The rate of private sector job loss in Wales has reached worrying proportions in recent months. Nor any longer is it only low-paid unskilled assembly jobs, which we have been told will inevitably go to China or India, that are disappearing. Nippon Electric Glass, the flagship industrial development which opened only ten years ago in Cardiff Bay, is being closed. Highly skilled aviation jobs have been salami-sliced from the DARA's site in St. Athan to the point where its long term survival looks unlikely.

Nor has the service sector escaped. The winner of the Western Mail's Fast Growth 50 award in 2003, Economy Power, is being summarily closed with the loss of 210 jobs by the German power generator, E.On, which acquired it for £40m only a few months ago. This was a company widely lauded as precisely the kind of entrepreneurial, modern, private sector business Welsh people should be involved in if we are to prosper in today's globalised economy. At the same time the numbers who remain economically inactive in Wales remain stubbornly high and include young people who may never work.

All this raises the question whether there are other policy instruments apart from grant support that need to be examined in order to retain a balanced economy in Wales, providing a vigorous private as well as public sector. In an article in this issue Professor James Foreman-Peck looks at just one such possibility. This is for a substantially lower rate of corporation tax for companies in Wales, as in Ireland, as a means of both encouraging further direct investment and of lowering costs for existing businesses and prospective start-ups.

The arguments are highly complex and the resistance of the Treasury, where Professor Foreman-Peck used to work, would be formidable. Nevertheless, he concludes that although such an initiative would not be panacea for Welsh economic problems, a 10 per cent reduction in corporation tax would increase gross domestic product by 1.09 per cent and increase employment by 16,000 jobs.

The ability to vary taxes, and as a result create an improved business environment in Wales, could, as another academic Professor Dylan Jones-Evans told a Wales in London meeting recently, be an important new power in the hands of the Assembly Government, enabling it to create a different business environment in Wales. At present, economic development policy in Wales remains straitjacketed by having only grants in its business support armoury.

While the wider debate over increased powers for the Assembly will continue, in practice the Chancellor Gordon Brown could consider variations in corporation tax rates for Wales and other poorer regions of Britain now and make them part of his next Budget. On the one hand the cost to the Treasury would be small. On the other the cost would be counter-balanced by the impact such a change would have in redistributing growth away from the south-east and towards those regions where there are high levels of economic inactivity and a continuing loss of private sector jobs.
upfront

4 shattering preconceptions
Sophie Gilliat-Ray outlines how a new study centre at Cardiff University will promote greater understanding of the Muslim community.

16 Irish luck
James Foreman-Peck and Laurian Lungu examine the benefits that could flow if Wales had the option of lowering corporation tax.

19 Builders wanted
Gruffydd Jones unveils research revealing demand for a Welsh Construction College.

8 News

Economy

10 Capital network
Kevin Morgan examines obstacles that lie in the way of economic collaboration between Cardiff and the Valleys.

14 Connecting Ebbw Vale
Richard Crook on a new passenger line linking Blaenau Gwent with Cardiff and Newport.

21 Drivers of the future
Aldwyn Cooper argues that the creative industries are key to Wales maximising the economic opportunities presented by broadband technology.

Politics and policy

24 Route map to power
Richard Wyn Jones interviews Secretary of State for Wales Peter Hain on his Assembly Bill and adds his own commentary.

Public service reform

29 i) Working together
Rhodri Morgan describes how the Assembly Government’s Making the Connections public reform agenda is being put into practice.

33 ii) Delivery
Jeremy Beecham explains how he is approaching his review of local service delivery in Wales.

35 iii) State building
Clive Grace says Welsh public services need significant change and reform.

38 Untangling the labyrinth
Meilyr Ceredig preview the launch of separate websites to cover the Assembly’s executive and legislative functions.

40 Internal borders
Rhys Jones and Carwyn Fowler ask a politically loaded question.

43 Estonian links
Wiard Sterk reports on a visit to Tallinn.

46 Freedom song
Elinor Bennett explains how her musical exploration of Estonia broke the language barrier.
newsflash

coming up...

• Creation of the National Library and National Museum of Wales.
  Friday 13 January 2006, Y Drwm, National Library, Aberystwyth, 6.30pm.
  Speaker: Dr Prys Morgan, Emeritus Professor of History, University of Wales, Swansea. Entry free, contact IWA for ticket. See website for details.

• Day Conference: Future Governance of North Wales.
  Thursday 2 February 2006, Celtic Royal Hotel, Caernarfon.
  Keynote speaker: Sue Essex, Minister for Finance, Local Government and Public Services. £35 for Conference and lunch; Table for ten £300

• Gwent Branch Breakfast
  Newport Unleashed
  10 February 2006, Newport Hilton. Speakers: Chris Freegard, Chief Executive, Newport City Council; and John Burrows, Development Director, Newport Unlimited. £17.50 (£16.50 for IWA members); Table for ten £165

• Creu Cyfle-Cultural Explosion National Conference and Gala Concert
  hosted by Catrin Finch
  19 / 20 February, Galeri, Caernarfon
  See back page for details.

environment

48 greening ethnicity
  judy ling wong describes the work of the Black Environment Network

50 llanerchaeron
  ruth williams, john pritchard and neil caldwell advocate investing in heritage and the environment

social policy

53 expert patients
  melanie williams on the benefits of taking control of chronic illness

63 disney wales
  peter finch visits the 74th North American Welsh National Cymanfa Ganu in Orlando

66 motor-biking in the nude
  rhian davies on how Wales seeped into the consciousness of the composer Peter Warlock

69 y wenhwysge
  elin jones on how ‘talking tidy’ led to the demise of a distinctive Welsh dialect

welsh baccalaureate

55 i) small vision
  david reynolds asks whether the Welsh Baccalaureate has been a success or failure

57 ii) breadth with depth
  brian lightman reports on the Penarth St Cyres School experience of piloting the Welsh Baccalaureate

61 could do better
  ned thomas describes how the UK is complying with its European commitments to support the Welsh language

culture and communications

63 disney wales
  peter finch visits the 74th North American Welsh National Cymanfa Ganu in Orlando

66 motor-biking in the nude
  rhian davies on how Wales seeped into the consciousness of the composer Peter Warlock

69 y wenhwysge
  elin jones on how ‘talking tidy’ led to the demise of a distinctive Welsh dialect

last word

72 peter stead

just published...

• Cherished Heartland: Future of Upland Wales
  Peter Midmore and Richard Moore-Colyer: £10

more information:

www.iwa.org.uk
linguistic, and cultural diversity of the Muslim community in Cardiff that marks it out as perhaps unique in the UK.

Cardiff's Muslim population has also become especially successful and prosperous. There are over 170 Muslim millionaires in Wales today, though pockets of extreme poverty remain, and the Muslim community continues to suffer disproportionate levels of socio-economic deprivation relative to the indigenous 'white' population. In terms of employment, Muslims contribute to a wide range of sectors, including retail, catering, IT, property development, healthcare and nursing homes, fashion, food processing, beauty clinics, childcare and other service industries. Muslims therefore make important contributions to the economic and cultural life of Wales.

Muslims have had an established presence in Cardiff for well over a century. Their presence has resulted from three distinctive periods of immigration, before World War I, between the two wars, and since 1945. The first relatively permanent community was comprised of merchants and sailors, known as 'lascars', mostly from countries connected with the Empire, such as Yemen, Somalia, and the Indian sub-continent. Their migration to Britain was especially connected to the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. But even by 1860, there was a settled Muslim community in Cardiff, and the first mosque in the UK was registered in the city in that year. It was probably used mainly as a temporary boarding house by Arab seafarers, but nevertheless, the fact these premises provided a publicly recognised focus for collective Islamic worship is significant.

Most of Cardiff's Muslim population were seafarers so, not surprisingly, most were to be found living in the docks area. In his 2004 book The 'Infidel' Within: Muslims in Britain, 1800 to the Present Humayun Ansari remarks that by 1881, Muslims in Cardiff "were numerous enough to warrant the establishment of a so-called Home for Coloured Seamen … One contemporary estimate put the permanently settled coloured population at around 700 (the majority probably Muslim) on the basis of the 1911 Census." The outbreak of the First World War resulted in the need for the rapid expansion of manual labour, and as a consequence, the number of Muslims increased in all Britain's seaports. Cardiff
Sheikh Saeed

Over more than three decades 75 year old Sheikh Saeed has become the best known Imam in Wales, indeed an iconic figure in the history of Islam in Britain. From the moment he started speaking when I interviewed him all my preconceptions about Imams in Britain were shattered. Seeing him wearing typical Arab garb, and knowing that he had spent the formative years of his religious training in the Yemen, I was quite expecting to hear him speak with a strong Arabic accent. Far from it. Instead, I heard a magnificent combination of Geordie and Welsh accents.

Sheikh Saeed was born to a Yemeni seafaring father and an English mother (who converted to Islam). He was born in South Shields in 1930. His father was killed when his ship was torpedoed by a German submarine in the Bristol Channel at the opening of World War II. Shortly afterwards the spiritual leader of the Yemeni community in Cardiff, Sheikh Hassan Ismail, was told about the nine-year-old fatherless boy while visiting the Yemenis living in South Shields. So he asked his mother if he could bring him back to Cardiff to teach him “my faith, my religion”.

That was in 1940. Some years later, when he was aged 16, Sheikh Saeed went with his foster father to the Yemen for his ‘religious’ training’, returning to the UK in 1950. Combining night-shift factory work as a welder with a religious role during the day, he eventually became the spiritual successor to Sheikh Abdullah Ali al-Hakimi in the Cardiff Muslim community.

As a young boy in South Shields, Sheikh Saeed was taught by the older men in the community how to read the Qur’an, but since Cardiff had more people to teach him, it was deemed preferable for him to move to Cardiff. He began fasting at the age of 11, and has been regular with his prayers ever since. As he put it, “I was brought up in an atmosphere of praying and fasting, these things. And that is how I am today.” His role has been exercised in an entirely voluntary capacity. As he said: “I’ve been an Imam here since I was 25 and I have never received a penny from anybody. I have always worked. We haven’t got the capability of paying anybody £200 a week or whatever.” He enjoys the freedom that comes from not being paid: “They cannot criticise me if I am not here. I can say ‘You are not paying me.’ But I am always here.” Although there are 12 mosques in Cardiff, Sheikh Saeed is the only Imam in the city who has the legal capacity to act as a Registrar of Births, Marriages and Death. His mosque provides the only funeral service facility.

Construct in 1980 the South Wales Islamic Centre is one of the few ‘purpose-built’ mosques in Cardiff, with a capacity for about 300 people, and a separate section for female worshippers. It has become a focal point for the Muslim (especially Yemeni) community, but also for non-Muslim visitors, particularly school groups. Sheikh Saeed’s lilting Geordie/south Wales accent and easy-going demeanour have helped to establish his reputation as a good speaker for young people encountering Islam and Muslims for the first time: “I have games and fun with them. I make them laugh. And you know, I try to tell them what we do, in a different way than I would tell a grown up.”

Perhaps because of his advancing years, Sheikh Saeed is unafraid to speak his mind, especially about the situation of the Muslim community in Britain. He considers it to have become “backward” and “too aloof” from the rest of society. He is particularly critical of the proliferation of exclusivist notions of piety, especially when connected to styles of dress:

“Some people say you must always wear a beard, and you must always wear a turban. Why? I’m still a Muslim although I wear a collar and tie. It is best to have a beard but if you don’t have one it’s not making you any less Muslim. I’ve seen Muslims with big beards who cheat and tell lies.”

Sheikh Saeed is anxious to see the development of British-born, British-trained Imams who are “indigenous people who live here, were born here, will die here, and who will look after our mosques in the future. We really need them”. Mindful of the fact that some 60 per cent of Muslims in Britain are under the age of 25, he is adamant about the importance of English as the lingua franca for mosques, especially the use of English during the sermon for Friday prayers: “Some of them say it can’t be done in any other language, only Arabic. But what is the use? I mean if people don’t know what you are saying, you’re missing the point. If you are speaking to me in Chinese, well, I might as well go home!”

Constructed in 1980 the South Wales Islamic Centre is one of the few ‘purpose-built’ mosques in Cardiff, with a capacity for about 300 people, and a separate section for female worshippers. It has become a focal point for the Muslim (especially Yemeni) community, but also for non-Muslim visitors, particularly school groups. Sheikh Saeed’s lilting Geordie/south Wales accent and easy-going demeanour have helped to establish his reputation as a good speaker for young people encountering Islam and Muslims for the first time: “I have games and fun with them. I make them laugh. And you know, I try to tell them what we do, in a different way than I would tell a grown up.”

Perhaps because of his advancing years, Sheikh Saeed is unafraid to speak his mind, especially about the situation of the Muslim community in Britain. He considers it to have become “backward” and “too aloof” from the rest of society. He is particularly critical of the proliferation of exclusivist notions of piety, especially when connected to styles of dress:

“Some people say you must always wear a beard, and you must always wear a turban. Why? I’m still a Muslim although I wear a collar and tie. It is best to have a beard but if you don’t have one it’s not making you any less Muslim. I’ve seen Muslims with big beards who cheat and tell lies.”

Sheikh Saeed is anxious to see the development of British-born, British-trained Imams who are “indigenous people who live here, were born here, will die here, and who will look after our mosques in the future. We really need them”. Mindful of the fact that some 60 per cent of Muslims in Britain are under the age of 25, he is adamant about the importance of English as the lingua franca for mosques, especially the use of English during the sermon for Friday prayers: “Some of them say it can’t be done in any other language, only Arabic. But what is the use? I mean if people don’t know what you are saying, you’re missing the point. If you are speaking to me in Chinese, well, I might as well go home!”
Students at the new Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK, Cardiff University, which opened its doors in September 2005.

was no exception. Wages rose sharply, and seafaring became an attractive proposition. Ansari charts the increase in the Muslim community, from 700 in 1911, to 3,000 by 1919.

Then, as now, prejudice against Muslims was discernible. This took the form of anti-Arab and anti-‘coloured’ sentiment, rather than what we might call ‘Islamophobia’ per se. On 2 September 1916 the South Wales Daily News noted with concern that “there are more Arabs … entering Cardiff than ever before.” However, it was after the First World War ended, when the coal trade began to go into decline, and young men returned from the War looking for work, that Muslims began to feel the sharp end of prejudice with calls that they should ‘go home’. Tensions led to race riots in 1919, and Anti-Arab feeling translated into the repatriation of 500 men (originally from Aden) in 1921, and between the two Wars, there was mass unemployment for Muslims. Ansari notes that “Out of the 690 unemployed seamen on the Cardiff Dock Register, on 1 June 1936, 599 were ‘coloured.’”

Unemployment was not the sole cause of ill-feeling towards Muslims in Cardiff in the inter-war years. Relationships between Arab/Muslim men and local white Welsh women were also a catalyst for prejudice. On 13 June 1919 the Western Mail found “such consorting…ill-assorting; it exhibits either a depravity or a squalid infatuation; it is repugnant to our finer instincts in which pride of race occupies a just and inevitable place.”. The Chief Constable of Cardiff sought to make sexual relations between ‘coloured’ seamen and white women illegal, and there was an almost complete segregation of the Muslims in Tiger Bay from the rest of Cardiff society. Words such as ‘undesirable’, ‘unsavory’ and ‘disreputable’ were the kind of terms used to refer to the homes and cafés of Muslims.

Despite prejudice, the community grew steadily. In 1930 there were an estimated 1,800 Muslims, and by 1940, this number had grown to more than 2,500. The main areas of Muslim settlement were Tiger Bay and Bute Town. Ansari notes that they were “forced to live in deprived areas and then blamed for creating the miserable conditions.” A make-shift mosque was established, known as Nur al-Islam, which enabled the major rites and rituals of Islam to be observed.

Following the Second World War the Cardiff community was again swelled by economic Muslim immigrants. However, Pakistani and Bangladeshi migrants tended to live separately from Arabs (mainly Yemenis), and to some extent the stratification of the community continues to the present day. A landmark in the history of Muslims in the City was the
However, since the London bombings, the question of British Muslim religious leadership and the training of Imams has become an urgent matter. There are numerous academic centres and departments for ‘Islamic Studies’ in the UK, but the new Centre is not concerned with ‘Islamic Studies’ per se, which tends to focus upon textual, linguistic, theological questions. Instead the Centre will draw upon social science methodology and approaches, and place the British Muslim experience at centre stage. Its ‘Advisory Group’ involves the participation of both Muslims and non-Muslims from within and beyond the University.

An important service that the Centre can provide, besides academic teaching and research, is continuing professional development and training, especially for public sector professions. Anti-racism and diversity awareness training is limited in its capacity to address often very difficult and sensitive questions that police officers, teachers, nurses, or magistrates may have about how to exercise their role effectively, in relation to the religious communities with which they work.

Religion is an increasingly important and meaningful category of ‘difference’ in contemporary society. This social change has been reflected in a range of legislation that has recently come into force relating to the multicultural, multi-faith workplace. For example, the Race Relations Amendment Act and the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations place a number of statutory obligations upon employers in both the private and public sector. The Centre aims to help organisations meet these new challenges.

At its heart, the Centre aims to promote understanding of Islam and the life of Muslim communities in Britain. The University provides an important neutral ‘space’ for fulfilling this challenge. Everyone is welcome to benefit from what the Centre has to offer, regardless of how much, or how little, they already know about Islam and Muslims.


Using 2001 Census data as a starting point, it is likely that the Muslim community in Cardiff today numbers approximately 11,500-12,000, and is home to approximately half of the Welsh Muslim population (see Table 1). There are now ten mosques in the City (two of which are purpose-built) and there are two private Muslim primary schools. Areas of Muslim concentration continue to be in Bute Town, Grangetown, and Cathays, with the transient local university population swelling the number in Cathays.

Part of the rationale for the establishment of the new ‘Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK’ at Cardiff University rests upon the long history of Muslim settlement, and the vibrancy of the community today. There are elders in the community who can remember stories told to them by their parents and grandparents about the history of the community at the turn of the 19th century. One of the tasks of the CSI-UK will be to try to initiate an oral history project, so that these valuable memories of Cardiff’s history are recorded.

As a sociologist of religion, I have a particular interest in the sociology of ‘religious professionals’, and the social processes that transform an individual from one status to another, from ‘lay’ to ‘professional’, within a religious community. However, since the London bombings, the question of British Muslim religious leadership and the training of Imams has become an urgent matter.

There are numerous academic centres and departments for ‘Islamic Studies’ in the UK, but the new Centre is not concerned with ‘Islamic Studies’ per se, which tends to focus upon textual, linguistic, theological questions. Instead the Centre will draw upon social science methodology and approaches, and place the British Muslim experience at centre stage. Its ‘Advisory Group’ involves the participation of both Muslims and non-Muslims from within and beyond the University.

An important service that the Centre can provide, besides academic teaching and research, is continuing professional development and training, especially for public sector professions. Anti-racism and diversity awareness training is limited in its capacity to address often very difficult and sensitive questions that police officers, teachers, nurses, or magistrates may have about how to exercise their role effectively, in relation to the religious communities with which they work.

Religion is an increasingly important and meaningful category of ‘difference’ in contemporary society. This social change has been reflected in a range of legislation that has recently come into force relating to the multicultural, multi-faith workplace. For example, the Race Relations Amendment Act and the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations place a number of statutory obligations upon employers in both the private and public sector. The Centre aims to help organisations meet these new challenges.

At its heart, the Centre aims to promote understanding of Islam and the life of Muslim communities in Britain. The University provides an important neutral ‘space’ for fulfilling this challenge. Everyone is welcome to benefit from what the Centre has to offer, regardless of how much, or how little, they already know about Islam and Muslims.

• Dr Sophie Gilliat-Ray is the Director of Cardiff University’s new Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK which opened in September 2005. (www.cardiff.ac.uk/relig/islam-uk ). She completed her PhD on Muslims in Britain at the University of Wales in 1994, and has since worked at the Universities of Warwick and Exeter on a number of major projects relating to religion in contemporary Britain. She is currently writing Muslims in Britain: An Introduction which is due to be published by the Cambridge University Press in 2006/7.
uplands face hard choices

Hard choices need to be made if the future of the hills and uplands with their valued contribution to Wales’s national quality of life is to be secured, concludes a new IWA report Cherished Heartland.

The hills and uplands are “at a tipping point” conclude the report’s authors Professors Peter Midmore and Richard Moore-Colyer of the University of Wales, Aberystwyth.

The report traces the development of the uplands from the mid 1700s when the Brecknockshire Agricultural Society, which commissioned the research to mark its 250th anniversary, was set up. The study draws on case histories of individual hill and upland farms to help form its conclusions. These are that the Uplands play a pivotal role in terms of culture, recreation, environment, and national identity, and that this outweighs their agricultural potential.

The status quo is not an option, so in order to maintain that role, continued and even expanded support is vital, returns from the market will be critical, and improved public confidence in, and affinity towards, agriculture is needed.

The report’s main recommendations are that:
• A minimum level of production is required, in terms of keeping an appropriate mix of sheep and cattle on upland farms, under expanded and retargeted agri-environment schemes.
• Agri-environment schemes should involve and utilise the valuable knowledge within the farming community. Local groups representing farmers and other key stakeholders would have the opportunity to engage in collaborative marketing, promotions, and integrated planning of tourism and leisure use developments.
• Community managed ‘wild’ areas should be established for public benefit, where there is a selective and voluntary withdrawal of agriculture.
• There should be an honest appraisal of the way in which National Park planning powers limit or obstruct development. And there needs to be fundamental reform which recognises the interaction between sustainable development and landscape conservation.
• The Welsh Assembly Government should promote further debate, through a major conference, and the National Assembly’s Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee should launch an inquiry into the future of the hills and uplands.

Copies of Cherished Heartland: Future of Upland Wales, can be ordered from the IWA at £10 plus £1.50 + p&p (half-price to IWA members).

myths memories and futures

The Institute of Welsh Affairs is undertaking a major series of lectures to mark the centenary in 2007 of the National Museums Wales and the National Library of Wales.

The series will be launched at the National Library in Aberystwyth on 13 January with a lecture on the Creation of the National Museum and the National Library by Dr Prys Morgan, Emeritus Professor in History at the University of Wales, Swansea. It will culminate in March 2007 with a lecture on the Future of National Museums, by Mike Houlihan, Director General of National Museums, Wales.

Full details of the series can be found on the IWA’s website www.iwa.org.uk

two for one for christmas!

Enrol two new members of the Institute of Welsh Affairs, or give two gift subscriptions this Christmas and get your own membership FREE for a year (members paying by Direct Debit will receive a cheque).

