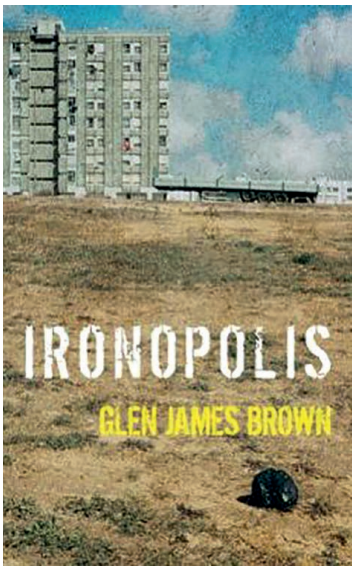
Counterpointing Dollbright's anguish is the complex love story of the beautiful young Menna Trouncer, whose feelings are inhibited by her sense of duty to her drunken mother, and Bellamy Williams, a young man whose lack of a mother figure infuses and makes desperate his need of Menna. Margiad Evans was fascinated by the Brontë sisters – she published an essay on Byron and Emily Brontë – and the intensity of feeling in *Creed* frequently takes us into a world akin to theirs. The passion of Bellamy and Menna, for instance, 'rent him and it rent her.



They fought like tigers, with every cracking sinew. Fiercely she guarded her breast from his touch. …Once his head lay there she was caught… And she burned for it'.

Creed is a remarkable and idiosyncratic novel, quite unlike the industrial fictions being written at the same time just a few miles away in the valleys of south Wales. Some readers may find its passionate registers too unrelenting, its language dynamic but overheated. But in its dark intensity it is worth accepting the narrator's challenge to 'read to the end'.

Prof Tony Brown is Emeritus Professor of English at Bangor University



Ironopolis

Glen James Brown
Parthian, 2018

Matthew David Scott

The literary community is currently wrestling with a multitude of questions around representation, and class is firmly part of that conversation. How working-class lives are depicted and the making of space and opportunities for working-class writers is a topic of great, and long overdue, debate. It would seem then that with *Ironopolis* Middlesbrough-raised and Manchester-based Glen James Brown – himself a working-class writer writing about working-class lives – has arrived at exactly the right time. But this is so much more than a timely book.

Told in six parts and spanning several decades, *Ironopolis* presents us with a choir of voices to tell the story of the semi-fictional Burn Estate. It kicks off with the letters of Jean Barr and it becomes clear as the novel progresses that tangled up in her words are the important threads that will eventually lead the reader through the criss-crossing lives of its large cast: from Corina Clarke, hairdresser, gambler, estranged mother and, for me, the most beautifully drawn character in the book; to her brother, Jim, ex-raver and physical reminder of what can happen when utopian intention meets hard reality; right up to Alan Barr, son of Jean who, in the penultimate section of the book, *UXO*, weaves together transcribed interviews, footnotes and journal entries that pulls a multitude of half-mentioned peripheral characters tight into the narrative web.

And as all of these personal stories are voiced we are also introduced to echoes of events that, through their sharing, continue to shape the lives of the characters and the character of the estate itself: unexploded bombs in both literal and human form, the very real spectre of regeneration and the more other-worldly spirit of Peg Powler haunting the streets both above and below ground. It is the latter – part wraith, part siren – that is just one facet of the book that lifts *Ironopolis* out of ordinary 'estate novel' territory and into one that references the mythological and gothic alongside drug dealers and casuals.

It is this narrative cartography that is the most impressive aspect of the book. The physical mapping of individual stories onto common spaces – whether real, remembered or imagined – creates imprints that behave almost as a palimpsest: the indentations left on and by all of the characters' lives only fully appreciated when held up to the light of each other. And it is this interconnectedness that holds the novel together structurally and philosophically. The only time this doesn't quite fully come off being the aforementioned *UXO* section, which despite that tumult of voices can sometimes meander a little. But this really is to nitpick and, in fairness, is a mis-step perhaps only made noticeable given the near perfect pacing at work throughout the rest of the book.

