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Wales and the Union

When will the dragon roar?

CONTRIBUTORS

Carwyn Jones AM • Nicolai E. Engesland • David S. Moon
Alan Convery • Calvin Jones • Syd Morgan

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Editorial team

Øivind Bratberg [Editor]

Kristin M. Haugevik [Associate Editor]

Atle L. Wold [Associate Editor]

Henry Allen

Postal address

P.O. Box 6 Blindern

N-0313 Oslo, Norway

Email

mail@britishpoliticsociety.no

Website

www.britishpoliticsociety.no

Print

Reposentralen, Oslo, Norway

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Memorial in Mametz, France, devoted to the 38th (Welsh) Division's fight to conquer the Mametz Wood during the First Battle of the Somme in 1916.

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Editorial

The forgotten player in a re-constituted union

In a year when the Scottish independence referendum was on everyone's lips it is only in the aftermath of the vote that its wider implications for Britain as a whole have been brought to the fore. The consequences for England, now the only part of the union without a separate legislature, were raised by Prime Minister David Cameron the morning after the Scottish No. His immediate indication that "English votes for English laws" must be considered for the House of Commons turned a page on the Scottish campaign. In doing so, however, it also opened the door for all the other issues to take into consideration if a new territorial balance is to be forged. In this re-United Kingdom, Wales plays an absolutely essential role.

The present issue of *British Politics Review* approaches the state of Welsh politics from different angles. The articles we present provide telling evidence of the political development Wales has gone through since 1999, when the first elections for the Assembly were held. It was a timid start to a political entity that has since become, if not a political powerhouse, then a real political arena. It is an arena which debates and interprets what Welsh identity can be in the twenty-first century, as part of the union but with its separate ideas.

The political parties have been, at the one and the same time, the creators of these changes while also being forced to change and adapt themselves. The articles in the present issue dealing with the Labour Party, the Conservatives and Plaid Cymru show that while processes in Wales share many similarities with Scotland, they are fundamentally different too. Moreover, it can be argued that nationalism in Wales is rather different from that in Scotland. The former is a civic nationalism, in which identity is forged less through age-old institutions – as in Scotland – and more through cultural representations, such as the Welsh language. It is, however, also a nationalism which has little to fall back upon in the form of cutting-edge industries or economic might.

We hope the following selection of articles may shed light on some of the issues, and debates which characterise Wales today – a country further from the fundamental crossroads than its Celtic cousin in the north, but with intricate and significant challenges of its own.

Øivind Bratberg and Atle L. Wold (editors)

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Our future union – a perspective from Wales

By Carwyn Jones

Rt. Hon Carwyn Jones
AM is the First Minister of the Welsh Government, representing the Labour Party. The speech reprinted here was given to the **Institute for Government** in London on 15 October 2015.



The manuscript can be found at <http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/events/keynote-speech-rt-hon-carwyn-jones-am-minister-wales-our-future-union->

Thank you for inviting me to speak today on the future Union. It is good to be here at the Institute for Government, where issues like governance and accountability are taken seriously. This is a bit of a minority interest in some quarters. I should know, I have been talking about constitutional reform for years. It was a struggle to get people to recognise the importance of having a sensible and established position well before the Scottish vote. Then of course, we have the referendum and suddenly the Union is centre stage. So, now we face a new reality. After the referendum, can we meet the challenge of reforming the Union? Or will we do the minimum necessary to honour the pledges given to Scotland and hope the problem goes away. That is the issue I want to address today. My fundamental point will be, let's stop talking about devolution, whether to Scotland or Wales, and let's start thinking about the Union as a whole – and that means England too. Why? Because devolution has already fundamentally changed the governance of the United Kingdom. This was clear before the Scottish referendum was even in prospect, and it has become blindingly obvious since then. Public support for the devolved Parliament and Assemblies has created a presumption of popular sovereignty in the different parts of the UK, which has fundamentally challenged assumptions about a centralised British state. So much so, that I believe we should stop talking about devolution, what powers can be handed down by a reluctant Whitehall, and start talking about the Union, and the issues we must share with each other. The referendum campaign underlined this.

The Union. Let me put my cards on the table: I believe in the United Kingdom. Just not the one we have today. I want change for the very reason that I want the component parts of the UK to stay together, our people travelling freely, trading freely, sharing the institutions we have built together. I was relieved when the people of Scotland voted decisively to reject independence and remain within the UK. The result of the referendum was clear - with a greater than ten point gap in favour of the 'no' side.

As far as Wales is concerned, we have never been interested in independence. I have no desire to see a separate Welsh pound.

We value Britain's common defence and our contribution on the international stage. And events in Scotland have emphatically not led to a surge of separatist sentiment west of Offa's Dyke. If anything, it appears that people in Wales have seen what was taking place in Scotland and concluded that we are - in last month's terminology - Better Together. That's not to say that the media aren't too quick to think that Wales is, or ought to be, a mini Scotland, always running to catch up with our Celtic cousins. If Scotland is considering leaving the UK, then surely Wales should want to do the same? And, when Wales fails to fit that convenient template, the explanation has to be that there is something wrong with us. We lack ambition. We are timid. We are missing the chance to achieve our historic destiny. This is all nonsense. But then we've long realised that it isn't easy being Welsh. For years we've had to put up with football commentators who referred to the English team as "we". We saw the interchangeability of the terms "English" and "British". The newspapers we read are mainly printed in London and in the main don't cover what happens in Wales. Many have Scottish and Northern Irish, but not Welsh editions. For years our language was ignored or worse, and we're not represented on the flag of the state that we're a part of. Even Lord Ashcroft called Cardiff Central and "English marginal" recently.

Before I turn into a younger version of R S Thomas, I should add that Wales's cultural identity is strong. It is thriving. The fact that it survived a period when we had virtually no national institutions is remarkable. But we reject the binary choice – Welsh or British. We are Welsh, British and European. Welsh for the Six Nations, British for the Olympics, European for the Ryder Cup. Simple! But this is about so very much more than sport or culture. In the last stages of the independence campaign, I travelled to Scotland to put the spotlight on the social case for the Union. Indeed, Gordon Brown made these arguments the feature of the last days of the campaign. In essence he made the case for the Union on the basis of social citizenship and solidarity. For Wales, this issue is critical, because it is a project which we identify with. We feel part of it.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Wales was heavily involved in movements for reform. These battles, for democracy, for trade union rights, for basic living standards, had a Welsh dimension, but they were part of a broader canvas. We worked to build a better Wales AND a better Britain, side by side with our compatriots in other parts of the UK. I believe that this is why independence holds so little appeal in Wales. Our battles were never for Wales alone – and improvements in the lives of ordinary people were never won by Wales alone but through the solidarity of united peoples acting for the common good. Irrespective of thirteenth century history, Wales in 2014 is part of a voluntary union of four nations, by the consent of the overwhelming majority of Welsh people. This is not some craven or supine position – it is based on a cool, collective analysis of our vital interests.

But even so, there is growing support for Wales to take greater control of its own affairs. In a nutshell, we don't want to undermine the ties of solidarity and citizenship that link us to the rest of the UK, but we want to be able to respond to the needs of Wales in line with our political values. And, at the expense of trying your patience, I have to insist that we want and need to be able to do this within an overall financial settlement that is demonstrably fair to us and fair to the rest of the UK.

Financial reform. Financial reform is key to ensuring a stable and lasting Union. The current funding system that operates in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland – the Barnett formula – makes no attempt to answer that most fundamental question: how much does each nation actually need to spend in order to deliver its public services? Instead, the formula rolls forward an arbitrary baseline established in the 1970s and adjusted only for population size. Barnett is, frankly, the constitutional equivalent of fixing a hole in the roof with blue tack and cardboard. Lord Barnett is one of the least complimentary people you'll hear on this subject. Indeed yesterday was his 91st birthday and perhaps the best belated present he could have would be a new system of providing fair funding to the constituent parts of the United Kingdom. The British state has done an amazing job in managing to ignore this problem for over 30 years. Nonetheless, if there is to be a lasting settlement that can secure support of citizens in all parts of the UK, it has to be addressed. The Whitehall/Westminster shoulder shrug does no one any credit.