For further details and membership forms contact Helen Sims-Coomber at the IWA: St Andrews House, 24 St Andrews Crescent, Cardiff, CF10 3DD
Telephone 029 2066 6606 or E-mail wales@iwa.org.uk
The IWA’s Creu Cyfle-Cultural Explosion project – aimed at increasing awareness about Wales amongst the ten EU Accession countries – was showcased in Brussels in November. A packed audience at the Wales European Centre viewed a video diary illustrating how the project is giving Welsh people a chance to experience the cultures of their new neighbours.

George Ingber, Deputy Head of Unit Information and Communication DG Enlargement said culture was an important tool to defend democracies against totalitarianism. IWA Chairman, Geraint Talfan Davies, told the Brussels audience that culture must now play a central role in filling the vacuum that exists in the EU following the controversial No votes to the European Constitution. The project’s patron Catrin Finch gave a performance of Smetana’s Moldau at the event, symbolising the connections that can be made between Wales and the new member states.

Catrin Finch was also prominent at a series of events at the IWA-Creu Cyfle stand during the Eryri National Eisteddfod.

Cultural explosion reverberates

The project culminates at a Creu Cyfle – Cultural Explosion conference in the Galeri, Caernarfon, on 19-20 February (see back page for details).

Future governance of north Wales

Sue Essex, Minister for Finance, Local Government and Public Services is guest speaker at a conference on The Future Governance of North Wales, being organised by the IWA at the Celtic Royal Hotel, Caernarfon on Friday 2 February 2006.

Supported by the North Wales Economic Forum, the conference will ask how north Wales is to be represented within the machinery of decision making once the Welsh Development Agency, ELWa and the Wales Tourist Board have been absorbed into the Assembly Government from April 2006.

The Wales Spatial Plan divides north Wales into three zones: Menai (Ynys Mon and the and the north Wales coast between Caernarfon and Llandudno); the North East (whose core area lies ‘within the triangle formed by Wrexham, Deeside and Chester’) and the rest, which forms part of the sparsely populated core of central Wales. Does this division serve the interests of north Wales in ensuring that its voice will be heard in Cardiff and that it will receive a fair share of resources?

What presence will the Assembly Government continue to have in north Wales? What will be the future role of the North Wales Economic Forum and how will the north Wales voice be fed into the regional Advisory Panels being established by the Assembly Government? In seeking answers to these questions the conference has been built around the themes identified in A Winning North Wales, the development strategy published by the North Wales Economic Forum in 2004:

- Business, Enterprise and Innovation, with Chris Farrow, Executive Director North Wales, Welsh Development Agency.
- Skills and Learning with Katie Whittaker, North Wales Manager ELWA, and Rhys Davies, Managing Director, Outlook Expeditions, Snowdonia.
- Community Cohesion with Sheila Potter, Head of Regeneration, Conwy CBC, Menna Jones, Chief Executive, Antur Waunfawr.
- Communications and Infrastructure with Dafydd Hughes, Chair, Rail Transport Users Forum for Wales and Chief Executive, TAC, and Roy Bichan, CBI North Wales.

Councillor Rhiannon Wyn Hughes, Leader of Denbighshire County Council will lead a discussion on tourism. A keynote address will be given by Professor Dylan Jones Evans and the conference will close with a panel debate with leading politicians from each of the four main parties.

- For further details and how to register for the conference contact the IWA office 029 20 666606 or access our website www.iwa.org.uk

Winter 2005 / 06
throughout the multiple policy-making communities in south east Wales today there seems to be an acute disconnect between a public profession of support for the idea of regional working and a deep private scepticism as to its feasibility and even its desirability. The reasons for the private scepticism are manifold and they vary from one area to another, but two reasons stand out, namely the problem of political scale and the delivery deficit.

The problem of political scale concerns the disjunction between the local and the regional – that is to say between the local focus of unitary authority members (which is by definition confined to their local authority area, and very often to the much smaller area of their own ward) and the regional focus which is now deemed necessary for a more economical and strategic approach to service delivery. As one senior local government official said in confidence, “The idea that you sacrifice something for your ward to better another ward which is 30-40 miles away is a difficult political concept.”

Far from being confined to the familiar Cardiff/Valleys fault line, this inter-area tension can erupt anywhere in the region. For instance, the new Heads of the Valleys programme, aimed at stimulating more collaboration in the upper Valleys, has the potential to induce highly localised tensions because of the priority accorded to Merthyr and Ebbw Vale as investment sites. The fact that the Assembly Government endorsed the selection of these two towns as the key urban hubs for the heads of the valleys corridor was the crucial factor in legitimising their privileged status in the pecking order. In an area where ‘old-style parochialism’ is far from dead, it would have been difficult if not impossible for one site to have been elevated over another without the intervention of an external agent, in this case the Assembly Government, to play the role of honest broker.

Though it may be less visible the delivery deficit is even more of a problem because it reflects the lack of institutional capacity to translate regional strategies from the design stage to the delivery or implementation stage. This was not a problem in the past because there was little or no spatial planning at the regional scale. However, the advent of new regional working arrangements will expose the most serious institutional defect in the Assembly Government’s vision for a ‘single networked city-region’ in South East Wales. This is the fact that there are precious few regional governance mechanisms to deliver the city-region strategy.

There is no shortage of regional fora to design regional strategies. However, the strategies that have multiplied have one thing in common: they have little or no capacity to put their designs into practice. This regional delivery deficit can be seen in four policy domains that
The key
Welsh Assembly Government, 2004

2136AgendaPagesDJW  1/12/05  4:58 pm  Page 11

that the Forum should consider “a
delivery solutions.”
possible move towards more regional
issue and suggests, albeit tentatively,
the statement returns to this litmus test
Instructively, the concluding page of
“appropriate delivery mechanisms.”

It says that having a shared view of the
admission of the current state of play.

However, the Assembly Government
needs to decide what it wants to do
with the South East Wales Economic
Forum because the latter seems to
have been marginalised by a new
Ministerial advisory group to advise on
the delivery of the Wales Spatial Plan.
This is creating uncertainty within the
Forum (SEWEF), the only organisation
that has so far managed to adopt a
genuinely regional perspective on the
Capital Network region. Significantly,
its recent economic development
statement, Enter the Dragon Economy,
was described as a ‘strategy’ on the
front cover and as a ‘framework’ on the
inside contents page, a small but
symptomatic reflection of the fact that
it was anything but an action plan.
Indeed, the final chapter on ‘strategic
capability’ offers a commendably frank
admission of the current state of play.
It says that having a shared view of the
region, is no longer enough because a
successful strategy needs to have
“appropriate delivery mechanisms.”
Instructively, the concluding page of
the statement returns to this litmus test
issue and suggests, albeit tentatively,
that the Forum should consider “a
possible move towards more regional
delivery solutions.”

The tentative nature of the Forum’s
conclusion stems from the political
sensitivities surrounding the subject of
delivery powers, the traditional turf of
individual local authorities. If the
Forum is anxious not to offend its local
government members, it is even more
anxious to maintain the goodwill of the
Assembly Government, not least
because the latter will be more directly
involved in the Forum in the post-
quango era. In other words SEWEF
finds itself in a regional limboland,
sandwiched between local and national
levels, neither of which can solve the
regional delivery deficit because local
government is too small to deal with
regional issues and national
government has no regional delivery
capacity – which is precisely what
compromises the operational
credibility of the Wales Spatial Plan.

Having performed some sterling
work in fostering a regional

As it is presently constituted the Forum
has absolutely no way of influencing
the budgets of local authorities, and
there is no bigger budget for
promoting local economic
development than the public
procurement budget. The combined
public procurement budget for the ten
local authorities in the Capital Network
city-region has been unofficially
estimated to be some £900 million.
However, the economic potential of this
combined budget goes untapped
because it is fragmented into ten
separate public sector organizations.

An integrated transport system lies at
the heart of well-functioning city-
regions around the world, affording
connectivity within and without. This is
perhaps the most important ingredient
if a ‘single networked city-region’ is to

the capital network

‘An Interdependent but Unplanned City-region’

“South East Wales is Wales’s most populous area. It is characterised by major
economic and social disparities. The coastal zone is now the main economic driver,
and its competitiveness needs to be sustained to help raise the economic potential
of Wales as a nation. The heavy commuting flows between the Valleys and the coast
mean that the area functions as an interdependent but unplanned urban network.
This gives rise to pressure on the transport infrastructure. Cardiff is a relatively small
capital city. It is important for Wales as a whole that Cardiff becomes significant
internationally, but to do this requires a much greater ‘mass’ of population and
activity. Already, Cardiff has a close functional relationship with its immediate
neighbouring towns, particularly Barry, Pontypridd and Caerphilly. This needs to be
built on constructively, making Cardiff the focal point of a coherent and successful
urban network in South East Wales, enabling it to share its prosperity...The area will
function as a single networked city-region on a scale to realise its international
potential, its national role and to reduce inequalities.”

Wales Spatial Plan, Welsh Assembly Government, 2004

perspective on economic
development, as well as creating a
common marketing programme for
the region in place of unproductive
local rivalry, the South East Wales
Economic Forum is now at a
crossroads. Either it evolves into a
more empowered regional delivery
vehicle for a ‘single networked city
region’, or it atrophies into an
increasingly impotent talking shop.

emerge in south east Wales. The Wales
Spatial Plan underlines this point by
saying that “an effective integrated
transport system is central to the
effective functioning of the area.”

The Transport Framework for Wales
has already established the route map
for transport planning in the Capital
Network region, with the main
emphasis on improvements to the

winter 2005 / 06
public transport system. In spatial terms two priorities cry out for urgent attention – improved connectivity between the Valleys and the coast and better connectivity between Cardiff and the outside world.

The formation of the South East Wales Transport Alliance in 2003, a regional consortium of all ten local authorities in the region, was a positive step in the direction of integrated transport planning. This was because it has responsibility for bus, rail, road and cycling, whereas earlier consortia were confined to rail. Moreover, the Alliance is better positioned than many of the other regional forums because its powers are legally constituted and it is the only authority empowered to make spending decisions on regional public transport projects.

At the same time, however, the Transport Alliance faces political problems that it does not have the power to resolve, the most intractable of which is the incendiary issue of congestion charging. Cardiff has taken the lead in proposing a road charging scheme to reduce congestion and to raise money for an integrated transport system for the capital. A congestion charge could raise up to £70 million annually. Not surprisingly, neighbouring local authorities argue that the capital city should not be allowed to ‘harvest’ revenue that has been generated from the region as a whole. A similar proposal to introduce a congestion charge in Edinburgh failed largely because political support was not forthcoming from the city’s regional hinterland. This underlines the need for the city-region to proceed on the basis of consensus rather than competition. It is doubtful if the South East Wales Transport Alliance has the stature or the authority to deliver such political solutions.

Planners argue that the city-region is a robust scale at which to design and deliver sustainable waste management strategies. Yet Cardiff has failed to take a lead on behalf of the Capital Network because, in 2003-04 for example, it managed to recycle a mere 15 per cent of its household
was importing waste from Cardiff. The fact that their local landfill tip, at Trecatti, Merthyr residents when they discovered precisely what lay behind the protests of waste from one area to another. This is one of the best examples of joint working among local authorities in the region, there is actually no implementation mechanism.

The most difficult problem with waste strategies comes at the implementation stage, when locations for landfill sites and incinerators have to be agreed. The city-region scale may be the best technical scale at which to design sustainable waste management strategies but the greater the distance between the generation and disposal of waste, the greater the political problem of local resistance to the transfer of waste from one area to another. This is precisely what lay behind the protests of Merthyr residents when they discovered that their local landfill tip, at Trecatti, was importing waste from Cardiff. The episode signalled that residents are prepared to deal with their own waste locally, but not the waste of others.

Apart from securing commonly agreed sites for disposal and recycling, the biggest challenge for the Capital Network region is how to use its investment in waste management as a medium for localised regeneration strategies, something that is beyond the reach of the Regional Waste Group.

Arguably it is here, in sustainable waste management, that the case for the city-region is strongest of all. The key drivers for joint working at the regional level are the legislation, the fines local authorities will face if they fail to comply with their statutory waste targets, the capital cost of waste infrastructure, the scarcity of acceptable sites, the need to share ideas about how to deal with waste as high up the waste hierarchy as possible and the need for waste management to make a greater contribution to economic development.

The creation of the South East Wales Regional Housing Forum illustrates that, like economic development, transport and waste, housing policy is being rescaled from the local to the regional scale, where two particular issues stand out – the location of new housing stock and the renewal of old housing stock.

Being one of the most commuter-dependent cities in the UK, Cardiff’s planners are increasingly being forced to think in city-regional terms about where new housing provision is being planned and how this articulates with public transport and waste management strategies. Continued population growth in Cardiff means that the capital will have to look outside its borders to accommodate an appropriate mix of new housing, and the lower valley areas are the obvious contenders. But lower valley districts like Caerphilly are not content to remain one-way commuter belts for the sake of the capital, and these different housing planning priorities will have to be resolved at the city-regional level.

As for old housing stock the key challenge is the exacting Welsh Housing Quality Standard, which most local authorities in the region are unlikely to meet by 2012, the original deadline for council housing stock. For local authorities that clearly cannot meet the Quality Standard if the stock remains in council hands, the only viable option is stock transfer to a registered social landlord, a move that could lay the basis for a housing-led process of local regeneration. Though they are loath to admit it, local authorities across south east Wales have much to learn from Valleys to Coast, which is spearheading a joined-up strategy of community regeneration since it assumed control of Bridgend’s council stock. As things stand, however, there is little or no city-regional approach to new housing provision, to old housing renewal and still less to housing-led regeneration.

Each of these policy areas illustrate that rescaling is underway and this is having two very positive effects. Firstly, a regional policy-making process is beginning to take root in which officers and politicians begin to engage with each other and learn more about the interdependencies that bind them together in something akin to a shared destiny.

Secondly, new regional strategies are beginning to emerge to illustrate how much more could be achieved if regional stakeholders worked in concert rather than in isolation. The big question mark is not whether regional collaboration will occur (it must occur because it’s an obligation not an option) but whether it will work. That is to say, whether it will deliver the three things expected of it, namely efficiency gains, quality public services and a ‘single networked city-region’.

Kevin Morgan is Professor of European Regional Development in the School of City and Regional Planning at Cardiff University. This is an edied extract from Rescaling the City: Cardiff as a Capital City Region? in Alan Hooper and John Punter (Eds.), The Regeneration of Cardiff 1975-2025, to be published by the University of Wales Press in 2006.
connecting ebbw vale

Richard Crook on a new passenger line linking Blaenau Gwent with Cardiff and Newport

The idea of re-opening the passenger railway line between Ebbw Vale and the coast was first mooted at the time of the town’s Garden Festival in the 1980s. Although a business case for the investment could not be proven, we continued to harbour aspirations for removing from Blaenau Gwent the distinction of being the only council in Wales without a railway station.

The loss of the traditional industries had left Blaenau Gwent with a legacy of low car ownership, low skills and a public transportation infrastructure that was unable to provide an attractive option for accessing the Capital City. In partnership with neighbouring Caerphilly and Newport, Blaenau Gwent secured European and Welsh Development Agency funding to commission a series of feasibility studies. A stakeholder group was established involving the three Councils, Railtrack, the Strategic Rail Authority, Arriva Trains Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government.

In February 2001 Blaenau Gwent was rocked by the announcement that Ebbw Vale steelworks would be closed in July 2002 with the loss over 1,000 well paid jobs. A further 1,500 jobs were to go at the Llanwern works in Newport where many people from Blaenau Gwent also worked. The Welsh Assembly Government responded by establishing a Steel Task Force and appointed consultants to prepare an economic strategy.

In early 2002 a series of projects were announced, including promoting broadband and the use of ICT by businesses, a property programme, the development of a lifelong learning network and new tourism development including preparatory work for the forthcoming Ryder Cup. In addition specific projects for Blaenau Gwent were a Learning Campus, an ICT Training Facility, regeneration of the town centre and of course the Ebbw Valley Railway.

This was seen as a key driver of a new Regeneration Framework for south east

Route of the new passenger service from Ebbw Vale, linking ten stations – six of them newly built – with Cardiff and Newport.
Wales, along with the M4 upgrade around Newport and the dualling of the Heads of the Valleys road. The Ebbw Valley Railway would provide a direct link to Cardiff and Newport, and also boost ambitious plans to redevelop Newport City Centre. The scheme was given a kick-start by £7 million from the Assembly Government which was used to match fund support from the European Commission. In addition the Assembly Government provided a three year revenue fund.

The project has two phases, the first securing a direct link to Cardiff by 2007, and the second linking to Newport in 2009. Newport comes later because of difficulties in making track connections. As a whole the project involves:

- Upgrading of 18.5 kilometres of track from the south Wales main line to Ebbw Vale.
- Construction of six new stations at Ebbw Vale, Llanhilleth, Newbridge, Crosskeys, Risca and Rogerstone.
- A new signal system and the upgrade of bridges and supporting infrastructure.

There will be an hourly service from Ebbw Vale to Cardiff, and eventually an hourly service to Newport. Construction will start in early 2006 with completion a year later. If we keep to this timetable it means that communities along the line will be able to use the train to get to the 2007 Rugby World Cup at the National Stadium. More generally, it is envisaged the new service will increase accessibility to the job markets, the universities and colleges, and the leisure facilities of Cardiff and Newport. In policy terms the project is distinctive for at least three reasons:

- It is being delivered by a Council rather than Network Rail. Because it was not such a high a priority for Network Rail, as it was for the communities in the Ebbw Valley, it would probably never have been delivered.
- Its rationale is economic regeneration rather than addressing transport issues such as relieving traffic congestion.
- It provides a classic case of a community-driven project promoted by a ‘small’ Council demonstrating vision and determination.

The project fits well with the Assembly Government’s Wales Spatial Plan and its regeneration proposals for the Heads of the Valleys. It also reflects its commitment to working closely with local authorities in promoting economic regeneration.

The long-term benefits of the scheme will only emerge over time. However, there are already tangible benefits in terms of raising community confidence, attracting investment in the residential sector and a growing awareness that the Valleys offer an attractive quality of the life within community distance of the Capital City.

Richard Crook is Blaenau Gwent County Council Project Director, Former Steelworks Site at Ebbw Vale.
irish luck

james foreman-peck and laurian lungu examine the benefits that could flow if Wales had the option of lowering corporation tax

Could Wales follow Ireland of the 1990s, boosting incomes and economic growth with a radically lower corporation tax? There are two distinct but related basic component questions. What would be the impact of such a change? And is it likely that corporation tax in Wales ever could be radically cut—indeed of England or otherwise? These questions are related because if the payoffs were immense, the political will would more likely be found.

A cut is certainly conceivable because UK standard corporation tax already has been very substantially reduced. The rate on large firms was 52 percent in the 1970s and remained there until 1983 (see Figure 1 and Note 1). The present 30 percent rate dates from 1999. So another similar percentage point reduction would take the corporation tax rate below that of Ireland. Small companies were subject to a lower tax rate but they are less likely to be footloose and therefore to migrate in response to fiscal incentives.

Among other things the impact of such tax rates on internationally mobile firms depends on what rates are levied in other countries. Table 1 shows that in 2003 Ireland’s standard corporation tax rate was less than half of Britain’s (and therefore of Wales’s). Ireland’s effective tax rate on US companies was nearer one third of Britain’s. Other European locations, with the possible exception of the Netherlands for US companies, do not differ greatly in their corporation tax rates from Wales.

Table 1: effective and standard corporate tax rates in selected EU countries (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>34.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


For the present exercise it is reasonable to suppose an approximately similar effect for Wales, if corporation tax were cut to 10 percent—say extra FDI equivalent to around one per cent of Welsh GDP in every year. But we need to know what difference this would then make to output and employment.

For such an assessment we need a simplified representation of the working of the complex Welsh economy: a ‘model’. The basic elements are likely to include identifying three sectors in which people work: government, tradeable goods and services and nontradeables. People who live in Wales can do so either because they earn an income by working here or within travelling distance, or because they have a source of income which they can receive wherever they are based. In this last category are pensioners and persons living off savings and investments. Those that must earn will be employed either in the public sector, which can levy taxes to finance employment wherever judged expedient, or in the private sector.

Unlikely the public sector, the private sector must be self-financing. Employees’ incomes must be covered by sales revenue. Goods and services that provide this revenue must be sold to somebody. Most of Welsh manufacturing industry production is sold outside Wales. Income from this...
‘tradeable’ production provides a market for products that are not traded across Wales’ borders – retail services, garage services, hairdressing and so on. Employment in the private non-tradeable sector is dependent on the demand from the tradeable sector and from the government, the rentier or the ‘transfer income’ sectors.

Over the last generation the balance between sectors has changed substantially, with the rise of government employment and the apparent decline of the tradeables sector – as represented principally by agriculture, manufacturing and mining. This means that now a policy, such as a corporation tax cut, impacting mainly on private tradeable goods and services production, will only directly affect a rather small part of the economy. Some of these tradeables firms can locate almost anywhere, depending upon transport and communication costs. They are footloose. By contrast a change in corporation tax is not going to affect the government sector or other transfers into Wales. Private sector nontradeable output and employment would expand primarily in response to greater demand from the tradeable sector. (Even though firms in this sector paid a lower tax on their profit, they could not move into Wales unless the demand for their services in Wales was present. However existing firms might expand because their capital is in effect cheaper.)

A tax reduction lowers the pre-tax return that capital must earn and therefore raises the amount of capital available in Wales, both because of expansion of existing firms and because of in-migration of new ones. This increases the demand for labour directly but also encourages substitution of capital for labour. The higher the elasticity of substitution, the greater the rise in output from the tax cut, because the easier it is to substitute now relatively more abundant capital for labour.

As a small economy relative to the rest of the world, Wales must take as given the prices of the tradeable products it makes, as well as the cost of capital. Together with the state of technology and efficiency, these determine the demand for labour in the tradeable sector. So a lower corporation tax increases the demand for Welsh labour in the tradeable sector. In conjunction with the supply of tradeable production labour, tradeable employment is thereby fixed by this new stronger demand. We therefore measure the impact of the tax change on tradeable output by substituting for the capital increase from the lower tax rate in the tradeable production function and by substituting the increased employment.

Table 2 below presents the results. It shows that the traded sector output in Wales would expand by an estimated 2.4 per cent. If the capital-labour ratio in the traded sector is assumed to remain unchanged, the condition of constant factor prices ratio implies that a 10 per cent reduction in corporate tax would lead to an eight per cent rise in the traded sector wage. This, in turn, would increase the labour supply in the sector by approximately 8,000 jobs. The expansion in the traded sector would spill over into the non-traded sector, which would increase by 1.2 percent. The rather low shares of traded and non-traded sectors in total output, 0.21 and 0.47 respectively, means that total output or Welsh GDP would increase by 1.09 percent. The employment gain for the whole economy would be 16,200 jobs or around 1.3 percent of the Welsh working population (see note 2).

