THE WELSH LANGUAGE

A HISTORY

JANET DAVIES

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The Welsh Language: A Personal Perspective

For many people in Wales, the Welsh language is the essence of Welsh identity. Yet, for the majority of the people of Wales, the language has only a marginal impact upon their lives. That was my experience as a child. I was brought up on the borders of Breconshire and Monmouthshire, a district where a considerable number of the inhabitants had a knowledge of Welsh a hundred years ago. By the 1950s, however, none of the native inhabitants could put together a sentence in the language. A few incomers were Welsh speakers, a fact that sometimes impinged upon us. Our parish church was Llanelly, magnificently sited above the Usk valley. Its vicar was Daniel Parry-Jones, a native of Carmarthenshire, and the first Welsh I ever heard came from his lips as he proffered the communion cup to the distinguished Irishwoman, Dr Noëlle French. Welsh, I came to the conclusion, was a liturgical language, rather like Latin among Roman Catholics. There were Welsh lessons at school, but it was difficult to imagine that anyone of my age could weave together the words we learned and turn them into intelligible and effortless speech. That some of my contemporaries could do so was something I discovered when pupils from Brynmawr met pupils from Ystradgynlais, at that time in the same county. Thus I became dimly aware that somewhere over the hills, in the upper Swansea valley, in Carmarthenshire, and also, according to some, in Anglesey,

there were people who not only spoke Welsh effortlessly, but did so all the time. It seemed very odd indeed.

Yet although Welsh was rarely heard in our community, it existed all around us. There was hardly an English place-name within miles. Indeed, Welsh names continued well over the border with England; on the train journey to Hereford, it was noticeable that the first station after passing the border was Pontrilas. Living in a land of *llan* and *aber*, *dol* and *cwm*, *pant* and *maes* – the building blocks of place-names throughout Wales – it was impossible to escape the fact that a language unspoken by my community was legible throughout that community. And although purists might think that some of the place-names were pronounced in a rather cavalier fashion (we did dreadful things to Maesgwarthaf), on the whole we managed them well enough. We did so because an instinct for the correct pronunciation of Welsh was built into the way we spoke English. When I eventually came to learn Welsh, I found that the pronunciation presented no problems at all. Neither did many aspects of word-order, for the syntax of our ordinary speech – the much-derided Wenglish – preserved patterns it had inherited from Welsh.

In no sense did the lack of knowledge of the language make us feel less Welsh. The traditions of the community included Brychan and his saintly progeny, the hidden city under Llangors Lake, and De Breos, the wicked marcher lord. We played on the banks of the canal and around the foundries and the tramroads of the early industrial age; we visited Crawshay Bailey's round houses and the caves of the Chartists; we knew of Lady Llanover; we learned of Brynmawr's unhappy reputation as the blackest of the black spots of the depression years; we eagerly read the serialized versions of Cordell's novels. All these things made us fully aware that we were in the mainstream of the traditions and the history of Wales. Many years

later, when giving birth at Llandovery Cottage Hospital, I was totally baffled when I heard the woman in the next bed to me referring to me as 'y Saesnes sy'n dysgu Cymraeg' (the English-woman who's learning Welsh). The Welsh-speaking Welsh, I came to the conclusion, use words in a different way. That seemed even odder.

The oddities of the Welsh situation intrigued me. Over the years, through meeting Basques and Catalans and Bretons and Frisians, I came to realize that these oddities are by no means unique. I should have been glad, when I first began to think about them, if there had been a brief guide to the origins and nature of Welsh, to the use that had been made of the language over the centuries, its present condition, and the parallels that can be drawn between its history and the history of others among the languages of Europe. Wanting to read a book is the best possible reason for writing one. This book was written primarily for those people in Wales whose childhood experiences were similar to mine. I should also like to think that it will be of interest to those visitors to Wales who begin to ask questions when they first encounter *llan* and *aber* and *dol* and *cwm*.