By far the best solution from a UK perspective would be for the funding of the devolved administrations (and the regions of England too) to be put on a new basis, with an assessment of needs at its core. That really shouldn't be controversial. Needs-based funding simply means that the distribution of resources across the UK should take account of factors such as demography and health status. That seems straightforward to me. This is not special pleading on the part of Wales, which does badly out of the present arrangements. Nor is it the politics of grievance, in fact it is the reverse. It is about recognising that all parts of the UK are entitled to a fair share - no more and no less. In Wales we do not hand out the begging bowl. We contributed greatly to the prosperity of the United Kingdom through coal, steel, tinplate and slate. Is it unreasonable therefore that we should receive a fair share of the pot?

In politics, of course, you can never let the best be the enemy of the good. Given what the Prime Minister is reported to have said last week, I recognise there may be significant barriers to securing this sort of reform. If Barnett reform is not on the cards, then my priority has to be a fair deal for Wales within the present architecture. There is a perfectly straightforward proposition on the table, involving an adjustment to the formula as applied to Wales. This would take away its inbuilt tendency to drive our relative funding levels ever downwards. I'll spare you the technicalities, but this so-called funding 'floor' would go a long way to

securing a stable basis to devolution finance in Wales.

Devolving tax and welfare powers. So I believe that financial reform is in the best interests of the United Kingdom. Once achieved, it is then perfectly sensible for devolved Governments to take on greater responsibility for raising their own resources. Both Wales and Scotland have taken steps in this direction in recent years. As someone who is instinctively pro-devolution, I cannot object to moving further towards financial autonomy for Wales and Scotland. I would also welcome England, joining that journey, if that is their wish. But, if handled badly, tax devolution has the potential to cause havoc with the integrity of the UK. As a believer in the UK and in fairness, I recognise that many taxes are better run from the centre on a pan-UK basis. There are real dangers in devolving corporation tax, for example, to some parts of the UK, but not to others. That risks handing a permanent tax advantage to certain nations or regions, leading once again to damaging perceptions of unfairness. Unfettered tax and spend autonomy would create a situation where the poorest areas had the worst public services. This would ride roughshod over equity and needs, and would present real risks to the Union's stability and cohesion. On the other hand, there is a good case that different parts of the UK should be able to influence the balance between levels of personal taxation and levels of funding for public services, provided they bear the cost of variation. Partial devolution of income tax, if underpinned by a fair overall settlement, would be one way of achieving that goal.

Thinking more radically, we may over time want to look at fundamentally restructuring our tax system, drawing lessons from places such as Germany. For example, it could make sense to me, to combine pan-UK solidarity taxes, which ensure equity across the Union, along with extensive devolved flexibility to top-up or reduce certain tax rates (and budgets) in line with local preferences. I have spoken at some length on finance, because it is so critical in enabling us to deliver for the people who elected us. But let me then briefly address one key aspect of the other side of the coin. It remains to be seen whether devolution of welfare powers will be on the table for Scotland and indeed for Wales. Whatever is on offer, the Welsh Government will want to weigh up the benefits and risks very carefully. Without financial reform, and a proper transfer of resources, our room for manoeuvre is limited.

Quite apart from the financial pros and cons, we should also think very carefully about why, exactly, specific benefits should be proposed for devolution. In recent days, a number of people – and I am one of them – have spoken about establishing "Home Rule" for Scotland and Wales. We should remember that that language was first used long ago, before government accepted responsibility for establishing universal systems of social protection for all our citizens in the UK: in other words before the welfare state was put in place. If there is to be a modern form of Home Rule, we must be careful that it does not serve to undermine that enormously important achievement.

Our welfare state establishes a certain set of rights and entitlements for our citizens which apply wherever they live within the UK. I place a strong value on the fact that we all have an equal claim on the safety net that protects us – however imperfectly – from Beveridge's five famous 'giant evils'. So I see social security as one of the core components of our common citizenship – one of the great achievements of the UK. I would not want that safety net to fray as a result of ill-considered or rushed reforms, which seems to me what we might get from Whitehall, particularly when it is all being bundled up in the English votes for English laws debate. Indeed, we often talk about devolution in terms of the three smaller nations, but let me be clear, we must address devolution for England too.

The Union of the future. That brings me to my final point – where are we heading as a Union and how do we get there? The key issue is cultural – there has to be a change of mindset at the centre. As I said earlier, we have to move from a devolution mindset to a New Union mindset. A devolution mindset starts with the assumption that the Westminster Parliament is sovereign and we are fundamentally a centralized state. That thinking has led us to making concessions to national feelings, by way of specific limited delegations to the so-called devolved administrations. A New Union mindset, on the other hand, says that the UK is a state governed by four representative institutions. Those Parliaments and Assemblies embody popular sovereignty in each part of the country, and yet work with one another for our mutual benefit. From that standpoint, the focus should then be on a realistic assessment of the benefits of a New Union, on defining the powers which it is agreed should be held at the centre. Everything else should be decided locally, with direct accountability at that level, and transparency of decision making to the citizen.

On the day after the Referendum there were encouraging signs of a change of mindset. There was a recognition that the Old Union had been swept away. The Prime Minister recognized (at least for a few moments) the implications for the whole of the UK, and said that Wales should be at the heart of the debate. Music to my ears – but how real is this change? Only a few short weeks since the referendum, there is talk of opting out of the European Convention on Human Rights and a new UK Bill of Rights. Let us not get into the substance of the argument, although I do find it astonishing. For today's purposes, the point is that such proposals are simply not within the gift of Westminster to deliver for the whole of the UK. The consent of the other Parliament and the Assemblies would be needed. We made this point very clearly in evidence to the Commission on the Bill of Rights. Again, my point is that Westminster has still not woken up to the fundamental shift that was already underway before the referendum. Indeed, three weeks later it doesn't appear that lessons have been properly learned if some of the rhetoric coming from Westminster is taken at face value. I should make clear at this point too that I believe nothing will damage the Union more than the renegeing of the "vow" made during the Scottish campaign. That is why I think we need some federal thinking. In the UK we seem incapable of addressing questions of state structure and governance on

grounds of principle. In the summer I was invited to speak to a conference of political scientists in Montreal, and this gave me an opportunity to talk about federalism in a UK context. I observed that here, federalism is associated with the spectre of a centralised European super-state located in Brussels. But we can look at it differently. As the Swiss socialist Andreas Gross has observed: "Rather than constituting a model for an ever closer political union or a European state, federalism implies a process of balancing power in a differentiated political order which enables unity while guaranteeing diversity."

Enabling unity while guaranteeing diversity is precisely the challenge we face. In other words, striking the best balance between national citizenship and local flexibility. Federal thinking gives us a new starting point to challenge the way we habitually view the state. The Old Union starts the discussion in the wrong place, because it starts with a presumption of centralization and undivided sovereignty. By contrast, the New Union starts from a premise of diversity and the legitimacy of different tiers of government. Now that we have democratic mandates at different territorial levels, we need to rethink where power lies and genuinely embrace multi-level sovereignty. These are complex issues and that is why, for the last two years, I have been pushing for a constitutional convention, something I have repeated again to the Prime Minister in recent days. I have suggested some outline terms of reference, and stressed the importance of the convention being jointly owned and supported by all four administrations, and not by the UK Government alone. I look forward to his reply. Because the work cannot stop there. To have true relevance, and to break through the anti-politics sentiment that risks suffocating the old, established parties, we must give ownership of the Convention to the people of the UK. The last thing this can become is a stitch-up behind closed doors, which gives the impression that politicians are carving things up in their own interests. A genuine re-founding of the Union, which I think is essential for its survival, must be done with society as a whole at the heart of the process.

Conclusions. My argument is that the fundamental underpinning assumptions about the nature of our state have disappeared for ever, but have not yet been adequately replaced. We need a process which will think through how our institutions of governance at Union level can reflect this new reality, of a UK which is a voluntary association of nations, self-governing in many key respects, but working together for our common good in a dangerous world. We need to think about new and better mechanisms to enable our legislatures and governments to work together more effectively on a basis of mutual respect. We have distinct identities in each part of the UK, but also shared cultural and democratic values which can serve as a strong foundation for a New Union. The task now is to think this through systematically in terms of our structures of governance at the Union level. Working through the implications for the different legislatures and governments, and their relationships one to another, will not be straightforward. Our best days though can be ahead of us – but only if we accept the need for change and work together to make it happen.