There are obviously many caveats to this prediction. In particular more work is needed on estimating the elasticity of substitution between Welsh tradeable sector labour and capital, because results are sensitive to this parameter. Also we have not considered the direct effects of a tax cut on the non-traded sector. However, we do not think that this is a major omission, although the impact will depend on how capital-intensive are these activities.

One reason this tax cutting policy has not been favoured in the past is...
perhaps because in effect it entails giving a subsidy to firms already in Wales and that would anyway continue. By contrast grants restricted to newcomers apparently allow public funding to discriminate between companies that would not otherwise operate in Wales and those that would, thereby saving money. On the other hand the administrative costs of the tax option are lower and the level playing field is fairer.

Another possible difficulty for a ‘branch plant economy’ such as Wales is that the profits imputed to the plants of multinationals located here, were such a tax reduction to be implemented, might be manipulated by transfer pricing between subsidiaries to reduce the overall tax burden of the company unwarrantedly. But there are established ways of assessing the reasonableness of transfer prices.

Particularly for a corporation tax cut restricted to a smaller zone than the whole of Wales, such as the Objective One area, there could be a boundary problem. Firms might cluster along the edge of the zone, to get the benefit of the lower tax rate, but without conferring the intended advantages to the centre of the area. This difficulty might be addressed by careful consideration of the location of the edges of the tax advantage zone.

A more compelling concern could be that this attempt to increase the demand for labour in Wales by attracting capital would be largely at the expense of other places. Insofar as the other places were parts of the UK, HM Treasury might be even more loath to lose tax revenue for the cause. But the tax base might actually expand sufficiently to compensate for the lower tax rate, so that revenue did not fall.

Would the boost to employment and output be desirable anyway? In at least one area this is debateable. Apparently job creation has already outrun the local supply of workers in Merthyr Tydfil, in the Objective One area. Merthyr differs from the other Valleys authorities in the much higher proportion of residents remaining in their own area to work. Merthyr Tydfil also differs in the net commuting inwards: 6,000 residents travelled outside the authority to work while 9,000 entered (National Statistics ‘Commuting in Wales 2001’ Statistical Bulletin 64/2002 2: July 2002). On the other hand Merthyr is unusual.

Ultimately the policy questions are whether, if some support is to be targeted on particular areas, is it more effective and is it fairer to choose a general policy instrument such as taxation, or a specific instrument such as administrative discretionary grants? An extra 16,000 jobs are certainly worth having but they are not going to transform the Welsh economy. The answer to the question posed at the outset is that a corporation tax cut alone itself would not allow Wales to replicate the Irish success story. But such a reduction could be a contributor to a Welsh economic renaissance.

**notes**


3) For the purpose of this simulation the traded sector production function was assumed to be of a constant elasticity of substitution (CES) type. The calibrated parameter values were: substitution parameter 1.2 (implying an elasticity of substitution of 0.45), share of capital in output, 0.25, and the technology parameter 1.26. Using the marginal productivity conditions for capital and labour one can determine the change in wage following a reduction in corporate tax. Then, from our estimated model of the Welsh economy we infer what the change in traded sector employment would be. The next step is to solve for traded output, as given by our CES production function. Our model coefficient in the non-traded output equation implies that a 1 per cent increase in traded output increases non-traded output by almost 0.5 percent. Thus, we can estimate the effect of corporate tax on non-traded output. Finally, using the 2001 values for the shares of the Welsh traded and non-traded output in total output we determine the total output effect of the corporate tax.

**agenda**

• Professor James Foreman-Peck is Director and Dr Laurian Lungu a Research Officer at the Welsh Institute for Research in Economics and Development at the Cardiff Business School.
urgeoning construction projects across Wales have prompted an Assembly Government initiative to investigate the case for founding a specialist construction training college in south Wales. An IWA report Plugging the Gap: the case for establishing a National Construction College site in south Wales demonstrates the strong demand that exists within the construction industry in Wales for such a site.

The National Construction College, the training division of CITB-ConstructionSkills, which provides training for specialist trades within the construction industry commissioned the Institute of Welsh Affairs to undertake the study. Presently the Construction College has four sites across the UK – in Birmingham, Glasgow, Erith in Kent, and Bircham Newton in Norfolk. The colleges train both adults and new entrants, numbering some 35,000 a year.

Given the geographical location of the existing colleges, in Scotland and the eastern side of England, pressure has been growing for the establishment of a campus for the college in the south western part of Britain. This has been supported by evidence that the propensity for new recruits to enrol is dependent upon the local availability of training. For instance, in early 2004, in a presentation to the South Wales Learning Group, AWG Construction commented that it was crucial for the development of the Welsh construction industry that the concept of “a Welsh Bircham Newton” was explored.

The case for extra provision in Wales has also been acknowledged by the Welsh Assembly Government. As the Social Justice Minister Edwina Hart...
stated in a plenary debate on skills training in the construction industry in June 2003,

“An additional 3,250 people must enter the industry each year over the next five years to cover the shortfall in capacity. As this excludes any work resulting from the new investment in council housing or stock transfer, the situation in Wales can only become more acute and desperate. The construction industry underpins the economic and social infrastructure of Wales – both through direct employment and through supporting growth in other sectors.”

The IWA study was based on a catchment area that included the whole of Wales as well as south west England. The construction industry employs nearly 93,000 people in Wales, with another 145,000 employed in the south-west of England. The industry contributes over 5 per cent of the GDP in Wales, a figure that has increased significantly over recent years. Construction output growth in Wales has been considerably greater than in the UK as a whole. For the four quarters ending in the first quarter of 2004, it rose by 17.7 per cent compared with 6.3 per cent for the UK as a whole. This growth has now been underway for the last eleven quarters and is likely to continue due to the large number of construction projects planned or underway.

A total of 2,679 students from south Wales and South West England attended courses with the National Construction College between September 2003 and September 2004. Most trainees from Wales attend courses at Birmingham and Bircham Newton. Companies are understandably reluctant to send their apprentices and workers on courses as far away as East Anglia. However there are currently waiting lists for students wishing to attend courses at all four existing NCC sites. As one company noted:

“The survey undertaken as part of the study was in the form of a questionnaire which was sent to construction firms of all specialised construction trades across the whole of Wales and south-west England. The study did not investigate the current demand for training amongst the more traditional trades such as carpentry and bricklaying. Instead it concentrated on the more specialist skills associated with scaffolding, steel erecting, roofing, flooring, civil engineering specialists, tiling, glazing, and steeple jacking.

Out of the total of 284 questionnaires that were returned a majority of the companies surveyed (56 per cent) said they would be more likely to use a south Wales site. Support was strongest in south Wales itself (92 per cent), surprisingly strong in south-west England (53 per cent) but weaker in north Wales (29 per cent). The trade that was proportionally most in favour of a college in Wales was scaffolding, with strong support across most other specialist trades. Most of the companies – 63 per cent – have experienced difficulty in acquiring trained skilled personnel in the past two years while 78 per cent forecast a skills shortage in the coming five years.

Other than the NCC the main source of training construction industry workers is through further education colleges. There are currently 17 further education colleges on Wales and 26 in South West England offering construction industry courses that lead to qualification in some aspect of the construction industry. However, none offer courses leading to qualifications in the specialist trades that are dealt with by the National Construction College.

The IWA was commissioned to assess the overall case for expanding the activities of the NCC into Wales, including demand amongst construction firms in Wales and south-west England. This entailed investigating the nature of the demand – which firms were likely to use such a facility, the size of the firms, their location, the likely take-up of trainees and the trades where there was most demand for training.

Gruffydd Jones is a Research Officer with the IWA. A Pdf version of this research study can be downloaded from IWA’s website: www.iwa.org.uk.
In her foreword to the IWA's recent Gregynog Paper *Wales on the Web* Ann Beynon of BT echoes the Monty Python team's question about the value of the Romans by asking, "What has Broadband ever done for us?" She then makes the point that although the technical infrastructure in Wales has developed rapidly, real results will only come as genuine effects on the lives of real people become apparent.

In the Paper itself the author, National Librarian Andrew Green, continues the Python parallel by reciting a long list of benefits that can already be observed in Wales. He also lists a wide range of nascent projects which can have the potential for a strong effect on Welsh culture and life. However, the Paper provides less perspective on the economic impact that broadband connectivity can have in reviving the Welsh economy.

Effective use of broadband connectivity is becoming one of the key determinants of future economic prosperity. It is an example of Arthur C. Clarke's third law that "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." Both Beynon and Green warn against the mantra chanted by technological fanatics who imply that the hardware alone will solve any problem – an example of Arthur C. Clarke's aphorism that, "Fanatics are always followed by fools, of which there is an inexhaustible supply." They rightly urge that Wales develop a true content industry and move towards a real knowledge society.

In their 1960s publication *The Collapse of Work* Clive Jenkins and Barry Sherman suggested that the rise of the computer and digital communications would be rapidly followed by massive reduction in employment and collapse of social cohesion. One might argue about the state of the latter during the last few decades but employment, albeit of a different pattern, has been maintained at a high level through into the 21st Century.

The Welsh Assembly Government is to be congratulated for its vision in the development of the physical Broadband networking structure in the country. However, this is merely a first step. Achievement will not come from simply being digital but also through being wise. Nicholas Negroponte painted too bright a picture of the future in his challenging work *Being Digital*. The truth is, as Conceição et al. noted in 2001 in *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, "Much attention has been devoted to digital technologies, a more fundamental change at the start of the new millennium is the increasing importance of knowledge for economic prosperity and the emergence of a learning society."

There are real lessons here for Wales in the Broadband era. Worrying indicators of change can be observed. Although employment has maintained a high level in the developed economies, a changed employment pattern is beginning to emerge. A new class system is developing. The traditional
'working class' of productive labour in manufacturing and agriculture is in decline. In its place has been a major growth in low skilled, 'service related employment'. This sector of the economy is highly vulnerable to employment export and outsourcing to developing economies. The rapid loss of call centre business and basic data processing from Europe to India and the Far East is a clear example of this.

The 'professional classes' remain highly skilled but are a relatively small sector of the population which only makes a small economic contribution to any nation's prosperity. The 'creative class' which includes scientists, technologists and those in the media are becoming the core of the new economy. They must be on the treadmill of constantly generating new ideas not simply reorganising existing knowledge. However, the infrastructure is now beginning to fail them and the performance of the developed countries in these cutting edge fields is in decline.

Wales is a classic exemplar of this movement. Over the last two decades there has been a downshift of the skills base into sectors that are highly vulnerable to competition from emerging economies. At the same time the full infrastructure has not been put in place to foster the new economy effectively.

Arthur C. Clarke has suggested that "Whenever the capability of a technology increases by a ten factor, it changes society in a profound and irreversible way." Ten factor changes in the past have taken place over long periods of time, centuries or at least decades. However, the power of information and communications technology is now growing by a ten factor almost every year and once its real impact bites we may not have comfortable periods to manage the change.

The social economist Robert Reich, who was Secretary for Labour in the first Clinton Administration, noted that, "It doesn't matter whether you are in a developed or developing nation, the drivers of the future are: technology, demographics and globalisation." In his book The Work of Nations he also suggested that national wealth can no longer be secured by a country's domestic industries or physical assets, if it ever was. Rather, it is now determined by its people, the respect that is shown by and to them, the culture that this generates and the ways in which they can reach out to the world.

Wales is rich in expertise in the key discipline areas for the knowledge economy including: education, environment, energy, electronics, engineering, media, medicine, management, agriculture, and biotechnology. However, the indicators are that Wales is already starting to fall back and the reduced investment in research compared with England will increase the gap in potential. Wales needs a set of clear, comprehensive policies for: technology, innovation, communication and management of knowledge.

But beware, there is a dangerous arrogance in Western economies about the potential for competition. Growth in knowledge-based industry is becoming much faster in the Eastern economies and could threaten to overtake the West in the next two decades. The industries of tomorrow could disappear to the same destinations as the industries of the past.

The world economy is changing much faster than can be addressed by cottage industry application of technology. The answer in developed economies is the creation of true knowledge industries. The definition of ‘knowledge-based’ industries is based on classification codes used by the OECD and is divided into two tiers. Tier one includes employment in, among other areas: telecommunications, software, aerospace, pharmaceuticals, entertainment and other research areas.
Welsh commerce and industry is dominated by companies in the SME sector and it must be questioned whether digital trade will bring more than minor advantages to the majority of these. There is also a finite possibility that in the short term the costs of participation may exceed the benefits even with a subsidised digital infrastructure. However, there is a sub sector within the OECD’s tier one where SMEs play a vital role and in which Wales already excels. This is media and the creative industries as a whole. In this sector, the outcome of Clarke’s ten factor change theory has shown demonstrable shifts in operational, and commercial applications during the last decades.

Wales has a thriving creative sector of world class quality. Some of its smaller companies in the fields of graphics and animation have captured the attention of the larger world players such as George Lucas and Steven Spielberg. As broadcasters, S4C and BBC Wales have engaged in innovative partnerships for international co-production.

Unfortunately the industry organisations that promote Welsh creative industries – from animation to architecture, digitisation to design, graphics to games, film to family entertainment – have tended to focus too much on media for the Welsh, rather than Welsh media for the world. It is all very well ‘Gathering the Jewels’ but in a globalising environment, they need to be gems that the markets want to buy in settings that they find attractive.

For economic success in this sector, and all that can lead from it, the Welsh Assembly Government needs to facilitate the development of a true trading body which can bring together the excellence in Welsh media SMEs and to market the brand to the world. As Andrew Green also points out in his Paper, media companies need levels of connectivity that are far greater than those for social broadband and, though this is developing, it is not moving fast enough.

Arthur C. Clarke suggests that there are two factors which hold back progress: failures of imagination and failures of courage. Wales has never lacked imagination. The issue is whether, having made a promising start, the political machine can have the courage to operate nationally rather than simply locally and develop a real knowledge economy.

Marshall McLuhan popularised the notion of ‘The Global Village’. He believed that the print revolution begun by Gutenberg was the forerunner of the industrial revolution. Although he died in 1980 and did not live to see, but perhaps foresaw, the merging of text and electronic mass media in this new media called the Internet, McLuhan saw electronic media as a return to collective ways of perceiving the world. He believed that it would have the ability of to unify and retribalize the human race. In his famous wordplay ‘The medium is the massage’, new media themselves defined the ‘mass age’ of geographical reach and also the ‘message’ about future development.

The infrastructure already provided in Wales should be a real catalyst for change but without early action the promise for the future could become a mere illusory chimera leading to a long term economy catastrophe. Welsh media and the creative industries need real high speed connection, a unifying approach and a world perspective. If we get it right, creative industries can make a big contribution to the Welsh economy. As McLuhan also said, ‘The message of any medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs. One of the nicest things about being big is the luxury of thinking little.”

If we get the big, bold steps right, we will be able to focus in future on the elements of culture and community. If we concentrate on these issues to the exclusion of real economic development society will become more divisive. Don’t let Wales falter at the first step.

“Whenever the capability of a technology increases by a ten factor, it changes society in a profound and irreversible way.”
Arthur C. Clarke

• Professor Aldwyn Cooper is Pro Vice Chancellor at the University of Glamorgan, Director of the Glamorgan Business School and currently researching the impact of new technology on employment and the role it can play in improving educational provision.

winter 2005 / 06
Secretary of State Peter Hain is nothing if not ambitious in his hopes for the UK government’s White Paper, Better Governance for Wales. Speaking at a conference in Cardiff’s Millennium Centre in July, he made clear his intention that the resulting legislation, due to pass through the Houses of Parliament in 2006, should be the last piece of major constitutional legislation for Wales for a generation.

The White Paper falls into three parts. The sections on the internal architecture of devolved government in Wales propose a move to a much clearer – and constitutionally orthodox – division of powers between the legislature and the executive. In this case, the proposed changes have been almost universally welcomed. Much more controversial are the proposed changes to the Assembly’s electoral arrangements. Claiming that aspects of the present system ‘both devalue the integrity of the electoral system in the eyes of the public and act as a disincentive to vote’, the UK government plans to bar candidates from simultaneously offering themselves for election as Constituency and Regional Members.

The sections on the Assembly’s powers are complex with important aspects of the proposed changes as yet unclear. Undeterred by the patent failure of many if not most of the constitutional experiments contained in the first Government of Wales Act (1998) – the corporate body status, the committee structure, and other related features of the original internal architecture of devolved government – the new Bill will seek to empower the National Assembly in constitutionally novel ways:

- Stage One Framework Legislation
  Initially the Government is promising that all Westminster legislation impinging on devolved areas will now be drafted in such a way as to maximise the freedom of manoeuvre enjoyed by Cardiff.
- Stage Two Orders in Council
  After 2007, the Assembly will gain substantial new powers through Orders in Council passed by Westminster. These powers will allow the National Assembly to amend Westminster legislation in given policy areas in order that it may pursue its own policy objectives.
- Stage Three Legislative Powers
  Finally, the Bill will place primary powers for Wales on the statute book. The Assembly will, however, only be allowed to exercise those powers following an affirmative result in a referendum – a referendum that can only take place once various constitutional locks have been opened.
Looking back over a 100 years or so of the history of the devolution debate in Wales, the argument has always largely been about whether we should have devolution or not? Is Wales a nation or not? Should that mean anything in political terms? And so on. In terms of how you actually do devolution, the debate has always been pretty dismal. One of the cardinal virtues of the Richard Commission, I think, was that there was very clear sense of principle underpinning their whole constitutional design. Is there a similarly clear constitutional vision underpinning the White Paper proposals? If there is, what is it?

In terms of the overall vision, there’s not actually much to choose between the White Paper and the Richard Commission in terms of where you want to get to. The issue is how you get there. I’ve always been a supporter, as you will know, for primary powers for Wales and I will be the first Secretary of State to have delivered on to the Statute Book primary powers waiting to be picked up following a referendum. The main difference between my own position and Richard, is that I accept that you could not get primary powers without a referendum endorsing this.

If you go back to the receipt of the Richard Commission in March 2004, I kept my powder reasonably dry because I knew that there was a lot of pressure from, on the one hand, those devolution sceptics for whom a referendum was a way of blocking the possibility of ever getting primary powers. On the other hand, there were those who were pro primary powers who argued that we needed a referendum as this was a completely different settlement from that endorsed in the 1997 referendum. What then came into the picture was the Prime Minister’s change on the referendum for the European constitution. All this was all swirling around at the time, and, you know, in internal dialogue and discussion with Rhodri it was clear that he was not keen or enthusiastic about a referendum because of the history of referenda in Wales. But then I just increasingly thought if you were offering a referendum on the European constitution which after all is just a modification of existing treaties, you would be putting yourself on the wrong end of the argument if we opposed a referendum on primary powers. So what I then decided was to go for a referendum, not as a blocking mechanism, but as actually the triggering device for more powers.

In the meantime, Rhodri came up with what he called 13.2+ (named after a section in the Richard Commission Commission report which suggested ways of enhancing the Assembly’s legislative role without resort to amending the Government of Wales Act, see Box 2). When we worked out exactly how that could work in a way that didn’t seem to bring primary powers in by the back door, we came up with enhanced Assembly powers granted through order making powers.

In terms of vision, I don’t think there is any difference in vision. But the Richard Commission doesn’t lay out a political strategy for achieving that vision.

One of the core complaints about the present settlement is its complexity. OK all multi-level level governance is complicated but this is particularly the case in Wales. Won’t the intervening steps to this legislative assembly make it all even more complicated? Isn’t the Orders in Council system, for example, an extraordinarily complicated addition?

RWJ One of the core complaints about the present settlement is its complexity. OK all multi-level level governance is complicated but this is particularly the case in Wales. Won’t the intervening steps to this legislative assembly make it all even more complicated? Isn’t the Orders in Council system, for example, an extraordinarily complicated addition?

PH It is and it isn’t. I mean, when you see it all spelt out in the bill, it may look, the architecture may look a little complex, but actually, the issue is quite simple. The Assembly or the Welsh Assembly Government, makes a request to the Secretary of State for an order-making power, then there’s a process of pre-scrutiny, then there’s an hour and a half debate and it’s passed.

Now that’s pretty straightforward. It’s a lot less complicated than the whole process of taking a bit of primary legislation, and the truth is that, when you look at what the Assembly has bid for, and what has been delivered in the bills, they all fall under the order making power umbrella.

RWJ Before we move on to more specific questions about all of this, I would like to probe a little further on the issue of complexity; I regard the White Paper as an extremely clever political fix in terms of moving us in the direction of primary powers, but it does so by creating even greater complexity. Is this going to make the public more interested in devolution and more interested in voting for primary powers when we get to a referendum?
politics and policy

PH Everybody knows where I am on the big devolution principles. But I’ve always thought the public are more interested in outcomes. So I don’t think the public’s that bothered about the exact constitutional details. What interests them is that the Assembly has more powers. I think there is support for that. They also want a system that’s clearer and in which it’s easier to see who’s responsible.

RWJ But does this proposal actually achieve that?

PH I think it does.

RWJ On powers and, specifically, framework legislation, obviously we’ve seen more of that coming through, but the question still remains is there any mechanism in place to ensure that this happens more regularly and consistently? How does one make this part of the culture of Whitehall?

PH Well, it’s the responsibility of the Wales Office to make sure that it does, and that’s going to be one of our major functions over the coming years – obviously, working with the Assembly and the Welsh Assembly Government. I think you’ll see this practice has already been applied in the past to various bits of legislation but it’s been erratic...

RWJ Very erratic.

PH … and I’ve written to cabinet colleagues saying that they should now be applied consistently. We’ll just have to check that it’s actually happening.

RWJ Have you got the resources in the Wales Office to do that; it’s such a big job presumably?

PH I’ve increased the complement of officials handling policy issues since I’ve been Secretary of State to make sure that we do have that capacity. And for each area there’s a set of Assembly officials who are the experts. Our role is a sort of mediating, negotiating, watch-dog role.

RWJ Could you perhaps indicate your latest thinking on the scrutiny process at stage 2?

PH My current thinking – based on a lot of consultation – is that the Welsh Affairs Select Committee would consider a draft order in conjunction with the relevant Assembly Committee. It’s a matter in the end for the Welsh Affairs Committee to decide whether it wants to use this model, but I would also suggest a model whereby anybody in the House of Commons may come to committee and may make representations, not just Welsh MPs. So we would have some pre-scrutiny, and I think that would give greater confidence to the whole process.

RWJ The danger of that is you get a kind of double scrutiny.