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The Origins of Welsh

The Indo-European family of languages

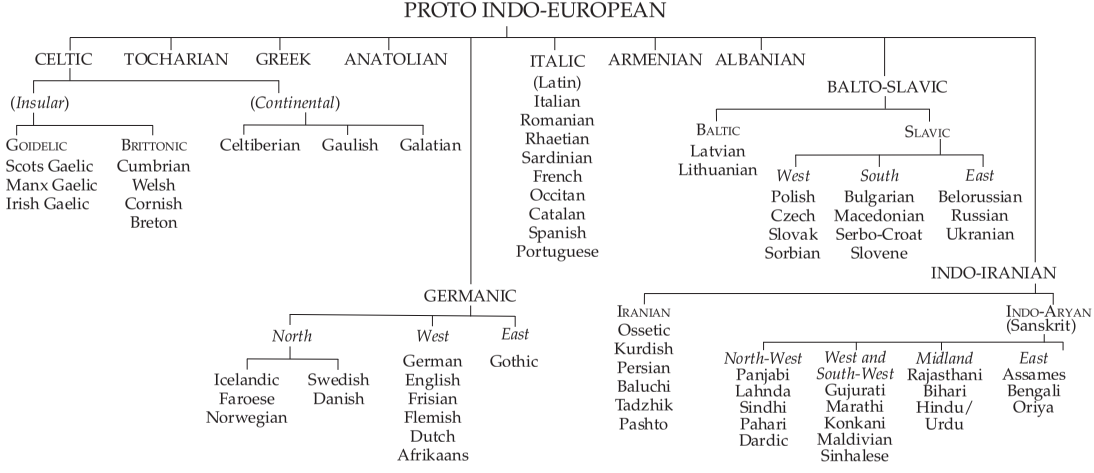
The Welsh language, like most of the languages of Europe, and many of those of Asia, has evolved from what linguists term Indo-European. Indo-European was spoken at least 6,000 years ago (4,000 BC) by a semi-nomadic people who lived perhaps in the steppe region of southern Russia, or perhaps in Anatolia. (Anatolian personal names with Indo-European associations have been found in Assyrian texts of the twentieth century BC.)

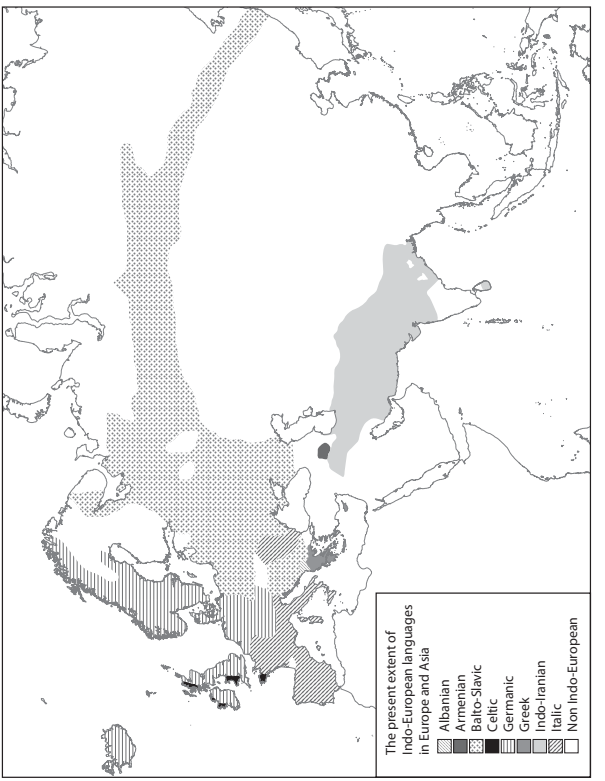
COGNATE INDO-EUROPEAN WORDS

WELSH	LATIN	ENGLISH	SANSKRIT
ieuanc	juvenis	young	yuvan-
dant	dens	tooth	danta-
tenau	tenuis	thin	tanas
gweddw	vidua	widow	mi vidhava
tri	tres	three	trayas