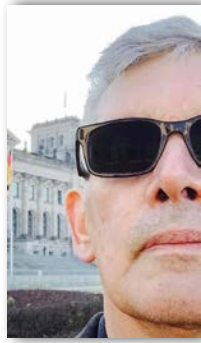
Welsh state-building or UK state-reforming? Plaid Cymru and the Scottish Nationalist Party

By Syd Morgan

Supporters and opponents of secession routinely state that Scotland and Wales are “different countries”. The electoral fortunes of their respective nationalist parties demonstrate this. Post-war, Plaid Cymru was the first to gain a Westminster seat (1966), whereas an SNP member was first elected to the European parliament (1979). Plaid Cymru was the initial beneficiary in the first devolved elections (1999), but the SNP was (narrowly) first to enter government (May 2007). Plaid Cymru has members in the House of Lords (1992, 2011), which the SNP has rejected out of principle.

New Labour’s 1997 asymmetric democratic devolution settlement – “Devolution All Round” – across four territories reflected both principle and realpolitik. It was an essential component of peace-building in Northern Ireland; it reflected the powerful Scottish identity of the Labour Party ‘north of the border’; and the all-London elected authority abolished by Thatcher was reconstituted with a powerful Mayor. Was Wales included for the sake of completeness – and without much hope of popular consent? After all, on 1st March 1979, 80% of Welsh electors had voted against the weaker Welsh Assembly contained within the Wales Act, 1978.

The razor-thin positive majority (0.6%) in the 1997 Welsh referendum to “agree that there should be a Welsh Assembly” – implemented by the Government of Wales Act 1998 – gives credence to that. Seemingly, the narrow popular margin had a profound effect on Plaid Cymru’s attitude to the National Assembly. As official Opposition after the 1999 Welsh general election, the party’s 17 AMs made a strategic decision to support to the Assembly as a body, rather than prioritise holding the Welsh Assembly Government to account. The Assembly’s standing orders – inclusive and family-friendly – were designed to contrast with the Westminster bear-pit,



Syd Morgan is a Research Officer at the European Institute of Identities, Swansea University’s. A long-serving national party official, he has been a parliamentary candidate for Plaid Cymru and was founder-editor of *Radical Wales* magazine (1983-91). He is presently a PhD candidate researching the relationship between *Fionna Fial* and the Welsh Nationalist Party in the inter-war years.

largely eliminating confrontational politics but reducing robust scrutiny and, perhaps, public engagement. This new, inclusive model was reinforced by the formal rulings of presiding officer Dafydd Elis-Thomas (Plaid Cymru). The use of members’ first names in plenary sessions also blurred party differentiations.

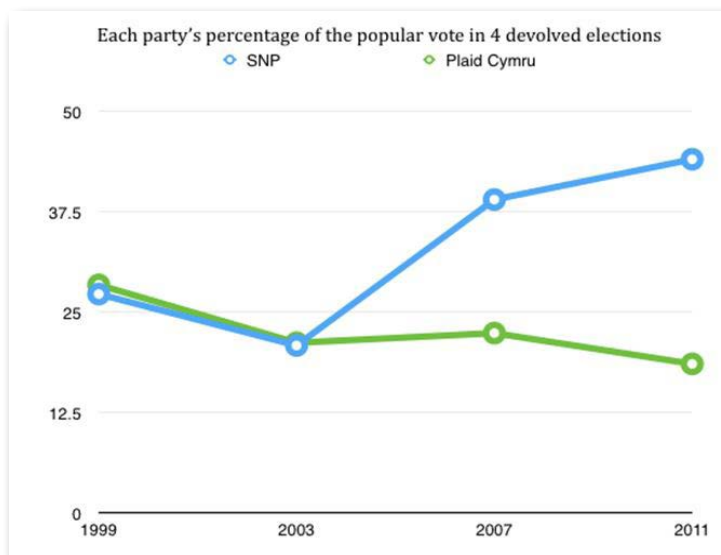
For Plaid, the Assembly quickly became its paramount focus, notably eclipsing its increased presence on local authorities, at Westminster and in the European Parliament. The Assembly Group constituted its largest full-time cadre, and reinforced its hegemony through election to national party posts. Research became focused on short-term Assembly issues rather than strategic state-building. The latter had been the party’s central characteristic since its 1926 foundation; state-building in opposition to the British state has been essential to Plaid Cymru’s *raison d’être*.

Party members’ reaction against the predominant ‘Cardiff Bay’ focus up to 2012 seemed to have been a mobilising factor in that year’s election of Leanne Wood AM as Leader. However, shortly afterwards, there was a shift back to an “Assembly First” policy, eschewing a party role as part of a civic nation-building coalition. Compare that with the Scottish Yes campaign, where the SNP became the backbone of a broader grass roots movement in favour of a Yes.

Unlike the SNP, which maintains principled abstentionism, Plaid Cymru accepts membership of the UK’s unelected House of Lords. Ex-MP Dafydd Elis Thomas was appointed in 1992. Despite this internally contentious ‘elevation’, the party itself decided in 2007 to nominate members. Three candidates were nominated in 2008 but only one – former party President and Assembly Group leader, Dafydd Wigley – has been appointed (2011). There is no academic research

into the efficacy of either party’s policy in relation to this chamber, but it does reflect different approaches to UK state structures.

Following the 2007 Assembly elections, party leader Ieuan Wyn Jones AM was determined to take Plaid Cymru into government as an alternative to Labour. The strongly preferred option was a Plaid-led, three party “Rainbow Coalition” with Conservatives and Liberal-Democrats.



The electoral fortunes of Plaid Cymru and the SNP in the four Scottish and Welsh general elections from 1999 to 2011 are demonstrably divergent.

The prospect of collaboration with Tories engendered vociferous minority internal opposition. The delayed proposal fell due to Liberal Democrat dissension. Nevertheless, the shock prospect of Labour being out of government – in Wales! – and Plaid's eagerness to enter government coalesced with devolutionary social democrats in both parties engineering the remarkable *One Wales* programme of government in July 2007.

Notwithstanding 2007-2012, the parties have positioned themselves differently on the UK left-right spectrum. This mainly relates to different strategies for dealing with "toxic Tories". When the SNP group voted at Westminster to bring down the minority Labour government in 1979, Plaid MPs voted with Labour. That this vote ushered in the Thatcher government was a millstone around the SNP's neck for decades. Plaid (largely) escaped that opprobrium. In response, the SNP conference passed a now long-standing resolution never to form a coalition with the Conservatives. Alex Salmond has confirmed that policy for the 2015 Westminster election. Yet a motion to Plaid Cymru's 2011 conference not to include Conservatives in a Welsh cabinet was rejected in favour of any Plaid coalition government with other parties "beneficial to the people of Wales".

Plaid Cymru operates in a different geopolitical environment to the SNP. Wales was "incorporated, united and annexed to the realm of England" 478 years ago. The centralized jurisdiction of England & Wales still predominates. Under the 1707 Union of Parliaments, by contrast, Scotland retained its separate legal jurisdiction, onto which all its public law is built. Confirming the old lament that Wales was "so near to England", its primary communications are East-West (to Ireland and England, not internally north and south).

Scotland has a significantly separate media infrastructure, with independent national newspapers or separate Scottish editions of London ones. While the BBC has devolved regions in both territories, Scotland's major private commercial television station is outside the England & Wales ITV network. Wales is increasingly an undifferentiated branch of London-based media, with the exception of the Welsh-language television channel, S4C. This creates what this author has termed the "Welsh paradox": an increasingly powerful government and legislature without media scrutiny. (Perhaps affirmation of Thomas Jefferson's preference for "newspapers without government"?) Further, the Welsh public sphere is fragmented by the use of two languages – both official – that appear to have little crossover.

State-building or State-reforming? The headline policy difference between the SNP and Plaid Cymru has been on the core issue of independence. Opinion polls in both countries emphasise the significant and increasing divergence in public attitudes to the question.