PH Well, not really, because the orders themselves are going to be in pretty general terms. If we had an Order say giving power to create a post of Commissioner for Older People, it wouldn’t be a very long Order. Parliament would need to satisfy itself that this would not, for example, impinge on England. Things like that the Parliament would want to know about, but that would be it.

RWJ But the Older Persons’ Commissioner is a fairly non-controversial development. It’s quite easy to envisage the Assembly wanting to do something much more controversial; something with real political bite. Is it realistic then to expect MPs not to get into a discussion of the actual substance of what Cardiff wants to do? Won’t this inevitably become the point at issue?

PH It could be, because Parliament is sovereign. But there’s no greater risk for the Assembly in this new process than in the existing one. In fact there’s less of a risk because you know every

box 3: Westminster scrutiny of ‘Orders in Council’

Orders in Council are not normally subject to amendment. The Secretary of State has made clear, however, that he wants to ensure that Members of Parliament are given the opportunity to scrutinise draft Orders before they are formally placed before Westminster for ratification. A concern that arises in this context is that proposals for specific devolved actions in Wales may become subject to a process of ‘double scrutiny’ in which MPs decide on the granting of Orders in Council not on the basis of the constitutional propriety of what is being proposed, but on the basis of their own views of the proposals. Should this occur then the prospect of major tension between Cardiff and London will surely become very real.

RWJ

box 4: the basis of legislative powers

The White Paper is notably opaque on the way power will be apportioned between Wales and the UK state once an Assembly with primary powers has come into existence. In crude terms, the Scottish Parliament established by the 1998 Scotland Act has wide-ranging powers across all those areas not specifically reserved to Westminster. This arrangement has been widely praised by constitutional experts for its clarity and efficacy. It stands in contrast, however, to the system proposed for Scotland back in the 1978 Scotland Act, whereby the putative Scottish Assembly would have been granted primary powers only in specified areas. Many experts have subsequently concluded that the Scotland 1978 model was essentially unworkable. Hence the question for Wales: will the division of powers be akin to Scotland 1978 or Scotland 1998?
line of primary legislation has got to be cleared through parliament, both houses, along with the detail. Well, that's all going to pass to the Assembly. But of course, until you've got primary powers, that risk remains.

RWJ Turning to the final stage, an Assembly with legislative powers. What's the justification for all the locks that will need to be opened before a Referendum can be held?

PH If we start off with why we need two thirds of the Assembly to vote for it. This is not as a blocking mechanism but a means of proving that there is a consensus. The worst situation, the nightmare scenario, which I was determined to avoid would be an opposition of some composition, swinging a referendum vote on, let's say, a Labour Welsh Assembly Government, with no consensus in Welsh Labour to do that. Then the train leaves the station and before you know it, you've got a referendum called which you're going to lose.

When we get to the point of calling a referendum, the whole purpose is to win it, not to have virtually guaranteed that you lose it. The two thirds majority proves there is a consensus, maybe outside the Welsh Conservatives, but you know you can live with that. Crucially you’d have Welsh Labour backing. Parliament would then not be in a position to resist this. So all of those so called locks are not locks really, they are opening doors that you can easily walk through rather than have them slammed in your face.

RWJ Assuming that there's a Yes vote, what would this new body look like in terms of its powers? In short-hand terms, is it the Scotland model 1978-79 or the Scotland model 1998-9?

PH I'm not sure it looks like either model in that sort of clinically distinct sense. We're approaching this destination from a particular route, and I think that suddenly to overturn that, to pretend that you're travelling a kind of parallel motorway, would not work. I don't think

box 5: changing the electoral system – the evidence

The findings of work undertaken for the Arbuthnott Commission in Scotland are now being cited in support of claims made in the White Paper that the present electoral arrangements with regards to Dual Candidacy are the source of major public disquiet and disaffection. These findings can be found at www.arbuthnottcommission.gov.uk/Research.htm

It is worth noting that this research is based on focus groups held in Scotland involving fewer than 48 people. The main tenor of those focus groups was of overwhelming hostility to politics and politicians per se. Only one of the focus group participants mentioned ‘Dual candidacy’ as an issue without specific negative prompting by the focus group leaders.

RWJ
you could win that argument, either inside government or outside.

**RWJ** Moving to the changes to the electoral system, I guess that the first fundamental question is where’s the evidence that this is a big problem? It’s clear that this is an issue that some politicians care about this, but there doesn’t seem to be any public attitude evidence to support the suggestion that this is a it’s a disincentive to vote in Assembly elections.

**PH** We’ve not researched on this, partly for resource reasons. The Arbuthnott Commission has done focus group work on it, admittedly in Scotland, but there’s no reason to suppose it would be different if it did the same in Wales. Their findings show overwhelming support of our case from members of the public.

When I took the bill through with Ron Davies and Win Griffiths in 1997-98 for this model, we never envisaged the way in which it would be abused by regional list members setting themselves up as competitors and performing functions that they weren’t intended to perform. I just think that the whole system has been brought into disrespect in the public’s mind.

But you know the idea that this is a unique penalty on everybody else except Welsh Labour is simply not the case. You take Alun Pugh’s position at Clwyd West next time. We lost it at the Westminster level earlier this year and all the evidence suggests that he’s going to face an even tougher battle next time as a result of this. We’re going to bar him – a senior, very able Labour member – from protecting his back by standing on the list system So this is not a penalty that applies uniquely to opposition parties.

**RWJ** What about alternative ways of dealing with this issue, assuming that there is public disquiet about it? What about some form of compact setting out the distinct roles that can be played by the constituency and list AM’s?

**PH** The evidence in Scotland is that hasn’t worked. David Steel, the Presiding Officer, is most trenchant on this and pretty well says all he can see in many cases is list members trying to undermine their target constituencies using taxpayer’s money. So I don’t think the code works.

The other route of course, whereby I suppose you could begin to approach this would be to have differential allowances for the two sorts of members. While they have the same role in the legislative process lots of people make the argument to me that there’s no justification for regional list members setting up constituency offices. Why should their staffing costs allowances be exactly the same as constituency members? Constituency members are the ones that hold surgeries. They’re the ones that are accountable to local electors. The Assembly may do that.

**RWJ** Part of the problem is that the list as presently structured on a regional basis implies a degree of territorial representation. So how about a national list as another way of removing the overlap in terms of what the different types of members are doing?

**PH** We’ve looked very carefully at this over recent months and there was some pressure from within Welsh Labour for that. But I think there is another argument. A national list system would be effectively a passport for very small parties to get into the Assembly and have the kind of fragmentation which you’ve got in Scotland. I don’t find that attractive.

**RWJ** Even if you put in a threshold?

**PH** Even if we had a 5 per cent threshold it would still be likely that we get that kind of fragmentation. But my mind is not closed on this. If a substantial case was put for it, on a principled basis, I’d listen to the arguments.
We all recognise that Gordon Brown raised public service expenditure to a new and higher level during the second Labour Government. From now on real growth of resources will be limited so meeting the ever growing expectations of the public can only be done by making ever better use of the resources available. This is why the Welsh Assembly Government has developed its Making the Connections programme for public service reform.

Even though the aims of public service reform are shared across the UK, our programme is ‘Made in Wales’ and responds to the particular circumstances of Wales. All the aims that we share for the future of Wales rely on our ability to deliver efficient and effective public services that respond to the needs of citizens and communities:

• Our future economy relies on us developing high level skills and education attainment among all people in all communities.
• We need to be healthier, both for our economy and our quality of life. This requires not just effective health care, but people and communities that share responsibility for developing more active and healthier life-styles.
• We need stronger communities that share responsibility for social care, that offer opportunities for young people, and that sustain and develop the quality of their environments.

As we reform our public services we need to recognise the particular circumstances of Wales. We are a small country made up, in the main, of relatively small communities. We have no metropolis in Wales. Traditionally the organisations responsible for delivering our public services are on a relatively small scale. By British standards, we have small local authorities – most with a population of around 100,000.

We have relatively small Local Health Boards – working on the same populations as local authorities. Our hospitals are often small in scale. We have many relatively small schools – with demographic trends now leading to a decline in pupil numbers. Most of our universities are small by international standards.

There are advantages in this small scale. Our services are often accessible and sometimes responsive because they are provided on this sort of scale. But we need to be honest and recognise that if we leave all delivery organisations to work on this scale and in isolation then costs will be unacceptably high and service quality unacceptably low. There will also be insufficient specialist expertise and a lack of response to the special needs of individuals.

As we developed Making the Connections we recognised that there are different ways of responding to the
circumstances of Wales. We could embark on a huge programme of structural change to create larger units of service delivery. We could have set the objective of creating far fewer local authorities with each authority being large enough to meet all the different needs of its populations. By the standards of metropolitan England – perhaps six local authorities and six multi-purpose health boards would have done the trick.

We have chosen not to do that and I need to stress that Making the Connections is not a prelude to large scale structural reorganisation. That could lead to a massive waste of time and energy, to years of navel gazing when we need immediate action to create urgent improvements.

The English model of public service reform puts substantial weight on the potential of competition between public service providers. The theory is that as hospital competes against hospital they will develop different specialisms and have the spur to create efficiency. The same theory is applied to schools and colleges in England.

There are risks in this competition. If each provider aims for the safer part of the market, the more specialised needs can get ignored. Moreover, if each competing provider seeks to be self sufficient in corporate support services there are inefficiencies.

Our reform programme in Wales has in the main not chosen the route of competition between public service providers. The proposal that we made in Making the Connections was that we could make effective collaboration a successful alternative to both structural reorganisation and competitive markets. We will reform Welsh public services by ensuring that:

• Schools, colleges and universities work better together.
• Local authorities, Trusts and Local Health Boards work together to share resources and develop ever better services.
• Citizens and government work together to share responsibility for the services we need.

We argued in Making the Connections that we could reduce the transaction costs of service delivery by ensuring that delivery organisations concentrated on front line services and wherever possible shared regional or national centres for business support. In the Wales NHS the 22 Local Health Boards are already plugging in to just three business service centres. We need to consider how many more business services can be provided from these centres and how the Trusts can join the same collaboration.

The whole of the Welsh public sector is entering a phase of large scale new investment in capital. In the NHS alone the annual capital investment is rising from £100 million a year to £300 million...
This extra spend has in large part been financed by the Assembly Government. But in significant part it can only have been achieved because local government has been successful in making the efficiency gains expected of it.

We work together to create the very necessary efficiency. But equally, we must develop our collaborations so that we can provide better services, with a wider range of service options to meet the ever more diverse needs of people in the 21st century.

We are committed to developing Learning Pathways for 16 to 19 year olds. These are diverse learning opportunities, mixing academic learning with vocational skills and with creative development. Learning in schools is linked with learning in colleges and the workplace. Our reform programme stresses that these pathways require active collaboration between providers. We simply could not achieve the breadth of product mix if school was competing with school, and colleges were competing with both.

We are committed to providing Care Pathways across both local government and the whole health care sector. At various stages a single individual will need care support in their own home, an adaptation to their home, alternative accommodation, health care in their local clinic, treatment in their local hospital, specialist care at a regional or national centre of expertise. We will not achieve these care pathways by merging all the activities into one large organisation. Neither will we achieve this diversity by competition between providers. We will only gain the combination of local access and central specialisation through effective collaboration. This will require both local innovation and national leadership.

We also believe that public services will work best if citizens are involved in shaping services and also sharing responsibility for producing the service itself:

• Children learn best with the involvement of their families.
• Most care for the vulnerable is provided by families and friends.
• Young people become part of their communities only because of active voluntary organisations.

Even before Making the Connections, I laid out my vision of a Welsh Public Service in which no matter which organisation people worked for, they saw themselves as part of a bigger network of organisations.

Development and career opportunities should span the whole Welsh public service. My vision was that people who were developing a career in promoting the Welsh economy should be able at various times to work in business, in universities, in local authorities and in the Assembly Government. People who provide and manage health and social care should be able to move between the NHS, the voluntary sector, local authorities, the private sector and the Assembly Government.

There is competition for talent in providing public services across the United Kingdom. If working in Wales is seen as a unique opportunity to build careers and gain experience across organisations – developing expertise whilst working in a variety of contexts – then our services will improve and we will be a very attractive place to work. Welsh public servants will become world leaders in working together, developing and managing networks.

Working with Welsh local government and the NHS the Assembly Government has established Public Services Management Wales. Already this has developed shared programmes for developing managers of public services. There is involvement by a collaboration of
Welsh universities led by Cardiff’s Centre for Local and Regional Government which will allow a diversity of learning experiences to contribute to a Masters in Public Administration. Public Services Management Wales is working to develop shared recruitment and career development pathways.

The Action Plan that is putting Making the Connections into practice commits the Assembly Government to making further progress on the establishment of Value Wales. This will be a significant organisation that provides leadership to the Welsh public sector on three fronts:

• Building on the work of the existing procurement units it will lead the way in to extensive collaboration on the procurement of services across the public sector.
• Value Wales will have the expertise and the capacity to ensure that we work together on the major expansion of capital investment, sharing expertise in the design and procurement of new buildings.

• We need to share expertise on the nuts and bolts of shared services: how they are managed, financed and made accountable. Value Wales will support collaboration by sharing the evidence on how it can be done well.

The Public Services Board has agreed that we need a short, sharp review of local services delivery to advise on where the most significant opportunities for greater collaboration exist and how they can be taken forward. This will be led by Sir Jeremy Beecham, former Leader of Newcastle City Council and former Leader of the Local Government Association. The proposal for the review came from discussions I had with Alex Aldridge, Leader of Flintshire County Council and the Welsh Local Government Association. This indicates the positive manner in which local government is taking up the Making the Connections challenge. Local Government has a genuine desire to work with the Assembly Government and the rest of the public sector to change radically the way services are delivered, achieving both efficiency and better services.

All of us have the responsibility to improve public services in Wales and the scope for improvement is substantial. Wales needs the best possible public services in order to succeed in the 21st century.
Jeremy Beecham explains how he is approaching his review of local service delivery in Wales

When Rhodri Morgan asked me in June to lead a review of local service delivery in Wales, I was delighted to accept for a number of reasons. First, the context seemed to me encouraging. Welsh local government had taken the initiative in suggesting such a review, itself an indicator of a willingness to embrace change in the face of new challenges and expectations. Moreover, Assembly Ministers have made clear that they are looking for radical thinking, without the distraction and cost of re-organisation.

Second, I welcome the broad scope of the Review. It embraces all the organisations that contribute to the network of local services on the ground – local councils, health bodies, schools and colleges, the police and fire services and so on. This provides an opportunity to examine the connections between services, to deliver what research shows is the top priority for the citizen: a clean and safe environment and quality services that tackle problems at source.

The wider UK context is interesting too. The UK Government last year established the Lyons review of the funding of local government, and when my review was announced in July, the expectation was that Lyons would report this autumn, in time for us to take account of his views in our own report due by July 2006.

However, since my team began its work at the end of August the UK Government has announced that the Lyons timescale will be extended and its remit broadened to cover the functions of local government as well. This new timetable seems to me helpful because it means that we can press ahead quickly with the Wales-specific analysis and Lyons will be able to take account of our conclusions in his report.

The Review is part of the Delivering the Connections Action Plan – through which the Welsh Assembly Government is putting the spotlight on how strategy is delivered on the ground, and what needs to be done to make sure services improve. The policy and governance context in England is different from Wales, but the concern with delivery is the same, including the increasing focus on communicating more effectively with people at local level. I’m learning rapidly that the devolved context and geography present a set of challenges and opportunities that are unique to Wales.

We need to establish where we now in terms of the performance and the perception of services in Wales. We need to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the present arrangements. And we need to consider the prospects for improvement, as well as the barriers that need to be tackled. Questions we shall be asking include:

• How should the roles of the relevant local organisations be defined for the future, for example, in health and education, in terms of community leadership, commissioning and service provision?
• What are the mechanisms that can be employed to achieve effective collaboration between local service providers: cross-functional collaboration such as between a local authority and a local health board,
and collaboration to achieve delivery on a larger geographical scale than the local area itself?

• How do we organise service delivery to obtain the appropriate balance between local access and centres of specialised expertise and provision?

• How should funding be arranged to facilitate greater collaboration and joint-working? What is the appropriate response to more limited growth in the available resources?

• Are there re-allocations of functions between different organisations delivering local services which would achieve improved delivery?

• What changes to the political management and accountability of service delivery would assist improvement? What are the appropriate roles for locally elected representatives and what level of local representation, and/or expert skills, are appropriate to different circumstances? What should be the relationship between local elected representatives and appointed bodies?

• What workforce changes are required to underpin the new approaches to service delivery and how best can the workforce be engaged in the process of improvement?

• How best does the Welsh Assembly Government provide leadership in improving local service delivery?

Where it is useful and the data is available we shall be looking at comparisons with England and elsewhere. However, the top priority will be to focus on what is needed to make sure services in Wales are on an improving track, are effectively joined up, efficient, and responsive to the needs of the people.

Time is short for such a wide-ranging review. As a result we have decided to adopt a focused process of discussion with the leaders and managers of public services in Wales. I am supported by a small Review team comprising Dame Gillian Morgan, born in Llwynypia, who is now Chief Executive of the NHS Confederation following a career in both management and public health in England, and Sir Adrian Webb, previously Vice Chancellor of the University of Glamorgan, and now Chair of the Pontypridd and Glamorgan NHS Trust.

Gill and I will aim to contribute with a degree of detachment from the Welsh scene while Adrian will ensure that we are not too detached from reality.

Professor Steve Martin of the Local Government Unit at the Cardiff Business School will be advising us, drawing on his research on performance across the UK.

This is not a commission to review all aspects of the public service infrastructure which would take years. Rather, it aims to be a high level study of the process for measuring and improving performance, including regulation, governance and accountability.

It is too early to predict what the outcomes of the Review will be. My aim will be to provide the Welsh Assembly Government with constructive advice on measures to help the overall public service infrastructure operate effectively for the citizen in Wales, and to promote a debate among stakeholders and the wider community.

Sir Adrian Webb

Dame Gillian Morgan

Executive of the NHS Confederation following a career in both management and public health in England, and Sir Adrian Webb, previously Vice Chancellor of the University of Glamorgan, and now Chair of the Pontypridd and Glamorgan NHS Trust.

Sir Jeremy Beecham is a Labour Councillor with, and former Leader of, Newcastle City Council. He was Chair for many years of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities and of the Local Government Association in England.
Wales is engaged in a process of State-Building, much in the sense used by Francis Fukuyama in his book *State Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century* (2004). We are actively creating the cultures and institutions of governance through which to realise our identity and aspirations. The Richard Commission has recommended the extension of Assembly powers to full law making capability, a clear expression of that long term process which has used the devolution of the late 1990s as a springboard to construct a more profoundly different future.

The political context and constraints are also critical. After the last Assembly election Labour had a majority only because Lord Dafydd Elis Thomas of Plaid Cymru took the neutral post of Presiding Officer. At local level there is no overall control in key authorities such as Cardiff and Swansea, and in the Welsh Local Government Association. In this environment, reform of public services has proceeded under the dampening effect of three inter-relating factors:

- A relatively large and powerful public sector which is in part resistant to change.
- The absence of a political majority with which to ride out the associated turbulence of change.
- The presence of many sources of effective veto including an Opposition in the Assembly which is not a consistent force for public service reform.

The Blair Government’s reforms would have gone nowhere had they depended on building a coalition across political parties to get them through, or even merely on persuading its own MPs to support them. Resistance to change and reform is especially strong when they might involve hospital and service closures capable of generating community opposition able to unseat even popular politicians with good majorities.

Some of the easy complaints about public service reform in Wales need to be seen in this light. There is much that could and should be done to reform. But how to do it is not best suggested by those who fail to appreciate the wider context.
Three layers of understanding about devolution need to be revealed. There is the surface description of devolution as being a ‘good thing’ in general, and part of Government policy. Then there is the critique underneath that, which observes the problems of health waiting and other signs of slow progress, and judges that the Welsh have not been served well by being able to do their own thing. “If the Welsh Office were still in charge, and waiting lists were this bad, there would be an outcry,” is one common observation.

But beneath that again is the understanding that in the medium term devolution induces a fundamental shift in responsibility. London and the Welsh Office can no longer be blamed. And although the Barnett Formula of resource distribution between the home nations is unfavourable to Wales, it is already well established that lack of resources is not an adequate explanation for the poor performance of some of Wales’ public services. It takes time to shake off the habits of (legitimate) grumble about inadequate funding and inappropriate policies from London, and to focus more clearly on what has to be done here in Wales to fix it. But devolution makes that happen.

One genuine measure of an underlying will to reform and improve public services is willingness to articulate the difference between Wales and the UK Government in positive rather than negative terms. The early ‘Clear Red Water’ impulse of the present Assembly Government meant not doing a whole range of things: from Foundation Hospitals, Academy Schools, and tuition fees to naming and shaming, league tables, involvement of the private sector, and intervention. The things it did mean generally entailed more spending on more services rather than change and reform. Examples are school breakfasts for all, and ending prescription charges.

But Wales has now set out its stall for public service reform in a comprehensive and very modern way. In the Assembly Government’s 2004 policy statement Making the Connections the citizen was placed at the centre of public services. The policy argues that Wales is too small to benefit from competition as a means to drive change and improvement. Co-operation and collaboration is the preferred ethos, one which reflects Wales’ communitarian traditions and is more likely to be effective. It draws on contemporary ideas of ‘public value’, which is posed in contrast both to choice as a driver of improvement, and also to private value as the basis for assessing the worth of services or goods.

Public value helps to see beyond the simple equation of money costs and direct service outcomes. Its associated notion of ‘co-production’ between the consumer and the producer of services is especially powerful. Education needs active learners as well as good teachers if it is to be effective, and people taking more responsibility for their own health is an essential complement to what is often described as an ‘illness’ rather than a ‘health’ service. Co-production is seen as a means to maximize public value rather than either consumers or producers being dominant.

This is ambitious, as illustrated by a recent survey undertaken by Marcus Longley and Tony Beddow in the Spring 2005 issue of Agenda. They asked leaders in health and social care and the voluntary sector in Wales which health care system they would work in, if they were able to choose. A relatively high figure of 65 per cent opted for Wales. However, when asked which system they would choose to rely on for the care of a loved one, only 31 per cent chose Wales. So in their roles as producers and as consumers, these self-same individuals have radically different preferences. It would likely be harder still to get producers and consumers more generally to share a vision for health and then implement it.

Whatever the difficulties of implementation Making the Connections is a clear statement of...
difference. Interestingly, ‘public value’ has also struck a chord in the UK Government, and in other bodies. See, for example the Cabinet Office paper Creating Public Value: An Analytical Framework for Public Service Reform, published in 2002, and the BBC statement Building Public Value, published in 2004. For some commentators it offers a sound theoretical basis for ‘third way’ reform, avoiding initiavitivitis through a more considered framework for understanding public services and driving their improvement.