Speakers of the language migrated eastwards and westwards; they had reached the Danube valley by 3,500 BC and

THE INDO-EUROPEAN FAMILY TREE





The present extent of Indo-European languages
in Europe and Asia

India by 2,000 BC. The dialects of Indo-European became much differentiated, chiefly because of migration, and evolved into separate languages. So great was the variety among them that it was not until 1786 that the idea was put forward that a family of Indo-European languages actually exists. In the twenty-first century, Indo-European languages are spoken in a wide arc from Bengal to Portugal, as well as in countries as distant as New Zealand and Canada, to which they have been carried by more recent emigrants. The Indo-European family is generally considered to consist of nine different branches, which in turn gave rise to daughter languages. Welsh evolved from the Celtic branch, as did its sister languages – Breton, Cornish, Irish, Scots Gaelic and Manx – although it was not until 1853 that the Celtic languages were fully accepted as members of the Indo-European family.

The Celts

The Celts were perhaps the first Indo-European people to spread across Europe. It is widely believed that a material culture specifically associated with the Celts originated in the eastern Alps in the eighth century BC, but that area was not necessarily the wellspring of the Celtic language. There are those who believe that Celtic had its origins along the Atlantic seaboard, and that it seeped into much of Europe in the wake of the vigorous economy of the late Bronze Age. The great variety of views held about the origin of Celtic makes it necessary for any statements on the subject to be hedged around with doubts and qualifications. As Barry Cunliffe put it: 'Specialized works should only be approached by those of a resilient disposition.'

Genetic studies may offer further evidence, but the vicious theories that have been underpinned by simplistic accounts

of prehistoric linguistic origins have made many scholars reluctant to rely upon biological archaeology.

However, it can be stated with confidence that by the later Iron Age, Celtic speakers were widely present in Spain, Britain, Ireland, Gaul, Germany, Italy, the Danube Basin and in parts of Anatolia. They left their mark upon the place-names of Europe. The names of the rivers Rhône, Rhine and Danube are Celtic, as are those of the cities of London, Paris and Vienna. Gallipoli on the shores of the Dardanelles is the city of the Gauls or the Celts, and there is a town called Bala (a Celtic word meaning the efflux of a river from a lake) in the heart of Anatolia in modern Turkey. Linguists identify at least four forms of Celtic spoken on the European mainland and in Asia Minor in the last centuries of the pre-Christian era – the Galatian of central Anatolia, the Gallo-Brittonic of Gaul and much of Britain, the Celtiberian of Spain (where other Celtic languages may also have been spoken) and the Lepontic and perhaps the Cisalpine Gaulish of northern Italy.

COGNATE CELTIC WORDS

WELSH	BRETON	IRISH	GAELIC
tŷ (house)	ti	teach	tigh
ci (dog)	ki	cu	cu
du (black)	du	dubh	dubh
cadair (chair)	kador	cathaoir	cathair
gwin (wine)	gwin	fion	fion

The Brittonic language

The language introduced into Britain was similar to that spoken in Gaul; indeed, the Celtic speech of Gaul and Britain at the dawn of the historic era can be considered as one language, frequently referred to as Gallo-Brittonic. A different form of Celtic – Goidelic – became dominant in Ireland and, in later centuries, in Scotland and the Isle of Man. Goidelic, the ancestor of Irish, Scots Gaelic and Manx, is known as Q-Celtic, because it retained the *kw* sound of Indo-European, writing it as *q* and later as *c*. In Gallo-Brittonic, the ancestor of Welsh, Breton and Cornish, the *kw* developed into *p*, and Gallo-Brittonic is therefore known as P-Celtic. The distinction is apparent in the Irish *ceann* and Welsh *pen* (head). The distinguished Irish historian Myles Dillon argued that Celtic speakers reached Britain and Ireland as early as 2,000 BC, but the most generally held opinion tends to date their arrival to the centuries following 600 BC. Of the forms of Celtic outside Britain and Ireland, Galatian had been supplanted by others of the languages of Anatolia – Greek in particular – by the beginning of the Christian era; the Lepontic of northern Italy and the Celtiberian and other possible Celtic languages of Spain succumbed to Latin somewhat later. Gaulish proved more resilient; by about AD 550, however, the Gaulish speakers of eastern Gaul had been overwhelmed by German speakers and, over most of the rest of the country, Gaulish had been replaced by Latin. Some Gaulish influence may have survived in Brittany, but the existence of the Breton language is largely the result of migration to Brittany from Britain over a period extending from about AD 450 to about 650.