Since 1999, Plaid Cymru has launched two attempts to build substantive independence campaigns, without making significant public headway. During the *One Wales* government – not least to counter criticism of 'too much consensus politics' – the party launched *Wales Can*, an on-line initiative to raise the profile of the issue and promote the case, particularly among social media users. This appears to have dissipated due to lack of input. Later, new Leader Leanne Wood set up three high-level party commissions – including one on independence. This was abolished before completing its work. Perhaps the party's reluctance to build a public case for independence – unlike the SNP – has become a self-fulfilling prophecy, given low opinion poll ratings for that option?

Instead, Plaid Cymru seems to focus on constitutional changes within the United Kingdom. It uses terms such as "rebalancing Britain" – constitutionally and economically – and makes frequent references to "these islands". When First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones, suggested the need for a UK constitutional convention, Plaid Cymru was the first to support it. Invariably, Welsh or UK government enquiries or commissions on more powers for Wales are four-party affairs, without minority reports. The overall impression in Wales is one of cross-party consensus on constitutional reform, as opposed to the Scottish set-up of SNP vs the unionist parties.

As the independence debate confirmed, the SNP has a comprehensive international and defence policy, matching its ambition for Scotland as an independent member of the international community. Its policies have been the subject of much critical analysis by specialist think-tanks and journals. In comparison, Plaid Cymru has never produced parallel policies for a Welsh state, relying, rather, on statements of principle and policies on specific issues. At Westminster, Plaid works with the SNP and the one English Green MP. Their votes on contemporary issues have been in lock-step: Afghanistan, Iraq, nuclear weapons, Syria, etc. Plaid Cymru leads on military welfare, understandable in a country with above average UK recruitment figures. The party's long-term reticence to propose such a fundamental expression of State policy appears to be due to sensitivity where local jobs – in preservation or prospect – are concerned.

Conclusions. There are significant differences between the fortunes of Plaid Cymru and the SNP since 1999, despite their common inheritance as progressive civic nationalist parties. Both nations' geographical, institutional and media infrastructures are powerfully instrumental in nationalist politics. Inevitably, both parties follow separate paths towards a seemingly shared goal. The difference appears to be the long-term persistent trajectory of the SNP compared with the uncertain, perhaps conflicted, strategy of Plaid Cymru since 1999. The SNP works alongside a substantial grassroots movement, its sister party much less so. Which is the chicken and which the egg?

Labour and the Union: a tale of horror

By David S. Moon

The end of October, beginning of November, is a particularly good time to talk about the quagmires constituting territorial politics in the United Kingdom. First, on October 31st we have Halloween; then, on November 5th, it is Bonfire Night. In different ways, both nights speak to Britain's present malady.



David S. Moon is a Lecturer at the Dept of Politics, Languages & International Studies, University of Bath. His research interests include post-devolution UK politics, rhetoric and oratory, and ideology and power relations in multi-level political institutions. His research aims to combine the insights offered by contemporary political theory with the analysis of day to day politics.

Halloween is a time for horror stories. For Great Britain, the Scottish referendum shock increasingly feels deeper than a movie 'jump scare'. Amidst terrifying scenes of nationalist momentum, the Union seemed to escape the referendum alive – just! Like a zombie's bite, however, the process appears to have left an infection which, while still only a few months out, already shows itself in signs of decreased brain function and irregular stoppages of the heart, as the Union stumbles forward, not quite yet the walking dead.

As the only political party in the United Kingdom that is Unionist for both ideological and electoral reasons this is bad for the Labour Party. Yet, the sickness currently suffered is largely due to Labour's own ineptitude, particularly the Westminster leadership. It is true that the still-by-name-at-least Conservative and Unionist Party has been playing a dangerous game post-referendum with its political rhetoric and pronouncements. However, Labour's poorly handled response to the sallies of the right-wing demonstrate a deep lack of understanding and concern for the lived history and political sensibilities within the Union's 'Celtic fringe' (as you find it patronisingly called).

The danger signs were clearly there during the Scottish referendum campaign. At first, while political debate flourished in Scotland, the situation went largely overlooked down South. It was only in the final months of campaigning that any real engagement occurred from London and when it did, the narrative articulated was far from heart-warming, a mixture of doomsayer threats, discouragement and emotional blackmail ("will someone think of the poor English left?!"). Those arguing Scotland was "Better Together" in the Union failed to craft a positive vision for the Union, crumbling into open panic as the Yes campaign appeared to take the lead, with the unionist parties signing-up to

hastily agreed 'vows' for greater powers for the Scottish Parliament following a No vote.

The closest Labour managed to a positive vision was Gordon Brown's prominent interventions towards the campaign's conclusion, wherein he emphasised collective struggles to forge the NHS – now devolved and far from *nationally* coherent – as the basis of British solidarity. This helped generating confidence in the No campaign's narrative, but even with a Labour-led victory in the referendum, the support for independence in alleged party heartlands such as Glasgow pointed to inherent problems to come – a disillusionment primed to explode at the first sign of any seeming 'betrayal' of the newly promised powers. This process started almost immediately.

When David Cameron used his morning-after speech to declare that, Scotland having rejected independence, a matter of first importance was to strip Scottish MPs of voting powers at Westminster (thereby pulling the pin on the grenade marked 'English Votes for English Laws'), Ed Miliband's team seemed taken by complete surprise. The high-pitched denunciations of the Prime Minister thereafter were undoubtedly correct but also clearly inadequate, being themselves largely partisan (the reforms would hurt Labour far more than the Conservatives). The rationale for the constitutional convention Labour raised as its counter offer was undermined by the immediate lack of any plan or idea Labour would take to such a convention, the latter thus appearing as a placeholder meant to park a difficult topic of debate.

"The support for independence in alleged party heartlands such as Glasgow pointed to inherent problems to come – a disillusionment primed to explode at the first sign of any seeming 'betrayal' of the newly promised powers."

Labour's policy on English devolution has not been clear since 2004 when regional devolution was smothered at birth by a negative North East referendum result. Labour's current policy – announced on Halloween, more than a month after the Prime Minister placed 'English Votes' on the agenda – involves setting up a new English Regional Cabinet Committee, regularly chaired by the Prime Minister, and with regional and city leaders present, and devolving some transport powers to cities, but this still offers no clear answer to the overall 'English question'. Moreover, by

trying to ignore the fall-out from Scotland at the national conference that followed directly after the referendum – where the message was all about the (English) NHS Labour want to fight the General Election on – the party looked out of touch, scared and without answers. Largely this is because the party seems unable to offer any comfort to English concerns on the one hand, or to convincingly reassure Scots that the terms of agreement on further powers will be acted upon in good faith.

Resultantly, even when powers *are* debated and devolved to Scotland, the party will have lost friends and supporters both in England and Scotland. As the SNP has doubled its membership since the referendum and now outstrips Labour support in electoral polling – seemingly denying the party a Westminster majority – the Labour Party has descended into a civil war within the Scottish Labour Party, with visceral attacks on the latter's lack of autonomy from London. Despondency has been grabbed from the jaws of victory.

That it did not have to be this way demonstrates how poorly the Labour leadership understands the post-devolution political reality. The basic outline Labour needed for a coherent response already existed. Carwyn Jones, Labour first Minister in Wales (represented elsewhere in this issue), has been advocating a constitutional convention, and warning that a solution would be needed to the English question post-referendum, for more than two years. Cometh the hour, however, Labour's lack of an answer showed no sign of having heard their highest elected official's arguments. If they had, the need for a constitutional convention would have been announced long before the referendum result was declared as Labour adopted a stance that, whatever the result, the Union would require renegotiation, and that the party would argue for a 'progressive' deal for all. Instead, there appeared the blasé attitude that a simple No vote would leave the Union largely unchanged, beyond some extra powers for Scotland. Furthermore, if the leadership had previously been interested in the Union's inadequacies and listened to its sub-national parties, it would not have vowed keep the 'Barnett formula' unchanged, when its underfunding of Wales is a matter of key political tension there. (That it also rules out English Votes for English Laws by linking spending per-head in England with the block grant levels for the devolved bodies is also missing from the debate.)