Public value as deployed in Making the Connections is certainly a clear alternative to the Blairite ‘choice and contestability’ agenda. However, in other respects (standards, and the importance of the front line, for instance) it overlaps with Blair’s Four Principles of Public Services Reform, or is at any rate not inconsistent with the English Model, as we should probably now call it.

The acid test will be the application of these ideas in guiding change. And, at least initially, it will be ‘guiding’ rather than ‘driving’ because Making the Connections places responsibility back on producers and consumers to work together to make improvements much as devolution places responsibility on the devolved government to do so. The outcome will be important, too, for England as well as Scotland and Northern Ireland. We now have an emerging test bed of experimentation and genuine difference in how best to improve and change public services given varying circumstances of country, politics, need, and public service ethos.

The big issue will be how to actually motivate people and institutions not only to accept change, but to take responsibility for making it happen. By deciding not to use many of the levers of change being applied in England, Wales has left itself with few to work with.

Money is one lever. That has been used to incentivise change, but it is an expensive way to do it, and will be increasingly less available as public expenditure tightens. User or customer pressure is another. Yet this is as likely to lead to resistance as it is to the promotion of change, especially when users get comparatively little published information about how services are performing compared to one another in Wales, let alone compared to England or elsewhere in the UK.

A third available lever is external regulation and audit. Public services regulators get a big role in helping improvement to happen in Making the Connections. They are seen as giving feedback to policy makers and information to citizens, as well to the audited and inspected bodies. Here too, though, the methods which regulators can use are limited by the context, and the general wariness in Wales about the publication of negative judgments of public services.

This wariness is often attributed to a general ‘cosiness’, and to an apologism born of everyone knowing each other too well, and too long. There may be something in that, but here too there is a more profound reason in the State-Building process described by Fukuyama in which Wales is engaged. Public services constitute a very large proportion of the Assembly’s devolved responsibilities, and criticism of Welsh public services feels in some quarters like criticism of devolution itself, and generates defensiveness.

Change and reform of public services needs to be energized and motivated in order to succeed. As Making the Connections moves from an initial policy statement to being the guiding and, if necessary, driving force for change, there is a need to grasp some of the contradictions between State-Building and Public Service Reform. Devolution is now sufficiently well established, and in a remarkably short space of time, that it ought to be easier to acknowledge the weaknesses and problems of Welsh public service more publicly, despite the tendency of the Welsh media to crowd out a fuller debate through sensationalist coverage.

That should help to forge the motivation and capacity to make change happen. It should also be helped by greater citizen understanding of what is wrong and what the price will be in the medium to long term of not changing, despite the pain of doing so. Beyond that, politicians and senior managers in the Assembly, and in health and local government, need to share responsibility for engaging and leading civil society in meeting the challenges of current problems of both efficiency and effectiveness, and the future possibilities created by technology and by fully citizen-centric public services.

In recent months the Welsh Assembly Government has moved decisively to re-structure its major Sponsored Bodies and bring them within the Assembly Government itself, and has overridden the concerns of others to do so. The same approach would not work in either health or local government for legal and political reasons. It needs active mobilization of a positive consensus for change, and a shared commitment that it is a national priority to do so. Indeed, seeing through the change and reform of public services is a critical next step in that very process of State-Building which risks inhibiting it.
untangling the labyrinth

According to the First Minister, the Assembly Government prides itself on being “committed to being one of the most open, accessible and egalitarian governments in the world.”

However, one element that continually undermines any genuine communication between the Assembly and its citizens is the deficiency that exists in Wales’s communication apparatus. While socio-economic problems can be blamed for the absence of a strong Welsh print media, one communication tool that firmly exists in the control of the Assembly and its Government is the National Assembly for Wales Website.

However, as one who uses the site daily for me it has become a labyrinth of gardens and dead ends. When searching for information on a particular issue or a recently published report, one is often faced with a search engine that cannot find the most simple of documents. Instead it offers a host of nameless files dating back no further into the past than 2002.

On the other hand, there are times when I have been amazed at the sheer helpfulness of some areas on the website. More often than not, however, these appear as a complete accident while one is looking for more urgent information, and is usually Googled into. Like gardens in a labyrinth, such areas often exist in complete isolation from their surroundings. They are reached by accident rather than deliberate means.

There is a sense that the website’s complexity reflects the Welsh constitutional arrangements themselves. The original site was launched in 1999 and was built around the corporate body status of the Assembly. That is to say, at that stage it had to work for an institution in which the legislature and executive were entangled one with the other. Since then they have grown almost completely apart. No website created at the outset could have foreseen how rapidly this would take place.

As the Assembly developed over the years the website itself had to be continually updated. And because the powers of the Assembly are always in flux together with constant changes to the Assembly’s internal organisational structure, the website has inevitably become a labyrinth.

In February 2002 Assembly Members voted for the “clearest separation between the Government and the Assembly”. The result was the creation of the Welsh Assembly Government (the executive arm), and somewhat later the emergence of the Welsh Parliamentary Service located in the Presiding Office (the legislature arm). This de facto separation of powers made two Assemblys arms on one website untenable in the long-run.

Consequently, on 1 April 2006 two new Assembly websites will be launched. There will be a site for the Welsh Assembly Government and a separate site for the National Assembly for Wales. For a Welsh electorate in Wales that is often confused by the different responsibilities of the National Assembly of Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government, the new sites promise a much needed clarity. The existing site will cease to exist although the new sites will allow access to archived information since the inception of the National Assembly in 1999.

Following the merger of the Welsh Development Agency, Wales Tourist
Board and ELWa into their sponsor Assembly Government departments, their individual agency sites will cease to exist and their contents absorbed into the new Assembly Government site. As a result there will be great potential for creating a clearer, more holistic picture of Assembly Government policy and announcements. On the other hand, information may be centralised under the Assembly Government website at the expense of plurality of the differing research sources and sites of information that exist at the moment.

What is most encouraging, however, is that foremost in the minds of the web designers are the principles of user-centred design. While the existing Assembly website tends to reflect the complexity of the internal organisational structure of the institution, the new websites will look at the needs of the users. It is noteworthy that the web designers have interviewed frequent users of the website to take their opinion and ideas into account.

Having spent time recently in Scotland using the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive websites, one can see how the potential new Assembly websites might look, if the present web designers stick to the principle of user-centred design. Due to the nature of the Scottish devolution settlement, the Scottish Parliament has always had two separate websites, one for the Scottish Executive and the other for the Scottish Parliament itself. From the outset, therefore, there has existed a clear demarcation of what information is put on which website. Undoubtedly, this has helped inform Scottish citizenry of the clear separation between the Parliament's executive and legislature.

The user friendly nature of both the Scottish Parliament website and Scottish Executive website is highly commendable. From the very front pages, information is offered on the latest news, press releases and policy announcements. With clear titling and through the use of logos and colourful pictures, the sites are visually as well as intellectually pleasing.

Take the Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) area on the Scottish Parliament website as an example. As well as a quick introduction to the MSPs, the page allows a user to analyse them by region, gender, which are members of the executive, parties spokespersons, as well as their first speeches. At another part of the website, each member has a page with their office contact details, constituency details, picture and a list of key staff of the MSP in question.

**websites of the devolved institutions**

- National Assembly for Wales www.wales.gov.uk
- Scottish Parliament www.scottish.parliament.uk
- Scottish Executive www.scotland.gov.uk
- Northern Ireland Assembly www.niassembly.gov.uk
- London Assembly www.london.gov.uk

The websites’ accessibility is increased further by the translation of contact details and key information on the site into an array of different languages, from Arabic to British Sign Language.

While proposals for e-voting are still in their infancy in Wales, the potential of the new Assembly Websites as tools to increase the interaction between the Welsh electorate and the Assembly remains vast.

Following a demonstration of e-democracy discussion forums by the Scottish Parliament to the Assembly’s Panel of Chairs Committee in November 2004, numerous points of interest were raised. The Committee advised the project group to look into the possibilities of e-consultations, in which evidence and comments could be given electronically, thereby facilitating wider debate. At the same time the Committee raised concerns that e-consultations could dilute the consultations, if in-depth responses from key contributors were not received.

One interesting tool, piloted in Scotland and now being looked at by other European Union countries, is e-petitioning. The e-petition allows a petition to be hosted on the Parliament’s website for an agreed period, providing an opportunity to attract a much wider audience for the petition, and allowing the petition to gather more support, web links, and research information. Each e-petition has its own discussion forum, where visitors and supporters can discuss and debate the petition on-line.

When the agreed period for hosting a petition on-line ends, it is then formally submitted to the Public Petitions Committee for consideration in the usual way. What the government then does with the petition, which department it is sent to, and which experts consulted, are published on the website along with any eventual changes to actual legislation.

The web designers of the new Assembly sites should consider piloting a similar scheme for the Welsh Assembly. Not only would it attract users to the new sites, including some who might otherwise find the sites overly complex and dull, but it would also strengthen dialogue between the Assembly and the Welsh citizenry. E-petitioning could also help attract groups that institutions like the National Assembly find hard to reach, in particular the young. Web-based discussion forums can help facilitate political engagement.

Cyber space may be one field, where such engagement can be won by means of political blogs, user-friendly website design, e-petitioning and e-consultations.

- Meilyr Ceredig works as a Political Consultant for Grayling Wales meilyr.ceredig@wa.grayling.com

winter 2005 / 06
Over forty years ago, Emrys Bowen, in his presidential address to the Institute of British Geographers, explored the geographical extent of Wales. Drawing on a variety of cultural and more physical themes, his paper illustrated the different ways in which one could think about the geography of Wales. At one level, Wales was a straightforward political entity or functional region. This is the Wales that appears on political maps.

But in another important context, Wales was constituted as a ‘pays’ or a region characterized by specific physical or cultural endowments. The main signifier of the Welsh pays or culture region for Bowen was the Welsh language. In this sense, it was possible to think of another geography to Wales, one which did not necessarily bear much relation to the political boundaries of the country. Key here was the region located in the north and west of the country, one where the Welsh language was spoken most widely and one which was characterised by a ‘Welsh way of life’. This region is most popularly represented through two terms: the Welsh heartland or, alternatively, ‘Y Fro Gymraeg’. At one level, Bowen’s work examined the territorial extent of Wales as a nation and culture region but, by implication, it also had much to say concerning the production of real and imagined borders within Wales.

More recently, political debate has raised questions about the ‘true’ extent of the Welsh culture region, linguistic nation or of its ‘heartland’ areas. Various organizations in the post-devolution period have sought to narrate different kinds of borders within Wales. Key to this whole debate was the formation in 2001 of the Welsh language pressure group Cymuned. As has been documented previously in this journal, the 2001 language debates triggered various tensions between Cymuned, Cymdeithas yr Iaith, Plaid Cymru and the Labour Party in Wales. The recent political debate concerning the role of the Welsh language...
Politics and policy

Politics and policy has also had territorial implications: key questions have centred on the ‘true’ geography of the Welsh linguistic nation or culture region. Differing narratives concerning the geography of the Welsh nation, we maintain, have unfolded in a number of contexts:

- Conflicting interpretations of the geographical extent of the Welsh heartland.
- Arguments made by various groups concerning the relationship that should exist between the Welsh heartland and the rest of Wales.
- The implications of these various debates within Welsh civil society for the governance of language within Wales.

Although much academic work has alluded to the existence of a so-called ‘Fro Gymraeg’ or Welsh-speaking heartland, there has been little agreement concerning its exact geographical extent. Our interviews with actors in various Welsh linguistic and political organizations indicate a serious attempt to grapple with the difficult process of defining the extent and borders of the Welsh heartland. This is especially true of Cymuned, which talks of ‘several possible models’ for the definition of the Welsh heartland.

The preferred model at the moment is for two different levels of Welsh heartland (see Figure 1). Those areas where over a half of the population speak Welsh would constitute a core area while the remaining heartland would consist of peripheral areas in which over a third of the population spoke Welsh. This two-tier model is significant, we argue, since it recognises that the Welsh heartland is not a homogeneous territory in which the Welsh acts as the sole or, in some cases, even the main means of communication.

This admission demonstrates a level of maturity on the part of some members of Cymuned and a recognition of the variegated character of the heartland. The dangers in adopting this plural way of thinking about the Welsh heartland were also recognised by the organisation. In 2004 Cymuned’s annual conference discussed the terminology they should use when referring to the Welsh heartland. Was it the term ‘Fro Gymraeg’ or ‘Y Broydd Cymraeg’ in the plural which they favoured? In the end a decisive vote favoured the term ‘Y Fro Gymraeg’. The political need to portray a united and potentially homogeneous Welsh heartland took precedence in this case over a more honest admission of the existence of linguistic variation within the north and west of Wales.

Proposals, we argue, would be fraught with practical difficulties, not least because of the uncertainties related to defining the territorial extent of the heartland.

In the 2001-04 period, a major bone of contention between Cymuned, on the one hand, and Cymdeithas yr Iaith and Plaid Cymru on the other, concerned the relationship that should exist between the heartland and the rest of Wales. The debate has exposed clear strains between the ‘right’ and ‘left’ wings of post-devolution Welsh nationalism. One avowed student socialist, active both within Cymdeithas and Plaid Cymru, argued that it was unfortunate “when people compartmentalise Wales, and say that this is a more Welsh area, and this area isn’t”. One of Plaid Cymru’s most prominent figures told us that some of Cymuned’s rhetoric had been “... an insult towards people who were restoring the Welsh language in the valleys”. As such, left-leaning nationalists argued that there were many different ways of being Welsh within Wales, and that an over-emphasis on the Welsh heartland could be detrimental both for the Welsh language movement and Welsh nationalism in general.
There is no doubt that Cymuned is worried about these accusations relating to its territorial and linguistic exclusivity. One Cymuned member discussed the campaigns in support of minority rights for Native Americans in the United States as a way of justifying Cymuned's political tactics. In the North American example, campaigners were said to focus in exclusively on the situation as it pertained in one geographical location and did not become embroiled with federal politics. In the same way, Cymuned was justified in focusing on the particular problems facing communities in the Welsh-speaking heartland and did not need to concern itself with language politics at the Welsh scale (see Figure 2). Whether one agrees with this sentiment or not, it illustrates an attempt on Cymuned's part to reflect on the moral justification for their political stance.

Cymuned have also tried to think about the relationship between the Welsh heartland and the rest of Wales in more positive ways. They have recently examined the potential of including a third category of Welsh heartland. This class would include those areas where the percentage of young Welsh speakers has risen considerably over recent years. The best example of this, according to one respondent, would be Pontypridd where approximately one third of young people between the ages of three and eighteen spoke Welsh according to the 2001 census. At one level, the extension of the heartland into the south Wales valleys would seem to dilute the meaning of the term but it would, at least, help to expand Cymuned's definition of the Welsh linguistic nation, both in terms of the people and the geographical locations to which it applies.

These debates may well have been only an interesting, yet insignificant, aspect of language politics in a post-devolution Wales. They were not for the fact that they have begun to affect the policies and strategies applied to the Welsh language within governmental circles. Since 2001, it would be fair to say that Cymuned has succeeded in placing the future of the language as a community language within the Welsh heartland on the political agenda. A case in point is faith Pambw, the Welsh Assembly Government's action plan for the Welsh language and its reference to the need to secure the continuation of Welsh as a community language within the heartland.

One Cymuned spokesperson viewed this inclusion as something that derived directly from the “general atmosphere that Cymuned created in 2001 and 2002”. It is, indeed, striking to note the way in which various language policy documents published since devolution have begun to narrate new borders and territories within Wales. There now exists a set of narratives, in the field of economic development, housing and planning in particular, that are beginning to ‘institutionalise’ the existence of new linguistic borders within Wales (see, for instance, Dyfodol Ddyweithogaeth: Ein Hiaith: Ein Dyfodol/A Bilingual Future and Ein Hiaith: Ein Dyfodol/Our Language: Its Future). A key consideration within these strategies and policies is the need to deal with the preservation of Welsh as a community language within the so-called heartland.

In addition to this one form of governmental narration of new borders within Wales, there is also a further set of language policies that seek to promote the use of the Welsh language throughout the whole of Wales – the most notable being the Language Act of 1993. This Act enabled the Welsh language to be considered as a language of equal status to English within the public sphere throughout the whole of Wales. There is, of course, the potential for some tension between these two priorities. At one level, there is a clear emphasis on developing a national policy framework that can lead to an increased status for the Welsh language throughout Wales. At the same time, there is specific regard paid to those Welsh-speaking communities – within the ‘Fro Gymraeg’ – that require special attention. The danger is that these communities will accrue benefits from policies and strategies that might place them in a relatively favourable position compared to other deprived (and sometimes Welsh-speaking) communities lying outside the formal heartland area. There is no doubt that such a development could lead to a certain divisiveness within Welsh civil society and even among the Welsh-speaking populations of various parts of Wales.

In summary, our research is highlighting how borders and territories – real and/or perceived – can become the object of contestation between different groups with different political and cultural priorities. The geographies of these contested narratives are significant in that they have impacted on the evolution of language policy within the nascent National Assembly for Wales. It is clear that unofficial narratives concerning borders and territories, which are based in civil society, do not exist in isolation from more official state-based narratives. There is a potential for considerable official and unofficial dialogue between the two.

We began our article by revisiting Bowen’s famous work and we believe it important to revisit it in the light of the empirical discussion. Bowen’s main aim was to determine the actual location of the ‘land of the Welsh’. It would be difficult to ask, let alone answer, such a politically-loaded question with regard to contemporary Wales. The most satisfactory answer, we would argue, is that the ‘land of the Welsh’ is located in those places where individuals, groups and organizations are able to successfully narrate its location.

It is significant, and to some extent surprising, that certain groups in post-devolution Wales have been able in a relatively short period of time to make acceptable – in public and political circles – the existence of a Welsh culture region, and of the need to preserve it at all costs. The danger is that such sentiments become accepted more generally as a reflection of the ‘true’ or ‘real’ location of the Welsh nation. This could lead to unwelcome divisions within the Welsh population and exacerbate the linguistic differences that exist at present.

Rhys Jones is a Senior Lecturer and Carwyn Fowler a Teaching Fellow at the Institute of Geography and Earth Sciences, University of Wales, Aberystwyth.
Estonian links

Wiard Sterk reports on a visit to Tallinn

Estonia is a Country that has barely had 20 years of independence in its long history and most of these were in the early part of the 20th Century, just between a departure of Czarist Russians and the return of the Soviet Russians. Controversially they also experienced a brief moment of ‘liberation’ when Hitler’s army drove the Russians out again. As a result there is little mention of the years between 1941 and 1945 in the Museum of Occupation. After World War II the Russians came back and many are still there, although their status has dramatically changed.

Until the secession of the Baltic States from Russia and the start of their second period of independence at the end of the 20th century, Russians dominated political and administrative life in the country. Today they drive the taxis, clean the streets and occupy the lower skilled jobs in manufacturing. They live in ghettos and enclaves, and have only immigrant status as non-EU citizens that severely limits their rights. And because they have been educated in Russian schools in the Russian language, they are in practice mostly excluded them from the Estonian higher education system.

However, I did not go to Tallinn to explore the plight of the still sizable Russian population. I had a heavy schedule of appointments with artists and architects, eagerly assembled by my special envoy, a native of Wales, who also happens to be my eldest daughter on a Leonardo exchange following the completion of her Art History Degree. She was there to gain work experience through a placement in one of Tallinn’s contemporary art galleries. I was there to investigate potential partners for collaboration in the next Urban Legacies conference, a biennial event that in May 2004 was organised by CBAT The Arts and Regeneration Agency. Its aim is to explore creative and collaborative practice in the development and regeneration of the built environment.

However, my first exploration was at the Barbican in London, where I met with Andres Kurg, co-editor of Tallinna Juht: A User’s Guide to Tallinn and a PhD student at Bartlett College. The book was a response to the many tourist guides (both flesh and blood as well as in printed form) that emerged after
europe

independence and Western Europe's discovery of Tallinn as a City Break destination, soon to be followed by budget airline routes and stag parties. The book is a selection of personal essays by architects and artists who grew up in Tallinn. They describe its districts, and provide and excellent insight into the city's recent history and transformation.

Tallinn has a very well preserved historical centre, with an almost fully intact medieval city walls. A Russian air attack caused some destruction and casualties, but much survived. The cobbled streets, historical buildings and lack of traffic make for a picturesque destination, a sense of the old Baltic Hansa trading port. However, outside the walls of this outdoor museum is another story of urban development, from the old timber houses in Kalamaja, interspersed with the odd apple orchard, to the large crumbling apartment blocks in Lasnamäe so typical of another historical era, the Socialist Soviet Republic of Estonia. Mostly occupied by low paid Russians, it contains all the social and infrastructure problems Britain faces in its dilapidated late 1960s housing estates.

There are other sights familiar to us: a glass and steel down town centre, full of hotels, banks and high street shops (many of which I instantly recognise); out of town retail centres with oversized advertising hoardings; and acres of redundant industrial buildings and dockland brownfield sites. A strategy document setting out the city's vision for the next 20 years, states: “...the city's seaside areas are unused resources – Tallinn's waterfront must primarily be developed into recreational, cultural-economic (sic) and ecological zones.”

These are words a Cardifffian (or Liverpudlian, Geordie or even Barcelonan) would instantly recognise. The Estonians have caught up very quickly with Western Europe. Their entry into the EU was no more than a formality, and they will no doubt sign up for the Euro long before Britain. Their focus has always been towards the west, to Swedes and in particular the Finns.

Estonian is not a Slavic language, as is the one spoken by their neighbours in Latvia and Russia, but closely related to Finnish. It is the geographical rather than demographical nature of language that I explored further with Professor Jüri Soolop, Dean of the Faculty of Architecture, a discussion which suggests the notion of 'language as place'. He quoted the research of his colleague Richard Villems at Tartu University, who has investigated the relationship between language and genetic distribution.

Language, it appears, does not always follow people in their migration patterns and can be left behind by those moving away, to be adopted by those moving in. This suggests its political as well as cultural significance, and that environment – or place – and language can have a close connection. This has a strong resonance for a displaced Hollander of Frisian descent like myself, as with many first or second generation immigrants, be they Russian in Estonia, Pakistani in Bradford or Welsh in Patagonia.

The rest of our conversation steered via the lack of a tradition of civic statuary in Estonia (the pagan and protestant conditions favoured a decorative approach rather than monumental), to the Soviet and German influences on city planning pre-independence. These have been replaced by the adoption of Scandinavian planning principles post-independence, and the lack of municipally owned spaces. Land is either privately owned or state owned, the latter left over from the Soviet days, when all land was state owned. Following independence much was transferred back to private ownership on the basis of claims by relatives of those whose land was dispossessed during Russian occupation. However, many landowners are the descendants of those who left and not resident in Estonia. This makes city planning complex.