WORDS OF LATIN ORIGIN IN WELSH

WELSH	LATIN
pont (bridge)	pons
eglwys (church)	ecclesia
lleng (legion)	legio
ystafell (room)	stabellum
trawst (joist)	transtrum
bresych (cabbage)	brassica

The impact of Rome

The Romans invaded Britain in AD 43 and, by about AD 70, those parts of the island which were to be England, Wales and southern Scotland formed the Roman province of Britannia. Latin became the language of law and administration, but Brittonic continued to be spoken by the mass of the population, especially in the western parts of the island. The cities of Britannia were bilingual communities and Brittonic absorbed a number of Latin words. The borrowings tended to be words for things unknown to the Britons before the coming of the Romans and they therefore throw light on the material as well as the lexical debt of the Britons to the Romans. Further borrowings from Latin were made as the Christian Church, which in the west used Latin as its official and liturgical language, consolidated its hold over the Britons.

Roman power in Britain had collapsed by *c.*AD 410 and Britannia ceased to be a part of the Roman Empire. The Brittonic elements reasserted themselves and the following century was a period when it was possible to travel from Edinburgh to Cornwall in the certainty that Brittonic would be understood

all along the way, and when Brittonic kingdoms were dominant in Britain. These kingdoms, however, were challenged from all points of the compass.

The influence of Irish

To the west lay Ireland, which had never experienced Roman occupation. Settlers from Ireland created colonies in western Britain even before the collapse of the Roman Empire. They were numerous in north-west Wales; indeed, the name Gwynedd may be of Irish origin. The Deisi of south-east Ireland established themselves in south-west Wales and are still commemorated in the name Dyfed. Irish settlers also penetrated further east, to form the kingdom of Brycheiniog, a name deriving from Brychan, the Irish Broccan. Other Irish placenames in Wales include Llŷn, Dinllaen and Mallaen, but the clearest evidence of the Irish presence in Wales is the existence of at least thirty memorial stones bearing inscriptions in ogam, the script devised in south-western Ireland. Irish was extensively spoken in Wales in the century or two following the fall of the Roman Empire; the monastic community founded by St David (died *c*.589) on the western tip of Dyfed may well have been partly Irish in speech. The Irish element in north-west Wales eventually declined, perhaps as the result of a migration of Brittonic speakers from southern Scotland. That migration is linked with the name of Cunedda of Manaw Gododdin on the banks of the Firth of Forth; the royal house of Gwynedd (north-west Wales) claimed descent from Cunedda, a tradition which may contain mythological elements. Some Irish words survived in the speech of the inhabitants of Wales – cadach (rag) and cnwc (hill), for example – but Irish had probably ceased to be a widely spoken language in Wales

c.600, although later migrations may have brought further Irish speakers to Wales.