That Miliband's team have not been paying attention to the devolved settlement is clear, and it is at the root of Labour's present problems. Dangers also lie ahead with the possibilities of another referendum, should the Tories win in May 2015, this time on leaving the EU. The Prime Minister has ruled out a Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish veto should a majority of English vote to leave – but such

an eventuality would almost certainly see independence for Scotland return as a balloted question. In Wales, where £2 billion in structural aid from the EU has just been agreed between 2014 and 2020, the threat of an exit should be equally concerning. So, the zombie Union shuffles forward...

Yet, there are glimmers of hope for Labour in (parts of) the Union. In marked difference to Scotland, support for independence in Wales has dropped to record lows and while far from commanding, Labour leads the polls. Furthermore, rather remarkably, negotiations between all of the parties in the National Assembly and the Secretary of State for Wales, Stephen Crabb, over further devolution of powers has so far been measured and consensus forming, even with disagreements over the question of taxes. That this is the case even with continued attacks upon the Welsh NHS by the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Health – with disturbing Conservative rhetoric labelling Welsh patients in England's NHS "refugees" and Offa's Dyke the border between "life and death" – is impressive, though unlikely to hold. The recent announcement that Labour will replace the House of Lords with a senate elected by region – similar to a plan again advocated by Carwyn Jones in his earlier interventions on the Union – at least shows signs of grand constitutionalist thinking, albeit with a policy which (while desirable in substance) may not woo voters.

Is the Halloween horror story too grim then? Bonfire Night, by contrast, offers the closest thing that Great Britain has to a national day. As a celebration of the thwarting of religious extremists seeking to destroy the Union, played out via the ritualistic burning of their stray-stuffed effigies, its underlying hymn is one to the unity of Scotland, England and Wales, as well as the Protestantism that once time bound them together. However, to the celebrating public, the 'Guys' being burnt are now more likely to represent in their minds the political 'elites' of Westminster, rather than the terrorists who would explode them. A deep antipathy to politicians is, at least, something that unites people across the UK; however, it is far from the healthy basis for a solidaristic mythos of unity with the Union – a Union that looks particularly hollow-eyed, with a corpse-like pallor as it stares into the bonfires' flickering light.



Looking down? Ed Miliband, Labour Party leader, has yet to define a compelling vision for continued union to pacify Scottish and English concerns.

Welsh Conservatism: the unexpected evolution

By Alan Convery

If you had asked any observers of British politics in 1999 where they thought a revival of Conservatism was likely to take place, the answer probably would not have been Wales. Wales narrowly voted for devolution and the Welsh Conservative Party was so closely integrated into British structures that you would have been entitled to question whether it was in fact a separate entity at all from the statewide party based in London. Scotland had the much more distinguished history of Unionist thought and indigenous Conservatism.



Alan Convery is a Lecturer at the School of Social and Political Science, University of Edinburgh. His research interests are in broadly three areas: conservatism and the UK Conservative Party (especially in Scotland and Wales); territorial politics and public policy; and British, Scottish and Welsh politics.

It is somewhat surprising therefore that 14 years after the creation of the devolved institutions, the Scottish Conservative Party is asking whether it has lessons to learn from its Welsh colleagues. Although it is important not to exaggerate the revival of the Welsh Conservatives, it is clear that they have adapted to devolution much better than the Scottish Conservatives. After examining some Welsh Tory success, this essay suggests three key factors that helped them to find a distinctively Welsh and Conservative approach to devolution: the obvious deficiencies in the Welsh devolution settlement in 1999; the possibility of being in government in Wales; and the presence at the top of the party of a group of revisionist thinkers.

Since devolution, the Welsh Conservatives have gradually increased their representation in Cardiff and at Westminster. They now have 14 members of the Welsh Assembly, compared to just 9 in 1999; they also have 8 UK Members of Parliament in Westminster, compared to none in 1997, whereas the Scottish Conservatives have only regained one MP since the low point in 1997. It would however be misleading to present the progress gained in Wales as natural and inevitable. The Welsh Conservatives' first manifesto for the Welsh Assembly in 1999 did not suggest that they were a party at ease with devolution. On the contrary, it emphasised the dangers of the EU and of further devolution leading to the break-up of the UK. It reiterated the policy positions adopted under the last Conservative government. The Scottish Conservative manifesto in 1999 harboured a more open and constructive perspective on the new constitutional arrangements.

Later Welsh manifestos in 2003 and 2007, in contrast,

adopted a much more positive tone and emphasised investment in public services and enhancement of Welsh identity and influence. This commitment to Welsh distinctiveness is a key theme that the party has pursued since Nick Bourne took over as leader from Rod Richards in 1999. 'Welshification' is an ugly word, but it perhaps best describes the strategy adopted by party elites over the past decade. What factors made such a change of direction possible?

First, the most obvious way in which the Welsh Conservatives were able to get into the debate was on the question of the devolution settlement itself. It was not necessary to be a member of Plaid Cymru in order to conclude that the balance of powers in 1999 was inadequate. The Welsh Conservatives were therefore able to support further powers for the Welsh Assembly without it seeming like a concession to nationalists or a dilution of their commitment to the Union. This led eventually to the position where nearly all elected Conservatives in Wales campaigned for a 'yes' vote in the 2011 referendum on strengthening Welsh devolution.

Secondly, unlike in Scotland, the Welsh Conservatives were able to see a path towards government. If, as some have argued, the Conservative Party exists to be in power, then this is a powerful incentive to reform. The Welsh party system was such that any government in the Welsh Assembly that did not involve the Labour Party would have to include the Conservatives in order to have a majority. Thus, if the Conservatives wanted to be in government in Wales, they would have to be a viable coalition partner for two parties on the centre left: Plaid Cymru and the Liberal Democrats. The Conservatives concluded negotiations and were on the cusp of forming such a government in 2007. Indeed, they had changed so much that John Osmond concluded: 'With the Welsh Conservatives Plaid Cymru now has a serious challenger in terms of identity politics.' The prospect of being in government provided a goal and a rationale for changing the party. It is much more difficult to justify changes in a context where a party is simply attempting to be a more competent opposition.

Finally, the Welsh Conservatives were able to take advantage of these incentives because elites at the top of the party grasped the opportunity to change. The leader, Nick Bourne AM, and the chief policy adviser, David Melding AM, concluded that the only way for the Welsh Conservatives to prosper was to wholeheartedly embrace devolution and cultivate a distinctively Welsh image.

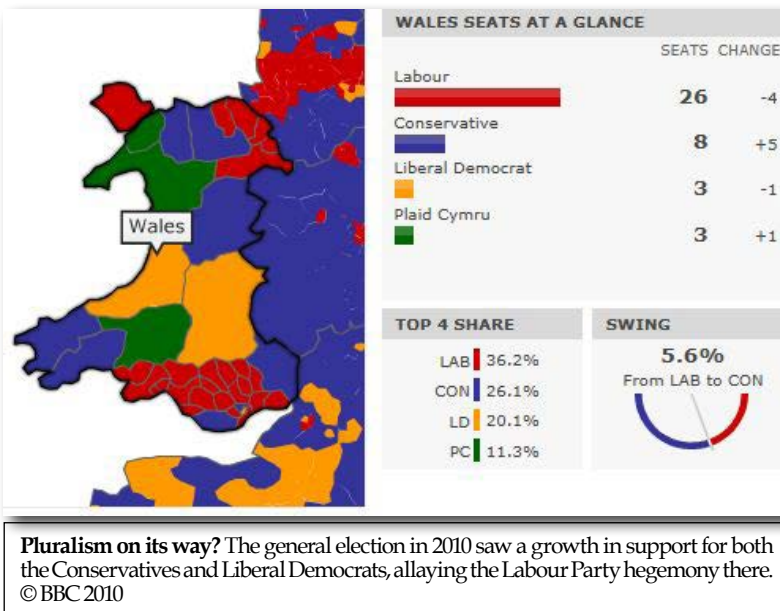
Thus, in stark contrast to the 1999 manifesto that seemed hostile to devolution, the party gradually came to emphasise its commitment to Welsh distinctiveness and moderated positions on key issues like health and education. Nick Bourne's foreword to the 2007 manifesto stresses the need to invest in public services. Such sentiments prompted one Conservative councillor to complain

that: 'I can't get a good number of people out working on the campaign. This is a wet, liberal manifesto that they don't want to sell on the doorstep.' Crucially, party elites tried to place themselves on the centre right of a Welsh, as opposed to a British, political spectrum. They began to see Cardiff, not Westminster, as the party's main focus.

