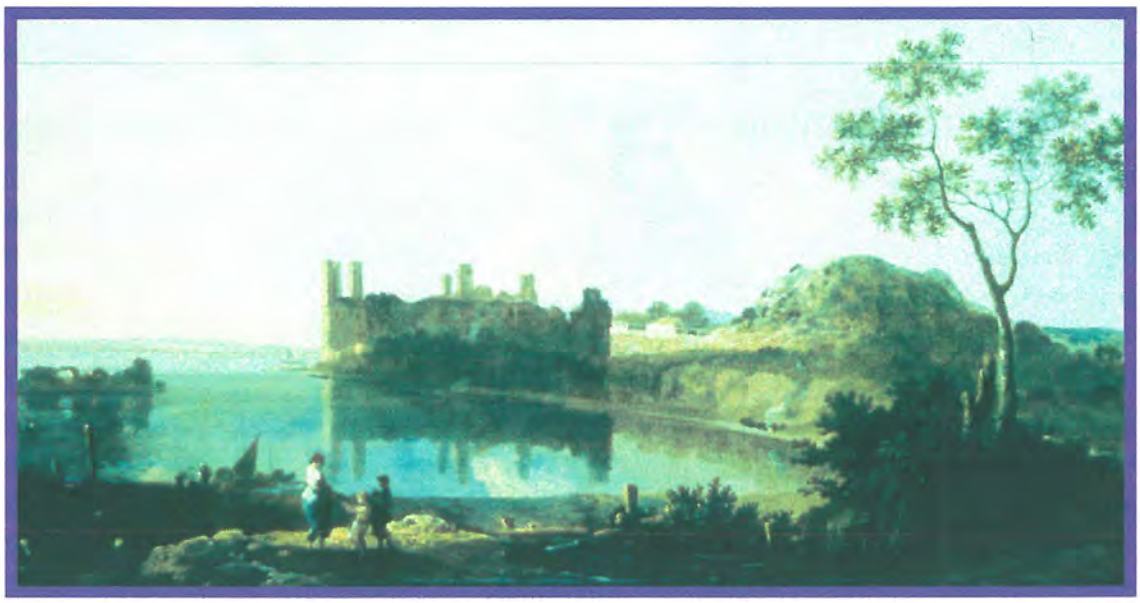
Cultural Atlas of Wales

Interim report



G1663

Report No. 412

Prepared for

Countryside Council for Wales

by

Dr D.Rh. Gwyn

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

- **The Countryside Council for Wales** is the Government's statutory advisor on wildlife, countryside and maritime conservation matters in Wales. It is the executive authority for the conservation of habitats and wildlife. Through partners it promotes the protection of the landscape, opportunities for enjoyment, and the support of those who live and work in, and manage, the countryside. It enables these partners, including local authorities, voluntary organisations and interested individuals to pursue countryside management projects through grant-aid. The Countryside Council for Wales is accountable to the secretary of State for Wales who appoints it and provides its annual grant-aid.

- **The National Trust Wales** is a charity governed by a voluntary body of trustees, the Committee for Wales, and is responsible for properties in its ownership. The vision of the National Trust Wales is to inspire present and future generations with understanding and enjoyment of the historic and natural environment through exemplary and innovative work in conservation, education and presentation.

- **The Gwynedd Archaeological Trust** was formed in 1974. It is one of four Trusts which operate across Wales. It is an educational charity as well as a limited company, governed by a board of Trustees who delegate the daily running of the Trust to a Director. The aim of the Trust is to advance the education of the public in archaeology. Using both its heritage management and consultancy services, the Trust offers information, advice and support to both public and private sectors, including local and regional government, schools and the public, as well as public utilities, developers and other consultants and environmental bodies. In particular, over recent years, it has built up an enviable reputation in Welsh archaeology and heritage management, notably in landscape, countryside and cultural matters. It also has experience of interpreting, presenting and promoting both its work and archaeological sites in the landscape to a wide public audience.

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The Cultural Atlas of Wales – Second development study

1. Introduction

The failure of the joint Countryside Council for Wales and National Trust Wales bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, spearheaded by Richard Kelly and Gwynedd Archaeological Trust to sponsor the *Cultural Atlas* project was inevitably a blow to all who had been involved in its preparation. However, both sponsors remain committed to the project, and the challenge is now to find a new way forward. To this end, CCW has asked the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust to produce two further exemplary chapters to add to the chapter on the Cambrian Railways produced for our HLF bid in 2000, and to identify potential sponsors.

2. Lessons from the failure of the HLF bid.

The obvious puzzlement of the HLF assessors as to many aspects of the bid should be a warning to us that the value of the project is far from obvious to people who are not landscape specialists. Whilst there was acknowledgement of the enthusiasm of the sponsors and of GAT staff for the project, the level and nature of questioning strongly suggests that the assessors could not understand from the bid document what the project sought to achieve. It is clear that if any future applications to any fund-awarding bodies are to have much chance of success, accompanying documentation needs to spell out very clearly indeed what the projects benefits are, and how they are to be achieved.

To this end, we need to be absolutely clear in our own minds as to the benefits the project is supposed to confer.

An academic study?

Is it *primarily* a contribution to the academic understanding of landscape? Whilst the project must be thoroughly researched and must cohere intellectually, and whilst both the methodology and the results must be such as will prove of interest and use to the academic community, the answer to this question has to be no – at least, not directly. The central message, that environment and human society affect each other in interesting ways at the local and regional level, was voiced by Fleure, and doubtless many others, in the early years of the twentieth century. There is every reason why we should now dust it down, place it on a new academic footing and give it a new gloss, but effectively it has been done before. In that the Steering Group has consciously eschewed a top-down discourse, we equally need to avoid a situation in which expert speaks to expert.

A management tool?

Is it therefore primarily a management tool? In that the *Atlas* seeks to encourage joined-up thinking among professionals such as environmental officers, planning decision-makers, then to some extent it has to be *a* management tool. Certainly this is in an important aspect of the work we propose. In Welsh-speaking parts of Wales in particular, we are used to the way in which the language is given encouragement and support, but the environment which sustained the (linguistic) culture is all too often altered or rubbed out, often with official sponsorship. If the *Atlas* encourages managers to make the connection between culture and environment, then it will have performed an important task.

National/regional/community benefit?

However, as discussion in the steering group has developed, we have come to see the *Atlas* primarily as a document which will both articulate existing traditions of belonging and place within Wales, and also which will encourage communities to take pride in their historic environment and to think about ways in which it can be conserved or managed. Just as we have been anxious to avoid a situation in which expert speaks to expert, so we have sought to avoid a situation in which experts lecture the uninitiated.

3. Further questions

There are a number of other questions which are worth raising at this stage.

Our Wales

If we follow through the implications of this position, there is room for some fine-tuning of the way in which the *Atlas* has been presented. The original indicative list of topics suggested by GAT in the light of Robin Gwyndaf's outline had, for instance, a very heavy Gwynedd bias, which I have now tried to correct. We must be very careful to avoid the assumption that Wales is most truly itself insofar as the conditions which historically and presently prevail in Gwynedd are present. These are the language, a strong sense of national identity, particular religious traditions, spectacular mountain scenery. Most members of the steering group have their roots very strongly in the north-west - Robin Gwyndaf in Cefn Brith and Cerrig y Drudion, Twm Elias in Nebo, myself in Dyffryn Conwy, Eurwyn Wiliam in Llyn, Merfyn Williams in Croesor, Rob Owen in Penmynydd, Richard Kelly in Llanddeiniolen. In addition, David Thompson and Peter Lord also identify very strongly with Welsh language culture.

So we must not remake Wales for the purposes of the *Atlas* in our own image. Richard Kelly has throughout stressed that the *Atlas* must take into account the emergent as well as the traditional aspects of Welsh culture, and he is absolutely right to do so. This will take us into areas with which we are perhaps not particularly familiar, such as new waterfront developments at Cardiff or *Catatonia*.

Gender bias

There are other ways in which we might present an unwittingly lopsided view of Wales and Welsh landscape. The Steering Group is entirely male. Apart from anything else, a grant-awarding body might well pick up on this. There are a number of women scholars eminent in this field of study who might be co-opted.

Empowerment

It follows from the foregoing that emergent culture calls for emergent methodology. It means that the *Atlas* should set out to empower all the major sections of the community that is Wales. This means a clear, strong emphasis on the visible present-day landscape. It also means that we should think about emphasising this aspect of our distribution/dissemination policy more – the application we put in to the HLF emphasised the official and statutory bodies who would be getting copies. Perhaps we need to put more emphasis on the grassroots.

Future applications to grant-awarding bodies will have to stress the way the *Atlas* will feed into LDIs and what LDIs can offer.

4. Funding

The question of funding is a vexed one. Although we are now looking for a smaller sum of money than the £250,000-odd we asked for last time, perhaps £150,000, the money involved still represents a considerable allocation of resources, and only a large charity could think about making such a sum available. On the other hand, applying for small sums – say £1,000 – is not likely to be a productive use of time.

The *Directory of Grant-making Bodies* lists comparatively few organisations that contemplate grants on the scale we require and whose remit might fit ours. The database which forms **Appendix 1** lists charities, trusts and other possible grant-awarding bodies. Long-established charitable organisations like Carnegie UK are a possibility. So are academic bodies like the British Academy and the Leverhulme Trust. The problem might be that these will want to see the element of intellectual originality in the project – Leverhulme, for instance, does not insist that applicants hold a university post nor that they should have a doctorate, but specify that the standard of work should be at post-doctoral level. On the other hand, bodies that are interested in social regeneration are more likely to want to see immediate grass-roots benefit. The fact that Balchder Bro is due to come into effect in April 2001 under the mantle of the Wales Council for Voluntary Action, might give an opening – it would certainly be a pity if Balchder Bro were to go ahead without some such volume as the *Atlas* to help people understand their environment. Perhaps the whole project should have been tied in with Balchder Bro in the first place.

European funding is likewise a possibility, though harder to research. But whilst there are plenty of sources, apparently, much of the money will be going to the NISs – newly independent states. Other European funds ask for a partnership project with other EU countries – a potentially rewarding but surely time-consuming process. That said, Emyr Tomos at CCW informs me that the originality of the project is likely to appeal to those who award European funds, even where there is no obvious and immediate economic benefit. So further research on European funding has to be an immediate priority, through Rob Owen in Brussels or Yvette Vaughan Jones at the Wales European Centre. The Euclid Culture 2000 project is a strong possibility, but the deadline for application is 15 May 2001.

One result of all this is that we may have to prepare different application documents stressing different aspects of the project with this is in mind. If Martin Buckeridge of the HLF has expressed surprise that we haven't re-applied, it may be that a fresh application to the HLF, for a smaller sum and without the digital element to which they objected last time, would stand some chance. We would have the advantage of being a known quantity. It is also worth bearing in mind that the HLF has recently made a substantial grant to the Victoria County History series to carry on with their projects. We can stress that a 'County History' approach is not really suited to Wales, and that the 'cultural landscapes' approach is more finely attuned to the innate sensibilities of the people of Wales.

5. The additional exemplary chapters

Appendix 2 consists of four exemplary chapters such as might appear in the *Atlas*. CCW asked GAT to produce two additional exemplary chapters as well as the original one written for the HLF application. My choice of subjects (taken from the original indicative list prepared by GAT) was governed by a concern to stress both the traditional and emergent aspects of Welsh culture, without having to carry out research which would take me into entirely unfamiliar territory. Following discussion with Richard Kelly, it was also felt to be wise that one of these should be a chapter on some aspect of the landscape of Cardiff. For this reason, a chapter has been prepared a chapter on the landscape of religious dissent at Dolgellau and Bala,) and two chapters on Cardiff. One of these looks at the civic architecture and statuary of Cardiff – effectively at the Liberal/business establishment of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – and the other at the multi-ethnic cultural landscape of Tiger Bay/Butetown. This chapter has profited particularly from the experience and advice of the Director of the Butetown History and Arts Centre, Glenn Jordan, an individual who has approached the question of local history and identity from a radically different standpoint from scholars such as Iorwerth Peate who have come from the Welsh rural tradition. Mr Jordan's work, which is discussed in the four exemplary chapter makes clear the varieties of interpretations and models that are available in Wales.

The opportunity was also taken to improve the original exemplary chapter, on the Cambrian Railways.

These four chapters appear along with the indicative Contents (and are numbered as they are numbered in the indicative Contents). Specific lessons are dealt with below; I note here that I have wherever possible cross-referenced the chapters with each other, and with others as yet unwritten, to give as much as possible the flavour of a final version, and, more important, to show how the various chapters do in fact interconnect and amplify each other – again, something that the HLF officers found difficult to comprehend. Illustrations have been assembled from various sources, but attempt to strike a balance between archive and contemporary.

6. Lessons from writing the exemplary chapters

Time

It is clear that the projected time-scale for the production of published book is realistic. Economies of time (and of scale) will become apparent once the whole book is under way.

Illustrations

The published *Atlas* will require good-quality professional photography; costings must include this. It must match the best-produced 'coffee table' books in terms of its attractiveness as a finished product if it is to have the impact we want.

Archive illustrations are relatively easy to come by, and most regional archives, as well as the National Library of Wales, tend to be fairly easy-going about reproduction fees. The National Museum charges much stiffer fees. There may be problems securing copies of, for instance, some of the paintings, and it is to be hoped that Peter Lord and Donald Moore may be able to advise in this respect. Some organisations in Wales are very quick about making copies, others are painfully slow.

Maps

Maps need to be prepared according to the exact scope of each chapter, but must, at the very least, show the precise landscape and its location within Wales. Others might need to show where other examples of the same phenomenon might be located in Wales, or in the United Kingdom as a whole. Chapter 16 *Religion and belief – St Winifred's Well* might need to show the centres of recusancy and post-emancipation Catholicism elsewhere in Wales. Chapter 19 *Social trauma – social conflict* should certainly show Chartist centres in England as well as in Wales.

The maps in the Cadw/ICOMOS/CCW *Register of Historic Landscapes* might form a useful model to follow.

7. Conclusions

It is concluded:

- That the present composition of the steering group is open to the charge of exclusivity.
- That production of the *Atlas* in book form is practical within the proposed time-scale.
- That the *Atlas*'s purpose and aim is the economic regeneration of communities within Wales through the encouragement of community pride and distinctiveness.
- That the *Atlas* must be published to the highest standards in terms of artwork and mapping as well as text.
- That the range of organisations which might fund the Atlas is nevertheless restricted.

8. Recommendations

It is recommended:

- That consideration be given to co-opting a number of other individuals to the steering group.
- That application be made to appropriate grant-awarding bodies for funds to produce the *Atlas* in book form within a time-scale of two years.
- That the *Atlas* be presented to appropriate grant-awarding bodies as an intellectually coherent and empowering document aimed at the economic regeneration of communities within Wales through the encouragement of community pride and distinctiveness.
- That application for funding be made to suitably targeted organisations, to include the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Euclid programme.

DRh Gwyn, 18 vii 2001

Report 412: Appendix 1

Full name

Carnegie United Kingdom Trust

Abbrev. name **Carnegie**

Address Comely Park House, 80 New Row, Dunfermline, Fife

Post/zip KY12_7EJ

Phone 01383_721445 *Fax* 01383_620682

e-mail / *web site* /

Scope General

Contact C John Naylor, Secretary and Treasurer

A wealthy and long-established charity, which stresses changing social needs and deliberately does not define possible projects tightly. Its scope includes heritage.

Priority **2**

Celtic Studies Association of North America

Abbrev. name **CSANA**

Address University of Washington

Post/zip /

Phone / *Fax* /

e-mail / *web site* http://www.cis.upenn.edu/~csana/info2.html

Scope Celtic studies

Contact R. Chapman Stacey

The CSANA does not, so far as is known, offer grants but may be worth contacting to establish sources of funding in the USA.

Priority **3**

CLA Charitable Trust

Abbrev. name **CLA**

Address Summerlea, The Street, East Knoyle, Salisbury

Post/zip SP3_6AJ

Phone 01747_830410 *Fax* /

e-mail / *web site* /

Scope Countryside

Contact Col. AF MacKain Bremner

A charity which specialises in the provision of leisure facilties in the countryside, but will also make grants available for education in conservation.

Priority **3**

Countryside Council for Wales

Abbrev. name **CCW/CCG**

Address Plas Penrhos, Ffordd Penrhos, Bangor

Post/zip LL57_2LQ

Phone 01248_385644 *Fax* 01248_355782

e-mail / *web site* http://www.ccw.gov.org

Scope External funding officer

Contact Emyr Tomos

Mr Tomos may be able to advise on European funding sources.

Priority **1**

Department of State Fulbright Programme

Abbrev. name **Fulbright**

Address /

Post/zip /

Phone / *Fax* /

e-mail / *web site* http://www.iie.org/fulbright

Scope Sponsors research in USA by non-USA

Contact /

Possibly a useful source of funding if an American-Welsh chapter were contemplated.

Priority **2**

EUCLID Wales

Abbrev. name **EUCLID**

Address

Post/zip

Phone 02920_235885 *Fax*

e-mail info@euclid2000.demon.co.uk *web site* www.euclid.co.uk

Scope Cultural contacts

Contact Martin Jones

EUCLID is UK's Culture 2000 contact point within the network of fifteen member states. It is not a programme as such but offers advice on partner-searches and applications. It advises that the EU will look favourably on the IT component of the CCW project.

Priority **1**

European Grant Aid

Abbrev. name **European Grant Aid**

Address 11 Albert Square, London

Post/zip SW8 1BT

Phone 0207_735_6020 *Fax* 0207_787_4698

e-mail / *web site* http://www.tomshand.dircon.co.uk/eurogrants/grants

Scope Consultancy

Contact Niall D. Thomas RIBA

Advises on sources of European grant (and loan assistance) and grant applications; the cost for grant identification is 390:00 for a project of less than 1,000,000:00.

Priority **3**

Ford of Britain Trust

Abbrev. name **Ford Trust**

Address c/o Ford Motor Co., 1-661 Eagle Way, Brentwood, Es

Post/zip CM13_3BW

Phone 01277_252551 *Fax* /

e-mail / *web site* /

Scope Community projects

Contact RM Metcalf, Director

The Ford Motor Company charity; it makes gtrants avaiable to commnuties within the area of Ford factories, including Rhondda-Cynon-Taff, newport, Bridgend and Swansea.

Priority **2**

Heritage Lottery Fund

Abbrev. name **HLF**

Address Companies House, Crown Way, Cardiff

Post/zip CF4_3UZ

Phone 02920_343413 *Fax* 02920_343427

e-mail / *web site* www.hlf.org.uk

Scope Heritage projects

Contact /

In view of past experience of HLF applications, it is worth considering a re-submission.

Priority **1**

J Paul Getty Junior Charitable Trust

Abbrev. name **Getty**

Address 149 Harley Street, London

Post/zip W1N_2DH

Phone 0171_486_1859 *Fax* /

e-mail / *web site* /

Scope Conservation

Contact Bridget O'Brien Twohig, Administrator

One of the wealthiest charities; its scope includes heritage and access to landscape.

Priority **2**

John and Ruth Howard Charitable Trust

Abbrev. name **Howard Trust**

Address 111 High Road, Willesden Green, London

Post/zip NW10_2TB

Phone / *Fax* /

e-mail / *web site* /

Scope Archaeology

Contact AS Aitchinson

The charity's aim is the advancement of public education in archaeology; the maximum grant is 5,000:00.

Priority **3**

North American Association for the Study of Welsh

Abbrev. name **NAASWCH**

Address JS Ellis, Green Mountain College, One College Circ

Post/zip VT_05764

Phone / *Fax* /

e-mail jellis@greenmtn.edu *web site* http://www2.bc.edu/~elisjg/naaswch.html

Scope Academic association

Contact John Ellis

It is unclear whether NAASWCH might be in a position to assist, but might be able to give guidance as to American funding sources.

Priority **3**

Tarmac Heavy Buildings Material UK Ltd

Abbrev. name **Tarmac**

Address Legal Department, Tarmac heavy Buildings Materials

Post/zip WV4_6JP

Phone 01902_353522 *Fax* /

e-mail / *web site* /

Scope Conservation

Contact Rev.Dr RWD Fenn

A body which may be prepared to make small grants available.

Priority **3**

The British Academy

Abbrev. name **British Academy**

Address 6 Carlton House Terrace, London

Post/zip SW1Y_5AH

Phone 020_7_969_5200 *Fax* 020_7_969_5300

e-mail secretary@britac.ac.uk *web site* /

Scope Academic research

Contact The Secretary

The British Academy will consider funding field study grants for periods up to three years, and will consider granting funds to extend existing research activity in the humanities and social sciences. Applicants must be scholars of post-doctoral status. Institutional overheads are not payable. The British Ascademy will make avaiable grants of between 5,000 and 20,000, but specifies that the upper limit has been set at 20,000 in order not to make possible the payment of a research assistant for a year

Priority **1**

The Cemlyn Jones Trust

Abbrev. name **Cemlyn Jones**

Address 59 Madoc Street, Llandudno

Post/zip LL30_2TW

Phone 01492_874391 *Fax* 01492_871990

e-mail / *web site* /

Scope Environmental research

Contact PG Brown

A North Wales trust which includes, inter alia, funding for environmental research among its objectives.

Priority **3**

The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund

Abbrev. name **Diana Memorial**

Address The County Hall, Westminster Bridge Road, London

Post/zip SE1 7PB

Phone 020_7902_ 5500 *Fax* 020_7902_5511

e-mail info@memfund.org.uk *web site* www.theworkcinues.org

Scope Advocacy, empowerment

Contact /

Though this fund has considerable sums of money at its disposal, and may well feel that it has a greater obligation to support a Welsh project, it is not entirely clear from the literature what projects the fund will support.

Priority **1**

The Dinam Charity

Abbrev. name **Dinam**

Address 8 Southampton Place, London

Post/zip WC1A_2EA

Phone / *Fax* /

e-mail / *web site* /

Scope Environmental protection

Contact Hon JH Davies

A Welsh-based charity which includes environmental protection among its aims.

Priority **3**

The Garfield Weston Foundation

Abbrev. name **Garfield Weston**

Address Weston Centre, Bowater House, 68 Knightsbridge, Lo

Post/zip SW1X_7LQ

Phone / *Fax* /

e-mail / *web site* /

Scope Environment, arts, community

Contact Fiona M Foster, Administrator

This charity will consider a broad range of projects.

Priority **2**

The Gwendoline and Margaret Davies Charity

Abbrev. name **Davies Charity**

Address Perthybu Offices, Sarn, Newtown, Powys

Post/zip SY16_4EP

Phone 01686_670404 *Fax* 01686_670404

e-mail / *web site* /

Scope Arts, health

Contact Ms S Hamer

A Welsh-based charity which makes grants of between 5,000:00 and 10,000:00 available.

Priority **2**

The Janes Pantyfedwen Trust

Abbrev. name **Pantyfedwen**

Address 9 Market Street, Pantyfedwen, Aberystwyth

Post/zip SY23_1DL

Phone 01970_612806 *Fax* 01970_612806

e-mail / *web site* /

Scope Various

Contact Richard H Morgan

A charity with a strong Christian leaning, but which will consider other projects.