On the edge of town are Russian apartment blocks – unfriendly buildings symbolising the 20th Century occupation.

winter 2005 / 06
Karin Hallas-Murula, is the Director of the Museum of Architecture in Tallinn. The Museum is housed in an old salt store at the harbour front, not far from the departure point of the many ferries to Sweden, Finland and Latvia. Karin’s office is at the highest point, a mezzanine in the apex of the roof and full of large architectural models.

We argued over the merits of formality over concept in architecture in relation to the Venice Architecture Biennale of 2004, where I was excited by how certain national pavilions (notably Belgium, France and Russia) explored notions of conflict and debate in urban development and regeneration. Karin felt that the biennale should be primarily about practice, and display the latest projects by the nations’ best architects.

At Schiphol, while boarding for the flight back to Cardiff, my boarding card was rejected, which prompted the lady at the desk to cheerfully cry “upgrade!” My brief moment of elation at the first upgrade in my entire air travelling history was soon dampened when I was sent back to the Fokker 70 I had left 30 minutes before. I was reminded that the seats throughout this plane are the same and that all it means is that I get a salmon bagel instead of a cheese sandwich and a free quarter bottle of wine, which nevertheless I smugly scoffed in the barely 30 minutes between take off and descent.

One of my final meetings was with Dr Erik Terk, Director of the Estonian Institute of Future Studies and one of the authors of the Tallinn Strategy. I met Dr Terk some years ago in Cardiff at a seminar organised by the IWA. This convinced me of the common issues that should be explored between Wales and Estonia. The Institute undertakes various research tasks to support policy development of local, regional and national level and we agreed to maintain contact in relation to the forthcoming conference.


---

*Wiard Sterk is Director of CBAT, the Arts and Regeneration Agency.*
Elinor Bennett explains how her musical exploration of Estonia broke the language barrier

In 1990 many thousands of people held hands in a human chain that linked the capital cities of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, whilst they sang a freedom song. It was an extraordinary event and became known as the ‘Singing Revolution’. So it was natural that when we began thinking how to celebrate the musical dimension of European Enlargement we should turn to that experience.

This initiative is part of the IWA-led Creu Cyfle Cultural Explosion project that is promoting cultural understanding between Wales and the new member states. Canolfan Gerdd William Mathias Music Centre resolved to engage a leading composer from one of the Baltic States to write a new work based on the Freedom Song. It will be performed by children and young people from Wales at a Gala Concert in Caernarfon in February 2006.

Accordingly, earlier this year I set about finding a composer from Estonia who would be willing to compose a new work for young people in Wales, based on a song that had been sung during the Singing Revolution. Estonia was chosen because of its many similarities with Wales, not least that it is also called ‘The Land of Song’. First of all, however, I had to find the song and it was not as easy as I thought it would be.

I remembered that some years ago, a leading young composer from Estonia had visited the Vale of Glamorgan Music Festival, during my period as Chair of the Festival. I learnt from John Metcalf, the founder and Director, that the composer in question was Urmis Sisask. Contact with the Estonian Government eventually provided his telephone number. Alas, I did not have much joy. All I could say was “Is that Urmis Sisask, please?” to which he replied “Ia!” Sadly that was the end of the conversation. I had no Estonian, German or Russian, and he could not speak Welsh, English or French. I was totally stuck for words, and had to put the phone down without uttering another syllable.

At the same time I needed to find the song as well as be able to have a meaningful conversation with the composer. I asked many people with contacts in the Baltic States for their help, and I had many good leads. I searched the internet, and found many, many pages about the wealth of music in Estonia, and much about the Singing Revolution. But the song remained still elusive.

One day Meic Llywelyn, Director of Voluntary Arts Wales, visited Canolfan Gerdd William Mathias, and told me about a young Estonian musician Sille Ilves who lives and works in Wales. She is a member of the Welsh Estonian husband and wife group, Sild, who also work with the well-known Welsh Crwth player Cass Meurig.

In this way I got in touch with Sille who could immediately sing Get Free, Baltic Sea over the telephone. I was delighted. I wrote down the notes of the song note by note over the telephone there and then, and Sille sent the words on to me in Estonian, together with a rough translation into English. The next step was to secure a translation into Welsh, and this was done by Dr Gwyn Thomas, Professor Emeritus of Welsh in the University in Bangor. The song was now ready for a preview performance during the ‘Cymry a’r Byd’ ceremony during the National Eisteddfod last August by children from the four primary schools in Caernarfon.

Sille lives then contacted Urmis Sisask and translated letters from me asking him...
to compose a new work based on this song. Initially he was reluctant, replying that he is not an arranger of little ‘ditties’, but a serious and original composer. I assured him that I understood this very well, and that what I wanted to have was an exciting new, original work for a brass ensemble, choir of harps, and a children’s chorus, based on the song ‘Get Free, Baltic Sea’. I had *Finlandia* in mind, Sibelius’s famous work which develops many ideas and culminates in the tune that we all know so well.

Still not sure that he should take on the job, Sisask said that he would not be able to finish the piece in time. But I was so determined to have his music that I agreed to postpone the delivery date until the end of October. The work is now complete and rehearsals for the first performance are going ahead.

The two-part choir, made up of children from Caernarfon and the surrounding area, is trained by Manon Llwyd. Twelve harpists from Canolfan Gerdd William Mathias, and nine members of the Gwynedd and Môn Youth Brass Band organised by the William Mathias Schools Music Service will perform this brand new work, at the gala concert at Galeri Caernarfon, on 19 February 2006. Urmis Sisask will be present. Also taking part will be Doniau Cudd (Hidden Talents), a group of people who have learning disabilities, under the direction of Arfon Wyn.

The whole project has educational on many levels. Through this co-operation we in Wales will be able to form deeper links with our new friends in the other ‘Land of Song’, Estonia, that hopefully will lead to many new and exciting musical experiences. I also hope that through this co-operation, we can play a part in fostering more understanding between the people of Wales and Estonia to our mutual benefit.

Elinor Bennett rehearsing the 'Freedom Song' with children from Caernarfon at the William Mathias Music Centre.
When the Black Environment Network began its work in south Wales seven years ago we discovered that all of the ethnic groups we reached out to had never been approached by an environmental organisation. Things have certainly changed. We have now built up a network of 684 environmental organisations and ethnic groups in south Wales.

Many ethnic groups live in some of the worst environments in the inner cities. The expertise, services and resources of the environmental sector are extensive but they have not had access to them. The Black Environment Network was set up to help ethnic groups benefit from what is on offer and in turn make their contribution. The Network uses the word ‘Black’ symbolically, recognising that black communities are the most visible of all ethnic groups. We work with black, white and other ethnic minority communities.

The Network’s headquarters is in Llanberis, with project offices in Swansea, Manchester, Birmingham, and Glasgow. We are a UK-wide organisation, though based in Llanberis. The organisation started in 1987 and now has 18 years of experience of opening up the environment sector to ethnic communities.

Our latest theme of engagement is environmental heritage. The Network works imaginatively, enabling excitement and enjoyment to motivate progress. Through years of neglect, many environmental concerns do not appear on the agenda of ethnic communities. Many themes can initially be experienced as remote and irrelevant by ethnic communities. A vital part of our work involves nurturing ethnic groups to see how engaging with the environment can make a significant impact on their lives, and how they can also make a culturally specific contribution to the range of mainstream activities on their own terms. It is about being able to frame and re-frame the environmental agenda on their own terms.

We are uniquely positioned to be a catalyst for change. Rather than work directly with ethnic groups we stimulate their involvement with other environmental organisations. The aim is to put such ethnic involvement where it belongs, as a mainstream activity. In all of this our ultimate measure of success is to do ourselves out of a job.

Social inclusion is now a high priority for government, and organisations are now legally required to address it. Our work has been so successful because we work in a non-confrontational ways in an area that is seen by many organisations as a minefield. We achieve our aims through:

• Encouraging and collaborating with mainstream organisations, supporting them to gain the understanding and skills to work effectively with ethnic groups.
• Facilitating contact, bringing mainstream organisations and ethnic communities together.
• Influencing policy at all levels through sitting on statutory and voluntary sector advisory committees.
• Consistently highlighting the value of ethnic participation and representation at key conferences and public events.
• Promoting ethnic involvement on the ground through projects to nurture interest and support action.
In Wales the Black Environment Network’s work started in the south where most ethnic groups live, in the main cities. We look forward to the challenge of attending to the sparse ethnic population of north Wales as part of the GWLAD project, led by Bangor University and funded by the European Commission Social Fund’s EQUAL project, to address access to informal learning and employment in the environmental and heritage sectors.

- Judy Ling Wong is Director of the Black Environment Network. Further information can be accessed on www.ben-network.org.uk
ruth williams, john pritchard and neil caldwell advocate investing in heritage and the environment

the country house Llanerchaeron, near Aberaeron in Ceredigion, is a classic example of a small Welsh gentry estate. It is important for its architecture, landscape setting, natural and social history and surviving completeness as a representation of rural life in west Wales. However, the National Trust’s decision to take on the estate in the late 1980s was a difficult one since it was dilapidated, did not come with an endowment and would cost millions to restore and open to the public. A further consideration was its location, far from any significant catchment of visitors to generate income.

However, an economic impact study undertaken in the past year has shown that the decision to take the estate on has resulted in a significant boost to the local economy, quite apart from the cultural and aesthetic value in maintaining a unique national asset.

The study, the first of its kind to be carried out on a National Trust property, developed an economic impact methodology capable of capturing and measuring the distinctive and diverse impacts of the Trust’s activities. The customary impact study approach needed to be adapted to respond to some complex settings and fragmentary sources of information. The local impact area was defined as within 25 miles of the estate, and financial analysis was considered in cash terms.

The social impact assessment was achieved through questionnaires and interviews with members of target groups including key opinion-formers in the local community, businesses that had been contracted to work on the restoration of the estate, businesses supplying goods and services, members of the public enjoying a visit to the property, and the Trust’s staff and the volunteers.
Initial meagre resources were enhanced by a band of enthusiastic local volunteers who played a crucial role during the early years. Now known as the Llanerchaeron Volunteers, they number more than 250 today, and they undertake a wide range of tasks. In 1995 Llanerchaeron got its first full-time property manager, and he now heads a team of 20 full-time and part-time staff.

A critical breakthrough in the restoration programme came in 1997-8 with the securing of two key grants for the sensitive restoration of the mansion and estate buildings. The Heritage Lottery Fund awarded £2million and the Welsh Assembly Government awarded £1.5million from European Objective 5b and Objective 1 funds and from Cadw. Additional support has been provided by the Wales Tourist Board via their Adfywio programme and by Ceredigion County Council via their Local Regeneration Fund. The major programme of work commenced in October 1999.

For the socio-economic study the consultants identified three stages for the impact analysis:


The economic impact of the Trust's work during the pre-restoration period is summarised as small but not insignificant where it was linked to employment and volunteer work (see Table 1)

However, during the main project restoration period, between 2000-02 the study found:

- There was substantial local economic contribution by the Trust to the Aberaeron area.
- 103 local businesses benefited significantly in financial terms – 70 per cent of a sample reported positive changes in their turnover, an increase in operating profit and greater market opportunities. The Trust's efforts to channel the benefits locally broadly succeeded.
- Local businesses benefited in terms of the skills they developed through working on a high quality heritage restoration project.

During the post-restoration project period:

- The benefits shifted away from contractors towards suppliers, local traders and the community in terms of enhanced, tourist trade, employment, income and community/social provision.
- 130 businesses have been used indicating a large number of small contracts and/or purchases.
- The scale of volunteering is well in excess of its pre-project level with over 170 people now involved on the estate, representing a highly qualified workforce.

When the property fully opened it generated immediate and widespread public interest from the local area and further afield, with over 34,000 visitors which was well above target.

In summary, substantial economic impact was created locally through the endeavours of the Trust. More than £3.5 million in gross income flowed into this local economy between 1997 and 2004 which can be directly attributed to the Trust's activity, especially its large investment programme thanks to the support of Heritage Lottery Fund and Objective 1 grants.
This study shows the extent to which these investments have contributed to a permanent change in income locally. The total net income effect of the refurbishment of the Llanerchaeron Estate is of the order of £1.94 million, which is a very substantial local investment. In terms of social impacts, those questioned felt that the restoration had:

- Put the area on the map.
- Increased visitor numbers.
- Brought in a different type of high-spending tourist.
- Reinforced the council’s strategy of raising quality, promoting niche activities and extending the season.

After some initial scepticism, many whose livelihoods depend on tourism have enthusiastically welcomed the development. Local residents are increasingly valuing:

- The Trust’s decision to acquire and restore a property long-lost from public view.
- A rare and fascinating glimpse into Ceredigion’s rich social history.
- A new educational and community resource.

The study shows how the Trust has used the investment to create a facility that has the potential to create significant, sustainable socio-economic impacts locally. The initial grant based investment has been replaced by a substantial increase in the volume of visitors spending in the area, which is likely to deliver even wider social and economic impacts in the future. The challenge now is to keep the momentum going. With careful management it should succeed, particularly by reinforcing its integration with the community.

- Ruth Williams is Wales Policy Manager, The National Trust Wales, John Pritchard is an Economist with KPMG Wales, and Dr Neil Caldwell is a community and environmental consultant. A copy of the report on which this article is based is available from the National Trust Wales office in Cardiff, Telephone 029 2046 2281.
When you live with a long-term illness you tend to feel excluded and you lose confidence. I have struggled with back problems since the age of 14. Thirty-one years ago I had an exploratory operation to see what the problem was. At that time there were no scanners. Unfortunately the operation caused more problems than it resolved. By now I have chronic arthritis in my spine and in addition I have bouts of extreme exhaustion and pain all over my body – Fibromyalgia.

Over the years I have found that the frustration of not being able to do what I want when I want a real hurdle. Any additional stress in my life caused me to have even more pain and at times I felt very low indeed. Everyone with a chronic condition needs support so it was with enormous relief that I discovered the Expert Patients Programme (EPP) and took part won a place on one of its courses in March 2004.

The Programme’s courses are for people experiencing any long-term health condition, including arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, asthma, MS, mental health problems and liver disease. Courses are run by volunteer tutors who themselves have experience of living with a chronic condition. Courses are free of charge and involve six weekly sessions of two-and-a-half hours in a variety of community venues. over six weeks. People who have attended the courses say that they feel more confident and Expert patients are able to take more control over their health on a day to day basis by understanding and managing their conditions, leading to an improved quality of life.

Those attending a course explore a range of self-management techniques such as relaxation skills, setting goals, planning for the future and learn how to talk about their illness to others, including their GP. The aim is to get you and the people around you to understand your needs better. Better breathing, managing pain, exercise tips, the benefits of a healthy diet, and dealing with stress, depression and low self-image all form part of the Programme. Expert patients have gained more control of their lives by:

- Managing their condition and its treatment in partnership with health care professionals.
- Communicating effectively with professionals.
- Being realistic about the impact of their disease on themselves and their family.
- Using their skills and knowledge to lead full lives.
### Wales expert patient programme co-ordinators so far in post

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglesey and Conwy</td>
<td>Melanie Williams</td>
<td>Telephone: 01286 674236 Email: <a href="mailto:melanied.williams@gwyneddllhb.wales.nhs.uk">melanied.williams@gwyneddllhb.wales.nhs.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwynedd /North Wales</td>
<td>Michelle Rigby</td>
<td>Telephone: 01286 674236 Email: <a href="mailto:michelle.rigby@gwyneddllhb.wales.nhs.uk">michelle.rigby@gwyneddllhb.wales.nhs.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swansea, Carmarthen and Pembrokeshire</td>
<td>Claire Norman and Caroline Davies</td>
<td>Telephone: 01792 784800 Email: <a href="mailto:claire.norman@swanseallhb.wales.nhs.uk">claire.norman@swanseallhb.wales.nhs.uk</a> <a href="mailto:caroline.davies@swanseallhb.wales.nhs.uk">caroline.davies@swanseallhb.wales.nhs.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neath and Port Talbot</td>
<td>Sue Evans and Keith Walters</td>
<td>Telephone: 01792 326526 Email: <a href="mailto:sue.evans@neathporttalbotllhb.wales.nhs.uk">sue.evans@neathporttalbotllhb.wales.nhs.uk</a> <a href="mailto:keith.walters@remploy.co.uk">keith.walters@remploy.co.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiff and the Vale</td>
<td>Carol Young</td>
<td>Telephone: 029 2035 0600 Email: <a href="mailto:carol.young@valeoglamborganlhb.wales.nhs.uk">carol.young@valeoglamborganlhb.wales.nhs.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monmouth and Torfaen</td>
<td>Sarah McCallum</td>
<td>Telephone: 01291 672352 Email: <a href="mailto:sarah.maccallum@gavowales.org.uk">sarah.maccallum@gavowales.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powys, Sandison and Davies</td>
<td></td>
<td>Telephone: 01874 711661 Email: eppian.sandison @powysllhb.wales.nhs.uk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaenau Gwent</td>
<td>Sue Arnold</td>
<td>Telephone: 01291 672352</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a result of the Programme I have learnt practical skills enabling me to feel in control of my condition. Through the course I attended I met some courageous and inspirational people. I got so much from that I wanted to give something back and decided to train as a volunteer tutor myself.

Just going on the volunteer tutor training course was an uplifting experience. I was actually going to be trained to do a specific job even though I wasn’t 100 per cent well. I was counted as a resource because of my problems – what a new idea! Becoming a volunteer has meant a fresh challenge, new friends, a whole lot of inspiration, quite apart from a permanent job. It is a wonderful tonic to be able to help people maintain their health and improve their quality of life.

In Wales the Expert Patients Programme was first piloted in 2003-04 by Gwynedd and Swansea Local Health Boards to enable it to be tested in an urban and rural area. Some comments from participants are recorded in Box 1.

Following the success of the two pilots, the Programme is now being extended across the rest of Wales. Evaluation of the pilots found that the Programme had had a profound impact on patients’ lives in the following ways:

- An increase in their ability to self-manage their illness.
- Development of a sense of well-being and happiness.
- Participants reported important life changes: they felt calmer and less angry.
- They are less isolated, more confident and proactive about their illness.
- They are deeply committed to the programme and its benefits.
- They wish to share their experiences with other disabled people.
- They have developed a sense of belonging and ‘community’.

Following the success of these two projects, the Expert Patients Programme is now being extended across the rest of Wales. By the end of 2005 around 80 tutors will have been trained and the delivery of 6180 six-week courses completed. With between 12 and 16 people per course, this means that the programme will have engaged with more than 850,000 people who have a long-term health condition/sitllness.

Local Health Boards are working together to develop networks to deliver the scheme. Each area is overseen by a co-ordinator (see Box 2), and there is a team of local volunteer tutors involved in the delivery of courses. There are three networks covering North, Mid and West, and South East Wales. It is planned that we will achieve a full roll out across Wales by 2007-08.

Close links have been established with Expert Patients developments in England, to enable the sharing of information and learning from one another. It has also been essential to establish effective partnership working with the rest of the NHS, social services, voluntary organisations and community groups to ensure that courses are tailored to meet the needs of local communities.

By now around 80 tutors have been trained across Wales and 61 six-week courses completed. With between 12 and 16 people per course, this means that the programme will have engaged with more than 850 people by the end of 2005.

- Melanie Williams lives in Bala and is the Expert Patients Programme Wales Coordinator for Anglesey and Conway.
The Welsh Baccalaureate had a great deal going for it when it was announced by the Assembly Government in October 2002. Rather than being rolled out to all schools and colleges immediately, it was to be piloted in a group of schools and colleges, with a one year lead in time. Resources were made available for training and a dedicated unit was established within the WJEC to support the project.

In comparison with the English situation this represented a broadening of the curriculum away from the straitjacket of A levels. The challenge the innovation confronted should not be underestimated, in particular the opposition of Daily Mail ‘middle England’ which clings to the so-called A Level gold standard. This was demonstrated by the Westminster government’s lukewarm reception of the Tomlinson proposals which in 2004 recommended scrapping the A levels in favour of broadening the curriculum and giving equal validity to academic and vocational subjects.

The Welsh Baccalaureate is quite different to the scheme developed by Colin Jenkins and John David of the Vale of Glamorgan’s Atlantic College and promoted by the Institute of Welsh Affairs during the 1990s. Rather than a new curricular arrangement that uses the International Baccalaureate as a template, it is a qualification built upon the existing A levels. The main difference is that a ‘common core’ is added, covering four main elements:

- Key Skills
- Wales, Europe and the World
- Work Related Education
- Personal and Social Education

Eighteen schools and colleges began the pilot from September 2003, and the preliminary results from this first cohort were published in August 2005 to an accompanying blaze of mostly negative publicity. Only 499 students chose to enter the pilot examination, compared to a first cohort size of 670. Of these only 304 (60.9 per cent) actually acquired the qualification.

Whilst large numbers of students in the first cohort obtained some of the components needed to acquire the Bac and may also have been working towards the full qualification, these kind of success rates are significantly below what A level students customarily exhibit. Since the initial cohort would have been the strongest students in the sixth forms, rather than the weakest who would not have been encouraged to ‘risk’ the Bac, these figures are very disappointing.

What has been going on? Firstly, it seems that the first cohort was demotivated by receiving offers from all bar a couple of the Higher Education Institutions that were still couched in terms of the old A level points. Given that the common core needed an additional three or four hours work per week to complete, which healthy 18-year-old would want to work at the Bac when it didn’t matter, particularly when these hours could be used for pizza, sex and rock and roll?

Secondly, the Bac seems to have had much greater success in school sixth forms than in the colleges, where the completion rate is half that of schools. What exactly has gone on here is unclear. Perhaps the schools historical personal tutor systems were able to
offer support and enhanced motivation to the Bac students, whereas in the colleges learning is more conventionally delegated to the student. Perhaps the intellectual and social mix of the colleges made it even more difficult to add a further three or four hours to students’ weekly workload and as it were keep them smiling.

Thirdly, and this is surprising in view of the long lead in time and training resources that were available, the Bac experience was apparently a highly variable one across the sample of schools and colleges taking part. Data is not available yet, but apparently the variation between schools and colleges in their ‘success rate’ – in terms of proportion of those on the original cohort of 670 passing – varies from under 20 per cent at the bottom to over 80 per cent at the top. Whilst there are clearly star institutions like St. Cyres in Penarth, which is described in the following article, not all institutions were as effective in their delivery. The good schools and colleges gave a good experience, while the less good gave a more muted response to the new qualification’s needs.