This has sparked revisionist Conservative thought in other areas. Having voted 'no' to Welsh devolution in 1997, David Melding AM is now the leading Conservative thinker on how the party should respond to devolution not only in Wales but also in the rest of the UK. His book, *The Reformed Union*, which argues that the Conservatives should support federalism, is the most sophisticated attempt to imagine a Conservative future for the UK. It has also received support from Murdo Fraser MSP in Scotland. The language of federalism potentially provides a new way for Conservatives to talk about the United Kingdom, making it seem like a modern constitutional approach to working together, rather than a historical accident.

In electoral terms, the Welsh Conservatives' new approach appears to have paid off (although of course it is difficult to attribute direct cause and effect), as the party has seen a steady rise in support. In addition to a rising number of MPs and AMs, a particular highlight was the 2009 European Parliament elections, in which the Welsh Conservatives topped the poll. This success helped to sustain a narrative about the effect of the party elites' strategy. The ban on dual candidacy in Wales combined with the Conservatives' increasing vote share resulted in the leader, Nick Bourne AM, losing his seat in 2011.

However, there remain tensions in Welsh Conservatism. They have not yet been able to agree a common position on more powers for the Welsh Assembly.



Although most elected Welsh Conservatives supported a 'yes' vote in the 2011 referendum, they were not obliged to do so by a common party position. Moreover, the party still lacks formal autonomy from the centre. The leader of the Welsh Conservatives is still technically David Cameron, not Andrew R.T. Davies in Cardiff. As Welsh devolution evolves, it will be interesting to

see how the party balances different Conservative opinions about strengthening the Assembly and creating a more autonomous party structure. The abrupt cancellation of the Welsh Conservative Party conference in 2012 suggests that the party still has work to do in establishing itself as a distinct and serious force within the Conservative Party.

The journey of the Welsh Conservatives also underlines wider points about the Conservative Party's attitude to devolution. As in Scotland, the central UK party remains mostly relaxed about sub-state party autonomy, provided it does not interfere with the main objective of achieving a majority government at Westminster. In addition, ironically, the lack of attention paid at the centre to creating distinct Welsh party structures might have helped party elites. The absence of a powerful party central office bureaucracy (which had existed in Scotland for many years and was been retained after devolution) and the creation of a relatively weak Welsh Party Board resulted in fewer constraints for the leadership in the Assembly. In promising further powers for the Assembly, the Welsh Conservatives must also rely on decisions made at the centre of the party about how much it is prepared to devolve.

The unexpected success of the Welsh Conservatives stands out as an example of how British Conservatism can adapt to new circumstances while retaining a commitment to the Union. The political opportunity structure in Wales clearly provided a more favourable context for rethinking Conservatism than is the case in Scotland and it is important not to exaggerate aspects of their success. However, crucially, the Welsh Conservative Party had elected politicians who were prepared to think creatively about their response to the changing nature of the UK. This has been the key to their success.

Wales: a nation in search of a living?

By Calvin Jones

In 2012, Wales had a level of economic output per head almost 20% below that of the UK. In rural Wales, and the post-industrial South Wales Valleys it is almost 40% lower. Of the top ten municipalities in England and Wales with the highest levels of long-term illness and disability eight are in Wales. Such statistics have not changed in at least twenty years. Despite showing some progress in reducing reported levels of unemployment, Wales remains an economically dysfunctional place.



Calvin Jones is Professor of Economics at Cardiff Business School. He has published extensively on various topics related to the Welsh economy, such as tourism impact, housing and environmental impact.

One cannot understand current problems without appreciating longer term economic history. Wales, as currently understood, is wholly a construct of the industrial revolution. In 1801, the population of Wales was around half a million, largely working the land, or in the scattered market towns, or employed in the just-burgeoning ironworks at Merthyr and Blaenavon. By the turn of the twentieth century, the population was over 2.5 million, dipping as men left to find work during the Depression, then rising again to its current level of 3 million. The population boom was wholly industrial; at their height, the coalfields of Wales employed around a quarter of a million men and boys in mining and associated industries. The loss of that energy industry, following exhaustion of coal in the 1970s and 1980s, leaves a negative economic legacy that Wales has been unable to deal with, certainly to a far greater extent than seen in other UK former coalfields.

There are a number of reasons why Wales may have coped less well than other regions in the face of structural economic change. Some point to the topography of the mined Valleys; the steep-sided, narrow bottomed landscape where around a million live is unsuited to large scale inward investments; transport for goods or people is problematic. It may be that there is something culturally different about the Welsh – job takers, not job makers if you will – which makes them less adaptable to circumstance. It may be that Wales in fact suffers many of the same economic issues as resource dependent peripheral regions in other parts of the world, in Africa or South America, but that we do not recognise them, situated as Wales is

within a rich European country.

This latter approach has some merit as a framing tool. Like some other poor places, Wales has benefited largely from investment that is *resource* rather than *market* seeking. Initially, British capital was drawn to Wales to exploit the coal, and to build coal-dependent steel and heavy industry. In the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, foreign capital – the Americans, then Japanese, Koreans and Taiwanese – came to Wales to exploit labour rates that were low by Western European standards, but in a place that afforded access to the Common then Single Market. Latterly, investment has been about energy again – but now Wales' wind and tidal resources (and openness to nuclear) that are becoming important in the face of climate change and the end of 'easy' oil. This resource investment has been somewhat useful in mopping up the excess labour left after the decline of coal and UK nationalised industries, but where it has not been successful (outside a few well developed supply chains) is developing a sustainable regional economic model that encompasses a high level of economic autonomy, an enthusiasm for entrepreneurship or high levels of research and development. And of course, when a given resource is fully exploited or becomes relatively expensive, mobile foreign capital usually leaves, with little in the way of positive economic legacy.

In the face of a weak private sector, Wales has developed a strongly centrist approach to economic organisation and public service delivery, arguably reinforced by the inauguration of the National Assembly for Wales in 1999. The public sector is extremely important economically, with a quarter of the workforce directly employed in 2012, second only to Northern Ireland. Somewhat worryingly, the richest part of Wales – Cardiff and its Western hinterland – has the highest proportion of public sector employment (a third), raising questions about how far this conurbation can actually drive wider regional growth. As well as its direct importance, (with hundreds of thousands employed in aggregate in education and health)

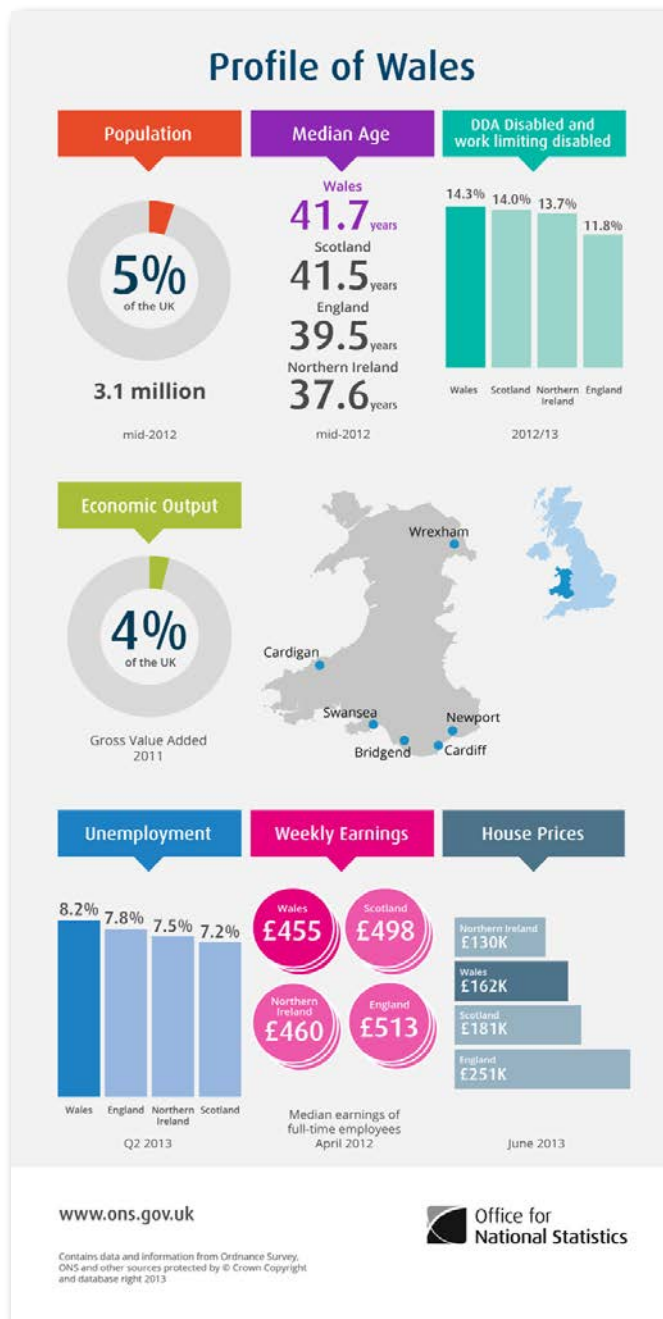
"The public sector is extremely important economically, with a quarter of the workforce directly employed in 2012."