Priority **3**

The Leverhulme Trust

Abbrev. name **Leverhulme**

Address 1 Pemberton Row, London

Post/zip EC4_3BG

Phone 020_7822_5220 *Fax* 020_7822_6938

e-mail josbourne@leverhulme.org.uk *web site* http://www.leverhulme.org.uk/Address.html

Scope Academic research

Contact J Osbourne

The Trust is willing to give grants at a minimum level of 250,000:00 and up to a maximum of 500,000:00 for larger projects for a maximum of 3 years to universities and registered charities. Interdisciplinary projects are particularly welcomed.

Priority **1**

The Marc Fitch Fund

Abbrev. name **Fitch Fund**

Address 7 Murray Court, 80 Banbury Road, Oxford

Post/zip OX2_6LQ

Phone / *Fax* /

e-mail / *web site* /

Scope Archaeology

Contact Roy Stevens, Director and Secretary

The Fund's aims include the improvement of knowledge relating to archaeology and antiquarian matters.

Priority **2**

The Pen y Clip Charitable Trust

Abbrev. name **Pen y Clip**

Address 59 Madoc Street, Llandudno

Post/zip LL30_2TW

Phone 01492_874391 *Fax* 01492_871990

e-mail / *web site* /

Scope Environment

Contact PG Brown

The Trust will consider grants for environmental research.

Priority **3**

The Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Abbrev. name **Voluntary Action**

Address Park Lane House, 7 High Street, Welshpool, Powys

Post/zip SY21_7JP

Phone 01938_552379 *Fax* 01938_552_092

e-mail trallwng@mcr1.poptel.org.uk *web site* http://www.fundraising.co.uk/services/wcva.html

Scope Advice on funding

Contact /

WCVA is a national Welsh charity, which promotes and helps voluntary action and community development.

Priority **2**

Full name

The Wheldon Charitable Trust

Abbrev. name **Wheldon Trust**

Address Steyning House, Fisherton Street, Salisbury, Wilt

Post/zip SP2_7RJ

Phone / *Fax* /

e-mail / *web site* /

Scope Various

Contact Messrs Wilson (solicitors)

A wealthy charity which will consider a variety of projects.

Priority **3**

UK Culture 2000

Abbrev. name **Culture 2000**

Address /

Post/zip /

Phone 02920_235885 *Fax* /

e-mail / *web site* www.euclid.co.uk

Scope Cultural contacts

Contact Martin Jones

This programme seeks to promote the creation of a cultural area common to the peoples of the European Union. A call is anticipated in July 2001.

Priority **1**

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Abbrev. name **WCVA**

Address Colwyn Bay

Post/zip

Phone 01492_539807 *Fax*

e-mail *web site*

Scope

Contact Geraint Humphries

Priority **0**

Full name

Wales European Centre

Abbrev. name **Wales European Centre**

Address Environment Desk Officer, Wales European Centre, R

Post/zip 11-20 B1000 Brux

Phone 00322_5064477 *Fax* 00322_502_8360

e-mail rob.owen@ewrop.com *web site* /

Scope European funding

Contact Rob Owen

Rob Owen may be in a position to advise on European funding sources.

Priority **1**

Zurich Financial Services (UKISA) Community Trust

Abbrev. name **Zurich**

Address PO Box 1288, Swindon, Wilts

Post/zip SN1_1FL

Phone 01793_514514 *Fax* 01793_506982

e-mail comm.aff@dial.pipex.com *web site* /

Scope Citizenship

Contact JB Bickell

A wealthy charity which funds a variety of projects.

Priority **2**

Cultural Atlas of Wales

Appendix 2

Report No. 412

Prepared for

Countryside Council for Wales

by

Dr D.Rh. Gwyn

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

PREFACE

The purpose of this book is to explore the myriad and complex relationship between places and people in Wales; the ways in which landscape has affected human society and culture, and the ways in which in turn communities have left, and continue to leave, their mark on the natural environment, or invest places with meaning, by associating them with memories or traditions.

It has been written with the support and advice of the Countryside Council for Wales and the National Trust (Wales) and with the encouragement of an informal group of conservation and heritage professionals, in the hope that as well as being of interest to the reader, it may also encourage him or her to consider some of the issues raised, perhaps to become involved in, or to initiate, a Local Distinctiveness Initiative or a heritage initiative (see Chapter 3).

It has been written in the belief that all places and all communities in Wales have their own unique and inter-related characteristics and identity, and that these deserve to be acknowledged and better understood, perhaps also appropriately celebrated. Furthermore, it has been written in the belief that the heritage of Wales is in the hands of all of her inhabitants, not purely professionals.

We present here a new way of looking at the relationship between landscape and culture in Wales – though one which builds on established perceptions of landscape. We demonstrate the richness of that relationship and the way it touches on all aspects of our lives. We take some historical examples and we look at modern and emerging examples of this twinning between place and people that is so much the hallmark of Welsh identity, the concept of *bro* and 'place'.

Four exemplary chapters are included, out of a proposed total of thirty. Each one begins by briefly setting out the themes which the subject-matter raises before moving on to a detailed exemplary study, followed by a discussion of what emerges, and how this might be applied elsewhere. One looks at the impact the Cambrian Railways system had, and in its present attenuated form, continues to have, on the rural culture of Mid-Wales and Cardigan Bay – on building styles, on labour and farming patterns, and on language. The second looks at central Cardiff, interpreting a townscape which has been deliberately contrived to articulate a view of the Welsh past in a way which fosters national identity. The third examines the way in which nonconformist Christianity, a force which has powerfully shaped modern Wales, has both its roots and its expression in the Welsh landscape. This chapter suggests that radical religious identity reflects patterns of power and prosperity in the rural environment, and has in turn created a distinctive built environment. The fourth considers Butetown in Cardiff – Tiger Bay – a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual yet avowedly Welsh society, whose distinct culture, brought into being by the transport needs of Glamorgan's collieries and ironworks, has survived the transition to a post-industrial waterfront development. A list of all thirty chapters appears in the Contents following the Introduction.

Discussing what constitutes 'landscape' is difficult enough. Discussing 'culture' is even more problematic. Both require us to use complicated concepts to reach at things that are in their essence very simple. We wish here to suggest a particular way forward for the study of landscape and culture in Wales, without either claiming that other approaches are invalid or that this is an 'experts'' approach.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the context for this book; the concepts and words used, and the way in which the subject-matter is approached. It does so under seven sub-headings:

- *Landscape and place*
- *Perception*
- *Culture*
- *Landscape and culture*
- *Belonging*
- *Welsh identity*
- *Whose landscape, whose culture?*

Landscape and place

There are many words in both the Welsh and the English languages which in one way or another mean our immediate physical environment.

Both languages have the range of governmental words – *genedl* (nation), *sir* (county) and *rhanbarth* (region). Older English words for smaller territorial divisions – *wapentake*, *riding* – mean little to anyone other than historians. In Welsh, older and more evocative words survive. *Ardal* preserves a medieval flavour and is immediately comprehensible to any Welsh-speaker. The same is true of *bro*, an ancient word still in common usage, and which survives in the Welsh word for aristocrat, *breyr*, from an unattested pre-Welsh form **bro-go-rix*, 'king of the *bro*'. More recently, the custom of Methodist preachers preaching on a designated circuit gave a new meaning to the *cylch*, the area of feudal dues and obligations, as well as the circuits followed by the assize judges; and *cylch* remains in use to indicate the immediate area of the daily round or the area encompassing a particular centre.

In English we are forced back on words like 'place' or 'landscape' – somehow seem evident in meaning yet notoriously difficult to define. 'Place' can signify an area as great or small as you wish, but it has the advantage that it is a fairly neutral word. 'Landscape' is much more complicated. It is, of course, a painter's word, and was introduced to the English language from the Dutch in the seventeenth century. It is difficult to separate it from notions of the picturesque. It is the word commonly used in the English language to mean a tract of land, of whatever size, which is apprehended *visually*, though not necessarily *pictorially*. Otherwise, the English language is thrown back on the clumsier word 'terrain'. The difference between the two is approximately the same as the difference in meaning respectively between the Welsh words *tirlun*, which preserves the pictorial aspect – literally a 'land-picture' – and *tirwedd*, literally 'land-complexion', like the now-archaic English phrase which may well be its origin, 'face of the land'. Landscape has both a physical reality, which includes material things within it, and an appearance which changes with the time of day, with the weather, the seasons; it is also place-with-meaning, a meaning that will vary from person to person.

More recently we have added made-up words like 'townscape' and 'seascape' to our English-language vocabulary, and we have furthermore expanded the meaning of 'landscape'. We now speak of the 'moral landscape' of a film or a novel. If the word has expanded its scope so much, it is worth asking whether it has become too imprecise, and whether we should be using a clumsier but perhaps more specific phrase like 'the natural environment'. In fact, as the following chapters show, we have used different words to convey different shades of meaning but the concept of *landscape* remains the fundamental one. It reminds us that the physical context within which we lead our lives is *as it is perceived to be*, in the light of our own processes of *perception* within the light of our *cultural* priorities.

- For the purpose of this book, we define landscape as **an area, whether rural or urban, as it is perceived**.

Saul Steinberg

Saul Steinburg, A View of the World from 9th Avenue, *1977. Courtesy of* New Yorker

Perception

The ways we perceive and record landscapes vary enormously from individual to individual, and according to the different needs of particular social groups – of governments and administrators, of landowners, of visitors.

Consider the way we look at maps. The American artist Saul Steinberg once famously drew a cartoon entitled 'A View of the World from 9th Avenue', purportedly a New Yorker's view of his or her own city. Sure enough, 9th Avenue is there in the foreground, and then the Mid-West, the Rockies, the Pacific Ocean, and finally, China. Beyond the fact that we all locate ourselves at the centre of our own universe, this underlines the fact that we also carry around within us cognitive maps of our own place – quite simply, we see it in our own terms.

When we look at a modern Ordnance Survey map we feel confident that it really does show us what is 'out there', an objective topography in which we can all share, once we accept the premise, common to most western cultures, that a piece of folded paper marked in a particular way can be used to represent an area of land. In fact, Ordnance Survey maps are highly selective in what they show. They offer a particular perception, and readily distort what they show – on a 1" map, for instance, roads are shown at ten times the width they are in reality – a reflection of a mobile, car-driving society. Earlier ordnance surveyors had different priorities – hills and mountains were shown in hachures, rather than contours, the better to indicate to soldiers what terrain they might expect. The care the survey took even in its very early days accurately to locate ancient sites and properly to record place-names reflects the scholarly and antiquarian bent of its surveyors. This was map-making for leisured gentlemen.

The earliest detailed maps of any part of Wales are privately-commissioned estate maps. These reflect their patrons' concerns very clearly – the accurate estimate of economic resources, claims to lands in dispute, and above all, their own sense of their own place in the scheme of things, shown in the elaborate cartouches and compass-points which decorate them. Not surprisingly, these have a great deal in common with the landscape paintings these same individuals sponsored, and in some cases it is difficult to make a hard-and-fast distinction between a map and a landscape painting.

This is why we can say that the physical context within which people carry out their lives is *as it is perceived to be*, because entirely different modes of perception are available to people who speak different languages, or belong to particular ethnic, social or age groups – children's perceptions of place are different from those of adults. Equally true, different modes of perception are available to people who have a different economic function within their physical environment. The leisured and the wealthy will see, for instance, agricultural land (especially if they happen to own it) in a very different way from those who have to trudge through hilly fields on February mornings. Former coal-miners may have ambiguous memories of the industrial landscape, either as places of intense comradeship or of back-breaking and dangerous work – or both; though somehow stacking shelves in Sainsbury's is never compensation for their loss. A newly-graduated business trainee in Cardiff Bay may enjoy the cosmopolitan dash of Butetown; but his or her feelings for the place will be very different from those who have lived there all their lives, and whose ancestors' bones are buried in the Yemen or China.

Culture

There is not the space, and certainly not the need, to look at every attempt to define culture. 'Culture' and 'cultured' are words that we use frequently, and some of their meanings are immediately clear. A succinct definition might be that culture is the variety of ways in which we, as human beings, try to live up to our natural resources – and that includes our environment. Raymond Williams described four contemporary usages. First of all, we speak of culture as a process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development – the sense in which we say 'so-and-so is a cultured person.' Secondly, as a particular way of life, informed by a common spirit, whether of a people, a period or a group such as we might say 'the culture of the Inca', 'the culture of the eighteenth century' or 'the shop-floor culture' of a factory.' Thirdly, the works and practices of intellectual and artistic activity; this is by far the most common modern use, and identifies culture with music, literature, painting, film and sculpture. And fourthly, the signifying system through which a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored. In this, the most complicated sense, 'culture' is not a separate region but a dimension,

literally, of everything we do. Archaeology, for instance, is the study of culture (perhaps in the second of Williams's senses) through study of material evidence.

Of course, these meanings overlap considerably, but it is clear that if we accept these as working definitions then the field of what constitutes 'culture' is broad. Our definition is similar in many ways to Williams's fourth usage, but encompasses the other three.

- For the purpose of this book culture is defined as **a set of socially transmitted means and symbols by which we adapt to geographic and social environments**. It includes patterned ideas, values, actions, social arrangements and objects.[1]

Landscape and culture

Human societies and cultures as they evolve are affected by a great variety of factors, yet by none more powerfully than the way in which landscape is configured. This may not be immediately obvious in a large modern European city, yet it often becomes apparent to anyone who cares to inquire why earlier settlers might have chosen that particular location – whether it is situated at the highest tidal or navigable reach of a river, or at a crossing point, whether it has a rich agricultural or industrial hinterland which required an export point, or whether it was easily defensible. Similar factors may have brought smaller communities into being. Even where the visible evidence of a village's *raison d'être* has disappeared, as in the South Wales valleys where the remaining pits were closed and demolished in the 1980s, the rows of straggling terraced houses make it clear even to anyone unversed in recent Welsh history that this was an industrial community and, in the absence of other evidence, that its wealth lay underground. An upland sheep-farm or a lowland farm will reflect the landscape in which it is set in its size and resources as well as its situation.

Human society and culture go far beyond the mere existence and location of settlements. The natural environment affects the level of surplus that a particular society generates, which makes the difference between a grim shared struggle for existence and a community which chooses to promote learning and the arts – many societies, of course, impose the former on the majority of the population and restrict the latter to the wealthy and the fortunate.

When we speak of this link between landscape and culture or of the way in which place has influenced people, we scarcely doubt that both individuals and communities are profoundly affected by where they live, move and have their being. Yet the ways in which this happens are often intangible. This book focuses on a number of these intangible links, from the commonplace to the exotic, and sometimes the bizarre.

Belonging

If different groups are likely to have different feelings about their own places, then we must also ask ourselves to *where* we feel we belong. Of course, we have other foci for our loyalties and allegiances that are not necessarily specific to place – family, friends or a sense of class solidarity are examples of this. We will return to this theme later on. In the meantime, we need to ask, with what place do we identify? Do we, for instance, feel ourselves to be members of a national group, occupying a 'national' territory? Or is the focus of our sense of belonging lesser, or indeed greater, than this?

We have looked at the words that mean smaller areas that might focus our loyalty. What about the greater ones? Governments past and present all over the world have anxiously encouraged citizens to think of themselves as members of a national group. Children in the U.S.A. pledge allegiance at the beginning of each school day to the flag, as the symbol of 'One nation under God'. British people, at the end of the nineteenth century and until well into the twentieth, were encouraged to see themselves not only as a national British group, an 'island race' (despite such clearly enduring national identities like English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish) but also as the centre of a great supra-national empire. When the time came to defend this empire, for some of the fighting men from what one might call the British periphery, imperial loyalty was a chimera. The native place was the only reality, as for Yeats's 'Irish Airman':

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[1] Adapted from the definition of the American anthropologist Frederick C. Gamst; see F.C. Gamst and E. Norbeck (eds), *Ideas of Culture: Sources and Uses* (New York, 1976), p. 6.

My country is Kiltartan Cross,
My countrymen Kiltartan's poor[2]

For others local loyalty was obscured, perhaps even confused, by loyalty to King and Empire – like the Deiniolen quarryman turned private soldier whose diary, written in stilted English, nowhere mentions Wales but longs for 'dear old England'.[3] The lesson is, that loyalty and self-identification can take many forms, and be given to very different areas – and that culture can be imposed, and superimposed.

This remains true today. Wales too went through – perhaps is still undergoing – its period of nation-building, and we can see in many places within the Welsh landscape places where attempts have been made to nurture a distinct sense of Welsh nationhood. These are of fundamental importance to us if we wish to understand the evolution of Welsh cultures as much for those of us who do not subscribe to the agenda of nationality, either in Wales or elsewhere, as for those who do.

Welsh identity

The establishment within recent years of a Welsh assembly has inevitably thrown into relief once again the question of what sort of Wales the people of Wales might want. For many of us it is a step on the road to full nationhood. At the very least it might call for a national audit of our historic environment and a new look at the varieties of Welshness. As responsibilities move from London to Cardiff, and perhaps to the Welsh regions as well, there is much to be said for asking ourselves what potential lies within the borders of Wales.

So it is wise to ask ourselves a few questions first. Wales includes landscapes of great natural beauty, and is home to a remarkable minority language – remarkable both for its simple survival as an everyday medium and for the rich intellectual culture which the language has made possible particularly since its great nineteenth-century flowering. From this, many people have concluded that Wales is most truly itself in its rural and mountainous areas – what we may call 'the heartlands' – and that Welsh people are most truly themselves insofar as they speak the Welsh language and conduct themselves according to a collectivist and egalitarian ethos rooted in chapel culture and the rhythms of farming life. This vision has been eloquently set out, and powerfully argued. For Iorwerth Peate, who established what is now known as the Museum of Welsh Life, Wales was an 'immortal essence', expressed most clearly in the folk-culture of the farmers and craftsmen of the countryside, such as his native Llanbrynmair. More recent commentators have distinguished the 'shallow time' of most Welsh lives from the 'deep time' of rural Welsh-speaking communities.[4]

A vision of Welsh-ness which stresses shared historic roots is in many ways an attractive one, and indeed it is almost impossible to approach the historic culture of Wales in the way that the present volume sets out to do without some sense of the time-depth in the landscape. But it is also important to realise that such analyses of Welsh society, which have their parallels in other European agrarian cultures, run the risk of underpinning an exclusionist view of what it is to be Welsh, or to live in Wales. Our intention is that some of the following chapters should demonstrate the way in which some landscapes have been portrayed, even contrived, precisely in order to stress that the culture of Wales is national – that, in the opinion of those responsible, Wales constituted a nation and that its nationhood needed to be enforced and nurtured. This was one of the constant motifs of nineteenth century Wales, conscious that other national groups the world over were coming out from under the wings of their former masters in order to assert their own identity. If identity derives from distinct and distinguishing characteristics, then a study of the relationship between landscape and culture should tell us much about what is distinctly Welsh. But we should not be surprised if in the process of making connections, we find that the links often lead beyond Wales.

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[2] William Butler Yeats, 'An Irish Airman Forsees his Death' in *Collected Poems* (London, 1961) p. 152.

[3] 'On Active Service – The War Diary of a Caernarfonshire Quarryman', *Transactions of the Caernarvonshire Historical Society* 52-3 (1991-2), pp. 87-102.

[4] John Barnie in Iwan Bala (ed.), *Certain Welsh Artists: Custodial Aesthetics in Contemporary Welsh Art.*

For this reason, this book also seeks to be justice to the variety of landscape, and the variety of culture, and to the varieties of their intertwining in Wales. Iorwerth Peate never satisfactorily solved the question as to whether industrial Wales was part of the 'immortal essence' or not. Here, the reader will find industrial Wales, and post-industrial Wales, alongside the rural landscape. Port Talbot steelworks is as much a part of the Welsh landscape as Snowdon. Here also are the landscapes of Wales that have long been exposed to other cultures and other languages – the Vale of Glamorgan, the River Severn. Here also – equally important – are the landscapes of Wales perceived by those who have come from beyond Wales and brought to bear upon it perceptions and insights nurtured elsewhere.

An artist on tour in Wales, searching for the picturesque, as depicted by Thomas Rowlandson

Whose landscape, whose culture?

As much as possible, this book has tried to do justice the geographic spread of Wales, and therefore to the varieties of culture and landscape that are to be found within Wales. It does not claim to be exhaustive – quite the reverse; by deliberately confining itself to broad themes and exemplary chapters it hopes to leave the field open to anyone else who wishes to explore further. Still less does it claim any special status for professional historians or geographers; the themes this book addresses are the common property of us all. It is offered in the belief that landscape and culture are inseparable, and that we can most creatively set the discourses of landscape and culture to work when we best understand how they have shaped us.

CONTENTS OF ATLAS (PROVISIONAL)

Contents/preface/sponsors

Backgound to the project

Introduction – uses of the Atlas

1. A discussion of cultural landscape, especially as the concept relates to Wales.
2. An explanation of the exemplary approach followed in the *Atlas*.
3. Suggestions as to how particular examples, and approaches to them, might inform study of other areas, as, for instance, in an LDI initiative.
4. A list and explanation of the four following cultural landscape themes (4.2.4-7).

The Land – Culture imprinted on the Landscape.

Section introduction. The natural landscape, with its barriers of mountain and river, is not only scenically spectacular but has made the culture of Wales a diverse one.

1. *Lowland zone – Vale of Glamorgan.* The prosperous farmlands of the Vale of Glamorgan nourished a distinctive community. Traditional houses here have more in common with their counterparts in Devon than with other Welsh examples, and the area's surplus enabled it to become a centre of learning in the eighteenth century. Unitary authority – Bro Morgannwg
2. *Highland zone – Ceredigion.* The upland region of Ceredigion was sparsely inhabited until lead mining revived in the early nineteenth century. Unitary authority - Ceredigion
3. *A Welsh river – the Severn.* The Severn was until the eighteenth century the busiest river in Europe, connecting the mart for Welsh woollens at Welshpool with the nascent industrial area at Ironbridge, with the early iron industry of South Wales and with the merchant city of Bristol. Its influence is felt in traditional architecture, in economic development and in linguistic patterns, sustaining Welsh-language communities over the English border. Unitary authority - Powys

The Land – Shaping the Landscape: subsistence, work and occupations.

Section introduction. This natural landscape has been exploited economically in many different ways, so to the variety of language/dialect is added the variety of cultural outlook created by different types of agriculture, by fishing, extractive industries, the different levels of surplus they generated, and the different levels of community infrastructure they supported. Again, these are all evident in the landscape – farms and farmhouses, other types of workplace and their associated dwellings.

The need to sell produce and to transport it away from whence it came creates its own cultural links, be they between farm and market town along a lane, or between mine and harbour along a railway. Drovers' roads, their pastures and taverns, are all visible as landscape features, and the drovers themselves are still a potent symbol. Similarly, Wales's seagoing traditions created strong historical links with other many parts of the world, apparent in the present day landscape at one level in the exotic names of harbour taverns, at another level in the polyglot communities of Cardiff and Swansea, and also in the Welsh communities, or Welsh-descended communities in Argentina, the USA and elsewhere.