The Anglo-Saxon kingdoms

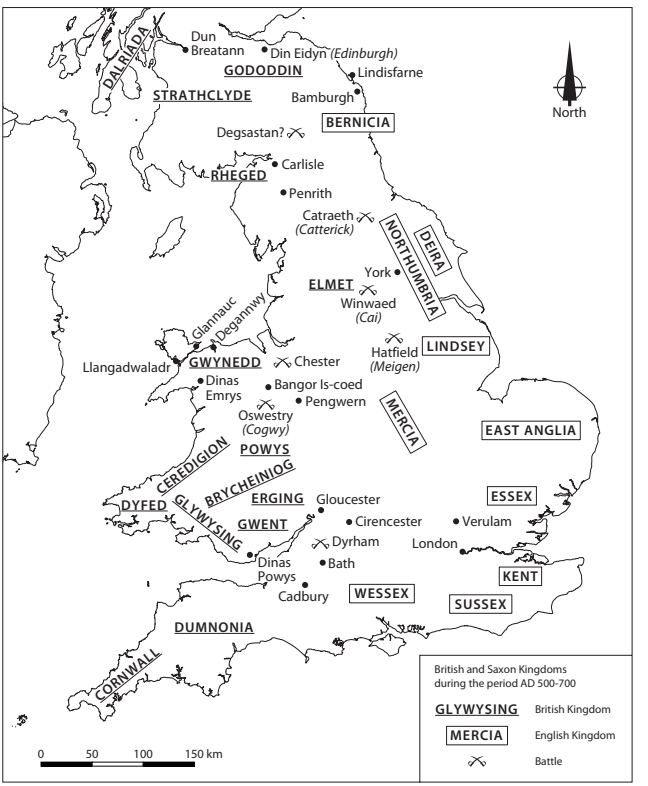
Throughout the Roman occupation, Germans had been a major element in the imperial army in Britain, and there is evidence of a Germano-Roman culture in eastern Britain by about 300. The collapse of the empire led to a movement of people to the island from what later became the Netherlands and Germany. By 500, they had created in eastern Britain kingdoms in which their language – Anglo-Saxon or Old English – was dominant. Despite campaigns against them, possibly led by the semi-mythical Arthur, they had reached the Severn estuary by 577 and the Dee estuary by 616. The regions first colonized by them – the most Romanized part of the island – may well have been inhabited by communities that were largely Latin in speech, but colloquial Latin seems to have disappeared from Britain by *c*.700. It was once believed that the Brittonic-speaking people in those areas colonized by the English were either massacred or driven out, but it is now acknowledged that the great majority of them were assimilated by their conquerors. This would seem to be confirmed by the survival of place-names of Brittonic origin in many parts of England. Many of those names, noted the historian F. M. Stenton, appear 'in forms implying that the English settlers who adopted them had more than a casual acquaintance with Brittonic speech'.

BRITTONIC PLACE-NAMES IN ENGLAND

Cognate with *mynydd* (mountain)	Cognate with *rhos* (moor)
Myndtown (Shropshire)	Ross (Herefordshire, Northumberland)
The Mynde (Herefordshire)	Roose (Lancashire)
Mindrum (Northumberland)	Roos (Yorkshire)
Cognate with *dŵr* (water)	Cognate with *du* (black) + *glais* (stream)
Dover (Kent)	Dawlish (Devon)
Dovercourt (Essex)	Dowlish (Somerset)
Andover (Hampshire)	Douglas (Lancashire)
England has six rivers Avon, from the Welsh *afon* (river)	

The varieties of Brittonic

The advance of the English caused land wedges to be driven between the Brittonic-speaking kingdoms of the north, the west and the south-west, although, as most contact was by sea, the significance of such wedges should not be exaggerated. Four successor languages of Brittonic evolved: Cumbric in southern Scotland and north-west England, Welsh in Wales, Cornish in south-west Britain and Breton in Brittany, although contemporaries undoubtedly thought in terms of a single successor language, with some regional variations. Brittonic speakers were known to their Anglo-Saxon neighbours as *Wealas*, or Welsh. The word is usually considered to mean foreigner, but it can also mean people who have been Romanized; versions of it exist in several parts of the marchlands of the empire where Romanized people came into contact with Germanic speakers – the Walloons of Belgium, the Welsch of



Map showing British and Saxon kingdoms during the period AD 500–700

the Italian Tyrol and the Vlachs of Romania. To describe themselves, the Welsh and the Cumbric speakers adopted the name *Cymry* and called their language *Cymraeg*. *Cymry* comes from the Brittonic *Combrogi* (fellow-countryman) and its adoption marks a deepening sense of identity.