the Welsh Government disperses money to many other organisations – for example through its administration of EU Structural Funds (West Wales and the Valleys attracts the highest level of support) and through the single farm payments that are a fundamental lifeline for over 10,000 small Welsh hill farms.

The first fifteen years of the Assembly have so far failed to spur even the start of any form of economic transformation. There are repeated and widespread claims that Wales is over-governed, with a regional government, 22 local authorities and 3 National Parks (albeit with moves afoot to reform this landscape). It is certainly true that developers and other economic actors (private and third sector, external and internal) report that Wales is not as fleet of foot as its small size suggests it might be.

The response to economic challenge in Wales has (for decades) sat squarely within wider UK regeneration and regional development approaches; focussing on increasing 'regional competitiveness' via (public) investments in skills, in encouraging entrepreneurship and in the research base; and in improving infrastructure and attracting more outside capital (mostly, but not wholly via the offering of industrial grants). More latterly, the Welsh Government has identified the Cardiff (and to a lesser extent, Swansea) City-Region as a driver of growth, following experiments in the North of England and overseas.

This is at a very early stage, and seeks to deal with the perceived issue that Wales has no large city (Cardiff is circa 330,000 in population) with which to lever agglomeration economies and drive a credible 'brand'. So far, the prospects are for a city-region is that without formal remit or properly pooled resources (unlike in, say Manchester), and based on partnerships with existing local authorities – which in Cardiff's case seems to be less than 100% enthusiastic. Whilst a city-region approach may have merit, little thought has so far been given to how this structure might interact with (or take development responsibility from) governments at a lower or higher spatial scale. The cynic might argue that a successful



and strong Cardiff Capital Region might challenge the Welsh Government's own primacy in economic policymaking, and hence the project, guided by Welsh Government, is doomed to be a talking shop.

A FOCUS by policymakers on improving competitiveness within, implicitly, the market-orientated, factor-mobile and regulation-lite structures of the UK and EU economies hides a fundamental unasked-question: what is Wales *for*, economically speaking?

Former strengths, in fossil resource and cheap labour have dissipated or been exposed to global competition. New investments in energy do not typically require large labour inputs, or deliver other benefits (such as R&D or significant supply chain opportunity). Wales is not just post-industrial, but in large part post-economic, with subsidy – via EU CAP and ERDF, for renewable power, or via government grants and soft-aid responsible for supporting economic activity rather

than direct, market-value sales and exports.

The loss of one or more of the few remaining large investors – Tata, Ford or Airbus (a Murco refinery is on the verge of closure) – would make this vulnerability even more stark. It is not all doom. Wales has a strong cooperative approach and orientation. A number of interesting social-economic experiments and community investments, notably in energy, are underway. The sustainable commitments of the Welsh Government are a strong point of difference that could be capitalised upon. These areas may bear economic fruit and prove a model for future prosperity, but it is hard to escape the notion that current, very mainstream economic policy attitudes, and the lack of ownership and connection between Welsh people and the key natural and other resources that surround them, are currently a barrier to development.

The state of 'the Senior Language of the Men of Britain'

By Nicolai Egjar Engesland

Wales has accommodated several languages for the better part of two millennia. At present the country has two official languages: English and Welsh. This article will provide the reader with a brief survey of the situation of the Welsh language in today's Wales, which will be seen in comparison with that of the two other surviving Celtic languages in the British Isles. A systematic comparison will not be made. Rather, the history of the language will be summarized so that the character of today's situation may become more apparent.



Nicolai Egjar Engesland is studying for his master degree at the Dept of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies, University of Oslo. He is studying Old Norse and Celtic languages and literatures.

The traditional division of the Celtic languages into P- and Q-Celtic is based on strictly linguistic grounds. Applied to the surviving languages this division leaves us with Welsh and Breton on the one hand, and Irish and Scots-Gaelic on the other. Before the Roman and Anglo-Saxon invasions P-Celtic was spoken in all of Britain south of Forth and Clyde. Q-Celtic was spoken in Ireland and was brought to Isle of Man and Scotland by the Irish. Manx, which became extinct in the seventies, and Scots-Gaelic are both descendants of the Irish language. Today the survivors among these languages are confined to the western and northern peripheries.

It was in the Middle Ages that the Welsh language was put to writing for the first time in Latin script. This, of course, was a prerequisite for the rise of a native, written literature, from which a number of important texts survive today. The native literary heritage has proved to be an important source of self-esteem and sense of nationhood in Wales, as it has in Ireland.

The loss of political independence in the year 1282 did not bring about a thorough change of the social order in Wales, and a degree of social stability ensured that the language was used both orally and as a medium of writing. It had both formal and informal registers, with which it could express the various aspects of human experience. Register-related issues have, however, played a not insignificant role in the history of Welsh language.

The Welsh language enjoys a far less threatened position than the other Celtic languages. It is indeed peculiar that the Irish language is struggling more than Welsh, seeing that Ireland both escaped the Roman expansion and is now a sovereign state. We are probably justified

in thinking that the Welsh translation of the Bible, published in 1588 (some two decades earlier than the King James Version), had a certain impact on the later development. It provided the language with a written standard. The milieu behind the significant revision of this translation in 1620 was an offspring of Renaissance learning combined with the ideals of religious reformers.

These Welsh humanists endeavoured to prove that Welsh had been the language of both worldly and religious learning in its previous history – but this was not the case in the 17th century. The publication of a grammar and dictionary was intended to reveal the richness of the language and marked the beginning of a period with a steady increase in Welsh-language publication. Yet already at this time the language was severely threatened, not least owing to a mind-set which is expressed in the following oft quoted extract from the satirical Wallography (1682): «if the stars prove lucky, there may be some glimmering hope that the British language may yet be English'd out of Wales». 'The British language' is Welsh. Roughly one hundred and fifty years before this, the same mode of thought had been formalized in the Act of Union of 1536.

During the first half of the 19th century there was an increase in the number of Welsh speakers owing to growth of population. At the same time there was a steady decrease in terms of percentage, which indicates a serious decline. One of the main issues also in recent years has been in-migration of monoglot English speakers into core Welsh-speaking areas. As a result of financial drawbacks these same areas have been drained of a considerable amount of young Welsh speakers. This is but a variety on an old theme: in

"The Welsh language enjoys a far less threatened position than the other Celtic languages. It is indeed peculiar that the Irish language is struggling more than Welsh, seeing that Ireland both escaped the Roman expansion and is now a sovereign state."

order to escape social immobility the use of English has traditionally been more or less inevitable. This is equally true for Ireland and Scotland.

The effect of the above is reflected by the census of 2011, which does indicate a certain decline in the total number of Welsh speakers during the ten years that had passed since the census of 2001. In 2011 562'000 people claimed the ability to speak Welsh. This meant a loss of about 20'000 speakers during the previous decade. It should be mentioned, however, that the census of 2001 showed a remarkable increase in Welsh speakers from that of 1991. The most important lesson to be learned from the facts presented in 2011 is therefore that the language will not continue to gain strength if left to itself.