What message can be gleaned from this educational experiment? The value of a broadened education for 16-19 year olds is not in doubt. In the UK generally the move towards it is unstoppable. The curriculum of the future needs to be about getting the interactions (or the synergy) between a larger number of subject and skill areas rather than depth in a small number. Besides, with the internet available, depths can be easily plumbed.

But the Welsh Bac was not sufficiently different to the old curriculum to engage schools’ hearts and minds, or to persuade students that their extra work was really worth while. Meanwhile, an increasing number of English independent schools are going for the full International Baccalaureate in despair of the English Government’s unwillingness to radically change their 16-19 profile.

Since the establishment of the National Assembly much has been achieved in education policy with a number of radical departures from previous practice. Abolition of the Standard Attainment Tests (SATs), the ceasing of publication of examination statistics for individual schools and the introduction of the learning pathways come to mind. Maybe the somewhat problematic Welsh Bac is telling us that if you have small visions, you get small – and varied – gains.

David Reynolds is Professor of Education at the University of Plymouth and Emeritus Professor at the University of Exeter. He lives in south Wales.
Long before the arrival of the Welsh Baccalaureate we were seeking to broaden the post-16 curriculum. Contrary to common assertions A Levels are certainly not becoming easier and they remain at the centre of the post 16 curriculum for the majority of sixth formers in schools.

While key skills, community service and a general studies programme have been strong features of our curriculum provision for many years it used to be difficult to convince students of the value of these ‘additional elements’. Understandably students had viewed them as less ‘marketable’ than their specialist subjects and concentrated on those things that were specifically mentioned in their university offers. In addition we felt that significant numbers of students were insufficiently challenged by a narrow diet of two or three subjects. This has all changed dramatically since we became a pilot school for the Welsh Baccalaureate.

When the opportunity arose to bid to become part of the pilot we jumped at the opportunity to give real value to a broad and balanced curriculum which emphasised precisely those skills and qualities employers consistently tell us they want. We had always been interested in the idea of an overarching baccalaureate type qualification. However, it would have been a very bold, some would say foolhardy, step for any school to abandon the known, tried and tested A Level qualification which is the main currency of university offers.

The Welsh Baccalaureate removed this tension by building an overarching ‘umbrella’ style qualification around existing qualifications. The WBQ is therefore an enhancement rather than a replacement of existing qualifications and as such adds an element of challenge and a new breadth to our post 16 curriculum. At a time when the rejection of the Tomlinson proposals was met with universal dismay by school and college leaders we have every reason to be proud that Wales is at the forefront of this important development.

Ask any head teacher and they can cite numerous examples of badly managed and planned initiatives. We all bear the scars! Ask a Welsh Bac pilot school and they will describe a textbook example of how a new initiative should be managed. It would make a massive difference if policy makers would adopt the following characteristics as a standard for curriculum developments:

- A whole year was set aside for planning before any student programmes commenced. This common sense approach ensured that there was clarity of purpose and adequate time to brief staff and prospective students, market the course and allay parents’ concerns in the context of the uncharted territory we were entering.
A professional team based at the WJEC was put in place to lead and manage the development. Throughout the duration of the project this team has worked in full partnership with the pilot centres and all other partners. They have worked tirelessly to raise awareness amongst the public, higher education and employers of the qualification, remain approachable and in close contact and highly supportive.

• Teachers have worked with the team to develop resources and the curriculum. This practitioner led approach has ensured that the teachers have had full ownership of the Welsh Baccaulaureate curriculum from the outset and that the content and methods of delivery are rooted in what professionals in schools and colleges knew could be achieved.

• The true costs of the development have been calculated in detail and funded on the basis of evidence of need. The vast majority of this has been used in our school to meet the need for increased staffing to deliver the programme properly.

• The project has been publicly supported by the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning and her officials not only in terms of public statements but also in very practical ways such as visits to the pilot centres and speaking to students and staff.

• Evaluation of the project was built in from the outset with the appointment of a professional team from Bath University.

A key feature of the Bac at St Cyres is that all students are allocated a personal tutor or ‘learning coach’. This member of the teaching staff interviews each student individually at regular intervals in order to guide them through the many different requirements of the Bac, and provides advice and support. They also remain in regular informal contact by being available in the sixth form centre. The Welsh Bac team meets weekly and
reviews progress of the programme. Ample in-service training time has been provided.

The sixth form centre was extensively refurbished to meet the needs of the students. This large base room contains high spec ICT facilities with broadband access and is the central point for storage of portfolios. A full time Welsh Baccalaureate administrator is on hand to support staff and students.

At the outset we made a conscious decision to make the Bac a core element of our post-16 curriculum for all students. We felt that this was essential if we really wanted to demonstrate our belief that it was a meaningful and worthwhile qualification. We are convinced that this was the right thing to do. Making it an option would have devalued it. Consequently we have some 250 students following this programme at present and are aware of a trend in many other centres to adopt a similar approach.

The first cohort of students knew they were doing something special from the outset. Having the Minister to open their induction conference helped make the point. New facilities and the ‘buzz’ of being a part of something which was clearly signposted as the future for Wales helped to reinforce this.

The curriculum itself is thoroughly permeated by the Welsh Bac. Sometimes visitors misunderstand what it is about by expecting to see Welsh Bac lessons in which the whole curriculum is taught. Some lessons cover core elements such as the module on ‘Wales, Europe and the World’ and aspects of personal social education and citizenship. Others are directed at specific programmes such as an internet business course which delivers elements of the key skills programme.

These core Bac lessons cover a fascinating range of topics such as capital punishment, the dangers of binge drinking and terrorism and also provide opportunities for training in important skills such a learning how to produce a ‘Powerpoint presentation’. However, many of the requirements relating to the six key skills, which all students have to achieve with three at level 3, are delivered through subject departments. This emphasises the importance of mapping and tracking.

Here a key role is played by the Welsh Baccalaureate coordinator liaising with all departments and the Heads of Department who have incorporated elements of the Bac into their schemes of work. The requirement to reflect on and document the key skills they are developing in their lessons inevitably causes the students to become more engaged in the learning process and aware of their relative strengths and weaknesses.

The need to carry out a substantial piece of independent research ensures that students do more than limit themselves to the A Level syllabuses. Thus, for example Geography students studying the Cardiff Bay development have extended their research to carry
out comparisons with similar developments as far away as Sydney and Boston.

A major breakthrough was the acceptance of the Welsh Baccalaureate by UCAS as equivalent in terms of University admission points to a grade A at A level. At the same time large numbers of universities in Wales and England have publicly announced their recognition of the qualification.

walkover and nor should it be. After all it is equivalent to a top grade A Level. In order to pass the Advanced Diploma students have to complete all elements of the Bac. There are no half measures and inevitably some students did not achieve this.

The media reporting at results time about those students who did not complete the programme was thoroughly misleading. Those students

Government policy of widening participation we know of a number of students who have gained access to higher education because of the Bac some of whom are the first in their families to achieve this.

Thirdly and most importantly, the benefits of the Bac for the students are evident to anyone who meets them. I genuinely believe that the programme has transformed the ethos and culture

It's not all serious. Increasingly the Welsh Bac is now being incorporated into offers of places. There is still more to do before the message about the value of this qualifications reaches the 8-9000 admissions tutors in universities throughout the UK. However, we believe that the first graduates of the Bac will accelerate this when universities see what they have to offer.

So what has all of this done for our students? Three major benefits have accrued that should give us great confidence.

Firstly, our student have had to work extremely hard. We should be ambitious and maintain the highest expectations and the Welsh Bac has proved that our students can and do rise to this. This qualification is not a
did not drop out. They did follow the programme and the majority of them did complete some of the core in addition to their A Levels. I am certain that the project team will look at the issue of partial completion and find ways of recognising this.

Secondly, the exam results were as good as they have ever been so the extra work did not have an adverse effect on their A Level results. In fact I would argue that their greatly improved study skills helped them. In addition to their A Levels, 85 of the students – some 85 per cent of the cohort – gained the full diploma and therefore had an additional A grade on top of their A Levels. These are the best results the school has ever had. Large numbers of the students have gone to their first choice of higher education courses. In terms of the important Assembly

of our sixth form. Throughout the pilot project the students have been the subject of intense external interest with all kinds of visitors meeting them including a Parliamentary Select Committee, Assembly Members, Inspectors, and Assembly Government officials. They have addressed national conferences confidently and even been interviewed on radio and TV.

Visitors and staff have consistently commented on the students outstanding confidence and communication skills and a level of community and political awareness which far surpasses anything I have ever seen displayed so widely amongst sixth form students.

- Brian Lightman is Headteacher of St Cyres School in Penarth.
Is the UK Government meeting the performance targets it has signed up to under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages? The Council of Europe’s Committee of Experts is currently undertaking an assessment to find out and the Welsh Language Board is urging organisations in Wales to make representations.

In some areas the UK is doing very well, most notably so far as Wales is concerned in making provision for a television service in the Welsh language. However, it was noteworthy that the last time the Committee of Experts evaluated the UK’s performance, in 2002 –03, they noted the lack of daily news in Welsh in printed form. The Committee’s views are important since the Charter, which the UK ratified in 2001, is legally binding.

During the 1990s and influenced no doubt by the violent conflicts in what was Yugoslavia, the Council of Europe developed first the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and then, with a more purely linguistic focus, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Both sought to avoid conflict between majority and minority populations and pressure for the redrawing of boundaries, by ensuring that member-states of the Council of Europe guaranteed certain rights to minority populations within their borders.

The fields covered by the Charter were very much those recognized as important by the European Parliament in a series of reports and resolutions relating to minority languages within the smaller compass of the European Union. Examples included the use of minority languages in education, in the press and media and cultural life generally, in public administration and in economic life.

The nation-state governments first sign the Charter as an earnest of intention and then proceed to ratify a satisfactory number of clauses. Within most sections of the Charter, governments are able to choose between high or low levels of support. Thus, for example, they can choose teaching the minority language as a subject or using it as the medium through which other subjects are taught; or providing some television or radio programmes in the language or providing separate channels. Not surprisingly, governments have tended to undertake to provide the level of support which they are already providing.

Nevertheless at the start certain countries had to move quickly to change their internal legislation because they found that there was no box at any level which they could tick for some of their minorities. And some of these countries were in relatively enlightened Western Europe whose governments had probably imagined that the Charter was being chiefly devised to defuse conflicts further to the east.

At first sight therefore, the Charter’s value is that it consolidates the provision that already exists, However, there is also a dynamic element. Governments present periodic reports on their own performance, and the reports are then considered by the Committee of Experts which makes visits to the areas concerned, takes evidence and makes its own evaluation. In addition to deciding whether Governments are fulfilling or
not fulfilling the obligations they have signed up to, the experts can note areas in which they hope to see improvements by their next visit.

The severest criticisms of the UK government’s performance probably relate to Scottish Gaelic. In respect of Welsh, the Committee of Experts were generally of the opinion that the clauses signed by the UK government were being implemented in a satisfactory manner. But not all. I am not going to attempt to summarize what is a very long document, which repays close reading, but to give one example: the committee did not consider that the UK had fulfilled its undertakings in respect of providing social care for speakers of Welsh in hospitals and retirement homes. Nor is the provision for Welsh in education perceived to be as healthy as many might imagine – and certainly not in vocational and higher education.

Moreover, when they last visited Wales in 2002 the Committee of Experts noted the lack of a Welsh language daily newspaper and seemed to expect that public support for such a venture would be forthcoming. It is noteworthy, therefore that significant support has already been mobilised behind Y Byd, the first ever daily newspaper in Welsh which it is hoped will be launched within the next year or so. So far 300 individuals have bought shares in the venture which has nearly reached the required £300,000 target. This will need to be matched by sponsorship and support from the private and public sectors. In addition the Supporters Club has so far reached 1,500 which will form the core of the newspaper’s circulation.

To promote responses to the Committee of Experts request for submissions the Welsh Language Board has provided a template, available on-line, in three columns: to the left the clause of the Charter which the UK has signed up to in respect of Welsh; in the centre the verbatim comments of the Committee in 2003; and finally a blank column in which organisations can give their own responses to the Committee of Experts secretariat in Strasbourg. The Welsh Language Board is also making proposals that the UK Government should sign up to some additional clauses in the Charter, and similarly it invites comments on these.

One is bound to ask who will undertake this work of consultation and of proposing new clauses if and when the Welsh Language Board is absorbed into the Welsh Assembly Government. The UK Government’s periodic report to the Council of Europe is drawn together at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on the basis of information received from the devolved administrations. The collection of comments and possibly of criticism of those reports cannot credibly be put in the hands of another Government department. Many would see the Welsh Language Board as already rather too close to Government, but certainly on this occasion it is fulfilling a most valuable function.

Promoting Y Byd.

**how to respond to the committee of experts**

The Welsh Language Board’s explanatory document provides the Committee of Experts address to which a response can be sent on paper or electronically, in the form of a letter or using the Language Board’s template. Both the explanatory document and template are available on-line at: www.bwrdd-yr-iaith.org.uk/en/cynnwys.php?cID=6&pID=109&nID=1500

The text of the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages can be found at: www.coe.int/T/E/Legal_Affairs/Local_and_Regional_Democracy/Regional_or_Minority_Languages/

Ned Thomas is Chair of Dyddiol Cyf., the company set up to launch the Welsh language daily paper Y Byd.
The Welsh interest in North America goes back a long way. If you believe all you read then you’ll already know that America was discovered by Madog ab Owain Gwynedd in the 12th Century. Not only that, until they died of smallpox in 1838, the Mandan Indians of the Mississippi Valley all spoke accentless Welsh. The Welsh have been emigrating to North America ever since. Not in the numbers managed by other nations, certainly, but in a steady stream. Welsh Quakers escaped persecution to the seventeenth century colonies. Welsh quarrymen, seamen, farmers and miners systematically sought their fortune in the new world. In the 18th Century this was often from north Wales and during the 19th Century mainly from the industrial south.

Welsh influence was not insignificant. Sixteen signatories to the Declaration of Independence were of Welsh descent. A great tract of Pennsylvania was almost christened New Wales. It’s the almost in that sentence that does it, I suppose: almost, but not quite. The number of our fellows leaving for the lands of plenty may have been large in Welsh terms, but for every one Wales managed, Ireland sent 25. Little wonder, then, that most present day Americans have trouble locating Wales when you mention it. “I’ve heard of that place”, a Magic Kingdom attendant told me, dressed like a commissar and pushing a brush. “But I’ve no idea what it is.” I often feel the same, I thought, but I said nothing. Now was not the moment.

The Seventy-fourth Welsh National Gymanfa Ganu spends a lot of its informal time seeking identity. Who are we, where do we come from, how did we get here? Just like being at home. Gather the Welsh together and the first thing they talk about is themselves. At the Gymanfa participants sport Welsh tartans, drink Welsh whiskey, and eat Welsh cakes enlivened with blueberries and chocolate chip. There are flags and Thank God I’m Welsh bumper stickers and smiling dragon sweatshirts. In corners people sing – old songs, the hymns of Wales.

According to Alfred J Reese Jr, a southern States retired Army Colonel, who has written the not inconsiderable history of the WNGGA, the holding of local eisteddfodau in the United States first started in the mid-1880s with the founding of a National Association following soon after. In a section titled What is the Welsh National Gymanfa Ganu Association and how do you pronounce it? he explains how the singing of hymns in a language little understood has become an almost transcendental experience for many north Americans of Welsh extraction. One hundred year old predictions that the “substitution of English for Welsh words will inevitably occur” have been proven gloriously wrong. The WNGGA may
culture & communications

publish hymnals with Welsh originals turned into ready American, my hen wlard fun hadeye, but the spirit and the melody and the part-singing remain fully intact.

In the queue for the WNGGA Buffet Dinner of grits, hoppin john, cornmeal breaded catfish, and southern fried chicken, Reese, looking like a white-suited escapee from the Dukes of Hazzard, shakes my hand heartily, tells me he's heard my name, wasn't I in a film somewhere. He should have a cigar but hasn't. Most everyone attending has some Welshness among the names on their badges: Richard Price Baskwill, Gerry Baker Parry, Sally Evans Funderburk, Lynn Owens Whalen, Olwen Joyce Anderson, Laurie Jones Fox, Eluned Mair Alsgaard.

Attendance is down this year. The Florida hurricanes have kept many away. Outside the tail-end of Hurricane Katrina is drenching Disney with more rain in one afternoon than Merthyr gets in a year, but protected by the omnipresent Mickey and Donald and Minnie no one here much cares.

Festival Director is John S Ellis, an ebullient history professor from Hartland Michigan. John’s speciality is Wales and the Investiture with a side interest in pirates. Captain Morgan, Black Bart and the rest of that Welsh rabble. He traces the routes of these Welsh brigands across the Caribbean. The Festival crèche has been labelled “Pirate's Cove Children’s Center”. Has John tried Disney’s Typhoon Lagoon? Not yet. On my trip there the bus driver kept up a non-stop stream of pirate impersonations over the tannoy for a full 30 minutes. Disbelief-suspended passengers were in stitches. As a commodity reality here is rare.

The work done by John and his wife Karen has been immense. Melding a myriad local societies into one unit, managing vested interests, directing committees, delegating responsibilities, coping with conflicts, shepherding awardees, sorting finances, dealing with the slow, the fast, the efficient and the difficult, fixing the direction and keeping the disparate both happy and engaged has all been down to them. The more I read the brochures and uncover yet further layers of participating organisations – the North American Association for the Study of Welsh Culture and History, the Cambrian Heritage Society, The North American Festivals of Wales, the National Welsh-American Foundation, the Women’s Welsh Clubs of America, and the seemingly countless St David’s Day and State Welsh Societies – the more I admire John's apparently effortless calm. What is the dress code I enquired, before coming. Dress shirt and tie, and these I am wearing. John is in a red open-necked Hawaiian shirt and shorts. North American Wales is obviously a matter of attitude.

The Festival runs for four days and centres around a series of huge excuses for communal singing – an Opening Ceremony led by Heather Jones and Hin Deg, jet lagged from massive delay flying in via Washington, but brilliant once they get into their stride; a Grand Banquet featuring light operatics from Geraint and Eldrydd Dodd, old fashioned but unexpectedly entertaining and absolutely professional; a Grand Concert with Colin Jones’ North Wales Male Chorus, bass-heavy in the Russian-style but dinner suited and looking and sounding just like a Valley choir should. On the Sunday there is a grand finale: back-to-back all-day Gymanfa Ganu sessions, Christian hymns mixed with sermon and Anglican Eucharist, worship and the reading of the roll of departed members, and the placing of memorial roses in the vases on the altar.

In this last session the brilliant Haydn James presides – red shirt, many mentions of Wales’ rugby prowess, slipping from English to Welsh and back and getting the old of North America singing like they were young again. It is at these sessions that the essence of the Festival surfaces. Christianity and Welsh Wales mixing again in a way they rarely do these days at home. For many being here is the next best thing to entering the chapel in Bethesda or Merthyr or walking the Preseli Hills or standing on the dockside in Cardiff. Wales of the spirit, Wales by remote.

Around this four-day vocal core circle any number of fringe events. The Welsh Assembly have funded a rolling film show which includes both The Englishman Who Went Up a Hill but Came Down a Mountain, appropriate for a Florida whose highest peak is 400 feet, and The Star Spangled Dragon, a documentary on the impact the Welsh had on the creation of the United
States. The Wales Tourist Board run multi-media presentations on visiting Wales. There is a marketplace of stalls selling books, tapes, CDs, kilts, tartans, Welsh Whiskey (take away only, Disney won’t let you drink), dragon pins, dragon scarves, dragon tees, dragon money pouches, and memberships to any number of local Welsh-interest societies, newspapers, and clubs.

The legendary Arturo L. Roberts, the Patagonian founder of the north American Welsh newspaper, Ninnau, is here to receive the Heritage Medallion for services to north American Welsh life. Ninnau, although merged with Y Drych, is still as strong as it ever was. The Madog Centre for Welsh Studies at Rio Grande are selling a wide range of Welsh learners material and have sent Timothy Jilg to run a festival Welsh-language class daily. Basic stuff, bore da, sut ydych chi, but a start.

The Festival Seminar Programme runs in the Fantasia Rooms. A man wearing giant white Mickey Mouse gloves directs attendees. Electric bikes are provided for the less able. Sweets and water for the speakers. Mouse ears in the wallpaper and the carpet. A man dressed as Buzz Lightyear is in reception. Jiminy Cricket’s singing drifts in from Cinderella’s Castle. Reality remains very much on hold. Gareth Williams from the University of Glamorgan is here to talk about the fighting choirs of the land of song and the revival of 1905. I am here to make Cardiff real and to read some poems. We are booked to appear in different rooms simultaneously on four separate occasions. No chance to hear what the other has to say. On our day off Gareth and I go on the Aerosmith Rock ‘n’ Roller Coaster in one of Disney’s parks and while being accelerated at 8G, exchange notes on what it’s been like. Later, in the wilting humidity, Gareth tells me a little about the passions and practises of the great Welsh choral tradition. I tell him about the psychogeography of our capital. We visit a 3-D show where the stage moves, and then, via the Great Movie Ride and the Lights, Motors, Action! Extreme Stunt Show, we return to poetry and history and Wales flowing wild and free through the American lens. We give them our version of how it is and how it was and, with rapt attention, they listen.

The North American Festival of Wales is a clear success – managed well, mixing the obvious with the erudite, delivering to its public precisely what they want. The attendance figures are ample proof. In Wales only our National Eisteddfod would do better. But the Welsh in north America are ageing and they realise it. Gymanfa Ganu documentation is full of earnest and concerned advice on the need to attract the younger crowd. But they are not much present yet, not at the 74th showing. Next year the Festival will be in Cincinnati. Attendance, I am assured, will be better. More than a thousand are expected. Welsh culture will again be made manifest as back in Wales we once experienced it. In that old fashioned way, as things once were in the fifties, perhaps, without state support and without the buildings and institutions that twenty-first century Wales glories in. Wales in the American grain. The diaspora back from the mists – not lost, but certainly different.
motor-biking in the nude

rhian davies on how Wales seeped into the consciousness of the composer Peter Warlock

Widey regarded as the composer of some of the finest British songs and choral music of the twentieth century, Peter Warlock (Philip Heseltine, 1894-1930) is also remembered for his famous friendships – with D. H. Lawrence, W. B. Yeats and Aleister Crowley amongst others. He also had a number of eccentric hobbies including keeping rare breeds of cat, Cossack dancing on railway stations, and motor-biking in the nude.