Of the successors of Brittonic which developed in Britain, Cumbric came under pressure from the English settlers in Northumbria. However, the kingdom of Strathclyde, which absorbed much of north-west England *c*.900, remained Cumbric-speaking until its collapse *c*.1018. Place-names such as Ecclefechan and Penrith, as well as Cumbria itself, preserve a memory of Cumbric, as does the system of counting recorded among shepherds in parts of northern England. In south-western Britain, Devon fell to the English *c*.710 and the kingdom of Cornwall came to an end *c*.878. Cornish survived in Devon until around 950 and in Cornwall until the eighteenth century. Dorothy Pentreath, who died in 1777, is usually considered to be the last native speaker of Cornish, although a group of Cornish patriots is now actively promoting the revival of the language.

From Brittonic to Welsh

Wales is the only part of Britain where a successor of Brittonic has had an unbroken history down to the twenty-first century. Indeed, Welsh is one of the rare examples of an indigenous language of the Western Roman Empire continuing to be spoken today. (The only other examples are Basque and Berber.) Of the languages now spoken in Britain, Welsh has by far the oldest roots in the island; those roots go back at least 2,500 years and perhaps 4,000 years, compared with little more than 1,500 years in the cases of English and Gaelic, a language

that became widespread in Scotland as the result of migration from Ireland. As J. R. R. Tolkien put it, Welsh is 'the senior language of the men of Britain'.

The transition from Brittonic to Welsh took place somewhere between AD 400 and 700. The major problem in tracing this transition is the paucity of evidence. Not a sentence of Brittonic has survived. The language was almost certainly written down, but the writing materials used were probably perishable, the more highly esteemed Latin being used for permanent inscriptions. Brittonic, like Latin, was a synthetic language: that is, much of its meaning was conveyed by a change in the endings of words, as in Latin *puella* (girl), *puellae* (to the girl), *puellarum* (of the girls). Brittonic eventually lost such endings, and the relation of one word to another came to be conveyed by the use of prepositions or by the location of a word in the sentence. It is difficult to date the change with any certainty. It is generally accepted that it had occurred by about AD 600, but it may have taken place in the spoken language much earlier. The most obvious sign of the change was the loss of the final syllables of nouns. When *bardos* (poet), *aratron* (plough) and *abona* (river) had become *bardd*, *aradr* and *afon*, Brittonic had become Welsh – although, as similar changes were happening in other one-time Brittonic-speaking regions, it may be preferable to refer to the successor language not as Welsh but as *Lingua Britannica*.

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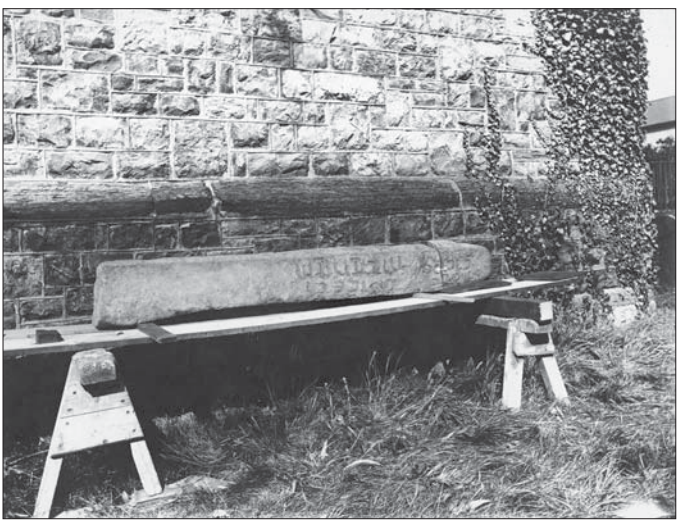
Welsh in the Early British Kingdoms