4. *Agriculture – Carmarthenshire.* The culture and landscape of a stock-rearing and dairying area. Unitary authority – Carmarthenshire
5. *Agriculture* – an upland hill-farm. Unitary authority – to be decided
6. *Iron and coal – Blaenavon.* The industrial development of South-east Wales has marked the landscape in a distinctive way, in terms of working for coal to fuel blast-furnaces, the iron-ore from which the pig-iron was derived, and the limestone used as a flux. Above all, the lives of the men and women who worked at Blaenavon, now a World Heritage Site, are recalled by the houses preserved at Stack Square and elsewhere. Unitary authority – Torfaen
7. *Slate - Moel Tryfan.* Slate-quarrying was the major industry of North-west Wales, yet the industrial community remained close to the land. The novels of Kate Roberts are rooted in the

quarry-cottage landscape of Moel Tryfan, and describe the experience of women and the dispossessed in a masculine environment and harsh times. Unitary authority - Gwynedd

8. *Communications and transport – the drovers' roads.* The drovers have left their mark in Wales not only in terms of the roads which are still apparent, but also in a rich legacy of stories, folk-songs and traditions, as well as in the banking houses of London. Unitary authority - various
9. *Communications and transport – Telford's road.* Telford's road from Shrewsbury to Holyhead is not only an engineering triumph, but formed part of an imperial way, joining the capital cities on London and Dublin in the aftermath of the Act of Union and celebrating the United Kingdom's victories over Bonaparte in the statues and columns of Viscount Hill at the start of the road in Shrewsbury and of the Marquess of Anglesey near Llanfair, the George IV triumphal arch at Holyhead, and in the emblematic design of the Waterloo bridge at Betws y Coed. Unitary authority – Wrecsam, Denbighshire, Conwy, Gwynedd, Mon
10. *Communications and transport – the Cambrian Railways.* The Cambrian main line runs from England to Cardigan Bay, and its outliers touched the slate areas of Gwynedd and the coal valleys of the south. Though in many ways the most Welsh of the standard gauge railways, its cultural impact was mixed, on the one hand arresting the drift from the land and on the other bringing with it mass-produced goods and the English language. Powys, Ceredigion, Gwynedd

People - Culture Embodied in the Landscape.

Section introduction. Perceptions of place and identity are strong in Wales not least because of the natural barriers between different parts of the country. For this reason, not only is the sense of identification with a particular place is strong in Wales but particular landscapes can also embody values and associations which may exemplify spirituality, political vision, or intellectual virtuosity.

11. *Perceptions and identity – to be decided.* How does the landscape of a small Welsh village embody a changing culture? Unitary authority - to be decided
12. *Perceptions and identity – Cardiff.* Wales's capital (since 1958) was a small market town until the nineteenth century. How do the people of Cardiff see their city, now that it has become the seat of the Assembly? Unitary authority - Cardiff
13. *Perceptions and identity – y wisg Cymreig.* National identity can be the product of conscious creation as well as natural evolution. Welsh women discovered, or were informed that they had, a national dress (with the obligatory regional variations) not long after the Scots discovered kilts. Unitary authority - various
14. *Famous people – The Ladies of Llangollen.* The celebrated elopement of two Anglo-Irishwomen, Sarah Ponsonby and Eleanor Butler, in 1780 caused a considerable stir. The retreat they established together in Llangollen was chosen for its picturesque landscape.
15. *Discoveries – William Edwards and Pontypridd bridge.* The work of many remarkable engineers and bridge-builders survives in the Welsh landscape – Thomas Telford and Robert Stephenson among them. William Edwards was a monoglot farmer and Methodist minister who constructed an engineering marvel from first principles. Unitary authority – Rhondda-Cynon-Taff
16. *Religion and belief – St Winifred's Well.* Treffynnon is one of the areas in Wales where Catholicism remains powerful, and was the scene of the last royal pilgrimage in Britain. The landscape embodies the culture of the Catholic faith in its communities of religious, in St Winifred's Well itself and in the poetry and prose, both English and Welsh, of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Unitary authority - Flint
17. *Religion and belief – on the banks of the Afon Wnion.* The town of Dolgellau was a stronghold of the old Dissent, the town of Bala a stronghold of the new. The landscape of this area is rich in associations, such as the route of Mary Jones's walk over the Berwyns and the site of the great *sassiwn* of 1811. Unitary authority - Gwynedd
18. *The Eisteddfod at Llandudno.* Matthew Arnold's mental landscape of Penrhyn Creuddyn as the meeting-place of the poetic Celt and the money-making Saxon now appears hopelessly misconceived yet led to a more sympathetic understanding of Welsh culture amongst English intellectuals. Unitary authority - Conwy

19. *Social trauma – social conflict.* A number of landscapes in Wales bear evidence of the conflicts of capital and labour in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. One such is Newport and its Chartists. Unitary authority - Newport
20. *Social trauma – exile.* Many Welshmen and Welshwomen left Wales between the eighteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. Welsh cultural landscapes include the coal mining town of Scranton in New Jersey.
21. *New cultures.* Wales's international role in trade and shipping in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries encouraged settlement from all over the world, particularly marked in Cardiff and Swansea. The rich ethnic mix of Tiger Bay produced a vital culture which preserved its own identity and contributed to a broader sense of Welsh identity. Unitary authority - Cardiff
22. *The Welsh Sunday, then and now.* Gladstone's Welsh Sunday Observance Act was the first legislation to acknowledge the special needs of Wales, but a Welsh Sunday is now more likely to be spent in a car-boot sale or a sports centre than in Bethel. Considering the case of Caermarthen, this section examines how the landscape of leisure time has changed in Wales. Unitary authority - Caermarthenshire
23. *Tourism and leisure – Tenby and Rhyl.* Holidaymaking has evolved its own landscapes and its own culture. Unitary authority – Pembrokeshire and Denbighshire
24. *Sport and leisure – the valleys and rugby.* Rugby was introduced to South Wales from Rugby School and Cambridge through St David's College, Lampeter, but quickly became a demotic game. Swansea Rugby Club, founded in 1872, was one of the 'big four' along with Newport, Cardiff and Llanelli.
25. *Landscapes made by historians.* Some landscapes have been deliberately created by historians to evoke and recall the landscapes of the past. St Ffagan's, the Museum of Welsh Life, is part of the National Museums and Galleries of Wales, and was consciously modelled on the Scandinavian folk-museums established in Stockholm in 1873 and at Skansen in 1891. Unitary authority - Cardiff

The Landscape Depicted.

Section introduction. The visual and landscape element is obvious in paintings and films. Whether they depict and thereby celebrate what has been called 'The Beautiful Empty Place' or they image social trauma, they are essentially *located.* Place and landscape are strongly experienced in prose narrative from Medieval times onwards.

26. *Mabinogion.* The four branches of the *Mabinogion* are all located in specific places – Pembrokeshire in the first branch, Gwynedd in the fourth. A powerful sense of place emerges throughout. This has more recently been articulated by W.J. Gruffydd and R. Williams Parry. Unitary authority – Penbrokeshire and Gwynedd
27. *Tintern Abbey.* It was not only Wordsworth who celebrated the picturesque beauties of the Wye valley – John Warwick Smith, de Lutherbourg and Turner all made the pilgrimage, elevating the landscape into an icon of sensibility, and providing the people of Tintern with a source of income. Unitary authority – Monmouthshire.
28. *The Aberystwyth naïve painter.* The work of this man or women, active in the 1840s, shows an interest in the activities of ordinary people within the rural economy and society of Cardiganshire as well as an interest in the conventions of pure landscape. Unitary authority - Ceredigion
29. *John Thomas of the Cambrian Gallery.* The Liverpool-Welsh photographer recorded the changing people of Wales – on the one hand ballad-singers and old ladies in shawls and *betgwn*, on the other hand the new industrial proletariat and professionals. He also depicted the change in the Welsh landscape, as the forces of modernity gathered strength. Unitary authority - various
30. *Coming up Roses. Coming up Roses* (1986), a Welsh comedy film in the tradition of the Ealing studios, was shot in and around Aberdare. It not only took forward the long tradition of film-making in Wales, but also shrewdly observes an industrial society's attempts to adapt to the realities of a future where coal is no longer king. Unitary authority – Neath-Port Talbot

4.2.8 Conclusions.

In the light of these thirty exemplary chapters, the Conclusion will offer answers to the questions posed in the Introduction, and will outline the way in which understanding, enjoyment and conservation of cultural landscapes by all sections of the Welsh community can be enhanced.

Bibliography and list of source material

List of contributors/acknowledgements

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Communications and transport 10

The Cambrian Railways

Welshpool-Aberystwyth, Machynlleth-Pwllheli: Powys, Ceredigion, Gwynedd: 1859-present day

Themes: technical, cultural and linguistic change

Economic decline and Dr Beeching between them wrought havoc with Wales's railway system, but nevertheless the two coastal main lines and a number of branches and cross-country routes survive, as well as the 'Great Little Trains', the preserved narrow gauge railways. One of the most remarkable survivors, frequently threatened with closure in the past, is the route of the former Cambrian Railways to Aberystwyth, and its branch to Pwllheli. A journey along it, whether undertaken for work or pleasure, recalls a less hurried age, and it is sometimes hard to imagine that the railway was itself once a new, dynamic and disturbing element in the Welsh landscape. What went through people's minds when the first locomotive blasted its way through Talerddig cutting? – and what effect did this particular railway have on the traditional culture of mid-Wales?

Introduction

From the late seventeenth century primitive wooden railways were being laid in Wales by the owners of mines, quarries and furnaces. Iron rails appeared before the end of the eighteenth century, and the first successful use of a steam railway locomotive in the world took place on the Pen y Darren tramroad from Merthyr to Quakers' Yard in 1804. By this date, the coal-producing areas were covered with a network of lines, along which teams of horses hauled waggons on cast-iron plateways (L-section rails for flangeless wheeled rolling stock), and the first railways were also making their appearance in the slate quarries of Caernarvonshire.

1. A horse-drawn train makes its way over the Risca viaduct to Newport in 1808 - Thomas Cartwright after Edward Pugh.

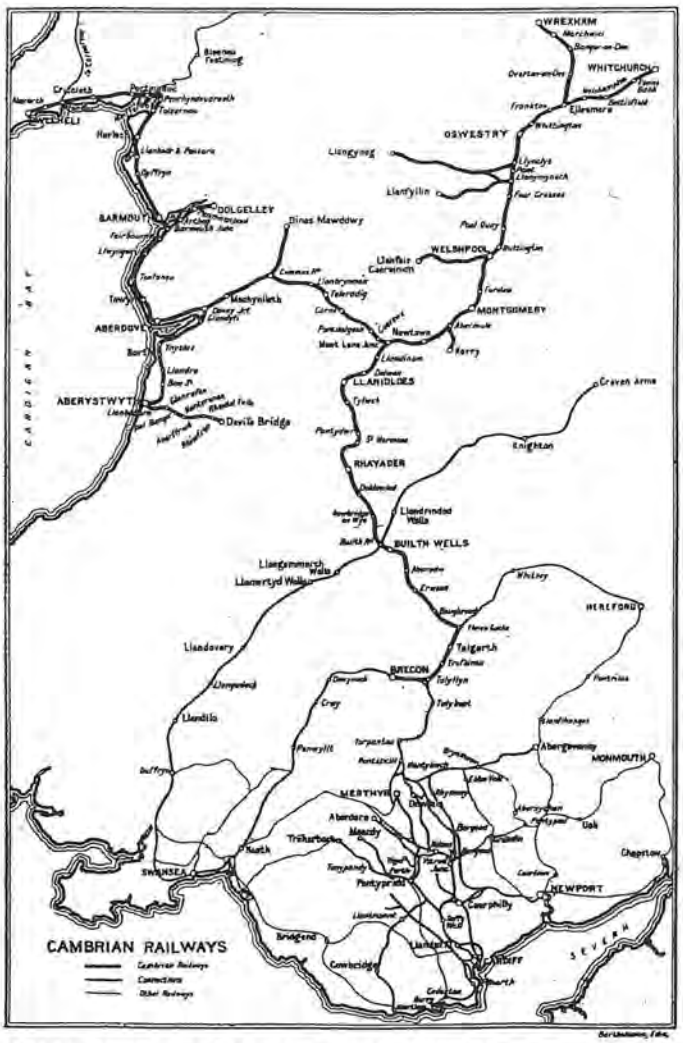
Courtesy of National Library of Wales.

These were all built through landscapes where roads were impracticable and canals too expensive. Though they were built to a multiplicity of different gauges for one-way goods traffic to the nearest navigable water, with no perception of a future national railway network, they were more than local lines of local consequence. The Monmouthshire Railway and Canal Company eventually came to

operate no less than 181½ miles of plateway down to Newport (Illus. 1), longer than many of the modern railway companies that came to supersede them.

Their effect on the Welsh economy is incalculable, enabling the industrial centres of the south-east to dominate iron production world-wide and making possible the rapid growth of the North Wales slate industry. The engineers might be local Welsh surveyors or might be Englishmen, in which case they soon had to learn some basic words of command and instruction in Welsh. But once they were in operation, the hauliers, enginemen and plate-layers would all be local men, members of that burgeoning skilled working class that was coming to dominate Wales.

The situation was different by the time the national railway network came to Wales in the 1840s. The modern railway as we know it evolved from the colliery railways of the North-east of England, and came into being with the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester in 1830. It uses the edge rail system (whereby the flange is on the wheel rather than the rail) and locomotive power, and is constructed as a common carrier, generally by Act of Parliament. Before long an interconnected network was under construction by a multiplicity of private companies. The administrative headquarters of Robert Stephenson's Chester and Holyhead Railway along the North Wales coast soon moved to Euston, and the Great Western Railway, whose main line ran through Newport, Cardiff and Swansea, was based at Paddington. These were built with Irish traffic firmly in mind, though they did send their branches inland. But the mainly agricultural land of mid-Wales had to wait until the next decade before plans became a reality.



Map 1: Bartholomew's map of the Cambrian system at its height in 1922.

Map 1. The Cambrian Railways at their fullest extent, just before the grouping, when they were absorbed into the Great Western Railway. The main line extends from Whitchurch, where it joined on to the London and North Western Railway, to Aberystwyth, via the headquarters at Oswestry. The most important branches connected it with Wrexham, with the Brecon and Merthyr Railway at Three Cocks, and with Pwllheli.

The Cambrian Railways

The task was difficult, not only for engineers but for promoters and shareholders, who had to negotiate with obstinate and temperamental landowners and contractors who ran out of money at crucial moments. An isolated section from the canal-head at Newtown to the woollen factories at Llanidloes opened in 1859. The link to the English railway network came into being two years later, and Aberystwyth was reached in 1864. The branch from Machynlleth to Pwllheli, which involved a substantial bridge across the Mawddach estuary, was operational by 1867. Other connections gave access to the slate-quarrying areas of the north, to Bala and Dolgellau (Chapter 17) and, via Brecon, to the heads of the valleys in the south, a total route of 299¼ miles. These various constituent systems had united to form the Cambrian Railways by 1866, when headquarters were established at Oswestry. Here the main engineering workshops were constructed, capable of building wagons and carriages and eventually locomotives (Map 1).

2 David Davies

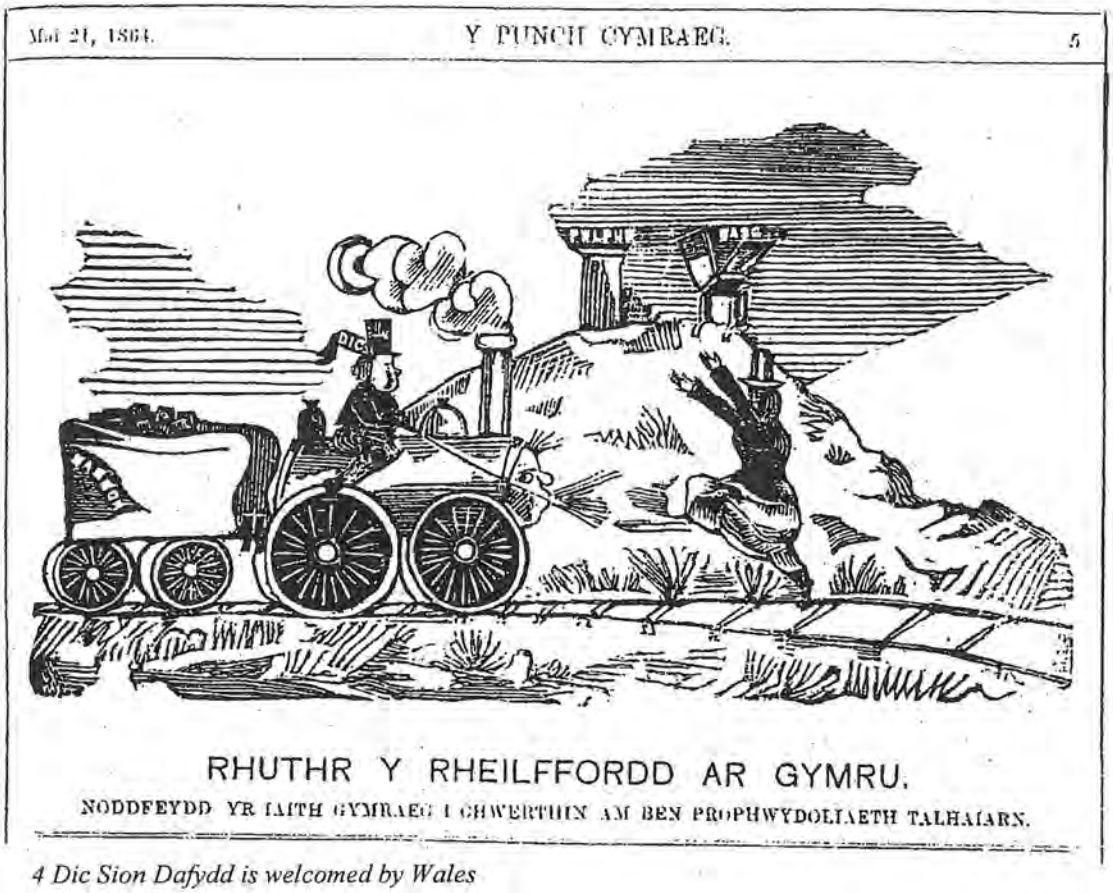
Unlike many other railways in both Wales and England, the construction labourers were recruited locally and there were none of the Irish navvies who elsewhere struck terror into countryside parishes. The Talerddig cutting, at the time the deepest in the world, was excavated by local farm-labourers, whose wages helped stem the tide of rural emigration.

3 David Davies of Llandinam (in the top hat) superintends work on the Talerddig cutting as the railway is driven towards Machynlleth.

The contractor, the great David Davies of Llandinam, was himself a Welshman, and spoke tellingly of the effect the new railway would have at the 1865 National Eisteddfod in Aberystwyth:

> He claimed himself a great admirer of the old Welsh language, and he had no sympathy for those who reviled their country and their language (applause). Still he had seen enough of the world to know that the best medium to make money by was English .... If they were content with brown bread, let them of course remain where they were; but if they wished to enjoy the luxuries of life, with white bread to boot, the way to do it would be by the acquisition of English. He knew what it was to eat both (cheers).

Davies was right to point out that the new railway would bring with it the English language. The bard Talhaiarn prophesied as much, though to him this was a matter of lament; he was mocked by a cartoon in *Y Punch Cymraeg* ('The Welsh Punch') in 1864 (Illus. 4), which showed Dic Sion Dafydd, the Welshman who apes English ways and his locomotive being welcomed by Wales.



4 Dic Sion Dafydd is welcomed by Wales

Edwin Evans, recalling his days on the Cambrian as a locomotive driver in the 1880s, observed that:

> The first stationmasters of whom I have a recollection were men drafted from other lines, on the same principle as the engineers, without a knowledge of the language and customs of the Principality. The appointments without a doubt frequently caused inconvenience and controversy, especially at outlying stations from a business point of view, owing to the inability of the official to converse in the vernacular. The writer of these lines when a mere youth recollects being called on to act as interpreter in many cases between traders and stationmasters when transacting business.

Traders soon learnt to speak English with railway staff; the 1891 census confirms that 60% of the population of Machynlleth, where there was a large goods yard and a locomotive shed, was bilingual, compared to 10% of the population of Llanbrynmair, two stops up the line. Tourists could now make their way to Aberystwyth and Borth in ever-greater numbers, and were taken aback to discover they had to deal occasionally with monoglot staff. Punch seized on the opportunity with a satirical piece entitled 'Travels in Taffy-land; or, Wales Blowing', which described a series of misunderstandings on a journey to Aberystwyth which never reached its destination. Welsh railway vocabulary was largely English-derived – a locomotive was *injan* (occasionally loco) in North Wales, *endgin* in the South (in literary Welsh *peiriant*). *Trên* and *stesion* came from English though occasionally *cerbydres* and *gorsaf* might be used.

The Cambrian Railways, however, did bring economic benefits, and not only to the tourist industry. It arrived too late to prevent the woollen factories of the Severn valley from competing on equal terms with those of England, but it enabled the slate quarries of Ffestiniog, Corris and Dinas Mawddwy to develop. Agricultural labourers' wages might increase by anything up to a half once a railway had been built, as cattle and sheep were loaded on to trains for the English markets. Droving effectively ceased after a number of years, and the old fairs in many cases declined or merged, as happened at Aberystwyth and Llanbadarn. The custom of farmers selling their cattle to itinerant dealers also came to an end, generally to the farmer's benefit. It had been observed of Machynlleth in pre-railway days, 'It were well for the farmers, we presume, if they were not in the habit of disposing of their stock to buyers who go round the farm houses in a clandestine manner, to purchase cattle at almost their own prices.' After 1863 the farmer's market was wherever he could find a buyer. The railway opened up the industrial markets of the English midlands to Welsh milk and butter. Life in Mid-Wales was henceforth not only bound up with the rhythms of the seasons and changes in the weather but with the demands of a railway timetable, and with the requirements of rolling-stock distribution.

If the railway could export livestock and dairy produce, it could also bring goods in. Traditional craft-skills of the countryside also began to disappear, as bricks from Rhiwabon began to displace local stone, and tools and implements could be ordered by catalogue from firms such as Turner's of Newtown instead of bought from the village smith. The benefits to agriculture encouraged landlords to raise rents, and made them more inclined to live on their estates, but also kept many on the land who might otherwise have drifted to the towns. The railway itself was a major employer, offering a new

5 New skills – the railways provided employment opportunities within rural Wales.

range of skills (Illus. 5). It also offered broader horizons through the provision of cheap excursions and that staple of organised religion in Wales, the Sunday-school trip. Travel within Wales became much easier, though South Walian students making their way to Bangor for a new term could be forgiven for thinking otherwise, after long waits between trains at Dowlais, Three Cocks, Moat Lane, Dyfi Junction and (somehow, always worst of all) Afonwen.