Ironopolis is a very impressive novel: a cast of characters that feels familiar yet offers all the surprise of genuinely lived lives, structurally daring while at the same time remarkably complete and a total refusal to tread the same sentimental or romanticised territory into which similar novels often stumble. This is a incredibly confident and considered work but one that still delivers an absolute wallop when needed. And, for all the talk of timeliness and working-class voices, its greatest asset is a writer who clearly understands the complexities and necessity of community – for that is what this book is really about. Exactly the right time or not, Glen James Brown feels like a writer who has definitely arrived. ➤

Matthew David Scott is the author of the novels *Playing Mercy*, and *The Ground Remembers*; he is a founding member of the theatre company Slung Low

Brief Lives

Six Fictions

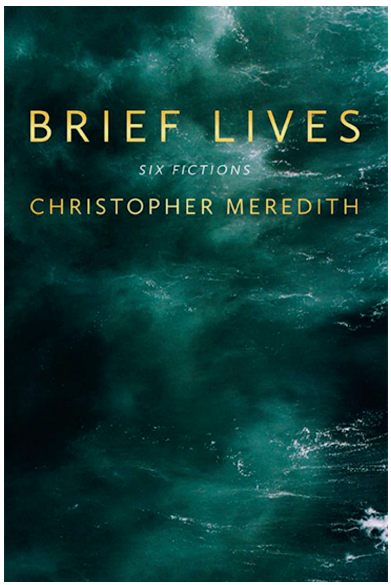
Chris Meredith
Seren, 2018

Eluned Gramich

In the foreword to *Brief Lives*, Christopher Meredith's first published collection of short fiction, he explains the need for the 'unoriginal' title. He tells us that the words 'Brief Lives' are working hard, and that he chose them 'partly as an acknowledgement that we're all in this together'. All in what together? Life – and then, from that – memory, history, community, love and the end of life. Perhaps I should start by saying that this is a beautiful, finely-tuned, and important collection (important for all sorts of reasons I'm afraid I don't have enough space to go into here). I've returned to the book several times over the last month, and the stories only grow in meaning and emotion the more I read them.

Since Meredith is careful about choosing names, I should be careful to use his word 'fictions' rather than stories. Fictions, perhaps, because they're all different lengths; some read like a concentrated novel ('The Cavalry') while others read like imagist micro-fictions (like the final scene in 'Opening Time'). The six pieces move from the past (the Second World War) to the fantastic, hyperreal future. Although the order seems chronological, the tales themselves play with time and memory, slipping between eras gone by and anxieties about what is to come.

In 'Averted Vision', for instance, set on a navy ship in the South China sea after WWII, two British soldiers guard the 'cargo' of Japanese prisoners of war. The narrative is fragmented, electric:



it takes you from a barber shop in 1930s Wales to the 'huge catastrophes on the other side of space'. The style is characterised by half-finished sentences hinting at the horror of the war: 'You'd change your tune if you'd seen half the.'

The violence of the twentieth century also haunts the next story. A man returns to the valley where he grew up, looking for work in the colliery. He's served in the War where he 'killed a lot of people. Yes. That had happened'. He also 'served' in the mines, losing three fingernails on his first day. It's clear that this return journey isn't an easy one. Troubled by his past and worried for his future, the man's life-changing decision is startlingly captured. The title 'Brief Lives' works hard here, as it does in 'The Cavalry', one of the more poignant and

The violence of the twentieth century also haunts the next fiction

complex fictions in the collection. A woman takes her two young boys (dressed up like cowboys with silver guns in their pockets) to go and visit an old, isolated man called Bert on Christmas Day, sometime after the war. Bert is sympathetically drawn, sitting alone in his dark house, illuminated by pre-war gaslight: his body is stiff and deformed by a lifetime of physical labour. Meredith's description shines with the details of a Christmas in 1960s south east Wales: the pointed multi-coloured lights on the tree, the

Did he make the right decisions? Did he abandon his old friend? The ending comes as a surprise, forcing you to re-evaluate what you've read so far