Inscribed stone at Tywyn, Merionnydd

Early and Old Welsh

Early Welsh, a phase in the history of the language extending from its beginnings to *c*.850, only survives in a few inscriptions and marginal notes or glosses. The most interesting of the

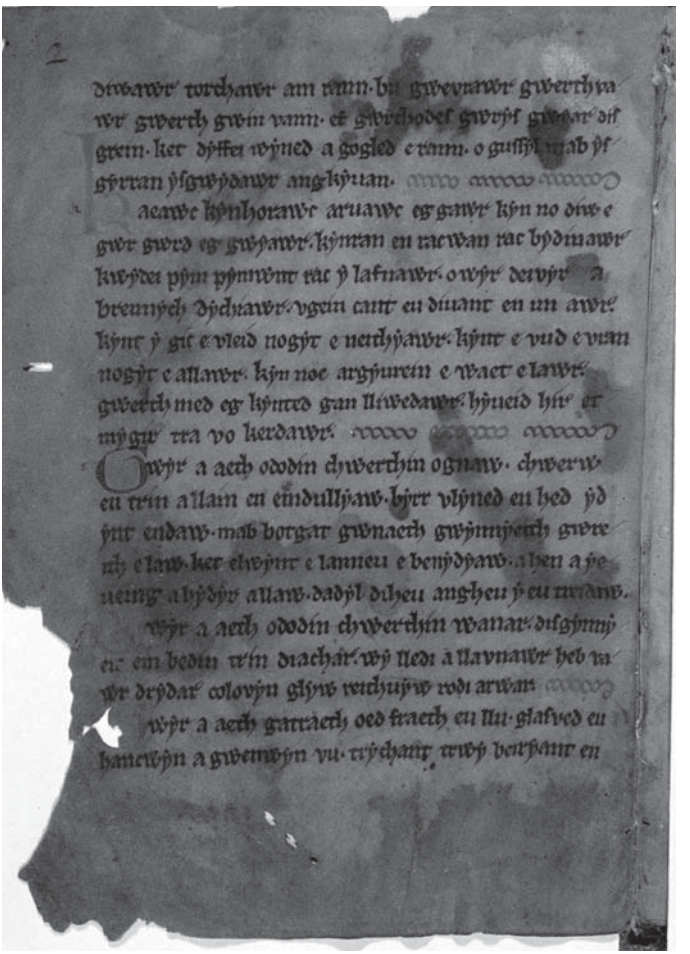
inscriptions is that on a memorial in the parish church of Tywyn in Meirionnydd. It was carved *c*.810 and ends with the words CUN BEN CELEN TRICET NITANAM (Cyngen's corpse dwells beneath me [the stone]). Although the inscription appears incomprehensible to the Welsh speaker of the present day, the words *celen*, *tricet* and *tan* (in *nitanam)* are related to the modem forms *celain* (corpse), *trigo* (dwells) and *dan* (beneath).

Old Welsh was spoken from *c*.850 to *c*.1100. Again the evidence is slight. Of the material that has indubitably survived unchanged from that period, there is little beyond marginal notes and a few brief texts and poems. An account of the settlement of a land dispute, written on the margin of an eighth-century gospel book and known as the Surrexit memorandum, is often claimed to be the earliest Welsh-language text. Two series of three-line poems written in about 880 are preserved as marginal notes on the Juvencus manuscript, now in the Cambridge University Library, and this manuscript is therefore the earliest surviving literary text in Welsh. Also in the Cambridge University Library is the remarkable Computus Fragment, written in about 920. It is a prose work of twenty-three lines discussing the methods of recording the moon's course through the signs of the zodiac, and provides evidence that Welsh was being used in the tenth century to discuss complex and abstruse topics.