When, in 1923, the Cambrian Railways Company was grouped with the Great Western, employees found themselves subject to the staffing rules of a much larger organisation, which preferred that promotion should always be to a new workplace. So the fireman based at Machynlleth might now find himself working at Exeter or Paddington once he passed as a driver. The Swindon eisteddfod prospered as a consequence.

6 Modern diesel stock at Harlech – the former parts of the Cambrian system which still operate now only run passenger services. Courtesy of Gwynedd Archaeological Trust.

Many of the traditions and the technology of the Great Western Railway survived well into the 1960s, when the Cambrian Coast Express was discontinued and steam locomotives went to the scrapyard. The railways which had connected it to other parts of Wales fell victim to the Beeching axe and for a long time it looked as it Pwllheli and Aberystwyth were set to lose their railway service as well. As it is, the remaining parts of the Cambrian continue to perform a valuable service to the local community as a carrier for school students and other passengers, and afford visitors and tourists a relaxing way of enjoying the landscape of Central and North Wales (Illus. 6). At Aberystwyth, Tywyn and Porthmadog the modern diesel stock connect with three of the preserved steam narrow gauge lines. These are popular visitor attractions in their own right, carrying traffic at levels that their original promoters would never have thought possible. Even so, profit margins would disappear without the volunteer railway enthusiasts who work alongside the locally-resident paid staff, spending their holidays firing locomotives or guarding trains, and sustaining Wales's contribution to the age of steam.

The Cambrian today.

The Cambrian main line from Welshpool to Aberystwyth and the branch from Dyfi Junction to Pwllheli remain in daily service. The narrow-gauge Vale of Rheidol Railway and the Welshpool and Llanfair, both at one time in Cambrian ownership, operate services for part of the year, and make use of locomotives and rolling stock from the Cambrian period. The Welsh Industrial and Maritime Museum has recently restored Cambrian Railways tricomposite coach 238, built in 1895, but the only surviving locomotive specificially commissioned by the Cambrian is a 7¼" gauge model of an express passenger engine, built by the apprentices at Oswestry in 1907, preserved at the Penrhyn Castle Industrial Railway Museum, Bangor, Gwynedd.

Summary

Many published histories of railways confine themselves to technical specifications of the formation, of stations, locomotives and rolling stock. Information such as this can be helpful – for instance, was equipment manufactured in Wales, and if so by the railway itself, or was it brought in from outside? Were engineers technically innovative, or conservative? Neath Abbey Ironworks, as an example, continued to build locomotives that owed much to the experimental period of the 1820s even after a standard type of locomotive technology had established itself elsewhere. Similarly, it is worth asking how railway builders responded to the challenges of the Welsh landscape. Some routes cling doggedly to the sides of hills, others bestride mountains on bridges and viaducts or tunnel under them. Some of the most important examples of Victorian engineering are to be found on railways in Wales – Stephenson's tubular bridges over the Conwy and Menai, and Hawkshaw's Severn tunnel. Railways and railway engineering in this sense represent a technical culture.

However, railway historians increasingly also look at the effect that the railways have had on the localities and undertakings they served. This is true both of purely industrial railways and of public railways carrying fare-paying passengers and goods. Economic and social change is easier to grasp than cultural change, but the evidence is there to be found, in census documents and linguistic surveys, in marketing patterns, in architecture. Railways revitalised the farming economy and enabled the tourist industry to develop. Eisteddfodau in country areas could be attended by many more than in pre-railway days. The railways also created entirely new communities. Though Wales has nothing to equal Crewe or Swindon, towns which housed railway servants, Butetown, the subject of Chapter 12, came into being as the sea-terminus of the Taff Vale Railway. Barry is another railway development – a tiny village at the beginning of the nineteenth century, a town of 40,000 by the early twentieth.

The Cambrian survives as a working element in the landscape of Mid and North Wales. In terms of function and purpose it forms a contrast with the other two transport routes discussed here. Unlike the Telford road, discussed in Chapter 9, its primary purpose was to serve its own hinterland, rather than connect two centres of imperial power. Like the drovers' roads (Chapter 8), it carried livestock, but took the trade out of the hands of the agriculturalists themselves and handed it over to uniformed paid staff, working to a timetable. It also fulfilled a much wider variety of tasks than the drovers' roads ever did.

7 Latter days of steam – a down train makes its way through Middletown, on the English-Welsh border.

Further reading:

The literature on railways in Wales is vast. The Oakwood Press, PO Box 122, Headington, Oxford, publish a series on books on individual Welsh railways. The following bibliography includes books specifically devoted to the Cambrian and studies specifically of the railways' social and cultural impact.

Stephen Hughes: *The Archaeology of an Early Railway System: the Brecon Forest Tramroad* (Aberystwyth, 1990). Despite its title, this is a very broad-ranging work, covering the technology of the hybrid railway, in between the primitive wooden railways evident in Wales from the sixteenth century and the steam-worked iron edge railway of 1830 onwards.
Christiansen, Rex and Miller R.W.: *The Cambrian Railways* (David and Charles, 1967). The standard history of the Cambrian.
Jenkins, Geraint H.: *Iaith Carreg fy Aelwyd: Iaith a Chymuned yn y Bedwaredd Ganrif ar Bymtheg* (Caerdydd, 1998) t. 5. Linguistic change in Wales in the nineteenth century, and the effect of the railway.
Howell, David: 'The Impact of railways on Agricultural Development in Nineteenth-century Wales', *Welsh History Review* 7 (1974) pp. 40-62. The impact of the railway on the agricultural economy.
Jones, Dot: *The Coming of the Railways and Language Change in North Wales 1850-1900* (Aberystwyth, 1995). This pamphlet contains a number of detailed case studies of the way in which the railways changed linguistic patterns, and examines the London and North Western Railway's brushes with Welsh politicians over the company's language policy.
Moore, Donald (ed.): *Barry; the Centenary Book* (Barry, 1985) – the history of the largest railway town in Wales.
Simmons, Jack: *The Victorian Railway* (New York, 1991). One of the standard works, by an acknowledged expert.

Perceptions and identity 12

Cardiff

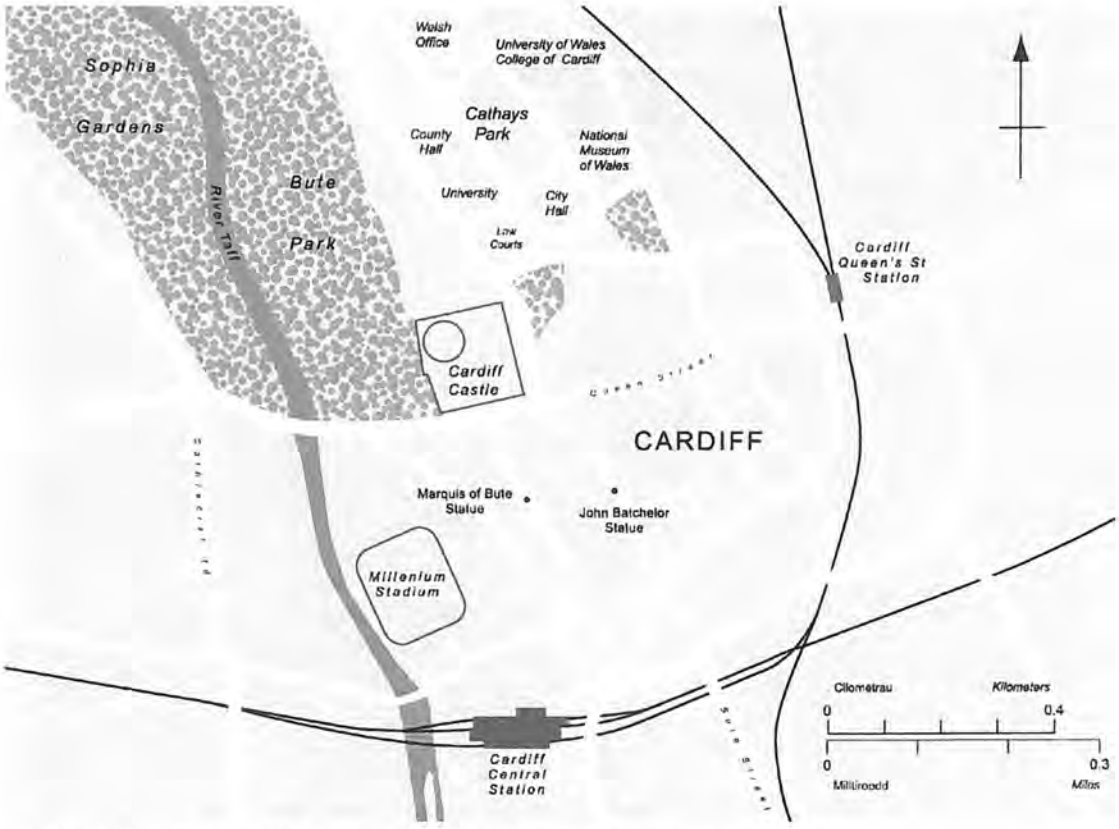
Cardiff: 1798-present day

Themes: cultures and competing identities in an urban landscape

At the beginning of the nineteenth century Cardiff was a small market town on the banks of the Taff. When it was awarded city status in 1905 Cardiff was already the largest town in Wales, the site of the National Museum and University College, and was beginning to think of itself as the metropolis, perhaps the capital, of Wales. The transformation of this townscape owes much to the competing visions of two powerful men, a Scottish aristocrat and a Welsh industrialist – the Marquess of Bute and D.A. Thomas. By looking in particular at two buildings, Cardiff Castle and Cardiff City Hall, and at their interiors, this chapter examines the way in which individuals have created a contrived urban landscape which articulates competing senses of a national past.

Introduction

The centre of Cardiff forms one of the outstanding townscapes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, whether in Wales or anywhere else in the world (Map 1). It was planned and laid out in the Gilded Age which the First World War brought to an abrupt end, when Cardiff was the greatest coal-port in the world. Cardiff Castle was rebuilt in part with the profits generated by coal export to create one of the most remarkable Welsh buildings of the nineteenth century. Cardiff City Hall, together with the other magnificent public buildings and statuary in Cathays Park, bespeak the power and confidence of the new urban order in Wales, as well as the seemingly boundless wealth that could be amassed, and spent, in this upstart city.



Map 1: Central Cardiff, showing locations mentioned in the text.

From amongst the wealth of civic architecture in Cardiff, this chapter looks in detail at these two buildings, at the different ways they proclaim the city's role as an imperial metropolis, and as a seat of power and authority. Not only do we look at the front these buildings present to the world, but also their interiors; within an urban landscape context, of public buildings designed to impress, what lies within is every bit as important as important as their external architecture (Illus. 1).

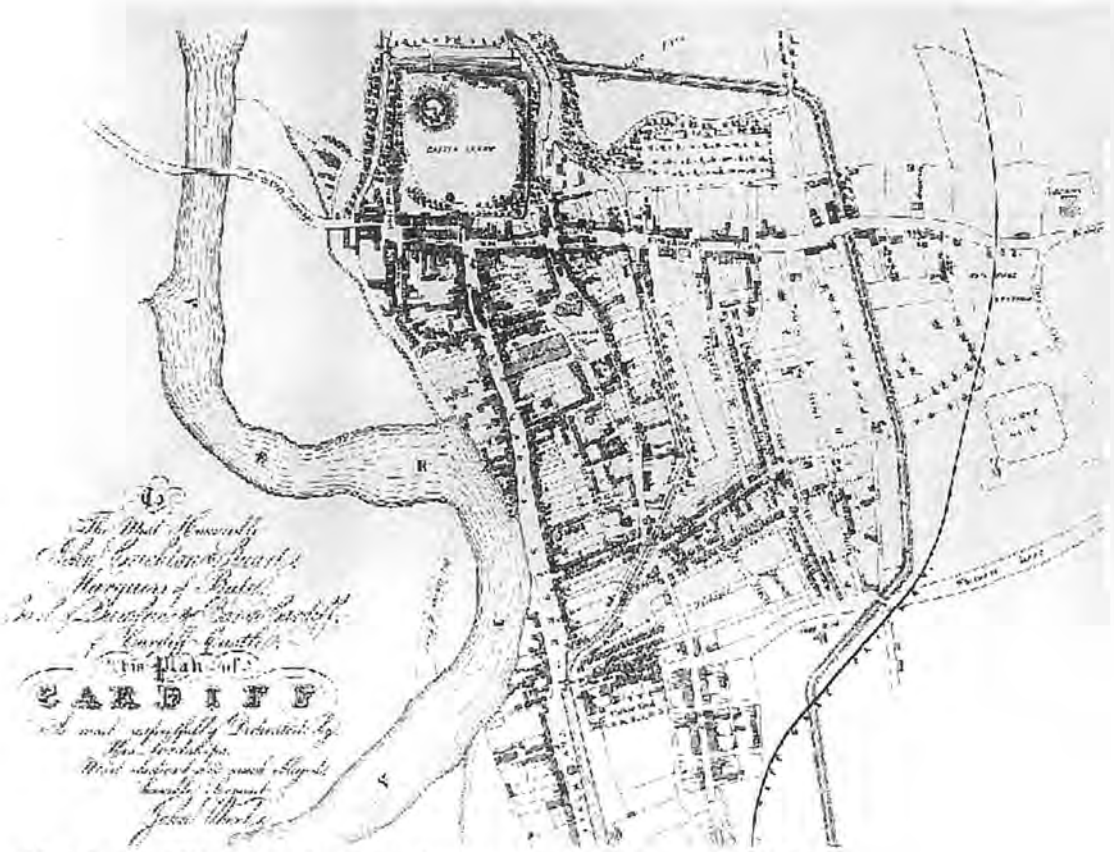
1 A modern aerial view of Cardiff. In the foreground is the Castle, beyond are the buildings of Cathays Park. The City Hall, with its dome and tower, forms the central block.

Before the eighteenth century, towns in Wales had been few and small. Though some evolved from native settlements, most were planted as borough towns by the English to tame a rebellious countryside, and were predominantly English, French or Flemish in population. Cardiff may be one of the few in which there is evidence of continuity from the fort established by the Romans at the end of the first century A.D. There are hints of Viking presence, even of slave-trading, but the town's recorded history begins with Robert fitz Hamon's motte, thrown up around 1080 and the charter granted by Robert of Gloucester to the borough in 1120-37. But by 1810, when exports of iron had begun from the furnaces of Merthyr, at that time the largest town in Wales, its population – 1,870 – was less than it had been five hundred years earlier.

Yet before many years had passed, Cardiff had wrested regional pre-eminence from the town of Cowbridge (Chapter 1), and by 1881 had overtaken Merthyr in terms of population, at much the same time that the South Wales valleys surpassed the North-east of England as Britain's major coal-producing area.

What began the transformation of this small market town was the opening of the Glamorgan canal in 1798 by creating the first effective dock in the last few hundred yards of its course, above the sea-lock – the street-names East and West Canal Wharf survive here. Coal was exported right from the start, but only in comparatively small tonnages, partly due to coastal duties, from which Newport was exempt. The pace of change accelerated rapidly from the late 1830s. Present day Cardiff owes its existence to the Marquesses of Bute, who owned not only the lands in the lower reaches of the Taff, but was also lord of most of the manors of east Glamorgan, with their mineral rights and was landlord of the Dowlais ironworks. The second marquess (1814-1848) conducted 'an industrial revolution in South Wales through

correspondence' from his estates in Scotland, developing from 1839 onwards a port at Butetown (Chapter 21, Map 2). to rival Liverpool. From 1841 Brunel's Taff Vale Railway connected Cardiff with Merthyr Tydfil, and ten years later the third marquess sanctioned the sinking of the first shaft into the steam coal on the Bute estate in the Rhondda



Map 2: Cardiff in 1839, finally beginning to outgrow its medieval limits.

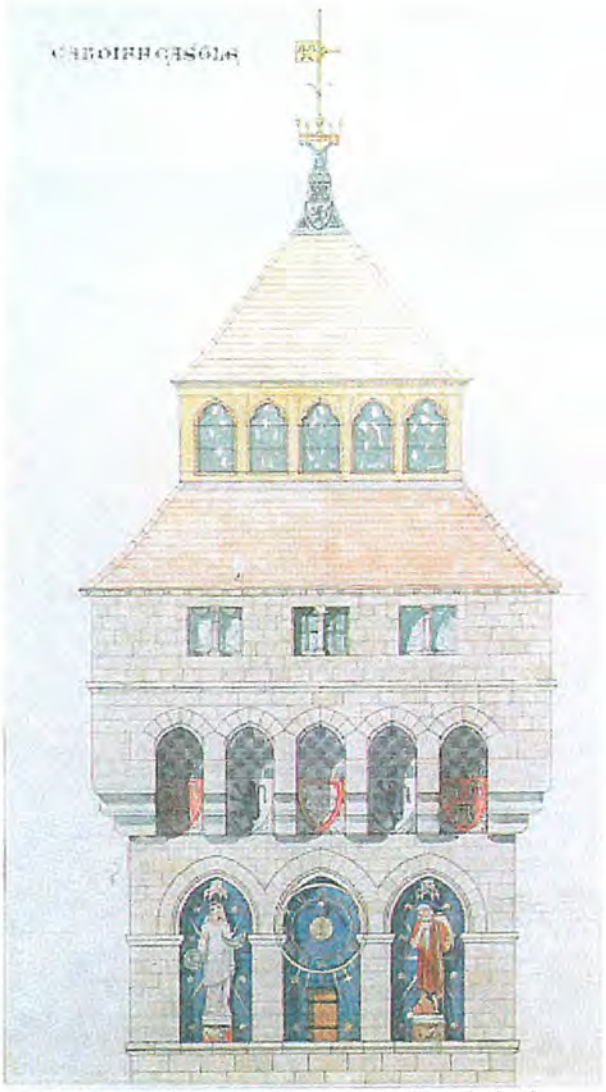
2 The third marquess of Bute

Cardiff Castle

The second Marquess of Bute had concentrated his efforts on industrial development. His son, the third marquess, was a very different individual. Shy and introverted as a child, he grew into an intense and intellectual individual, fascinated by history and archaeology, and by ritual and ceremonial (Illus. 2). He began the work of excavating, restoring and rebuilding Cardiff Castle in 1865 – this included the architect William Burges's free interpretation of the spirit of the Middle Ages, including the immense neo-medieval clock-tower he built in the south-west corner of the Roman fort (Illus. 3). The rebuilding reflected his patron's interest in medievalism, orientalism and the occult, and the rooms were decorated in a variety of styles and according to different themes. Lady Bute's sitting room is adorned with scenes from Chaucer, the marquess's bedroom is themed around St John the Evangelist and the seven churches of Asia, whereas his interest in Orientalism found expression in the Arab room, the last that Burges designed before his premature death in 1881. But it is in the Banqueting Hall, completed between 1872 and 1890 (Illus. 4), that the theme of the Welsh past found clearest expression.

The result is one of the most extraordinary public rooms of the nineteenth century. The stone chimney piece represents the castle itself, and shows Robert the Consul, also known as Robert of Gloucester (*fl.* 1099-1147), the illegitimate son of Henry I and second Norman Lord of Glamorgan, riding out to battle. According to Iolo Morgannwg's fabrications, Robert was the son of Nest, Princess of Deheubarth, 'the Helen of Wales', whose many lovers certainly included Henry I. It was Robert the Consul who presented Cardiff with its charter, as well as, in the last year of his life, founding Margam Abbey. Below, peering out of a dungeon cell, is the son of William the Conqueror, who was imprisoned in Cardiff castle for eight years until his death in 1134 (Illus. 5). The tale this tells is also taken up by the murals, painted by Burges's friend, the American artist Horatio Lonsdale, which depicts the wars of Stephen and Maltilda – the Glamorgan tale forms only a part of a broader epic of chivalric struggle, enacted in England as well as a Wales (Illus. 6).

The two men collaborated on the stained glass windows, which show the Glamorgan ancestors – successive Lords of the castle and their consorts (Illus. 7). The heraldic shields that dominate the roof are mainly of the marquess's Scottish ancestors.



3 Burges's plans for the neo-medieval clock tower built on the south-western quadrant of the Castle.

4 The banqueting hall

5 William the Conqueror's son peers out of his cell window.

The marquess had in fact a strong sympathy for Scots nationalism, an allegiance which in those days by no means conflicted with his strong Toryism, and it was one of the most frequently voiced complaints against him that his Welsh revenues went to pay for his Scottish interests. Even so, he learnt to speak and write Welsh, encouraged Welsh scholarship and the Welsh Language Society, and appointed to the livings in his gift Anglo-catholic Welsh ordinands (he converted to Catholicism as a young man) – as well as giving a pension to the watchmaker-druid Myfyr Morgannwg (Evan Davies of Pontypridd).

This vision of a courtly and aristocratic past was enshrined in the middle of one of the fastest growing commercial cities of the western world. Paradox though this might seem, many felt that the marquess's archaeological excavations in particular gave the parvenu town prestige and status by emphasising its historic roots. Others felt that the conspicuous consumption it implied contrasted with the Corporation's programme of building resources for all Cardiff's citizens. Yet both the marquess and the Corporation were acutely conscious of the way that architecture could invoke the past to legitimate the present, even if their visions of the Welsh past differed fundamentally.