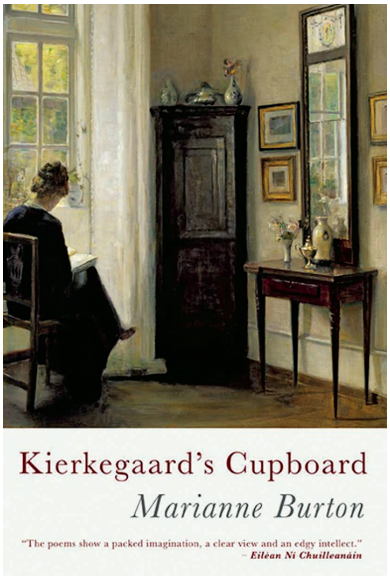
chicken in the lit gas oven, Charlie Chaplin on the television. He also captures the nuance of the Tredegar accent perfectly – 'There's a bit of plain cake for you. Not much mind. On'y little bits. And dwn give em to the bloody cat. You got to eat' – but it's what the characters say (and don't say) to each other that bring the story to life.

The longest piece of the collection is 'The Enthusiast': a middle-aged man gets back in touch with an old childhood friend. The re-established relationship brings back all sorts of memories – like a magician revealing handkerchiefs – that make the narrator take stock of his life. Is he successful? Did he make the right decisions? Did he abandon his old friend? The ending comes as a surprise, forcing you to re-evaluate what you've read so far.

The last two fictions are a slight departure in as much as they're set in the future, an alternative world; however, they explore the same ideas of memory and mortality. 'Haptivox' is reminiscent of the television series *Black Mirror* (although not as bleak). It portrays an elderly couple living out the heydays of their courtship in a virtual world. Its eroticism becomes pure fantasy as the lovers push the boundaries of what's physically possible. The final story, too, breaks down the world as we know it when the dead rise from their graves. The last line of the collection is brilliant and haunting. It ties together these intricate tales in the contemplation of what is waiting for us all.

Eluned Gramich is a Welsh-German writer and translator. Her latest story, set during the 1970s Welsh language protests, appeared as part of the *Wales: Hometown Tales* series

Kierkegaard's Cupboard



Marianne Burton
Seren, 2018

Ben Gwalchmai

From the moment *Kierkegaard's Cupboard* opens, Marianne Burton is having fun. Fun with the form of the sonnet and fun with her choices in wording and tone. Dark comedy comes quickly in 'Either/Or'.

'I Have Just Returned From A Party' feels like more than just a found poem, so prose-like are its choices and so flowing the reading that it feels like a stealing of Kierkegaard's prayers. Not a found poem but a ventriloquism.

'When She Stood There Clad In Her Finery' and 'She is Married' have a subtle relationship with rhyme. The placing and infrequent, perhaps opportunistic, use makes for that pleasing thing – just the right amount. It does more than please the ear: ever within the sonnet boundaries the poet has set, this light touch in rhyme feels as though each poem could create a form of its own.

In some poems there's a tendency toward melodrama. It's Kierkegaard, after all. He was satirised for taking himself too seriously so here too will poems about his love life believe in their own seriousness. A good ventriloquist doesn't leave out the whistles.

All that said, there are a couple of bum notes (for me). It could be a taste for the subtler, just enough rhyming which means this reviewer finds less in the outwardly performance-poetry-like 'I Must Decide What To Do' and the echoes of MacNeice in the first of the 'It Was Early Morning, Abraham Rose' poems.

Some of the sonnets end as Shakespearean sonnets would, with a maxim in a couplet or a summation. These are sharp instruction in precision form-as-writ. The poem 'When The Child Is To Be Weaned' finishes with:

> Lucky the child who loses his mother
> in no other way. Who is offered other food.

This is a bittersweet ending to early motherhood. Consulting Lady Luck as Lady Death walks by, thankful that the latter didn't stop. It is likely more thankful in all aspects than Kierkegaard's reputation would have us believe about the man himself but this is what the poet does well – reveals the aching humanity of Kierkegaard. Behind and beyond the persona or reputation, Burton imbues Kierkegaard's works with care: care for her subject and subtly careful not to overrule his voice. The poems from the letters to his sister in law and cousin are heartbreaking. Beautiful in their resilience.