And although he was born – famously – in London’s Savoy Hotel, he had close family links with mid Wales. His mother, Edith, née Covernton, grew up in Knighton and in 1903 settled in Llandyssil on her second marriage to Walter Buckley-Jones, squire of Cefn-bryntalch Hall. Warlock loved the mid-Wales countryside. He taught himself Welsh and several other Celtic languages, and completed much of his most significant work while living more or less permanently at Cefn-bryntalch between 1921 and 1924 and again in 1928.

Peter Warlock would still have been nine-year-old Philip Heseltine when his mother and stepfather arranged their new family unit’s first summer holiday in Montgomeryshire. The composer’s surviving manuscripts at the British Library show how Wales seeped gradually into his consciousness: childhood poetry and plays on Welsh themes; enthusiasm for the heroes of Welsh history; and an inexhaustible fascination with the preposterous place name Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogogoch. He read Giraldus Cambrensis and the Mabinogi, but loved George Borrow best of all:

“Wild Wales ... is one of my most treasured possessions, which I have always by me, and read constantly over and over again. It is wonderful how Borrow caught the spirit of that heavenly country ... I simply adore Wales and never tire of such a delicious picture of it!”

(Philip Heseltine to Frederick Delius, 10 December 1911)

Borrow became the teenage boy’s personal guide as he explored Wales on a succession of untrustworthy motor-cycles: north to Aran Fawddwy, south to the Golden Valley, and west to Pumlumon, Dylife, Aberaeron and Lampeter. Heseltine was always proud that his first publication, an article in The Locomotive Magazine and Railway Carriage and Wagon Review in January 1912, described the railway which served the Van Lead Mines and ran down into Caersws where the poet John Ceiriog Hughes managed the line. Heseltine made a point of programming Llwyn Onn and Ar Hyd y Nos at Eton College concerts. He based one of his earliest surviving compositions, the fourth of his five Folk-song preludes for piano, on another Welsh folk tune Tros y Garreg. Of course, this same tune has since been reinvented again, by Karl Jenkins for Catrin Finch as Crossing the Stone.

Britain declared war on Germany two months before Heseltine’s twentieth birthday and he gave Wales a wide berth throughout the conflict. His mother’s charitable work for wounded soldiers, the Belgian refugees billeted in Cefn-bryntalch’s laundry, and the death on active service of his stepfather’s youngest brother, Brigadier-General Lumley Jones, did not square well with...
his own curriculum vitae. This included dropping out of two universities, a broken marriage, evacuation to Cornwall and Ireland, and experimentation with drugs and the occult.

However, reminders of mid Wales continued to track him by post – vests and pyjamas from Pryce Jones’ Royal Welsh Warehouse in Newtown, sweet peas and Lilies of the Valley from Cefnbryntalch’s gardens, and even the occasional pheasant. Eventually, following a five-month bender around north Africa and Europe, he hit the buffers in Paris and had to wire home for help. Edith Buckley-Jones was already taking charge of his unwanted son Nigel, born in 1916. Now, five years later, she bailed out her own son by sending him a one-way ticket back to Bryntalch.

By 1921 Philip Heseltine’s public profile as Peter Warlock was becoming increasingly well established. A set of fantastical noms-de-plume allowed him to produce fearless and acerbic music criticism: as Roger A. Ramsbottom, Prosdocimus de Beldamandis, and Huanebango Z. Palimpsest. When publishing an anthology about drink he styled himself Rab Noolas (Saloon Bar backwards). But it was Warlock which stuck. He first signed off an article about Eugène Goossens with it in 1916. And once it had been redeployed successfully for the publication of Heseltine’s first seven songs in 1919 he thereafter always used it for musical compositions.

Warlock’s finest music and Heseltine’s finest musical scholarship were completed as a result of his mother’s disciplined hospitality at Cefnbryntalch. She severed her son’s allowance in lieu of board and lodging. When she had no need of her drawing-room to entertain other members of the mid-Wales county set to tea, she allowed him to sit at the Broadwood grand piano and generate a sequence of significant scores.

The turn of the seasons, the moorland scenery, the smell of honeysuckle and the local beer, and all the gentle pleasures of local life combined to restore Warlock’s peace of mind and fuel his creativity. Montgomeryshire compositions include *The Curlew*, *Lillygay*, *Sleep* and *Autumn Twilight*, together with a landmark biography of Frederick Delius and transcriptions of 300 Elizabethan and Jacobean airs thrown in for good measure. Warlock was even relaxed enough to deputise for George Wroughton at the organ of St Tyssil’s Church, Llandyssil. This last was quite something for a musician who normally hated performing in public. As he wrote in a letter to Cecil Gray in November 1921:

“Last Sunday, in response to a sudden and urgent request from the Rectum [sic], I attended divine service, for the first time in many years, and – in the language of provincial reporting – ‘presided at the grand organ’, fully arrayed in cassock and surplice … During the Communion Service in E flat by Mr Caleb Simper (!!) I discovered three pedals each of which, when depressed, shot out half a dozen stops, whose names were quite unintelligible to me, with a roar, or shot them in again with a sound like an expiring bagpipe. It was almost as good fun as changing gears on a motor-car. However, the strange sounds I produced were nothing compared with the caterwauling they were supposed to accompany – and I received the congratulations of the parish on my beautiful performance. I was persuaded to undertake this truly Tibetan task chiefly by the reason for the village schoolmaster’s absence (for this individual usually officiates with, I am told, far less skill than even I can command, although he has done the trick every week for the last forty years); and this was – would you believe it? – utter incapability to move as the result of Saturday night! That my sobriety should be called in to assist another’s incapacity seemed to me one of the best jokes of recent months. I celebrated the occasion by playing as a ‘voluntary’, as the congregation departed, that fine old Welsh tune entitled *Tôn-y-Bottel*, with harmonies that must have seemed most appropriate to the villagers.”

Warlock was a regular visitor to the beautiful and historic county town of Montgomery, a few miles east of Cefnbryntalch. He once holed up with the notoriously bibulous local general practitioner Dr Richard Game Phillips, who lived in the Governor’s residence at the town’s former County Gaol, and they polished off a case of whisky between them. Emerging several days later for a breath of air on Castle Rock, Warlock
culture & communications

broke his leg in the mistaken belief that he could fly from the battlements. A letter of 22 April 1924 to Bernard van Dieren confirms the unfortunate consequence of this “too too Dionysian prance down the steep slopes of Montgomery Castle.”

To mark the 75th anniversary of the composer’s death on 17 December 2005, and in partnership with Montgomery Civic Society, I have devised a Gwyl Peter Warlock Festival to be held between 16 and 18 December in many of the historic buildings which Warlock would have known in the town, including the recently-refurbished Georgian Town Hall and Church of St Nicholas. Building on my script for the drama-documentary Peter Warlock: Dewin Cerdd (S4C, 1998) and following more recent research in public and private collections in the USA, Canada, South Africa and Australia, I shall be highlighting the composer’s mid-Wales connections as a curtain-raiser for the Festival (Peter Warlock in Montgomeryshire, Friday, 16 December, 7.30pm). And there is very much more to be told, believe you me, of Warlock and Cefnwynach, where the cast of walk-on characters included not only the wonderful Dr Phillips (Game by name, and game by name), but also Bela Bartók, the outstanding Hungarian composer-pianist who stayed there for a couple of days after giving a recital at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, on 16 March 1922 which Professor Walford Davies was overheard to describe as ‘baffling’.

Saturday, 17 December, begins with a walking tour of Warlockian sites, including Montgomery Castle and Gaol (9.30am), and the official opening of the Festival exhibition in the Old Bell Museum (10.30am). Then, at 11.30am – exactly 75 years after Warlock was pronounced dead in a Chelsea hospital – the distinguished Home Office pathologist, Professor Bernard Knight, will re-examine the evidence concerning the discovery of the composer’s body in his gas-filled basement flat (Peter Warlock’s death: a mystery or not?).

Also on Saturday, Professor M. Wynn Thomas, Director of the Centre for Research into the English Language and Literature at Swansea University, discusses the creative writing of Warlock’s son who grew up to move in the same literary circles as Dylan Thomas, Lynette Roberts and Keidrych Rhys (Nigel Heseltine: forgotten border writer, 2pm); and Dr Brian Collins, author of the standard text Peter Warlock, the Composer, assesses Warlock’s Christmas music (4pm).

At the heart of the Festival (Saturday, 7.30pm) is a performance by the must-hear young British tenor, Andrew Kennedy, making his first major appearance in Wales since winning the Rosenblatt Recital Prize at this year’s BBC Cardiff Singer of the World. Andrew is a truly exciting artist destined for an international career and the Festival is fortunate indeed that he and his accompanist Simon Crawford-Phillips are available to perform on the 75th anniversary itself. Their programme will combine substantial groups of Warlock songs with music by two of the composer’s friends, Roger Quilter and Percy Grainger, and Benjamin Britten’s seasonally evocative song-cycle Winter words. Grainger admired the ‘freshness’ of Warlock’s original compositions and signed his correspondence ‘In artistic sympathy’, while a presentation copy of Warlock’s song Late summer survives which carries the inscription ‘To Roger Quilter / without whose genial influence / there would have been no songs by / Peter Warlock’.

Sunday includes a reconstruction in Llandyssil Church itself of one of the choral services for which Warlock ‘presided at the grand organ’ in 1921 (18 December, 9.30am). The Festival resumes in Montgomery with a workshop on Warlock’s vocal music for young performers, directed by the leading authority on British song, Michael Pilkington (11.30am); and John Worthen, Emeritus Professor of D. H. Lawrence Studies at the University of Nottingham, who considers Warlock as the model for Halliday in Lawrence’s Wornen in Love (D. H. Lawrence, Philip Heseltine and the ‘inner life’, 2.30pm). The closing event is a programme of Christmas music and readings (4.30pm), featuring performances of Warlock’s carols by the Guilsfield Singers, directed by Suzanne Edwards, with soloists Zoe Challenor (soprano), Paul Carey Jones (baritone), Seth Williams (piano) and Tim Mills (organ).

We salute the Arts Council of Wales, Powys County Council, Montgomery Town Council, the Peter Warlock Society, the Welsh Music Guild and several local business sponsors for enabling us to stage such an ambitious arts project in mid Wales by endowing the Festival with goodly amounts of what the composer would have described – for reasons still best known to himself – as “alligators”.

- Dr Rhian Davies is a historian of British music in print and film and is completing her second book, an Illustrated Life of Peter Warlock. Tickets for the Warlock Festival are available from Paul and Louise Hodgson on 01686 668838 and warlockfestival@hotmail.co.uk. Web: www.oldbellmuseum.org.uk
Wenhwyseg was the Welsh dialect that would have been heard throughout the south Wales valleys in the nineteenth century. It was described in 1902 as an exceptionally strong dialect: ‘tafodiaith eithriadol o rymus’, as John Griffith put it in his Y Wenhwyseg, Newport, 1902). However, by the middle of the twentieth century it had been entirely overwhelmed by the English language. In the 1960s very few speakers of y Wenhwyseg were left, and those mostly in more isolated communities such as Twyncarno in Rhymney, and Tafarnau Bach between Rhymney and Tredegar.

Yet, this vanished dialect can still be heard. The pronunciation of many place names in south Wales reflects some of the peculiarities of Y Wenhwyseg. Gelligaer, Aberdare, Pen Cae are all pronounced with a distinctive ae sound. This was how speakers of y Wenhwyseg pronounced the long a of words such as tad, bach, da, gwlad. Even the proud speakers of Cardiff have to own the influence of y Wenhwyseg! H- was not pronounced at all, so not only did Harri become ‘Arri, and Helen ‘Elen, and the rh- of rhaid and Rhymni became r’aid and R’yrmni.

The ch-sound was also unheard in the dialect. Speakers of y Wenhwyseg pronounced chwech as wech, chwalu as walu, and chwaer as waer. There were archaic features to the dialect. There is some evidence that it preserved the distinctive u of the Welsh of north Wales when this had been lost in other south Wales dialects. Certainly the third person singular of the past tense preserved the ending -ws recorded in mediaeval Welsh manuscripts but not heard in any other living Welsh dialect.

Another distinctive feature was the hardening of intervocalic consonants, as scholars describe it. When people had had enough (as you may have had at this point) they would say ‘Dicon’ (not ‘Digon’). Between Giffach Goch and Glyngwr (Glynocwr in y Wenhwyseg) there used to be a pub called the ‘Dim Racor’ (‘Dim rhagor’ ‘No more’) after the teetotal landlady’s all-too-frequent command to her customers. In the same way, the pond called Skipper Wen above Tredegar was the local pronunciation of Ysgubor Wen.

Some of the idioms used in speech in the Valleys today reflect the constructions of y Wenhwyseg. When we don’t care for someone we say ‘I got no looks on him’ – an almost exact translation of the Welsh ‘Sdim golwg gen i arno fe’. Often we don’t call someone – we will call on them – ‘galw arnyn nhw’ in Welsh. Words like twp, cwtsh, didorath, danto, ach-y-fi have given colour and flavour to the Wenglish recorded – and celebrated – by John Edwards in his books Talk Tidy and More Talk Tidy (both reprinted 2003). They reinforce the comment he quotes from an expert in linguistics, “Of course they still speak Welsh in the valleys – but now, they speak it through the medium of English”. And you will realise now that this is not just Welsh – it is y Wenhwyseg.
So what happened to this dialect? The census returns record the rapid decline in the numbers of Welsh speakers in the south Wales valleys during the twentieth century. Scholars like Dr Sian Rhiannon Williams have studied this process and noted the factors which led to it (See her *Oes y Byd i'r Iaith Gymraeg*, Cardiff, 1991). Others, like Mary Wiliam, have studied the characteristics of the dialect in the last stages of its decline (see her *Blas ar Iaith Blaenau'r Cymoedd*, Llanrwst, 1990, which draws on her own M.A. thesis on the Welsh dialect of Tafarnau Bach in the early 1960s and Lynn Davies’ M.A. thesis on the dialect of Merthyr Tudful and the surrounding area in the late 1960s).

The influence of an educational system and a society which saw the Welsh language as an obstacle to progress and to ‘getting on in the world’; the growth of media such as cinema and radio which were initially entirely in English and ignored Welsh culture; the decline in influence of the chapels which were the strongholds of the language and the distinctive culture of the nonconformist, liberal Welsh-speaking society of industrial south Wales – all these played their part. So too did social factors such as emigration in search of work in the 1920s and 1930s and marriage to non-Welsh speakers.

Another powerful factor was shame: the feeling amongst many speakers of *y Wenhwyseg* that if Welsh was a bad thing, their version of it – dropped h’s, odd pronunciations, funny words – must be the lowest form of a bad thing. They heard the Welsh of William Morgan's Bible in chapel, and in their hymns they sang the Welsh of William Williams and Ann Griffiths. They became ashamed of the Welsh they spoke: they did not believe they ‘talked tidy’ at all. It was not ‘Cymraeg deche’ – ‘proper Welsh’. Many chose to speak English (or Wenglish) to each other, believing this to be ‘better’, reflecting an attitude of mind noted as early as 1585 by an anonymous writer:

"... some of the Welsh are so tasteless and shameless, that ... they claim to have forgotten their Welsh before they have learnt English. This vanity and childishness in the Welsh causes the English to suppose their language worthless" (Gerald Morgan, *The Dragon’s Tongue*, 1966).

Most significantly of all, parents who could both speak Welsh chose not to pass the language on to their children. This was a greater blow to the survival of the dialect than the steady influx of English-speaking migrants.

This is how it could happen in one family – my own. In 1911 a Rhymney shoe shopkeeper called Twynog Jeffreys died. He was a native of Talsarn, Llanddeusant, and had come to live in Rhymney in 1875 with his wife Elin, the daughter of John Evans of Abernant, Aberdare, well-known in his day as a campaigner for temperance and a writer for Welsh-language papers such as *Tarian y Gweithiwr*.

Twynog Jeffreys had earned his living as a puddler in the iron-works at Abernant before becoming an agent for the forges there. He was a poet, and the friend of poets such as Ossian Gwent, Islwyn and the Archdruid Dyfed, who edited his biography. While he was an active participant in the lively cultural life of the Welsh-speaking community, Twynog was very aware of its fragility. He repeatedly urged his five children to ensure that they spoke Welsh to their children. But only two of them, Polly and Myfanwy, did so. Like their mother, they spoke *y Wenhwyseg*.

Myfanwy Jeffreys was my grandmother, and I grew up in her household. She certainly spoke Welsh with her children and with me – but she spoke English with her husband, David, even though he was a fluent Welsh-speaker from Cwm Ann near Lampeter. Myfanwy and David had five children themselves. All spoke *y Wenhwyseg*. Three of them married Welsh-speakers and, in accordance with their grandfather’s wish, passed the language on to their children. But only...
One married a speaker of y Wenhwyseg and the language died in the next generation of the family.

None of Twynog’s great-grandchildren passed on the Welsh language to their children. Only one of them — my childless self — lives in Wales and speaks a version of y Wenhwyseg. None of Twynog’s great-great-great-grandchildren speak Welsh — and none live in Wales. Lovely as they all are, no-one calls them by y Wenhwyseg’s words of endearment — calon (‘heart’), shitan (=sidan, ‘silk’, meaning ‘precious’). They mean all the world to their parents, but no-one tells them they are gwerth y byd i gyd.

Yet there is a reviving interest in this vanished dialect. Maybe its decline provides an uncomfortable paradigm for the situation of the Welsh language in some parts of Wales today. Maybe the characteristics of the dialect, its richness of expression and its strong individuality make it attractive to writers. Whatever the reason, you can visit a remarkable number of websites devoted to the language, and, if you can read Welsh, you can enjoy a truly outstanding novel, Pan Oeddwn Fachgen by Mihangel Morgan (Talybont, 2002), in which the author tries, as he says in his introduction, to give something of the flavour and the atmosphere of the y Wenhwyseg. He not only succeeds in doing this, but gives an unforgettable picture of growing up in a Welsh-speaking family in a Valleys town in the 1960s.

Enormous wealth has been made out of the Valleys of south Wales, but it has passed through them. It didn’t leave much trace. The descendants of the workers who produced the wealth still live there, and the revival of some communities, like Blaenafon for example, can give us all hope for the future. The second half of the twentieth century has seen a revival of the Welsh language, and thousands of Valleys young people are now Welsh-speaking — but speaking a new version of Welsh sometimes dignified with the title of ‘y Rhydfeleneg’ — the dialect of Rhydfelen, the first Welsh-medium secondary school in south-east Wales. It is very unlike y Wenhwyseg indeed!

It is ironic that the very years that saw the growth of Welsh-medium education in the Valleys saw the final decline of their own dialect of Welsh. But I hope that in their hearts these young people keep alive the best of the traditions they have inherited, a pride in the language and the culture preserved for them and a hope for a better future. In y Wenhwyseg the common response to the greeting ‘Shwt ych chi?’ (‘How are you?’) was ‘Clawd a balch a byw miwn gopath’ (‘Tlawd a balch a byw mewn gobaith’ ‘Poor and proud and living in hope’). That should be the motto of reviving valley communities.

• Elin Jones, now an educational consultant, was formerly a teacher and also worked with National Museums Wales.
never having to say sorry

Peter Stead

It turned out I was the only person interviewed for the job, but it still took WAG two years to confirm the terms of my appointment. The main difficulties occurred over the job description and the terms of reference. I am to be called the Commissioner for Redundant Ideologies. My task will be to provide counselling and reassurance for all those Welsh men and women who, in years gone by, found identity and purpose by committing themselves wholeheartedly to a totalist ideology.

Perhaps nowhere in the free world has ideology died so decisively and spectacularly as in Wales. This historic process has not necessarily affected individuals in a devastating way for the Welsh are born optimists, and in general we have adjusted satisfactorily.

Nevertheless there have been reports of occasional sleepless nights, guilty dreams and heavy drinking, and essentially I have been called in to comfort those so afflicted. Accordingly I have launched a programme that aims to bring together those experiencing post-ideology anxiety (clinically a form of agoraphobia) with the purpose of reminding them of how important their years of belief were in shaping modern Wales. Most lapsed ideologues are fully aware that they can forge lucrative careers in Wales, but my job is to convince them that they should not feel guilty about success, and that there is no harm in indulging in well-controlled nostalgia.

I have derived most fun from working with the former Non-conformists. Of course, no group has suffered such a loss of meaning and status as these former Christians who not only controlled the politics of Wales but also determined the whole nature of its culture. We have had several weekends in session at Morriston where the highlights were the hymn singing and the services in which well-known S4C actors performed the sermons of Howell Harris and Christmas Evans. The first assessment called for participants to recite the Book of Romans off by heart, but relief was provided by the mock funerals held at the Crematorium where unfailingly the singing of O Fryniau Caersalem made the tears flow and served as confirmation that the old loyalties and certainties were still at hand.

The weekends for former Marxists held at Caerau near Maesteg were far more high-powered in the sense that MPs, Life Peers, Cabinet Ministers and Vice-Chancellors were fairly thick on the ground. There have been lengthy formal sessions concentrating on the textual analysis of the major works of Marx, Gramsci and Noah Ablett, but there was time for visits to the Big Pit, darts tournaments and for marches led by brass bands through the streets of Maerdy. The most popular speakers have been Cabinet Minister John Reid, who outlined the ways in which the Blair Revolution was destroying the British ruling class; the Vice-Chancellor who spoke on ‘Bureaucracy: the Highest Form Of Democracy’; and the representative from the Cuban Tourist Board.

Internment was a major theme of the weekends I organised for former Welsh language activists. All sessions were held at Gower’s Fairy Hill Hotel and meals were eaten either there or at selected Mumbles restaurants. However, all accommodation was provided by Swansea Prison. What is most intriguing about these gatherings is the mix of nostalgia (day-trips to Liangrannog and Dafydd Iwan concerts), global perspectives (talks on the language struggle in the former Soviet republics and Indonesia) and business sessions on overseas marketing and investment and buying holiday homes in Provence and the Pyrenees.

Of late more and more of my time has been taken up by perhaps the most important group of old believers in Wales, namely the veterans of the old Temperance Movement. These sessions, held in conjunction with Alcoholics Anonymous, are held in the Pop Factory in Porth with all meals being taken place in various Italian cafes in the Valleys. The main outcome of these deliberations is the launch of a movement that aims to persuade the Assembly to introduce Prohibition in Wales. The view is that only a total ban on the sale of alcohol to everybody under the age of 21 and earning less than £75,000 a year can save public life in Wales and give the nation any coherent identity and integrity.

At every gathering I have organised the general feeling has been that Wales is great today only because in the past young people had clear beliefs. Of course people have to grow up and put aside notions as they become mature consumers and bureaucrats. Nevertheless the young of today urgently need to discover some form of initial faith. The Assembly has now commissioned me to find it. I will report back.