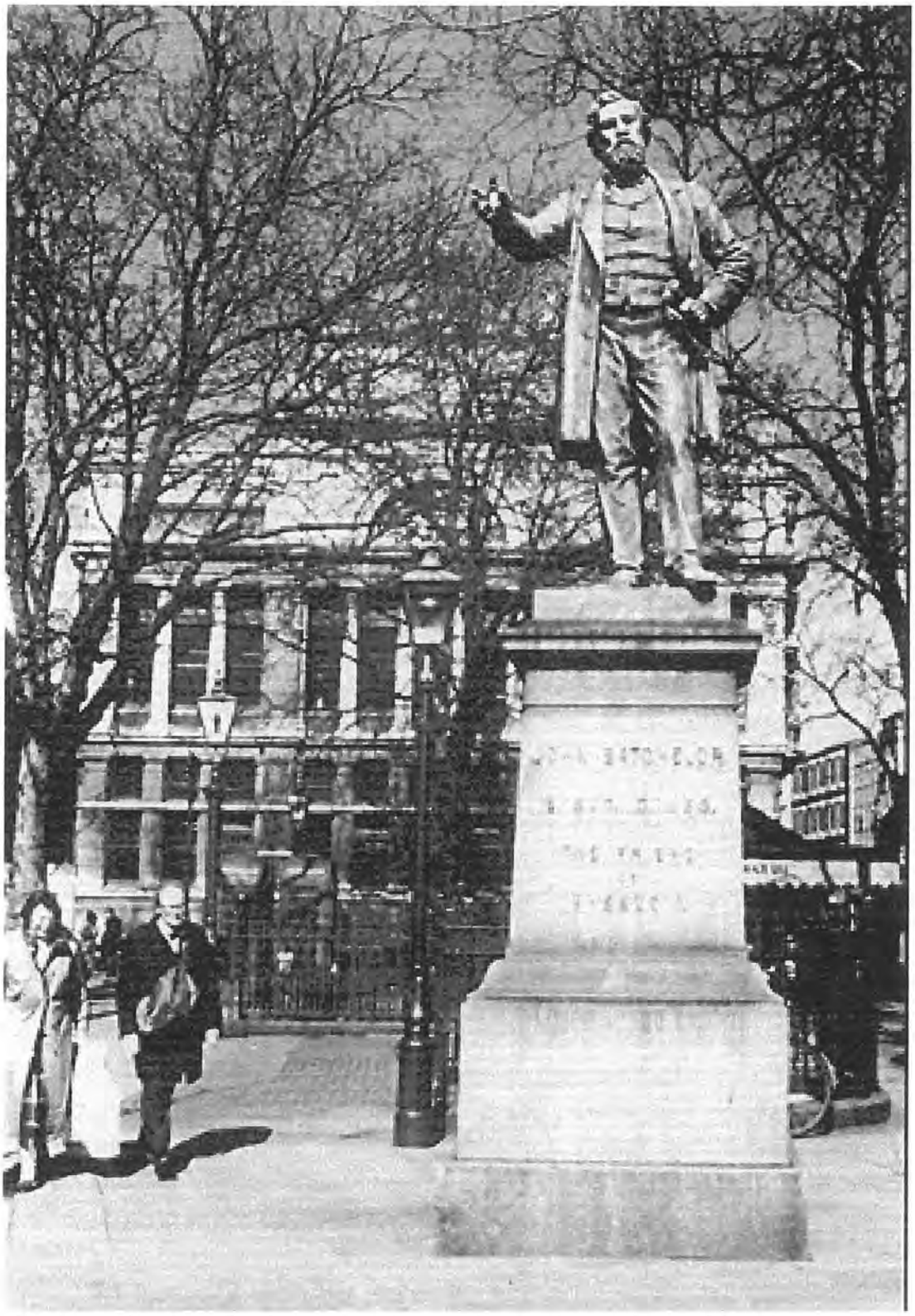
6 Londsale's design for the banqueting hall mural.

7 The Welsh past in stained glass.

Conflict

The second and third marquess' architectural interests were not confined to the Castle but left their mark all over Cardiff. Plots were let on 99-year leases on which builders constructed houses to an estate design. The 99-year lease had evolved in London following the Great Fire, and was much used in the developing resort towns on the south coast of England. In Cardiff terms it was pioneered on the marquess's Butetown estate (Chapter 21) in the 1840s. But whereas the second marquess favoured a neo-classical style, his son preferred indigenous architectural traditions. Along Senghennydd Road, at Grangetown and Canton, later at Roath Park, Gabalfa and Victoria Park, there appeared distinctive neo-Jacobean dwellings for the middle classes of Cardiff, whereas the Tredegar and Mackintosh estates tended to concentrate on grid-pattern terraced housing for the working classes.

Many felt that the rigid control which the marquess exercised over the town and its commerce weakened Cardiff. The short-term leases, though they were by no means unique to the Bute estate, were regarded as one more means by which it maintained its power in the long-term. From the middle of the nineteenth century, Cardiff Castle and the business interest were in frequent conflict. The second marquess regarded himself as the patron of the



8 John Batchelor – 'The Friend of Liberty', and enemy of the marquess of Bute.

poor and the middling against the voraciousness of the directors of the Taff Vale Railway, in his opinion a conspiracy of ironmasters bent on destroying him. They for their part regarded him just as one more businessman among many, rather than as a nobleman to whom deference was due. The third marquess was in frequent disagreement with the Corporation, dominated by Liberals since the 1850s. When in the 1880s the marquess offered the Corporation land for a library provided he could designate the architect, the offer was turned

down flat as tying their hands. When the Free Library was built, the Liberals on the Corporation erected outside it a statue to John Batchelor, a champion of municipal reform and an opponent of the Butes in the 1840s. Batchelor's shipbuilding business had been bankrupted in 1873 by, it was darkly rumoured, a conspiracy of the Bute estate, and the Corporation audaciously chose to inscribe on the plinth the words *The Friend of Freedom* – a calculated snub to the Bute interest and a counterpoise to the statue of the second marquess erected in front of the Old Town Hall (Illus. 8, Map 1). So it is all the more remarkable that the land the marquess made available to the Corporation in 1897 should have become the focus for a Liberal and Nationalist political vision.

Cardiff City Hall

Cardiff City Hall, completed in 1904, officially opened two years later, is one the earliest of the outstanding group of public buildings, memorials and statuary erected in Cathays Park, after it had been sold to the Corporation by the marquess of Bute in 1892 for this purpose – inevitably under strict conditions. Other buildings are the Law Courts and the University Registry (1904), County Hall (1912), the University College (1909-12), the Technical College (1916-27), the National Museum of Wales (1927-32), the Welsh National War Memorial (1928), the National Temple of Peace and Health and the Welsh Office (1938). The names of these buildings resound with the nation-building of the Edwardian era and its confidence in technology, as well as with the blighted optimism of the inter-war period. But all of them embody the civic pride of twentieth-century Cardiff, a city that was beginning to think of itself as a capital.

9 Alfred Thomas M.P.

These buildings had been made possible by an Act of Parliament in 1891 which had permitted raising a local rate to erect museums and galleries, but also reflect a belief, generally unspoken but powerfully felt, that national groups, as they emerged from under the wings of more powerful neighbours, needed to create their own distinctive institutions of learning and collective memory. On this basis the National Institutions (Wales) Bill was piloted through parliament by Alfred Thomas, Liberal MP for East Glamorgan, a Cardiff businessman and former councillor and Mayor, later to be President of the Baptist Union – an embodiment of the new Welsh nonconformist plutocracy which increasingly dominated both the Corporation and the Chamber of Commerce (Illus. 9).

The City Hall, located in the centre of Cathays Park, is the most impressive of all the civic buildings in Cardiff, with its towering dome and Welsh dragon, and its sculptured groups representing 'Poetry and Music' and 'Unity and Patriotism'. Part French, part Austrian in conception, to the design of E.A. Rickards of the London firm, Lanchester, Stewart and Rickards, it not only proclaimed to the world Cardiff's new-found metropolitan status, but in its baroque flamboyance and its Viennese echoes, suggested something of the teeming multi-cultural, multi-lingual world of the Austro-Hungarian empire.

Teutonic influence was apparent in a suggestion made initially by Major-General Sir Ivor Herbert (1851-1934) in an open letter to the *Western Mail*, when he urged a 'national valhalla' in the new civic area around the City Hall in 1910.

> Let this open space be transformed into a 'Forum' in which the representation of all that is greatest and most inspiring in Welsh History, grouped with gardens round the personality of the late King *(sic)*, and blended with the architectural adornments which are the pride of the Welsh capital, shall form a fitting image of Welsh nationality.

10 D.A. Thomas, Merthyr's M.P., owner of the Cambrian Combine.

At the eisteddfod at Colwyn Bay later on that year he had to be more careful about what he meant by using a motif from 'the heathen mythology of Germany'. The 'valhalla' was to be based on the processional ways of nineteenth century Germany near Munich and Ratisbon, both the work of Ludwig I of Bavaria, and on the Sieges Allee in Berlin.

In fact, statues had already been erected in the gardens immediately in front of the Law Courts, the City Hall and the museum, representing various Cardiff and Welsh worthies, beginning with Lord Aberdare in 1898, as well as to the Welshmen who died in the South African War. But when the valhalla project was revived two years later, the statues were to be erected within the City Hall itself. In 1912 Joseph Wheatley, the town clerk of Cardiff, secured an offer from D.A. Thomas, Liberal MP for Merthyr Tydfil and owner of the Cambrian Collieries Combine (Illus. 10), to pay for what was now to be called 'Pantheon of National Heroes', a series of statues to be placed within the Marble Hall.

Thomas, later to be the first Viscount Rhondda, was a very different individual from the other representative men of late nineteenth century Wales. Both Tom Ellis (Chapter 17) and David Lloyd George were from the Welsh-speaking rural heartlands, whose concerns were farm-tenant-rights and disestablishment. Thomas's roots lay in his constituency, but he had been sent to boarding school at Clifton and to Caius College Cambridge, where he graduated in mathematics – a more academically successful student than Tom Ellis, who was always regarded as the intellectual amongst the Welsh group of MPs. But he was no etiolated collegian; as soon as he had taken his degree he was getting his hands dirty at Clydach Vale, studying mining engineering. Nor was he a great chapel man, putting in a reluctant appearance on a Sunday to satisfy propriety. His blue in boxing did him no harm in the macho world of the South Wales miners, and he discovered a rare talent as a manager of men and as a businessman. He topped the poll four times at Merthyr.

Thomas saw that the coalfields and seaports were evolving into a very different type of landscape from that of the rural hinterland, and argued that in the event of disestablishment of the Anglican church in Wales, or of the creation of a national council, that funds for social and cultural institutions should be allocated on the basis of population – to the advantage of Glamorgan, and of Cardiff in particular – instead of being frittered away, as he saw it, on the parishes of Anglesey and Caernarvonshire. It was this vision that underlay his fratricidal strife with Lloyd George over the *Cymru Fydd* debacle in 1894-6, when he concluded that the Welsh National Liberal Council was 'a mere annexe of the Hotel Caernarvon'. Thomas's victory was Pyrrhic, and ever since he has occupied a place in the demonology of Welsh nationalism. It is truer to say that he preferred his nationalism sentimental rather than separatist.

In fact, Thomas was unusual amongst the industrialists of late Victorian Wales in his strong sense of Welsh nationality, as Romantic in its way as the marquess of Bute's yearning for all things chivalric. His vision of the city was as the centre of the new Imperial Wales, at once distinctively national and a province of the British Empire. Cardiff was the imperial city *par excellence* – the coal shipped through its docks sustained the navy on which British power rested. In celebrating Welsh distinctiveness – even the tradition of Welsh separatism in the person of Owain Glyndwr – Thomas was creating an imperial vision.

11 Buddug and her daughters.

A panel was established to decide on the subjects, though the opinion of the public was also sought – the most popular choice was Glyndwr. The commissions were awarded to a variety of young sculptors – all, as it happens, English, with a possible saver on J. Havard Thomas, whose roots lay in West Wales.[1] Edwardian Wales was invited to contemplate its descent from an Iron Age past in the person of Buddug (Boadicea) and her daughters (Illus. 11), its religious faith in St David, William Morgan and William Williams Pantycelyn. Pantycelyn is shown 'with head uncovered, hair and garments caught by the winds of his native mountains, while in his hands are a pen and notebook ready to record the inspired verse' – the type, in fact of the romantic poet. Glyndwr is 'the enthusiast with lofty ideals and noble aims, who fought with splendid courage for the independence of Wales and the advancement of the people'. Dafydd ap Gwilym represents poetry. The independent Welsh tradition was represented by Hywel Dda, Llywelyn ap Gruffudd (Illus. 12) and Owain Glyndwr, Wales's British destiny by Gerald of Wales, Harri Tudur and Sir Thomas Picton.

12 Llywelyn ap Gruffudd (lLywelyn Olaf)

[1] Dewi Sant was carved Goscombe John; Gerald the Welshman by Henry Poole; Boadicea and her daughters by J. Havard Thomas; Dafydd ab Gwilym by W.W.Wagstaff; Howel Dda by W.F. Pomeroy; Owain Glyndwr by A Turner; King Henry VII and Rhys ab Thomas by E.G. Gillick; Llywelyn Olaf by Harry Pegram, Bishop Morgan by T.J Clapperton; General Picton by T.W. Crook; William Williams, Pantycelyn by Leonard Merrifield (names are as given in D. Jones *A Nation's Heroes* [Cardiff, 1916]).

Welsh Outlook in August 1916 considered that the theme of the statues was freedom, a theme developed by David Lloyd George, the Minister of Munitions, on 27 October of that year when he opened the pantheon (Illus. 13). Lloyd George praised Thomas's initiative, and dwelt on the rights of small nations, implicitly identifying Wales in its hour of crisis with Belgium and Serbia and the other victims of Teutonic militarism, and emphasising the need for yet more South Wales coal to fuel the Imperial war effort. It was not long before this son of a small nation was to assume the leadership of the war effort as Prime Minister, the first Welshman to hold the office, whilst D.A. Thomas, now Viscount Rhondda, was to become president of the Local Government Board, and from June 1917 Food Controller, in some respects the man who won the war.

13 David Lloyd George, Minister of Munitions, shortly to become Prime Minister, opens the pantheon in 1916

The City Hall statues keep strange company. Opposite the painting of Lloyd George opening the pantheon (the individual statues were unveiled by Cardiff city officials) is hung Sir Luke Fildes *The Penitent's Return*, showing an unmarried mother greeted with frosty stares on her return to her native village with her baby. Dewi Sant faces a composite portrait of Diana, Princess of Wales. Smaller busts, depicting Cardiff aldermen, James Callaghan and D.A. Thomas himself, keep watch over the whole. The banqueting hall at Cardiff Castle remains much as it was at the end of the nineteenth century, and is still used for its original purpose, as a centre of power and ceremony – it was here that the Queen presided at a dinner to mark the opening of the Welsh Assembly. With the establishment of the Assembly, the city had come of age as a metropolis. It was fitting that this should have been marked under the eyes of Robert the Consul who had granted Cardiff its first charter in the banqueting hall created by the man who transformed Cardiff into a great trading city.

Connections

Cardiff is the largest city in Wales, and was the greatest of the Welsh mineral-port towns. As such it stands comparison not only with the other large coal-exporting towns of Wales but also with the great commercial port-cities of the nineteenth century, such as Liverpool, Belfast, and Chicago. As a created city, with ambitions to become a capital, it is similar in conception to L'Enfant's city of Washington for the newly-United States of America, Hausmann's ceremonial capital for Second Empire France, or Lutyens's Delhi, constructed at much the same time as Cathays Park, to represent British rule in India.

It is also a city brought into being largely through the ambitions of one aristocratic family – and, to some extent, despite them. In Wales, the closest parallel is perhaps Llandudno, which the Mostyn estate originally proposed to develop as a port for Wrexham coal, but opted for a controlled resort development instead. However, no other shipping town in Wales was so completely dominated by one family as Cardiff, and for parallels we have to look at the development of Belfast under the second marquess of Donegall.

Other towns all over the world, both small and great, have made it their business at various times to construct suitably splendid public buildings as a mark of civic pride, just as their richest citizens have displayed their own wealth in the construction of houses for themselves or their dependants or in provision of public infrastructure. Civic architecture and urban planning are never innocent, or dictated purely by topography or convenience. The extenral and internal form of such buildings, as well as their siting and relationship wherever they are to be found, articulate their builders' understanding of power.

The same is true of public statuary. Some writers have seen the statues as an emblem of the economic power of coal-boom South Wales; others have seen them as yet another example of nouveaux-riche *pretension compared to the proletarian reality of the coal field. In this respect, the marquess of Bute's murals and decorations have escaped more lightly, as more clearly fantastic in conception.*

Yet all of these show, and few cities more clearly than Cardiff, the perception that power in the urban landscape is defined by history, and that there are radically different, often competing, views of history. Related themes are examined in Chapter 17, which discusses the populist historiography of the chapel culture, and in Chapter 21, which examines the 'people's history' of Butetown. Central Cardiff, with its rebuilt castle and its pantheon of heroes, is in its own way as much a consciously created historic national landscape as Saint Ffagan's (Chapter 25). But whereas Saint Ffagan's celebrates the folk-values of the gwerin, *central Cardiff articulates the power and prosperity of Wales's Antonine Age, distinctly national yet also Imperial. There are parallels in other cultures – as well as the model of the German* valhalla *which Herbert recommended, the murals and statues in the House of Commons in Westminster celebrate the theme of freedom. Aneurin Bevan confessed to finding them repellent, an invitation to ancestor worship. Yet he now has his own statue, in characteristic pose, facing Cardiff Castle at the end of Queen Street.*

Further reading:

A number of books have been written on Cardiff's history, as well as a number on the city's architecture, though Lord, Wilson and Gaffney are the best and most readily accessible sources for Cardiff's statuary.

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Puritans and Protestants 17

Dolgellau-Bala: Gwynedd: 1650-present day

Themes: religion, power and piety in the rural landscape

Radical Christianity – Protestant dissent – has made a tremendous impact on the landscape of modern Wales, visible everywhere. Rural chapels sometimes hark back to the very earliest days, such as Glasbury chapel above Hay on Wye and Capel Pen y Rhiw, the eighteenth century Independent chapel re-erected at St Ffagan's (Chapter 25). Even the smallest of villages might have several chapels, in which variously Calvinists, Baptists, Independents and Wesleyans worshipped. These varied from the plain unadorned buildings of the early days of dissent to the flamboyant buildings of the late nineteenth century. Chapels in larger towns are often huge buildings, witness to the self-confidence of Welsh life in the period, and to its comparative prosperity. Morriston, near Swansea, sometimes called the cathedral of Welsh nonconformity, is one of the most spectacular examples, but the pattern is apparent in the huge chapels of the Rhondda and elsewhere.

Though attendances have declined as Wales appears to be moving into a secular age, these buildings continue to dominate the landscapes and townscapes of Wales, and, in less obvious ways, continue to inform the way we look at society and community. The history of Wales throughout the nineteenth century and for much of the twentieth was dominated by the traditions of religious dissent. Yet the seed of this harvest was sown much earlier – in the Reformation of the sixteenth century as well as in the 'Old Dissent' which grew out of the Puritan movement, and which flourished where established religious authority was weak.

A number of places are particularly associated with nonconformist Christianity – Llangefni in Anglesey, was known as 'the Sublime Porte of Methodism' because of the powerful and uncompromising personality of John Elias. Howell Harris's community at Trefeca, Talgarth, Powys is open as a museum as well as a religious centre and preserves the main building from the eighteenth century.

The neighbouring towns of Dolgellau and Bala and their surrounding areas provide two such landscapes. The first was a centre of the Society of Friends, the Quakers, a movement which arrived in Wales from England and which was spread further afield by emigration from Wales. The other is Bala, 'the Geneva of Wales', the great centre of Calvinistic Methodism, the oldest of the specifically Welsh connections. In both of them we can see how patterns of power and plenty in the landscape have affected religious life, and how radical Christianity has in turn left its own profound mark on the landscape.

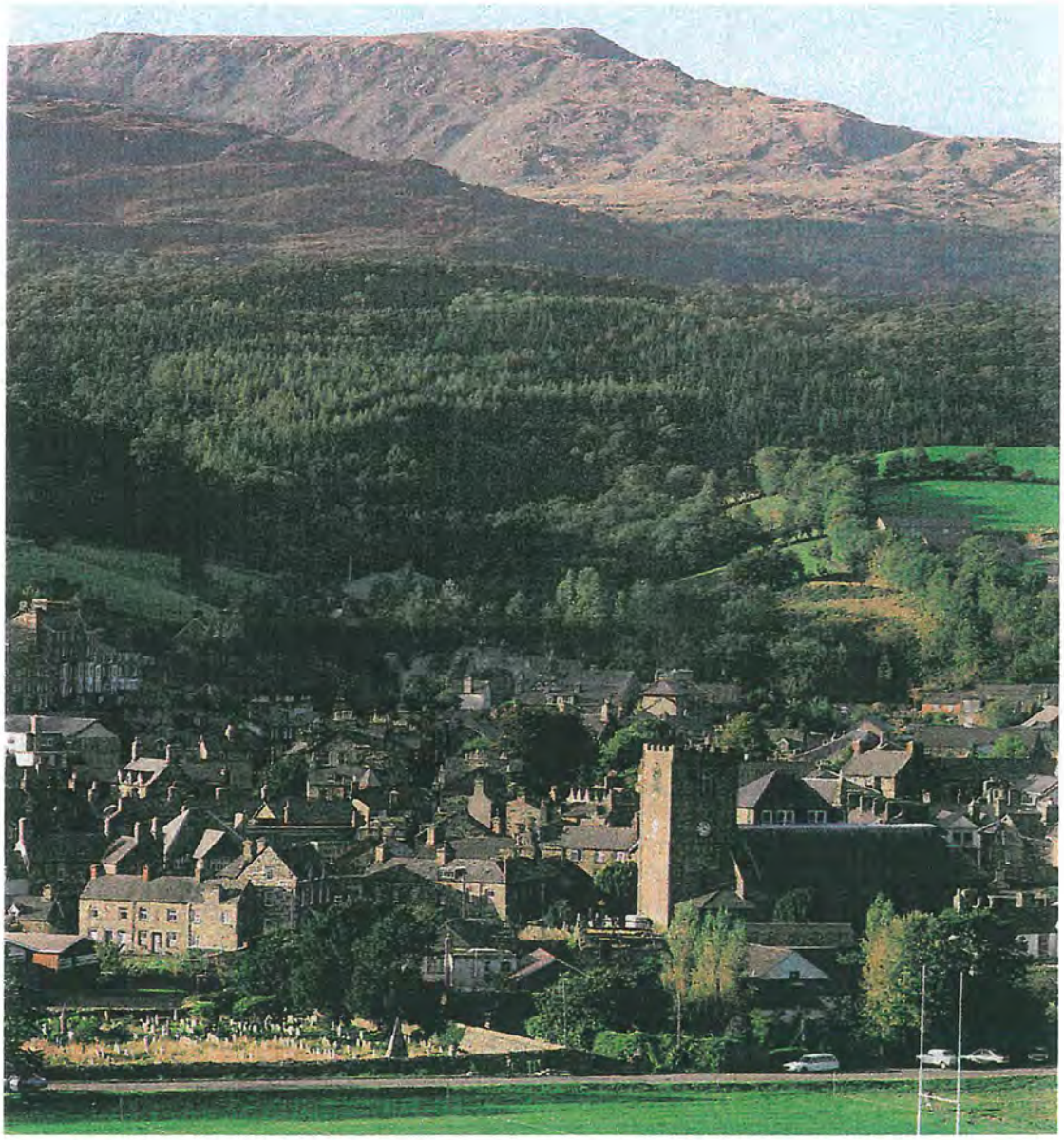
Introduction

At first sight, it is hard to see how landscape and religious faith affect each other. For historians of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, writing the history of their particular chapel, it was God's grace which brought the Christian faith to Wales and which wrought it to purity. Historians and sociologists have sought other explanations – not necessarily ones which exclude a religious view of the world – including, most famously, Max Weber (1864-1920), whose *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* argued that Protestant Christianity favoured the rise of an individualistic business spirit.

Because landscape dictates the scale of economic resources, and affects the ways in which power is exercised over a particular area, it also affects the form religious life takes at a local and a regional level. In the sixteenth century, the richness of the corn-growing lands of the Vale of Clwyd and the Conwy valley enabled them to support both lay piety and clerical learning, with the result that Llanrwst and Denbigh both became centres of the Reformation.

Study of particular landscapes can help us understand how spirituality took a particular form and shape.