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'To Them Normality Is The Highest Good' is a poem for our political times:

> They are men who like only other men like them:
> jeerers, whorers, drinkers. Normal as migraine
> …
> They never hear the crying, see the pain
> their jeering and their whoring leave behind.

While Kierkegaard's ultimate joke about humanity's continuous theatre of the absurd – a clown tells an audience the theatre's on fire, the audience only laugh – becomes a poem for our planetary times:

> Smell of smoke. Flames lick the backdrop.
> …
> And this is the way the world ends.
> No bangs, no whimpers,
> just loud-mouthed humour
> among clever folk
> who think the warning is a joke.

While I write, Finland's part of the Arctic Circle is 32 degrees celsius. It hasn't been this hot since 2010 and that was considered a fluke. No fluke, anymore. On 1 August 2018 – Earth Overshoot Day, this year – a newly documented kind of weather event hit California: a fire tornado. 'Flames lick the backdrop…'.

Kierkegaard could have done with Burton's touch in his lifetime. In all the poems, she distils an essential truth from his original. As if in translation. Perhaps her masterstroke is not in ventriloquism then but in distilling, humanising, and translating Kierkegaard's essence.

That is what this book is, a masterstroke. ➤

Ben Gwalchmai is a maker, worker and writer who was WNO's writer-in-residence, a Historical Novel Society 'Editor's Pick' for his novel *Purefinder*, a shortlisted poet in the Melita Huma Poetry Prize 2016, and a co-founder of Llafur Dros Annibyniaeth

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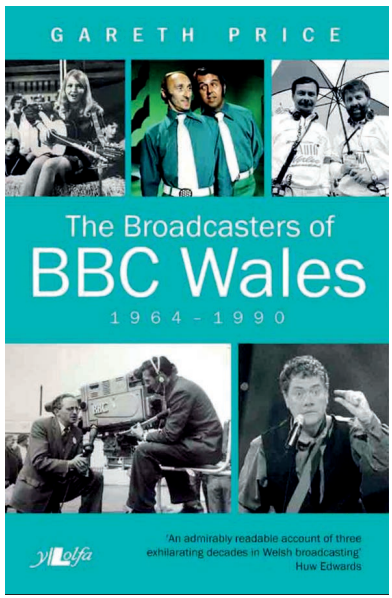
The Broadcasters of BBC Wales 1964–1990

Gareth Price
Y Lolfa, 2017

Aled Eirug

The author states clearly that this is a memoir, not an autobiography. Sadly, given his recent passing as I read this book, it will serve as evidence of Gareth Price's lasting legacy as a producer, manager and mentor for generations of talented broadcasters through his influence as a television producer and latterly as Head of Programmes and Controller for BBC Wales between 1964 and 1990, before leaving to become the director of the Thomson Foundation, advising broadcasters in the post-Communist Eastern Europe and post-apartheid South Africa.

This book reflects his renown as a producer with a terrific ability to identify and support new talent and a generosity that made a difference to so many people finding their way in the industry. It celebrates the individual genius of stars such as the entertainer Ryan Davies, the incomparable comedian and songster Max Boyce, the inimitable



dramatists Gwenlyn Parry and Alun Richards, the rugby genius of Carwyn James. It describes the building of formidable documentary, religion and drama departments that broke into the network with dramas such as *District Nurse* and *Lloyd George*, the iconic rugby comedy *Grand Slam*, and which pioneered not only hymn singing on network television but also

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He describes engagingly the human side of BBC Wales and eschews the dry institutional history of what the Welsh historian John Davies described erroneously as the organisation that created the artefact of Wales

serious religious documentaries. Gareth Price recounts his crucial part in the radical changes in Welsh broadcasting between 1977 and 1982 that saw the creation of Radio Cymru and Radio Wales, the launch of S4C and the relaunch of the English language only BBC Wales TV service. This was the period of the greatest growth for the BBC in Wales, and he recounts the constant struggle with the central BBC to gain a foothold for BBC Wales on the network service, as well as the condescension with which network colleagues treated Wales. This came to a head in 1990 when the incoming director general John Birt made it clear that there was no future within the BBC for someone of Gareth Price's independence of thought.