The 2008 financial crisis had a negative impact on several important Welsh institutions. It must be mentioned that Sianel Pedwar Cymru (corresponding to the Irish TG4) does no longer receive funding from the British Ministry of Culture. This clearly exemplifies the attitude with which the Welsh-speaking public is met when theirs is but one among several concerns. It is an obvious advantage for the individual to be bilingual, but the fact that most, if not all, Welsh speakers are perfectly able to communicate in English makes it easy to think



Bilingual road markings near Cardiff Airport.

that the survival of the language is not necessary for mere utilitarian purposes. Times of economic austerity must be seen as responsible for turning the minds of enthusiasts from language-related matters to more immediate and, after all, more important concerns.

Even so, many people choose to learn the language. Speakers who have learned Welsh as a second language are of course valuable. Learning a language is a time-consuming task, and even though it is not harder to learn Welsh than other languages, attained fluency does show considerable devotion to the task, especially since communication is always possible through English. This is something of a problem for the learner, as native speakers are not always too enthusiastic when it comes to providing them with the essential conversational practice.

One should bear in mind that the extent to which the language is used varies considerably throughout the country. It is thus difficult to get a proper impression of the actual situation. One main reason for this is that the percentage claiming ability to speak Welsh might not necessarily correspond to the percentage actually using the language in their daily lives. For many people the Welsh language is a vital part of their identity, but that does not necessarily mean that they are active users of Welsh.

The Welsh language is today reasonably well grounded as a language of instruction. It is possible to be taught by means of the Welsh language throughout one's education. This is of utmost importance when it comes to sustaining the language. The teaching of Welsh has been compulsory in schools since the turn of the millennium. A result of this is that pupils without Welsh-speaking parents also gain a valuable insight into the language.

Each year the National Eisteddfod serves as a major cultural festival intended to promote the language and

culture of Wales. The fact that English is not allowed even slight participation ensures that the event is kept through the medium of Welsh. This cultural gathering serves to promote amongst other things a Welsh language literature, for instance by means of literary prizes and book-trading.

The Scottish independence referendum held this autumn provided an opportunity for discussion about the identity not only of Scotland, but also about the whole of Britain and the

British people. But independence has not really been an issue for Wales. The support for Welsh independence even lost a few percent in the wake of the Scottish referendum, thus reaching a record low (about 3%). The state of the Irish language shows that independence does not necessarily lead to strengthening of what has become the language of the minority, even if its status is heightened to that of 'first official language'.

A lesson learnt from the course of history is that political action and governmental interference might easily disturb the role of a language and cause its decline. It is a lot more difficult to restore its vigour by institutional and political means, which is acknowledged in the Iaith Pawb issued by the Welsh Government. The impulse must come from below. If a language has too strong ties with a certain mode of life it is all the more prone to extinction. Indeed the lament of many Welsh-speaking people has been not only over the language's threatened state, but also over the passing of the old order.

The famous English philologist and author J. R. R. Tolkien thought of Welsh as 'the senior language of the men of Britain'. If Welsh is to survive and stay healthy it is paramount that it does not also become the language of the seniors of Britain: it must be used in modern contexts as an alternative to English.

Recommended further reading

The article is mainly indebted to the following works:

-Davies, Janet (2014): *The Welsh Language: A History*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

-Owen Jones, Robert (1993): «The Sociolinguistics of Welsh», in: Martin J. Ball (ed.): *The Celtic Languages*. London: Routledge Reference, pp. 536-606. This work of reference contains articles on the sociolinguistics of all the living Celtic languages, including the revived Cornish and Manx. It is also a suitable introduction to Celtic linguistics, but do note that some twenty years have passed since its date of publication (1993).

How Scotland voted No

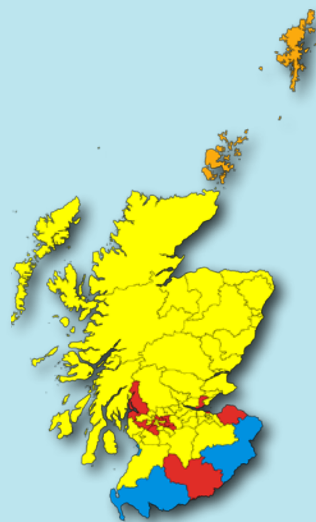
The results from the 18 September referendum

Given the drama of the last two weeks of the campaign, the result of the Scottish independence referendum was surprising to some by the scale of the No win. Notably, the margin between the two sides - 55.3 per cent vs. 44.7 - is larger than in both the Norwegian EU referenda. Yet, the mobilisation by the Yes side combined with a very impressive turnout has been interpreted as a wake-up call for the political elites in London.

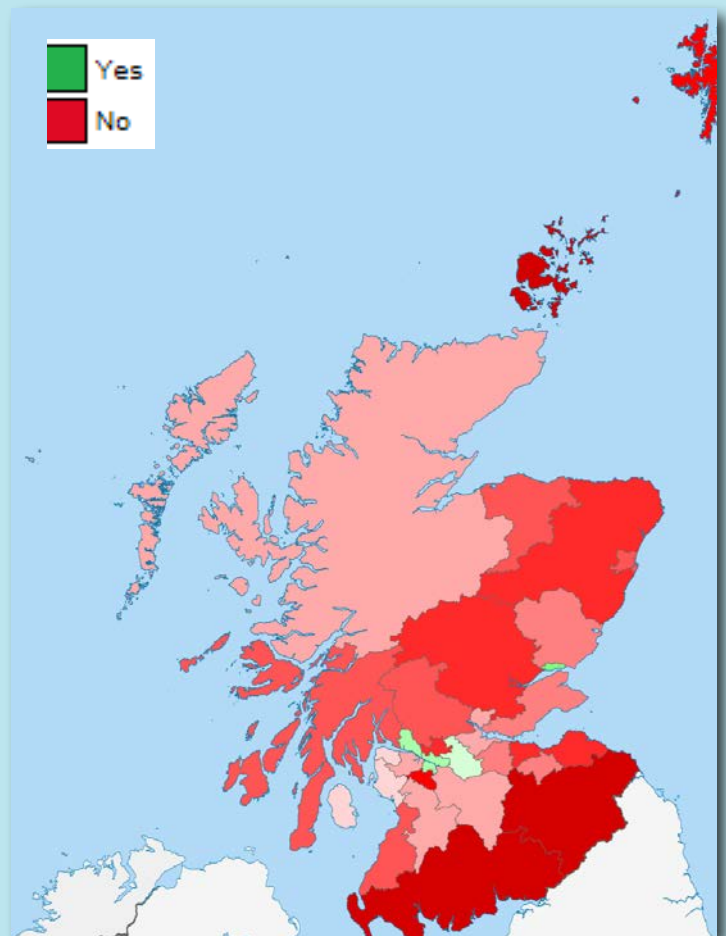
| Choice | Votes | % |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| No | 2,001,926 | 55.30 |
| Yes | 1,617,989 | 44.70 |
| Registered voters and turnout | 4,283,392 | 84.59 |

Interestingly, the Yes vote reached far beyond SNP heartlands. Although only four of the 32 council areas saw a Yes majority, the Labour stronghold of Glasgow was one of them, Yes securing 53.5 per cent.

Among the voters, the referendum split not merely along party lines (the SNP vs. the unionist parties) but along a range of other cleavages, such as class structure and level of unemployment in the area, the latter correlating with higher support for independence. That interpretation also fits with the fact that the campaign in favour of a Yes served to mobilise a range of underprivileged groups in Scottish society.



Results from the watershed 2011 Scottish Parliament election: SNP constituencies in yellow.



The referendum results: saturation of colour denotes strength of vote.

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What characterises the relationship between Britain and Australia? The winter-edition of *British Politics Review* raises the question of British-Australian relations today and in the past, taking the centenary of the Gallipoli-expedition during World War 1 as our starting point.

As the Australians

(together with the New Zealanders) prepare to mark the anniversary of a military operation which is often seen as having fostered a sense of national identity in Australia and New Zealand on ANZAC-day 25 April 2015, what are their thoughts about their relationship with the former colonial master? Will Gallipoli bring up sore feelings,

or does the popularity of Prince George, "the Republican Slayer" during the recent visit to Australia by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge suggest that the link with Britain is as close and warm as ever?

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