Conversely, a religious centre, whether a church, a community, a seminary or a shrine, may itself dominate the landscape and give it a unique form. Throughout history, cathedrals and monasteries have been built to impress on the faithful the majesty of God, but they also have affected the landscape in more subtle ways, through their administration of their surrounding estates and the development of industry. In some instances, associations have grown up around venerable ecclesiastical ruins, such as the musings of Wordsworth and his contemporaries on Tintern Abbey (Chapter 27). It may seem strange to apply this to the homespun puritanism of Welsh nonconformity, yet Wales offers a many examples of communities which preserve the signs of a particular religious connection.



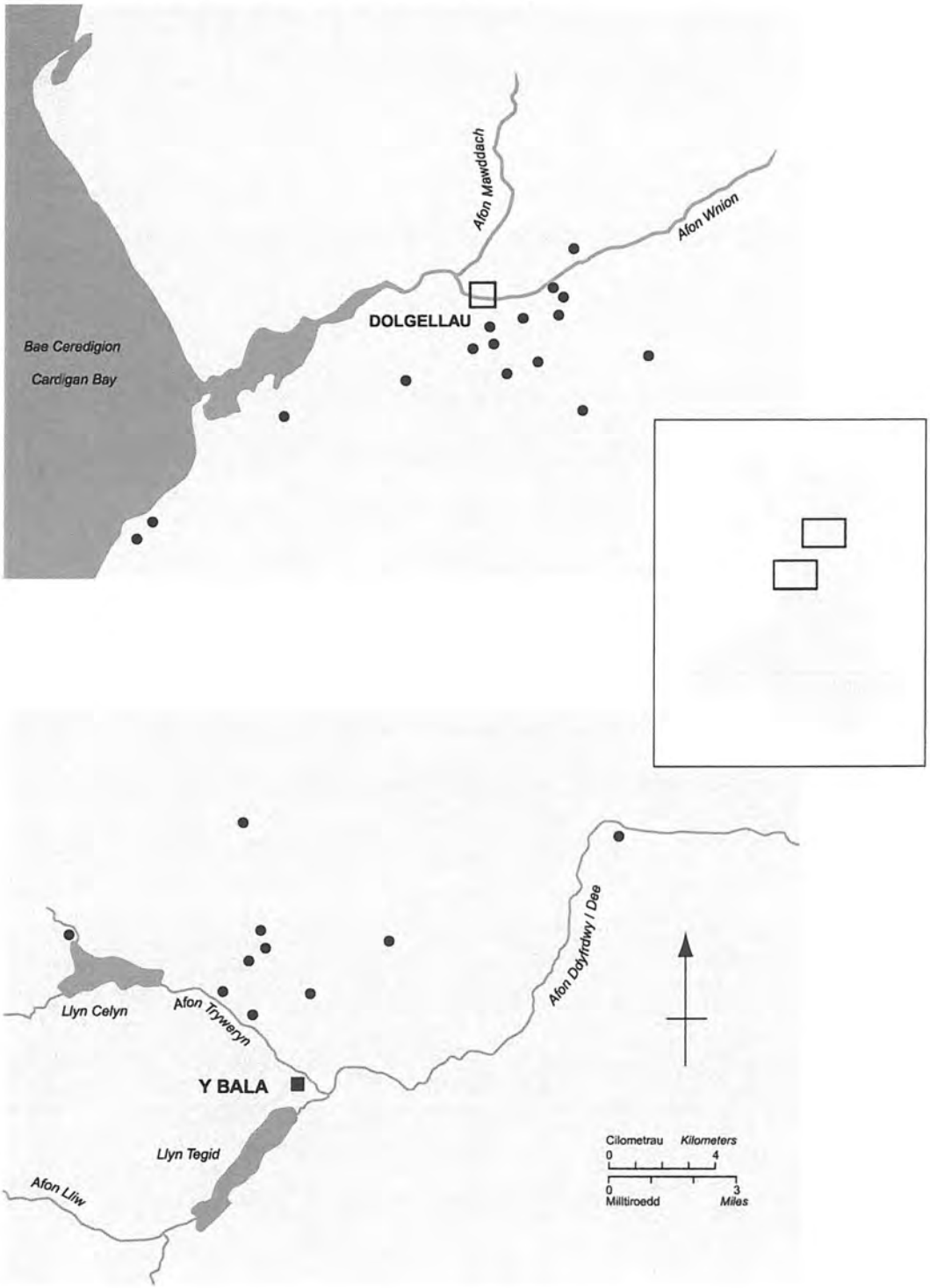
1 Dolgellau today, looking south west towards the summit of Cader Idris.

Dolgellau

The town of Dolgellau in Gwynedd, and its surrounding area (Illus. 1) was in the seventeenth century a stronghold of the Society of Friends, commonly known as the Quakers, which grew out of the radical Christian movements of the Reformation, and which throughout its

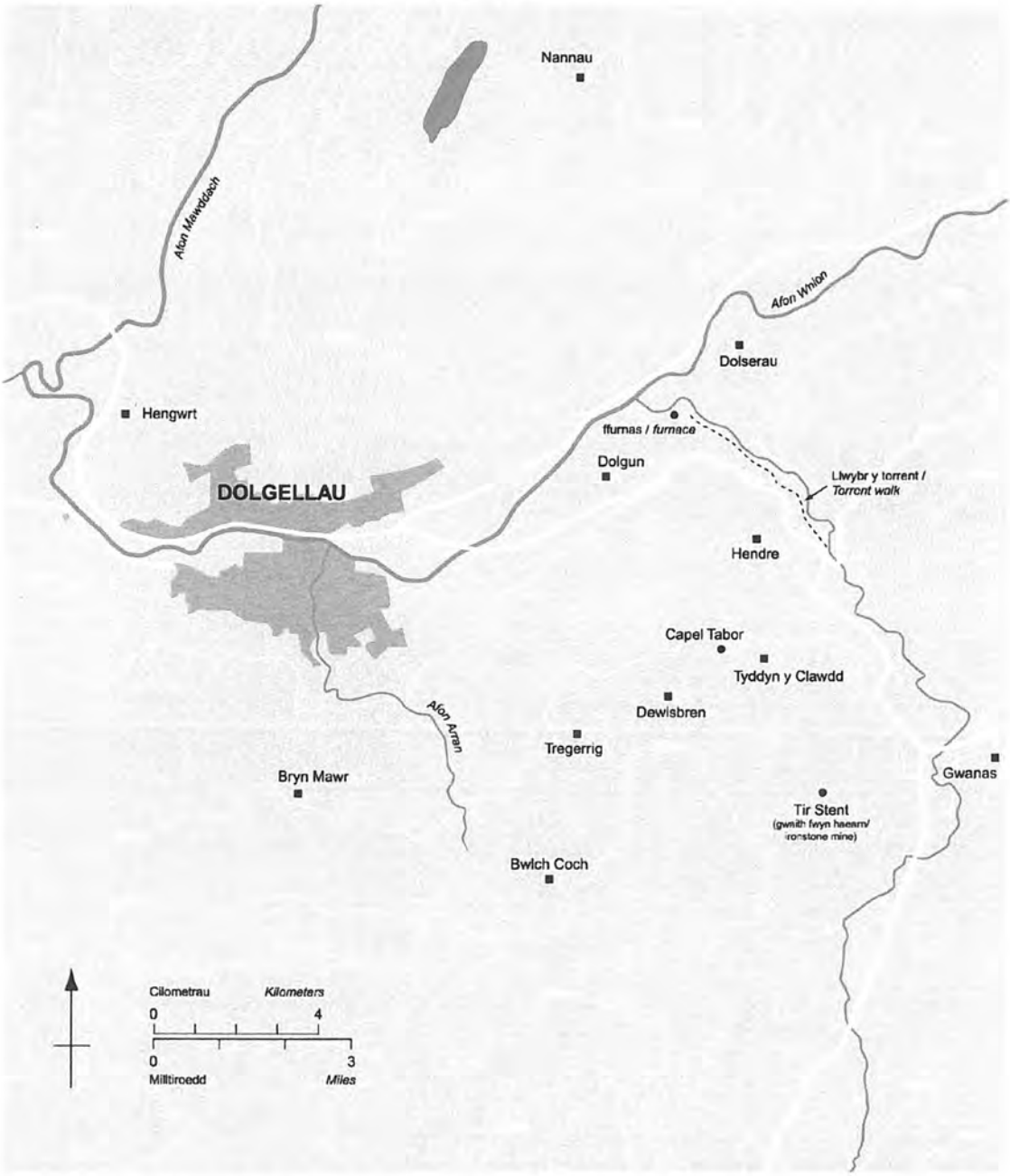
history has stressed individual conscience – 'the inner light' – and non-violence. Quakers have no clergy, no liturgy, and congregate in meeting houses rather than in churches. The origins of the Friends lay in England, and they now claim many adherents world-wide. There were other important centres of the movement elsewhere in Wales – Montgomeryshire, for example – yet their significance for the Dolgellau area was profound, and it in turn formed one of the cradles of the state of Pennsylvania. The areas around Llwyngwril and to the north of Bala were also home to a number of Quaker families (Map 1).

Map 1: Quaker homes in the seventeenth century.



Dolgellau is situated at the foot of Cader Idris, on the banks of the Afon Wnion a mile above where it joins the Afon Mawddach, just beyond its tidal limit (Map 2). A native Welsh settlement, it was in existence by 1292-3, but until the coming of the railway this was a remote area, looking out to Cardigan Bay rather than to the English Severn valley culture (Chapter 3). The fullers and weavers of the town's hosiery industry, well established by the early seventeenth century, faced a long trek to the English markets in Shrewsbury (Illus. 2).

Map 2: Centres of Quaker activity in the Dolgellau area



But if it was distant from centres of trade and authority, it was not a poor region – the distinctive and well-built farmhouses of the area testify to levels of comparative affluence. Exceptionally for rural Wales, the dominant architectural period is not the nineteenth century. Earlier buildings survive, including many from the seventeenth century or earlier, all within easy walking distance of each other – precisely the sort of landscape which might give rise to traditions of discussion, sturdy inter-dependence and intermarriage, as well as a readiness to think freely.

2 A water-colour of Dolgellau in the late eighteenth century, by John Josiah Dodds

One which did not last was Nannau, the home of the Nanney family, owners of most of the land on the ridge between the Wnion and the Mawddach. The house was burnt down by the Parliamentary army in 1645, forcing the family to decamp to their estates elsewhere in the county – thereby creating a power vacuum in which religious dissent could flourish. It was the lesser estates which were central to the Quaker story. Hengwrt was owned in the mid-seventeenth century by Robert Vaughan the antiquary, whose children married variously into Anglican and Quaker houses. One daughter married Robert Owen of Dolserau, Cromwell's militia commissioner for Merionethshire, who may have been attracted by the teachings of the millennial sect, the Fifth Monarchists. His family had been famous for their religious radicalism ever since one of them, Lewis Owen, had joined the Jesuits, only to become their most ferocious critic. Another daughter of Hengwrt married David son of Rowland Ellis of Gwanas; David's sister Margaret married Owen Lewis, son of Lewis Owen Tyddyn y Garreg who sat on the Merioneth County Committee established by the Parliament of Saints. Intermarriage within this comparatively small area was vital to the growth of the Quaker movement.

3 Dolgun Uchaf, one of the Quaker houses, is a medieval building with later additions, little changed since the seventeenth century

The Puritan tradition had taken strong root in Merioneth during the civil war, building on the work of the earlier reformers, John Davies and Edmwnd Prys, with the result that when into this landscape of gentry and yeoman estates came George Fox in 1657, preaching the doctrine of the inner light (through an interpreter), he soon attracted followers. Of his journey to Dolgellau, Fox noted that he was 'moved to declare that the Lord had a seed in these (rude) places, and that there has been a brave people raised in the covenant of God and gathered in the name of Jesus, where they have salvation and free teaching.' At the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660, many suffered persecution. Robert Owen was imprisoned first in Caernarfon, and then in the old gaol on the banks of the Aran at Dolgellau, and again for five and a half years years. Others over the next decades were to face the prospect of the death sentence for heresy –

hanging for the men, burning at the stake for women.

4 Torrent Walk, near Dolgun Uchaf.

Many of the houses at which the Friends met survive, several of them externally much as they were in the seventeenth century. Bryn Mawr, at the end of a steep and winding track, the birthplace of Rowland Ellis, who joined the Society of Friends in 1671, has been altered on the outside but preserves much of the interior fabric, including the letters carved on the roof timbers by his grandfather when the house was built - 'y ty hwn yn y flwyddyn 1617 Rees Lewis a'i gwnaeth'. Dolgun uchaf, a Medieval hall-house with seventeenth-century additions (Illus. 3), was the home of the first effective yearly Meeting of the Welsh Quakers, when Ellis Morris 'gent' was living there, a sympathiser if not necessarily a member of the Society of Friends, whose daughter Margaret married Rowland Ellis of Bryn Mawr. The Society of Friends 'were faign to meett out of doors under the shadie trees' in what is now Torrent Walk when Dolgun could not hold them (Illus. 4).

These people were not paupers – in the Hearth Tax return for 1662 Robert Owen of Dolserau was assessed for eight hearths, and took five servants with him to America. Most of the Quaker families fell in English terms either into the category of 'esquire' or of 'yeoman', and were authentic representatives of the Welsh concept of the *bonheddig*.

Robert Owen and his wife were in the successive emigrations to Pennsylvania, where the Welsh Quakers purchased 40,000 acres, in order to establish a homeland free from religious persecutions. The Welsh language survived in the meeting houses of Pennsylvania until the mid-eighteenth century. To this day, farm names from Dolgellau survive in the landscape of Pennsylvania. Bryn Mawr, the women's university, was established on the site of the land granted to Rowland Ellis of Gwanas, to which he gave the name of his birthplace near Dolgellau.

Some stayed behind. An example of their enterprise from the eighteenth century is the blast-furnace established on Dolgun by Abraham Darby I, a Quaker ironfounder from Bristol, had already succeeded in using coke instead of charcoal to smelt iron in a blast furnace at Coalbrookdale (Illus. 5). Honesty and plain dealing had made many Quakers successful and respected businessmen, and other Friends formed a ready-made and sympathetic group of investors and partners. It was the same at Dolgellau; the iron-ore on Tir Stent, limestone for flux on Bryn Mawr and water-power at Dolgun were all owned by Friends, though timber for charcoal had to be bought from Garthangharad, Hengwrt and Ty Gwyn. The furnace was only in blast from 1719 to 1733, but its remains survive, together with the pit for the wheel which operated the bellows.

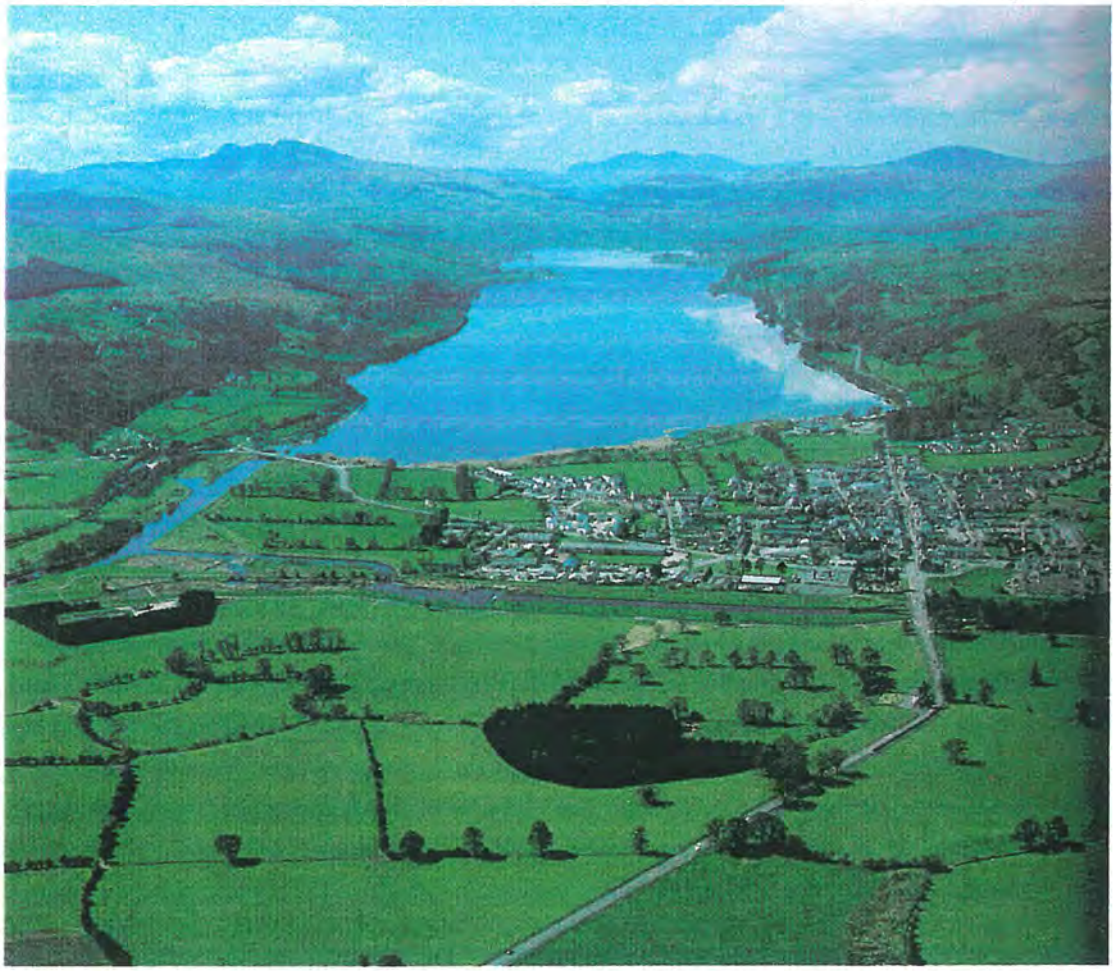
5 The remains of the Dolgun blast-furnace.

Thereafter the Quaker cause declined in and around Dolgellau, until in 1845 only three elderly ladies were left to attend the meetings in Tir Stent, at the meeting house where two years later the Independents were holding services in what became by purchase Capel Tabor.

So the Quakers themselves have all but disappeared from the landscape they inhabited around Dolgellau. Their descendants in many cases live not on the banks of the Wnion but in the U.S.A.; Penssylvania is itself a Quaker cultural landscape. But many elements of the Quaker tradition survived into the new dissent of Methodism and into the traditions of secular radicalism, such as their distrust of state authority and their abhorrence of violence. When in 1877 Cadwaladr Jones was sentenced to death for murder, none of the Dolgellau carpenters would build a gallows for his execution, obliging the governor of the gaol to send to Chester for the means to carry out the sentence. In this sense the legacy of the Quaker culture in Dolgellau is intangible; but the landscape which nurtured them remains.

Bala

The town of Bala at the north-eastern tip of Llyn Tegid, may well have been the commotal centre of Uwch Tryweryn in Penllyn (Illus. 6). A Norman motte, Tomen y Bala, stands on the edge of the present town, whilst a further earthwork, Castell Gronwy, guards the Dee at the point where it flows out of the lake. Bala was established by Edward II in about 1310, and the planned borough is still visible in the modern streets; but it grew only very slowly, and by the eighteenth century it covered an area smaller even than the medieval settlement. But one sign of change was that the long-established cloth industry was increasing rapidly, finally free of the restrictions of the Shrewsbury markets. Traditionally, weavers and cloth-workers were among the most intellectually independent and radical of workers – being out-workers, rather than factory employees, they could control their own work and time, and being based in small groups they had the chance to talk and debate. Equally important, at Bala the squires, the Lloyds of Plas yn Dre in the centre of the town, a branch of the Lloyds of Rhiwaedog in nearby Llanfor, had long been sympathetic to dissent. In Bala the tradition dates back to the days of the Quaker families of the area. A number of the farmers to the north of Bala had become members of the Society of Friends in the seventeenth century, and maintained links with their co-religionists in Bala. In 1732 John Kelsall, manager of the Dolgun blast-furnace, negotiated with Lloyd of Rhiwaedog for use of a hall and lodging houses for the annual Quaker meeting, and Lloyd of Plas yn Dre let the growing Independent community meet in a store-room attached to his house before the building of their chapel.



6 An aerial view of Bala from the north-east, showing its location at the head of Llyn Tegid, and the medieval grid-plan on which the town was built. In the foreground is the site of the great open-air preaching meetings.

But it was with the arrival in 1742 of John Evans of Wrexham (1723-1817), a weaver and a book-binder, that Methodism became established. The first *sassiwn* was held at Bala as early as 1760; by the early nineteenth century these were held at Llanfor, half a mile to the north-east of the town, in which the preachers of the day would address the multitudes from wooden stages. Vast open-air meetings such as these remained a feature of Welsh religious life until the revival of 1904 (Illus. 7).

7 John Elias preaching in characteristic pose at the Bala *sassiwn*.

Simon Lloyd of Plas yn Dre (1730-1764) came under the influence of Methodism – and under the sway of Sarah Bowen, whom he eventually married – on a visit to Howell Harris's community at Trefeca in Breconshire. Their son, also called Simon (1756-1836) was ordained in the Anglican church when he graduated from Oxford, and held the curacy of Llanycil until 1800 but thereafter held no office. He and his university friend Thomas Charles (1755-1814), a farmer's son from Cardiganshire, became the leading lights of Bala and North Wales Methodism. When in 1811 the two men sanctioned the ordination of ministers, effectively breaking with the Anglican church in which they had been raised and in which they had served, at was at the Bala *sassiwn* that the ordinations took place.

8 Thomas Charles

Calvinistic Methodism, more than any other connection, refashioned the Welsh people and the Welsh landscape in its own image. Theologically conservative, it initially identified with the Tory party, and only gradually came to ally itself to political Liberalism. As the largest single denomination in Wales, it exercised tremendous power nationally and locally, and not only bequeathed thousands of chapels the length and breadth of Wales, but also breathed new life into the rural Welsh traditions of collectivism and community.

Bala became 'the Geneva of Wales', the fact that Llyn Tegid came almost up to the growing town adding to the strength of the comparison. Simon Lloyd readily granted leases to the Methodists, who dominated the growing town, and before long the Medieval street-plan was once again lined with houses. Robert Roberts *sgolor mawr* describes how, when he went to study at the Methodist academy established there in 1837:

Nearly all the people in town were members of the Big Chapel. Even the Squire attended occasionally. The 'Cause' was triumphant everywhere. There was no Church in the town; the parish church was a mile off, in a retired spot on the bank of the lake.

9 Dr Lewis Edwards

The 'Big Chapel' was Capel Tegid, outside which there now stands the statue of Thomas Charles, in his cassock, bands and gown, as befitted a clergyman ordained into the Establishment, holding out a bible (Illus. 8). The relief on the plinth shows young and old, men and women, approaching Charles for guidance with their bibles in their hands. It was to see Thomas Charles and to buy her bible that Mary Jones walked to Bala over the Berwyns. Walking was an important element of the nonconformist experience, recalling the journeys of the children of Israel to the reach the Promised Land. To generations raised on the hymns of Pantycelyn and translations of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, even the Catholic practice of pilgrimage (Chapter 16) was an understood concept in this most Protestant of societies.