Price focuses on those managerial talents, such as Hywel Davies and Aneirin Talfan Davies, Geraint Stanley Jones and Price himself, who provided the administrative and political muscle for BBC Wales to grow into a national broadcaster from 1964 onwards. The book highlights the importance of the key producers and backroom staff who dedicated their careers to BBC Wales. He describes engagingly the human side of BBC Wales and eschews the dry institutional history of what the Welsh historian John Davies described erroneously as the organisation that created the artefact of Wales.

This book is an important addition to our understanding of the relationship between Wales and London within the BBC and shows the extent to which its impact on the network scale was dependent on the pure cussedness (and luck) of BBC Wales' senior executives. Gareth Price reminds us that the creativity of BBC Wales in this period was due in no small measure to the freedom afforded to individual programme makers and enthusiastic staff who poured love and commitment into their work.

At a time when the BBC is more closely regulated and has to meet statutory targets for its programming including Wales' contribution to network output, Gareth Price reminds us that the challenge remains for BBC Wales to impress BBC network commissioners in London. One of his key themes is that broadcast talent, whether as performers or programme makers, is indispensible, and that in the teeth of institutional antipathy to television and radio productions from Wales, the excellence and passion of the key talent in those programmes will trump metropolitan centralism.

For those who have grown up with Vincent Kane, Hywel Gwynfryn, *Pobl y Cwm* and *Wales Today* you will find much to entertain and engage you. And for those who haven't, this book will serve as an important contribution to our understanding of how the BBC in Wales came to play such a huge part in our national life. This exhilarating book cements Gareth Price's immense contribution to the development of Welsh broadcasting, and is a fitting tribute to his significant career as an inspirer of talent. ►

Aled Eirug was BBC Wales' Head of News and Current Affairs from 1992–2003

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The Prince of Centre-Halves: The Life of Tommy T.G. Jones

Rob Sawyer
de Coubertin Books, 2017

Aled Eirug

This is the tale of a Welsh football hero, Tommy Jones, a 'Roy of the Rovers'-type figure rarely commemorated and almost forgotten. At his prime, Jones was among the best of defenders in British and international football.

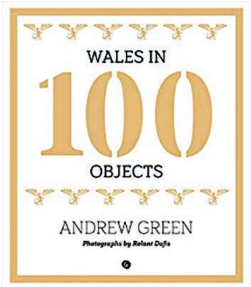
Tommy Jones' fans called him 'the Prince of Centre-Halves' and in his day, and in his role as a centre-half, his reputation was similar to that of Bobby Moore and Franz Beckenbauer as a brilliantly creative all-round ball player. He played in the 1930s and 1940s and his defensive skill and playmaking ability as a centre-half won him respect and adulation. He played a key role in Everton's first division league title of 1938/9 and although further honours eluded him – his career was interrupted for seven years by the Second World War – perhaps his greatest successes came as manager of Bangor City. Undoubtedly, his highlight as a manager was the defeat of the Italian team Napoli at home in the European Cup-Winners Cup in the 1961/2 season, drawing on aggregate before losing a replay.

Sadly, he later slipped away from management and into obscurity, becoming a newsagent in Bangor, and was largely forgotten by his former clubs and by football fans. Rob Sawyer evokes Jones' skills as bestriding Goodison Park with an 'air of supreme confidence matched by his ability, elegance and just a touch of arrogance'. One of the thirties' greatest players, the Evertonian Dixie Dean, described him as the most complete footballer he had ever seen, and he has also been compared to the great Italian midfield maestro Andrea Pirlo, 'spraying passes with both feet… unbeatable in the air'.

Born in Queensferry, Flintshire in 1917, he was signed by Wrexham as a boy of seventeen and only played six games before being transferred to Everton, with whom he played 317 times, becoming a legend of the club. He became captain of the Welsh national team in March 1939 before his international career was curtailed by the Second World War and limited his appearances to 26 games.

His playing for Everton was gradually reduced after an injury at the end of the war at the age of 29 led to him losing the captaincy. Eventually, he escaped to Pwllheli where he was head-hunted to run a local hotel and to become a player-manager for the local team. Jones became disillusioned with football, and his brusqueness and impatience with club directors made it more difficult for him to thrive as a manager. Sawyer reveals private aspects of Jones's character but regrettably, in my view, does not pursue them further: 'A sometimes liberal approach to his marriage vows would lead to difficulties in both T.G.'s personal and professional life over the decades, and it seems that [his wife] Joyce displayed remarkable forbearance to keep the marriage intact'. His tactics as a manager could also be crude. After an opposing centre forward had scored two goals, he instructed his centre-half to give him the 'Bangor tackle', which was 'anywhere underneath the bloody chin'.

This book celebrates a world-class footballer who dominated games and whose style was modern and daring. In 2009 *Daily Post* readers voted him second only to Ian Rush as the greatest footballer to hail from north Wales. Those who played with him considered him to be a world-class player. This is primarily a book for football aficionados rather than the general reader, and whilst choosing not to pursue the more personal aspects of Jones's life, thankfully salvages the memory of Tommy "T.G." Jones, a Welsh footballing legend. **AE**



Wales in 100 Objects

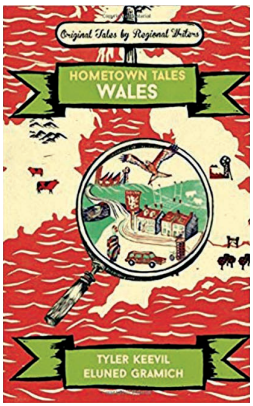
Andrew Green and Rolant Dafis
Gomer, 2018

It is refreshing to come across a great book from a Welsh publisher. Setting aside the content for a moment, the object itself is lovely and unobtrusively yet elegantly designed inside and out. This should of course be the rule, yet too often it is still the exception. Vital, one might say, for a book about objects and in this regard Gomer, as both publisher and printer of *Wales in 100 Objects*, are to be congratulated.

The book, as author Andrew Green, former librarian of the National Library of Wales, indicates in the introduction, 'tells some of the stories of Wales… using as its starting point overlooked objects that anyone can go and see'. This democratic impulse informs Green's descriptions of the objects: he relates their history in engaging and accessible language whilst making sure to draw out the themes, connections and significances of each, from valuable, ritually preserved artefacts to the mass-produced ephemera of today.

Roland Dafis' photography provides an excellent counterpoint on each page. The objects are dissociated from their archival context (in public collections in Wales) by means of stark lighting and dark backgrounds – so in this sense the experience of the book is quite different from that of viewing the artefacts in a museum.

Wales in 100 Objects effectively tells the story of Wales' connected history, from Roman loanwords to Pontypool's history as a centre of 'japanning'. But it also tells us a story about what Wales has been subjected to – invasion, exploitation, extraction, repression. The scars of these large-scale historical forces are etched into the everyday objects that shape and texture our lives. **MG**



Hometown Tales: Wales

Tyler Keevil and Eluned Gramich
W&N, 2018

Hometown Tales is a laudable and lively series from Orion Books in which 'established' and 'emerging' writers are paired to produce fiction (longer than a short story, not quite a novella) that shed literary light on some of Britain's less-celebrated corners. The immediate problem for many Welsh readers will be the way that 'Wales' is shoehorned into the series as a 'region' alongside counties (Lancashire), cities (Birmingham), multiple places in Scotland (Glasgow, Highlands and Hebrides) and genuine regions like the South Coast and Midlands of England. But once you've come down off the ceiling, you are in for a treat.