The same motif of the open bible is repeated in Goscombe John's statue of Dr Lewis Edwards (1809-87), unveiled in 1911 (Illus. 9). Edwards oversaw the growth of the Methodist academy from its origins by Thomas Charles' house, next to the present Capel Tegid to its second home between y Plase and the High Street, to the substantial building erected in 1867 on a site overlooking the town (Illus. 10). The Independents also established an academy in Bala, whose building still stands, though the teaching function was transferred to a new college in Bangor.

10 Coleg y Bala, the Methodist Academy.

One other statue by Goscombe John stands in Bala, a secular figure, but one profoundly influenced by the Methodist world in which he grew up. This is of Thomas Edward Ellis, MP for Merioneth, born at Cynlas, two miles to the north-east of the town, in 1859 (Illus. 11). It was at Bala that Ellis set out his vision of a Welsh legislative assembly. His statue, unveiled three years after his premature death in 1899 in the presence of David Lloyd George and John Morley MP, Gladstone's biographer, shows Ellis in his academic robes – unusual for a politician, but appropriate for one of the first graduates of what had now become the University of Wales and a pioneer of education. The plinth on which the statue stands includes relief sculptures of his birthplace at Cynlas, the college at Aberystwyth, the cloisters of New College, Oxford, and the houses of parliament – stressing the inter-relatedness of landscape, learning and power.

11 Goscombe John's statue of Thomas Ellis, in Bala High Street

The townscape of Bala, with its memorials, its college and its chapels, even its secular buildings, under lease from Squire Lloyd, embodies the powerful coincidence of forces which shaped this uniquely Welsh denomination. If Methodism in Wales becomes, like the Quakers in Dolgellau, a memory, it will have bequeathed both a powerful collectivist ethos and more tangible memorials to itself.

Connections

The impact of religious life is evident in the rural and urban landscape of Wales. In Bala, as well as chapels themselves, such as can be seen throughout the country, other structures also bear witness to the faith of past generations. The Independent academy survives as a building, recently restored and the Methodist College now serves as the Welsh Presbyterian Church's Youth Centre. Bala in particular, is also remarkable for its statues. The custom of erecting memorials to eminent men and women is now viewed with little enthusiasm, and we may feel that a preacher's reward is in heaven, not in graven images. But the chapel-going population of the nineteenth century felt strongly about their community leaders, and clearly wished them to be commemorated, just as the local squire might have his memorial in the parish church or a military hero such as Viscount Hill or the Marquess of Anglesey might have a public statue (Chapter 9).

What this chapter also demonstrates is how the landscape itself affects the development of religious life. Forms of worship and belief which are radically different from those sanctioned by the state tend to flourish in geographically remote areas, and where local power structures are either weak (as at Dolgellau) or actively sympathetic to the new movement (as at Bala). The level of economic surplus which the landscape generates is also important. The Dolgellau Quakers were prosperous farmers, with the independence of mind which financial security confers. The weavers at Bala were self-employed or worked in small groups, and were used to thinking for themselves.

There are other ways in which the landscape of Wales powerfully influenced the culture of dissent. Religious groups often met in the open air, whether the small groups of Quakers in Torrent Walk or the enormous open-air meetings of the Methodists, such as Kate Roberts describes in the opening pages of Traed mewn Cyffion *(Chapter 7). Faith was witnessed within the landscape. Many hymn-tunes are named after places – 'Blaenwern', 'Crug-y-bar' and, most famous of all, 'Cwm Rhondda'. The imagery of valley and mountain stream and of wilderness ('anialwch') in which the hymns abounded appealed powerfully to a rural generation which made a virtue of the journey to the means of grace, whether to hear or discuss, to read, or as a preacher on his 'taith' (circuit). It is no surprise that the hymn of Christ's return from Samaria ('Y Gwr wrth Ffynnon Jacob') is sung to the tune 'Bryniau Khassia' (Hills of Khassia), the Welsh Calvinist mission field in India. This also is a landscape of radical Welsh Christianity, every bit as much as the settlements in Pennsylvania.*

One of the reasons we know comparatively so much about the development of nonconformist Christianity in Wales and its landscape impact is through the many books that were published from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century about the origins and growth of a particular 'achos' (religious cause) or a particular connection in a particular area. Their authors were frequently conscious that they were writing an 'alternative' history, giving voice to what they considered an authentic form of belief and of identity – though this often meant slandering the Anglican church and other conservative institutions. These little volumes, if they survive at all, tend to moulder in second-hand bookshops at a couple of pounds each, yet for anyone who can read Welsh they form marvelous source-material for local history. If they sometimes seem memorials to a world of boredom and cant, fearful of such ungodly activities as quoits and dominoes, it is worth remembering that tales from the unredeemed world often find their way in. Protestant Christianity has always emphasised popular literacy and the growth of book-binding workshops

and printing firms in small Welsh towns in the nineteenth century made possible the creation of a distinct sense of Welshness.

It is from nonconformity, more even than from the political radicalism that the chapels eventually came to support, that the populist and democratic traditions of present-day Welsh life spring. The popular and long-running Cymru *(as well as its English-language equivalent* Wales *and the children's version,* Cymru'r Plant*) edited by Owen M. Edwards, Tom Ellis's schoolfellow at Bala, specifically set out to encourage people who might not otherwise think of writing for a journal to contribute their own essays.*

More modern academic study of dissent is still very undecided as to the legacy of the chapel culture, but has challenged many aspects of nonconformist historiography. The chapels were no more 'native' institutions than the Anglican church, and even in their heyday were frequently criticised for absorbing all the spare energy and all the spare funds of many a small community. Between the great religious revival of 1904, by the beginning of the twenty-first century attendances have dropped to the levels of the late eighteenth. Many chapels have closed, and many have been demolished. A challenge which faces Wales in the twenty-first century is to find an appropriate use for many of these buildings, as well as how to take forward at least the beneficent aspects of their legacy into an increasingly secular age.

Further reading:

Although the memory of the Quakers is strong in Dolgellau, and the traditions of their emigration to America are preserved in a number of works, the Society of Friends as a whole made comparatively little impact on Wales. However, as befits a religion of the word, there are very many books about various aspects of Calvinistic Methodism in Wales, as of the other major denominations. These are set out below.

One of the most remarkable accounts of growing up in the intense religious atmosphere of the early nineteenth century was written by Robert Roberts y sgolor mawr *in the 1870s. Roberts turns his jaundiced eye on church and chapel alike, and does not spare his own abundant failings; yet as a spiritual autobiography few are more candid, and as an account of life in nineteenth century North Wales it is unsurpassed.*

Bassett, T.M., *Bedyddwyr Cymru* (Abertawe, 1977) – the history of the Baptist connection in Wales.

Besse, Joseph, *A collection of the Sufferings of the people called Quakers (London, 1753)* – an account of the years from 1650 to 1689.

Browning, Charles H., *Welsh Settlement of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1912) – the story from 1600 to the effective end of Welsh-speaking Pennsylvania in the late eighteenth century.

Eames, Marian, *Y Stafell Ddirgel* (1969 – translated as *The Secret Room*, 1975), *Y Rhandir Mwyn* (1972 – translated as *Fair Wilderness*) – novels describing the Dolgellau Quakers' experiences on both sides of the Atlantic.

Ellis T.P., *Dolgellau and Llanelltyd* (1928)

Jones, Anthony: *Welsh Chapels* (Stroud, 1996) – an excellent if brief introduction to the architecture and culture of the Welsh chapel.

Jones, Ieuan Gwynedd, *Explorations and Explanation* (Llandysul, 1981) – a collection of essays on nineteenth century Welsh society.

Jones, Samuel Maurice, NLW Samuel Maurice Jones papers, *Tair Cof Golofn* (1920) – an essay on the statues of Griffith Jones of Llanddowror, whom Jones calls 'the Moses of our nation', of Lewis Edwards at Bala, and of Tom Ellis at Bala.

Jones, R. Tudur, *Yr Annibynwyr Cymraeg: Ddoe, Heddiw ac Yfory* (Cardiff, 1989) – the history of the Independents in Wales.

Roberts R, *A Wandering Scholar: The Life and Opinions of Robert Roberts* (introduction by John Burnett and H.G. Williams, Cardiff, 1991) – a candid description of Welsh religious life in the nineteenth century.

Smith P. and Suggett R, 'Dolgun Uchaf: A Late-Medieval Hall-House' *JMHRS* XCII 2 1995 pp. 95-10 sets out the archaeological evidence for one of the Quaker houses in the Dolgellau area.

Nickalls John L, *Journal of George Fox*.

Owen, Ifan: *Penllyn* (Cyfres Broydd Cymru 4, 1997).

Weber, Max, *The Protestant Ethic and the Rise of Capitalism* (London, 1930; a translation by Talcott Parsons of *Protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*) – the standard work on the relationship between economic change and religious identity.

Williams, J. Gwynn, 'The Quakers of Merioneth During the Seventeenth Century' *JMHRS* VIII 2-3 (1978-9).

New cultures 21

Butetown

Cardiff: 1839-present day

Introduction

New cultures. Butetown is a community brought into being by the transport needs of nineteenth century Wales, and the topography of the immediate area, but there the resemblance with the towns and villages described in Chapters 8, 9 and 10 ends. The need to transfer coal from railway to ships, to sail the ships, and to administer this process, brought into being an entirely new landscape and new social and linguistic patterns. It has its parallels elsewhere in Wales, not least Barry and Newport, but it formed part of a world-wide maritime culture that was regarded with grave suspicion by the majority of Cardiffians as they set about the creation of a suitably splendid metropolis for the new Wales (Chapter 12). In fact, the rich ethnic mix of Butetown – Tiger Bay – produced a vital culture landscape which both preserves its own identity and contributes to a broader sense of Welsh identity.

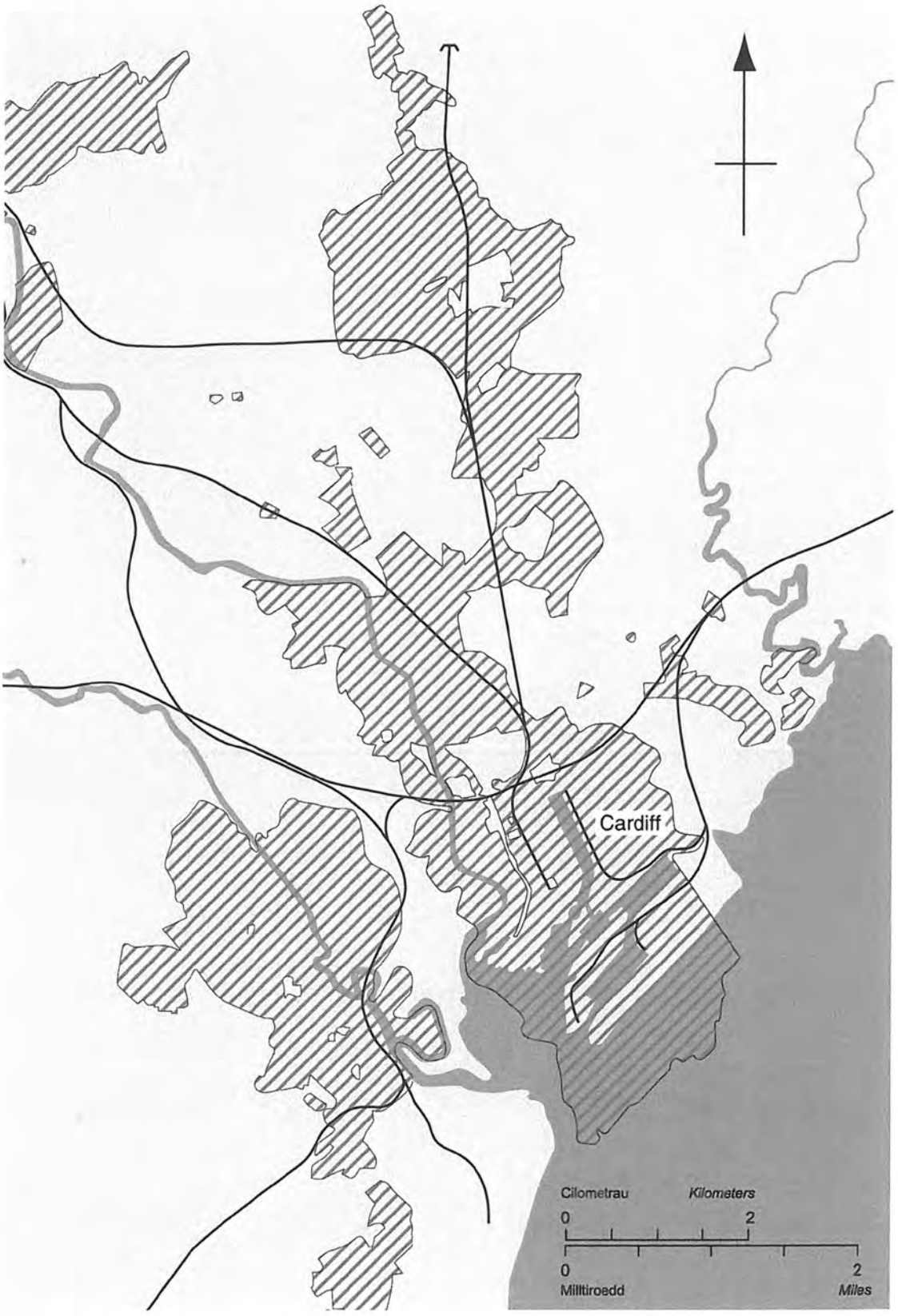
Between 1801 and 1911 the population of Cardiff increased a hundredfold. Many of the new arrivals came from the Welsh rural hinterland, many came from England, and settled either in the new terraces or the prosperous suburbs of the growing town. Others came from further afield, and for various reasons were not offered, or could not seek, the option of integration. Butetown was the place these other communities made their own, the region of the city that is also known as Tiger Bay.

1 Early days in Butetown, showing the marquess's development of town houses and the sidings of the Taff Vale Railway

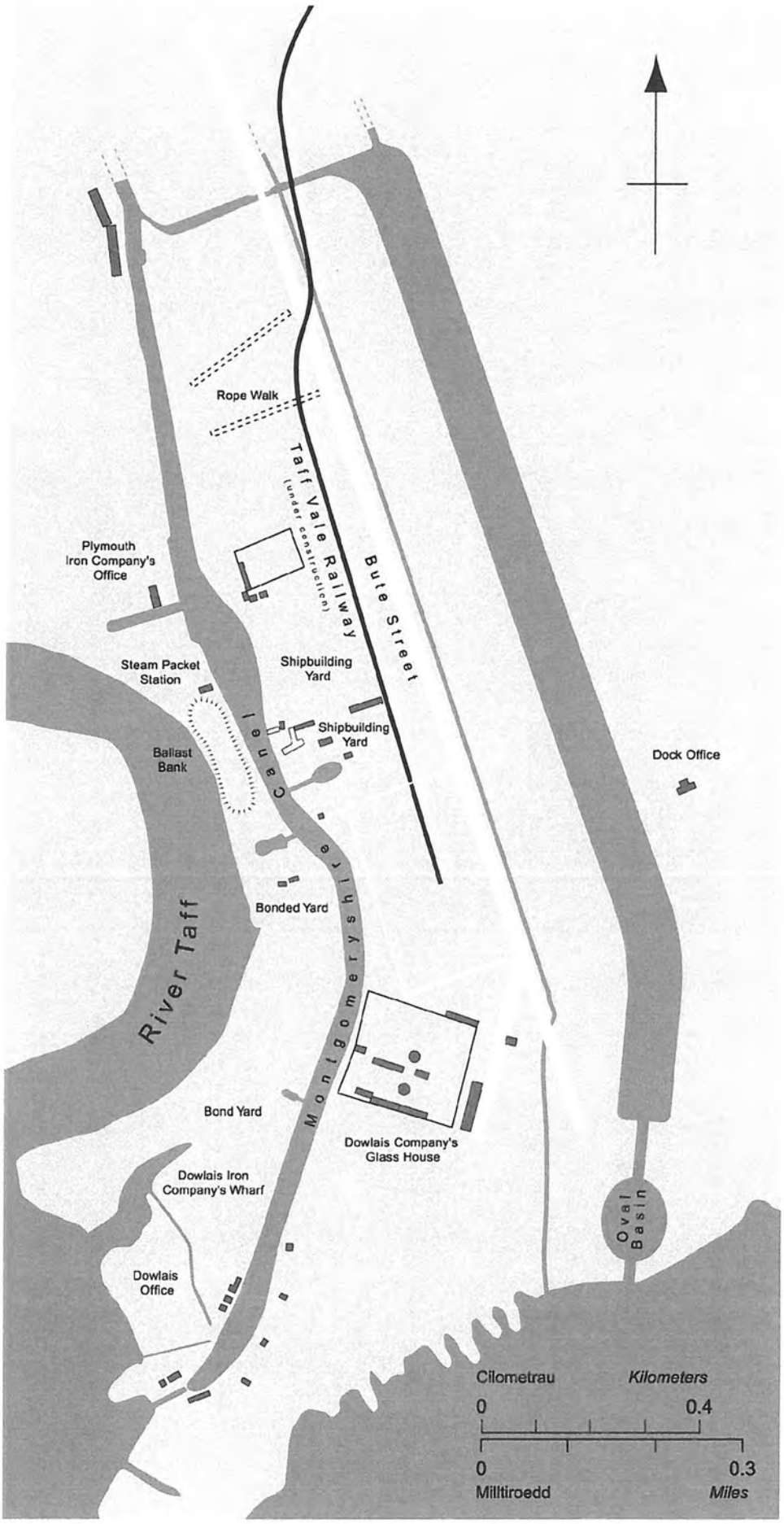
Historical background

Butetown owes its existence and its name to the Marquesses of Bute, who owned the lands in the lower reaches of the Taff – as well as much of central Cardiff, the Dowlais ironworks and the lordship of most of the manors of east Glamorgan, with their mineral rights (Map 1). It is a strip of land a mile long, nowhere more than a quarter of a mile wide, defined by the Glamorgan Canal to the west, the Bute Dock to the east, the bay to the south, and separated from the rest of Cardiff by the junction canal. The Bute West Dock was laid out in 1839 (Map 2) and the following year, after the opening of the Taff Vale Railway to Abercynon, iron, and, later, coal, could be directly transferred from railway wagons to ships (Illus. 1 and 2).

Map 1: Extent of Bute lands in the Cardiff area.



Map 2: Butetown in 1839.



Initially Butetown was given over to industrial development – John Wood's plan of the late 1830s shows ship-building yards, sail-lofts, brick-yards, a glass-house and rope-walks. But the second marquess's intention was that it should be developed for residential use, with industrial activity confined to the wharf and railway sidings on the on the east side (Map 3). Building plots were leased out for 99 years, and builders were to construct dwellings to the satisfaction of the estate agent and as certified by him, subject to restrictions as to use. Before long, the streets, squares and houses of Butetown occupied the tongue of land between the west Dock and the canal. The prosperous merchants moved into the classically-inspired town-houses of Loudoun Square, and poorer incomers made their homes the streets radiating off from them. Mount Stuart Square was developed after the Dowlais Company gave up their glassworks in 1852, when Alexander Roos, the Bute estate's surveyor and architect, began building two-storey terraced houses here (Illus. 3).

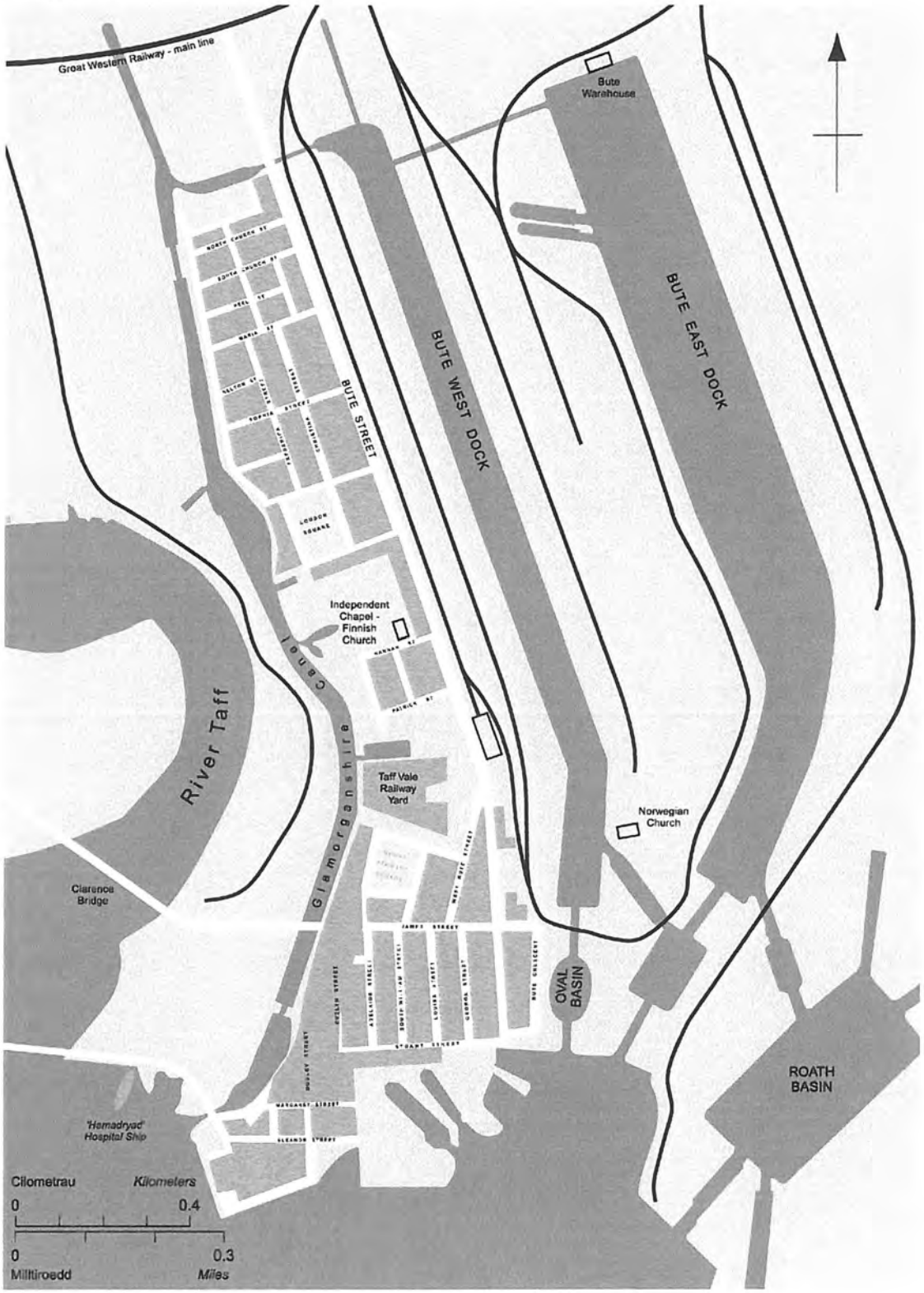
The marquess intended Butetown to be a socially varied community, and so it was for a while. But as early as 1853 the *Merthyr Guardian* was complaining that public houses and brothels were gaining ground, and by the 1880s the wealthy had all but left for other parts of Cardiff (Map 3). Ship-owners and coal-exporters continued to maintained or build offices there, often demolishing recently-erected buildings in the process – the classically-inspired Mount Stuart House was built in 1898 for John Cory and Sons Ltd by H. Tudor Thornley, the baroque Baltic House, now the headquarters of the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation, was built in 1915 by Teather and Wilson on the site of an Independent chapel.