So composed is Eluned Gramich's story 'The Lion and the Star', which takes as its jumping off point the Welsh language protests in 1970s Ceredigion, that it's impossible to tell who is supposed to be the 'emerging' writer here. And that's not to detract from 'established' multi-award winning Tyler Keevil, whose 'Last Seen Leaving', about a man's disappearance from an unnamed Powys town, is a masterclass in this oddly satisfying 15,000-word form. The stories' lengths (or brevity) are part of the one-sitting satisfaction, but primarily it's the unerring ring of truth to the sense of place contained within these haunting tales that marks them out as especially deserving of this superb format. It's just ironic that it may have taken a Canadian immigrant and a Welsh-German writer and translator who made her name writing about Japan to convince the publishers that there may be more to Wales than 'Wales'. It would be great to see the series expand by doubling down on diversity. **DM**

Q&A

One of the IWA's Next 30, **Rhian Elizabeth** talks to **clare e. potter** about her new poetry collection, *The Last Polar Bear on Earth* (Parthian, 2018)

In an interview with John Lavin for *Wales Arts Review* in 2014, you said 'I'm going to take some time reading and writing and putting something together that I'm proud of instead of something that makes me want to smash my head against the delete button'. Your new collection *The Last Polar Bear on Earth* has already been met with considerable admiration. What has made you most proud about creating this book?

Wow, four years ago. I can't even remember writing that. Funny you should find that quote though, because the things I think I'm most proud of with this collection are the words I didn't delete. Or, rather, the words I deleted but put back in after much going back and forth between the delete and undo buttons. I was constantly censoring myself, worried about writing certain things, worried about the possible repercussions of what I was writing, with the love and relationship poems. So I'm proud I kept those things in, that I put them back.

There is a lot more I could've written, lots I didn't say, but I felt I got enough off my chest to be satisfied that I didn't do myself and my experiences an injustice, that I wasn't silenced anymore. It all comes down to shame I suppose and shame is the most silent of all the emotions.

Also writing about my daughter in the collection. I avoided doing that in the past too, avoiding talking about it, again out of shame as I was sixteen when I had her and it's always been a bit of a touchy subject for me. But I don't feel ashamed to write about it anymore.

I don't know if this is something to be proud of or not. Or something to be ashamed of, that I didn't do it enough before.

You began this collection while still being a 'valley pigeon.' Was moving to the city a freeing experience for your work or something you had to push against?

Yes definitely freeing. I think any type of change is freeing, especially if it is a positive one. Whether that change involves travelling, leaving a bad relationship, moving house, or something as simple as going for a walk or rearranging your office space... a change in physical space, for me anyway, creates a change in space in my mind.

My first book was all about growing up in the Valleys so it was important to be there amongst the mountains and the terraced houses and the accent and the conversations on the bus when I was writing. But it was a positive change for me leaving because as much as the Valleys are a part of me and always will be, they also hold a lot of not nice memories for me.

I felt like I had to get out. It felt like a new start and writing in a new genre for me, writing poetry, it felt easier to do that in a brand new place. Like your first day at school when you've got all new pens and pencils and stuff and you feel all brand new and shiny and that you are going to do things right and neat this time.

Now I like going back there to visit. Me and the Valleys were like a marriage that lasted a long time, almost thirty years, but sometimes you just need to sleep in separate beds for a bit because you are getting on each other's nerves and the only way to stop from killing one another is having that bit of space.

In 'IWA Next 30' (*agenda* 59) you say these are your protest poems against your disease MS. What else would be on your protest banner?

I feel like I'm protesting against the person I used to be or the person I was, at least, for a period in my life. Does that sound pathetic? I realised how weak I was to stay so long in a relationship that was unhealthy and violent. Perhaps some people will think that's the wrong thing to say and especially now, with everything that's going on in the world, because people who go through abuse aren't weak, of course they aren't, but that's how it left me feeling anyway. That I somehow deserved everything that was said and done to me because I haven't been an angel in my past. But in going through that and coming out the other end I also realised how strong I am. So maybe it's a protest against weakness. I have a teenage daughter and I write about her so I'm also protesting against teenagers too – they are more difficult to manage than an incurable, life changing disease.

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