2 The coal-hoists at the docks.

Butetown's working class population remained behind, augmented by an increasingly visible population of mariners from all over the world. Areas of Cardiff were increasingly segregated by occupation, class and ethnicity. Not only the river but also the railways came to be significant physical barriers – the main line of the Great Western Railway running east to west, the north-south routes of the Taff Vale and the Rhymney. The other areas defined by these boundaries had their distinct characteristics – Splott, where most people were employed

by the steelworks, Grangetown, where most people were tenants of the Windsor estate, Cathays, whither the wealthier working class families moved in the 1890s, the centre of Cardiff working-class Liberalism and Trade Unionism. But Butetown was in a class of its own.

Map 3: Butetown in 1890



Its separation was reinforced by powerful psychological boundaries, not least by the stern monolith that was Welsh Protestant nonconformity. Most of the early population of Butetown was Welsh by language and birth, but it rapidly acquired a multi-cultural identity. For the chapel-going Welshman of the later nineteenth century, it was hard to believe that God loved the unregenerate world as much as He loved the chosen. The sight of Butetown chapels originally built for Welsh denominations serving other affiliations – the Independent Chapel on Hannah Street became the Finnish church – did nothing to dent this view. This, and the Norwegian *siømannskirke* (seaman's church) at the mouth of the bay, whose spire became a familiar landmark to seamen entering the harbour, were at least protestant (Illus. 4). But the orthodox church, the synagogues and the Noor-uh mosque in Old Peel Street (Illus. 5) were constant reminders to the rest of Cardiff of the ethnic mix of Butetown – or, as it came to be known, Tiger Bay, a name which is much debated but which is also to be found in London's docklands and in Georgetown, Demerara.

3 A vessel leaving the docks in the 1880s

Many of the more lurid tales can be discounted as the products of racial and sexual stereotyping, but there is no doubt that, in the late nineteenth century at least, it was not a place for the fainthearted. Not all seamen drank, and many never went to brothels, but bars

and brothels there were in Tiger Bay. Frequently seamen were paid off at Cardiff at the end of voyages, which meant there was often plenty of money in the short term. More often, ships arrived in ballast with a skeleton crew, and took on a new crew once they had loaded up with coal. Seamen who had been paid off elsewhere went to Cardiff to sign on, arriving with no money. Boarding house keepers would give credit to the advance of one month's pay, but no more, so they were virtually obliged to sign wherever they could. As well as the seamen, there were the dock-workers themselves – always the poorest-paid of the industrial working class.

4 The Norwegian church

All major seaports came to have just such a distinct and entirely separate area of the city, and in some respects Tiger Bay had more in common with Yokohama or San Francisco than with the parent community. It was home to a transient population of seamen, individuals doubly isolated by the nature of their work and the fact that many of them were foreign-born. There were many more boarding houses for seamen than in any other British port – 178 in 1894, of which more than a quarter were managed by non-Welsh. Germans, Greeks, Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, Russians and Finns all had their own areas.

5 The opening of the Peel Street mosque in 1947. Butetown shares with Birmingham the distinction of having one of Britain's earliest purpose-built mosques.

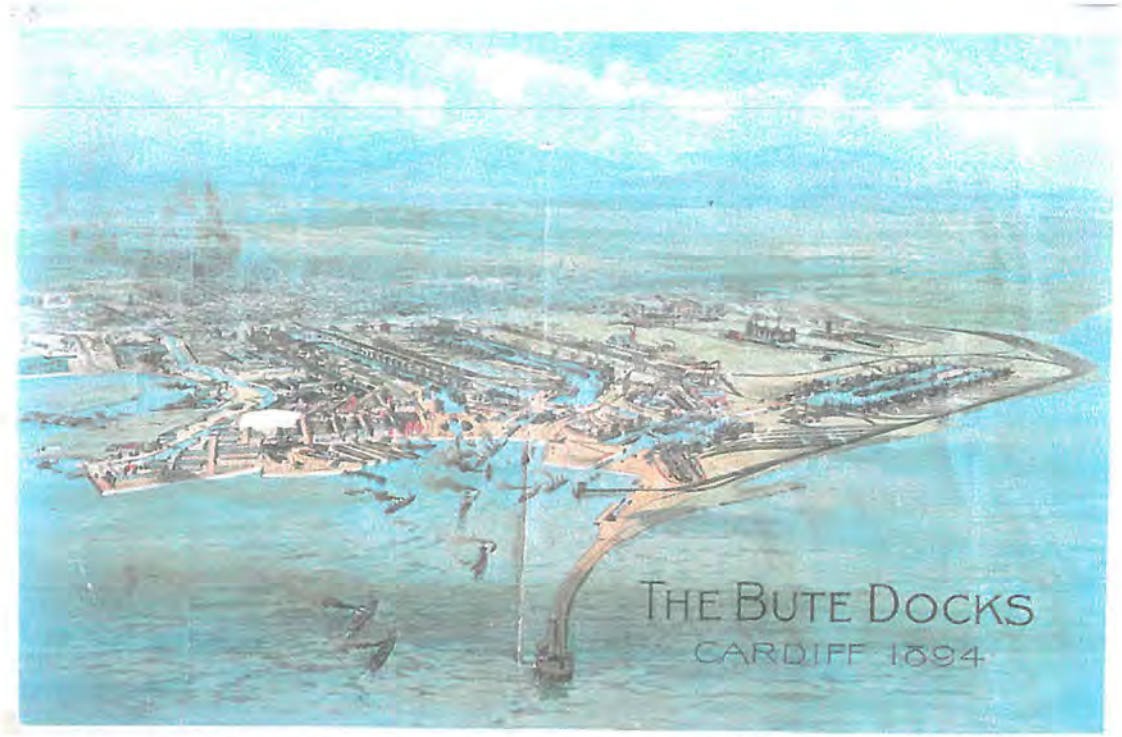
Mount Stuart Square was the place where men from the Arab and Somali in Cardiff from South Shields on the English east coast, were selected as deckhands and firemen. The Chinese were much in evidence until many left after the first world war. Unlike the other ethnic groups, they began to spread out into other parts of Cardiff by opening laundries. Many of these were attacked in 1911 following tales of white women being drugged with sweets in Tiger Bay and sold into slavery. Following the arrival of West Indians and West Africans during the first world war, violence flared up again in 1919, a year which also saw attacks on

the coloured populations of Newport and Barry, as well as of Liverpool and, further afield, Chicago. Butetown became the target for the resentment felt by many demobbed soldiers who had come home to poor housing and low pay.

Initially there was little sense of cohesion between the different ethnic groups, though differences began to be submerged between the two world wars, as groups intermarried and when Moslems and Afro-West Africans found common cause in the open discrimination they experienced as seamen. The Alien Seamen Order of 1925 forced all coloured seamen to register as aliens, and the British Shipping (Assistance) Act of 1932 denied them employment.

6 Roheima Ali

Tiger Bay was multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and shared many of the common characteristics of dockland communities everywhere – poverty, occasional violence, and yet with a vibrant culture, or cultures, of its own. The actress Deara Williams, the cabaret singers Patti Flynn and Roheima Ali (Illus. 6) and, most famous of all, Shirley Bassey, all grew up in this diverse and lively community. Sportsmen were as much in evidence. Billy Boston scored 571 tries for Wales over seventeen years – more than any other British player, and Glenn Webbe was Wales's first black rugby union player. Joe Erskine became famous as a boxer, Darky Hughes and Gerald Ernest were both Amateur ABA Welsh/British Light Welterweight Champions.



7 A view of the Bute docks and Butetown at the height of their late Victorian prosperity.

Butetown today

Some of the old character of the community began to disappear with the slum clearance projects after the war. The handsome houses of Loudon Square were demolished, and the park in the centre of the square, where families could watch their children playing together, and on

whose boundary wall musicians would play their guitars, became the site of two tower blocks. From the 1960s to the 1980s it seemed as if the whole area was a building site, and now comparatively few of the nineteenth century buildings survive. At the northern end of Butetown, the twin towers of St Mary and St Stephen the Martyr, built by the architect John Foster in 1843 after Wordsworth had contributed a sonnet to raise funds, still proclaim the Anglican presence in the area. Worship maintains the tradition of ritual enjoined on the Church in Wales by the Catholic marquess of Bute. Nearby is the Orthodox church of St Nicholas, built in 1906 by James and Morgan of Cardiff, and the Peel Street Mosque of 1947.

Otherwise, surviving structures are mainly to be found at the southern end of the area, partly due to the fact that it was declared a Conservation and Improvement Area in 1981. These include the Taff Vale Railway's former passenger terminus, the Dock Chambers and Cory Buildings. On the other side of the Oval basin stands the magnificent Pierhead building, designed by William Frame, Burges's assistant and successor at Cardiff Castle and Castell Coch (Chapter 12) for the Bute Dock Company. Inspired by the Gothic renaissance of sixteenth century France, the design includes a panel on the west wall decorated with the figures of a ship and a locomotive between the arms of the old borough of Cardiff and the Bute family, underneath the motto *Wrth Ddwr a Than* ('By Water and Fire' – Illus. 8).

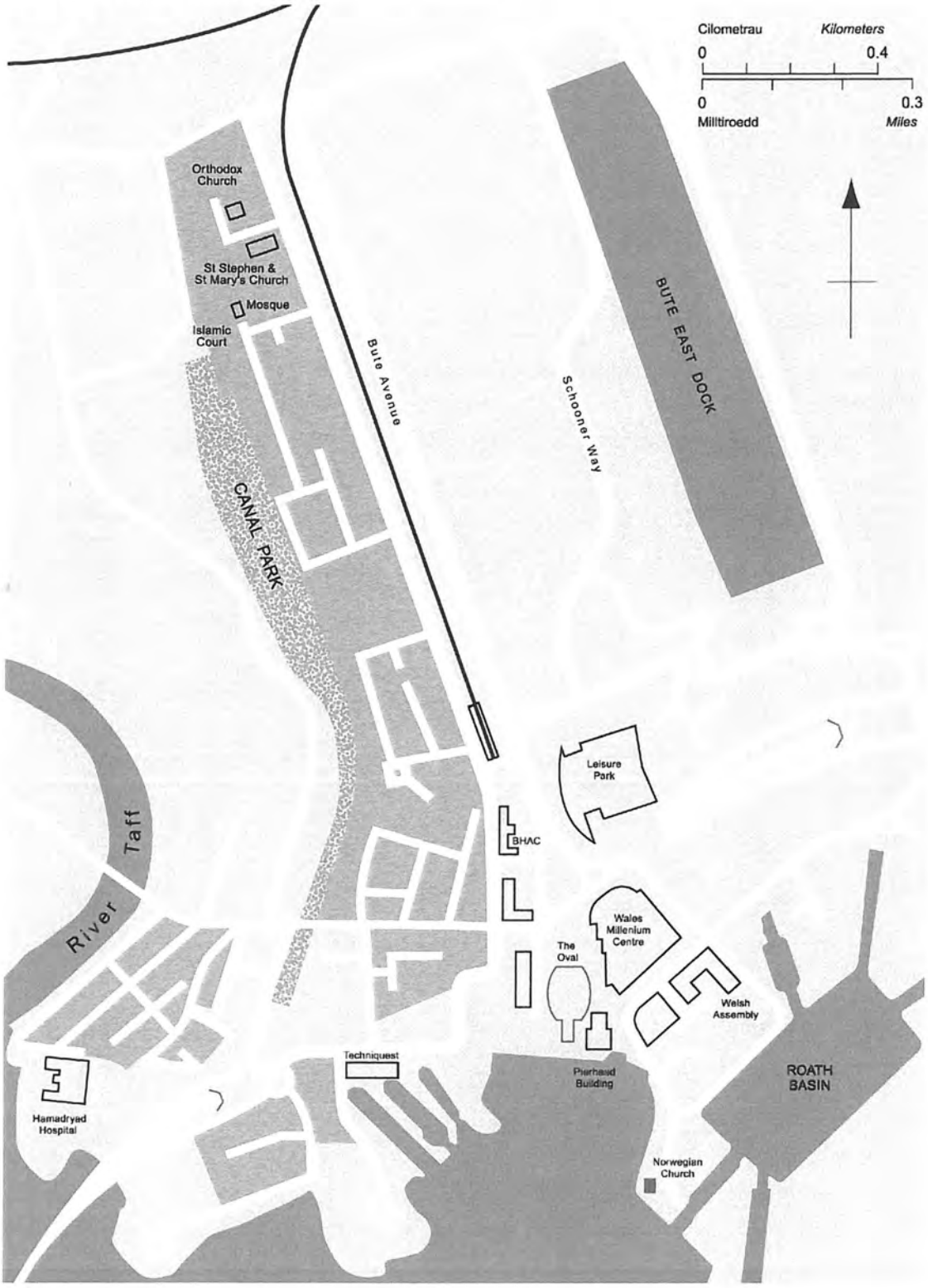
8 The Pierhead Building

The Pierhead building is now the administrative office for Associated British Ports, who retain ownership of the Cardiff docks. By the 1970s most of the remaining South Wales coal was being shipped through Barry and Swansea. The removal of the railway sidings and the coal hoists on the docks has yielded space for the handling of bulk imports such as timber, for oil storage and for containerisation. The later docks to the east – Roath and Queen Alexandra – remain in industrial use, served by both road and railway, and underwent a renaissance in the late 1990s, handling cargoes of up to 25,000 tons, though any coal that passes through is now imported.

The docks at Butetown, however, are now given over to leisure. Cafés, retaurants and designer clothes shops have sprung up where once sailors disembarked. Financial assistance from the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation relocated 'Techniquest', billed as 'Britain's

Leading Science Discovery Centre', the brainchild of Professor John Beetlestone, from the city centre to the site of the old graving docks in 1986 (Map 3).

Map 3: Butetown 2001



Butetown heritage

A sign of changing times was the establishment of a number of heritage initiatives in Butetown. The first was the Welsh Industrial and Maritime Museum, a branch of the National

Museums and Galleries of Wales, established on the site of the old Merchant Exchange on the Bute West Dock which was demolished to make way for the museum. The first stage was opened by James Callaghan in 1977. In 1990 an exhibition centre was opened at 126 Bute Street, the site of a ship's chandlery bought by James Frazer of Belfast in 1862, opposite the old Taff Vale Railway terminus. In June 1988 the former paddle-steamer booking office, the 'Q shed' was reopened as the Museum Gallery. But the Museum's ambitious plans were never realised, and it was closed down in May 1998 for transfer to Swansea.

A more focussed heritage development, and one more firmly rooted in the immediate area, was the establishment of the Butetown History and Arts Centre. It had its origins in the Black Film and Video Workshop in Wales formed in 1984, sponsored by Channel Four, the Welsh Arts Council and others, one of the many similar community projects that flourished all over Britain in response to, often in defiance of, Thatcherite conservatism. Most BFVWW members were male rastafarians in their twenties, and their non-broadcast tapes were shot on low-band UMATIC. In 1986-7 they taped a community education course offered by Iain Tweedale entitled 'The History of Butetown' and went on to tape the first series of interviews with elderly residents of Butetown.

From this there arose an informal association called the Butetown Community History Project, which before long had become the Butetown History and Arts Project – now multi-ethnic, rather than specifically black in its scope. The Butetown History and Art Centre is based at 5 Dock Chambers, Bute Street, a building erected in 1861 and intended as a town hall, and includes offices and a gallery. As well as making video tapes of Butetown residents, the Centre publishes books and mounts exhibitions – a collective exercise in memory and commemoration very different from the Valhalla of Cardiff City Hall (Chapter 12).

In part the project came into being because it was clear that memories were fading, but it derived much of its purpose from the ambitious plans of the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation scheme, initiated in the late 1980s. Though the quays to the east were to have a future as an industrial port, the Corporation considered that Butetown's role was to establish Cardiff internationally as 'a superlative maritime city, which will stand comparison with any similar city in the world, enhancing the image and well-being of Cardiff and of Wales as a whole.' Plans involved link roads, facilities for yachts, a waterfront opera house.

Experience of waterfront developments elsewhere, above all London, suggested that there was every danger that the established communities would be dispersed and the area become unrecognisable. Developers repeatedly assured Butetown that there were no plans to demolish the area, but arguably what guaranteed its survival as a community was its fame – Tiger Bay is the most famous part of Cardiff and provided a ready-made identity for the dockland development. In the words of Glenn Jordan, director of the Butetown History and Arts Centre, the Project 'has no choice but to be involved in tourism. In an event, we do not regard this as intrinsically a bad thing. What's so wrong with providing educational materials for the general public, including tourists? Purist politics are usually dumb politics – certainly, ineffective politics ...'[1]

Certainly by the 1990s 'heritage' (of whatever sort) was increasingly being perceived as an economic asset. It was a sign of the times that the Corporation should have gone to the lengths of constructing new waterfront buildings on the pattern of the bonded warehouse at Bute East Dock – not far from the flats at 'Windlass Court' and 'Barquentine Place', leading off 'Schooner Way'. Other changes were made to suit the tastes of visitors. The *siømannskirke* ('seamen's church') which served the Norwegian community from 1866 to 1959, and which

[1] Glenn Jordan, 'Whose History Is It? Class, Cultural Democracy and Constructions of the Past' on Glenn Jordan and Chris Weedon, *Cultural Politics: Class, gender, Race and the Postmodern World* (Blackwell, 1995) pp. 112-173.

originally stood on the eastern side of the Bute West Dock, was rebuilt to its 1889 condition as a café, and re-sited at the mouth of Roath Basin. In its new guise it recalls not only Cardiff's trading links with the Baltic, as a source for pit props, but also the Scandinavian communities which made up part of the ethnic mix, and which included Roald Dahl, the children's writer, amongst its number.

So present-day Butetown is in some respects a very different community from the old Tiger Bay. Many former residents would have been astonished to think that the coal trade would one day vanish and that the West Dock might become the site of a dual carriageway. But so it is. Yet the majority of Butetown residents come from long-established local families. Some traditions seem set firm to continue with the work of the Schools' Choir and the Community Choir, and in the work of young professional musicians. This once-mistrusted and feared area is now effectively the core of the new Wales, with the Assembly operating since 26 May 1999 out of Crickhowell House barely a minute's walk away from Butetown, with the further prospect of the new assembly debating chamber to the design of the Richard Rogers partnership, featuring a democratic canopy across the site.

Connections

Butetown long ago ceased to be perceived as an alien growth in the Welsh landscape, but more recently has comes to be regarded instead as a fashion accessory to the body politic. Its iconic significance as television news suggests the background to the Welsh any other community, as much (Illus. 9). In fact, and like live and work, and lead Butetown is a place where people familiar area. The their own lives within their own exists because Butetown Butetown History and Arts Project and investigate their own people have chosen to record journalists, film-makers history, independently of the descended on it in the and social researchers who have increasingly frequent it past, and of the tourists who democracy – the now. The issues of cultural cultural production – and redistribution of the means of basis which the Project of an appropriate intellectual the experience of Welsh has raised are directly relevant to projects mounted by the rastafarian community in the early 1980s may appear to have little in common with the chapel histories that came out of both rural and industrial Wales in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that are described in Chapter 17. Yet both embody a determination that their own version of the past should enter the historical record as well as those of the ruling élites.

9 – Welsh TV news features Butetown as a backdrop.

10 Welsh ladies

Many of the descriptions of Tiger Bay in the past, when they did not sensationalise its violence, sentimentalised its racial harmony. Yet it is a genuinely cosmopolitan area which offers not only other communities but also regions and countries valuable lessons in how live with others in an atmosphere of tolerance, respect and harmony. Individuals and communities within a pluralist society have the choice, whatever their antecedents, of identifying or of not identifying with the perceived national culture as they see fit. Many ethnic minority cultures across the world have chosen not to assimilate. But it is a matter of record that Butetown people tend to identify very strongly with Cardiff and with Wales (Illus. 10).

The irony is that this once marginalised area should now be practically at the heart of modern Wales – not only in its physical proximity to the Assembly buildings and as part of the Cardiff waterfront, but in its simultaneous sense of its own local identity and as a part of the Wales of the twenty-first century. Butetown forms an appropriate testament to the diversity of modern Welsh life in a cultural climate that is able to recognise both traditional and contemporary elements.

Further reading

A number of published works have looked at the history of Butetown or have examined related issues. Some of these have been published by the Butetown History and Arts Centre.

Cannadine, David, *Lords and Landlords: The Aristocracy and the Towns, 1774-1967* (1980) examines the role of the aristocracy in urban development, and includes a section on the marquess of Bute.
Chapell, Edgar Leyshon: *History of the Port of Cardiff* (Cardiff 1939, reprinted 1994) examines the development of the port up until the 1930s.
Chappell, Phyllis Grogan: *A Tiger Bay Childhood (Growing up in the 1930s)* (BHAC, 19??)
Cooke, Harry (series editor): *How I Saw It (A Stroll Thro' Old Tiger Bay)* (BHAC, Cardiff, 1995?)
Daunton, Michael J.: 'Jack Ashore: Seamen in Cardiff Before 1914', *Welsh History Review* 9 (1978-9) pp. 176-203 examines the employment patterns that beset Butetown.
-- *Coal Metropolis: Cardiff 1870-1914* (Leicester, 1977) examines Cardiff's history as a coal-port in its hey-day.
Davis, John: *Cardiff and The Marquesses of Bute* (Cardiff, 1981) is the standard history of the marquesses of Bute and their involvement with Cardiff, though it concentrates on central Cardiff and says little about Butetown.
Hugill, Stan: *Sailortown* (London 1967) – a repetitive work which concentrates on violence and prostitution, but which nevertheless gives something of the flavour of 'sailortowns' the world over.
Jordan, Glenn: 'Whose History Is It? Class, Cultural Democracy and Constructions of the Past' on Glenn Jordan and Chris Weedon, *Cultural Politics: Class, gender, Race and the Postmodern World* (Blackwell, 1995) pp. 112-173 – the story of the Butetown project and its intellectual basis.
Lee, Brian: *Butetown and Cardiff Docks* (BHAC, Cardiff, 1999) – one of the 'Images of Wales', which includes photographs and engravings of the area from 1839 to the present day.
Owen W.R. (Bodwyn): 'Tiger Bay: The Street of the Sleeping Cats' *Glamorgan Historian* VII 72-86.
Sinclair, Neil: *The Tiger Bay Story* (BHAC, Cardiff, 1993) – an insider's view of Tiger Bay.
Townend, W: *Once to Tiger Bay* (London, 1929)

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