The Cynfeirdd

Although there are very few literary manuscripts in Welsh before Old Welsh evolved into Middle Welsh in the years after 1100, a substantial body of literature was almost certainly composed in both Old and Early Welsh. A thirteenth-century

manuscript known as the Book of Aneirin commemorates the attack of the Gododdin (the Votadini, who lived on the banks of the Firth of Forth) upon Catraeth (Catterick), an episode that it would be reasonable to date to around 595. Aneirin is mentioned in the *Historia Brittonum*, a mass of material put together in about 830, as is Taliesin, who is said to have sung to Urien, king of Rheged (Dumfries and Cumberland) in the years around 580. Aneirin and Taliesin are the first of the Cynfeirdd (the Early Poets), singing, as the scholar John Morris-Jones put it, 'the birth-song of a new speech'. They are considered to be the founders of the Welsh poetic tradition and it is ironic that they belonged not to Wales, but to Yr Hen Ogledd (The Old North). Indeed, if it is accepted that their work is contemporary with Urien and the attack upon Catraeth, it could be claimed that they wrote in Cumbric rather than Welsh, although it is doubtful if there was any great difference between the two languages at that time. On linguistic grounds, what has survived could have been written much later than the sixth century. However, it is generally agreed that the nucleus of the work of Aneirin and Taliesin was composed in that period, but that oral repetition over the centuries led to adaptation and modification. A later manuscript, the Red Book of Hergest, written about 1400, contains cycles of poems associated with Llywarch Hen and Heledd. The Llywarch poems, which were probably composed around 850, are considered to be verse passages in a saga of which the narrative has not survived. The Heledd poems lament the defeat of the royal house of Powys and, in their restrained passion, they are among the greatest glories of Welsh literature.



A page from the Book of Aneirin. The last full sentence reads: 'Gwyr a aeth gatraeth oed fraeth eu llu. glasved eu hancwyn a gwenwyn vu.' (Men went to Catraeth; they were ready for battle. Fresh mead was their feast, but it was poison.)

The defeat of Powys deprived that kingdom of the rich lands of the Severn valley and brought the English colonizers to the edges of the uplands of Wales. Offa, king of Mercia (central England) from 757 to 796, sought to demarcate the boundary between the English and the Welsh. As Asser, King Alfred's biographer, put it: Offa 'ordered a great *vallum* to be made from sea to sea' between Wales and Mercia. Offa's Dyke, wrote F. M. Stenton, is 'an impressive suggestion of the power of command which belonged to the greater Anglo-Saxon kings'. It was that power which had by 800 caused *Lingua Britannica* to retreat from virtually the whole of England. The retreat was not universally considered to be irreversible. A remarkable poem, known as *Armes Prydein* (the prophecy of Britain), was written *c.*930, probably at St David's. It foresees that the Welsh, in alliance with their fellow Celts of Cornwall, Ireland, Brittany and the Old North, and with the assistance of the Norsemen of Dublin, will arise and drive the English out of Britain and will thus reclaim the whole realm 'from Manaw Gododdin to Brittany, from Dyfed to Thanet'. *Armes Prydein* was a powerful example of the prophetic or vaticinatory verse which is a major element of Welsh medieval literature.

The influence of Norse

The prophecy of *Armes Prydein* was not fulfilled. Indeed, while it was being composed, Hywel Dda, the leading Welsh ruler, was cooperating with the rulers of England in resisting the attacks of the non-Christian Norsemen. In some parts of Britain, Norse settlement was sufficiently extensive to introduce a new linguistic element. Many common English words – husband, rotten and ugly, for example – are borrowings from Scandinavian languages, and Scots Gaelic also has a considerable

Scandinavian element. In Wales, however, the Norsemen made few permanent settlements. Only one Welsh word – *iarll*, from *jarl* (earl) – is indisputably a Norse borrowing. However, the English form of a number of place-names along the coast – Anglesey, Fishguard and Swansea, for example – are of Scandinavian origin. Viking supremacy on the seas may have isolated Wales from other lands inhabited by speakers of *Lingua Britannica*, and hastened the emergence of a more distinct form of Welsh.

The Law of Hywel

According to tradition, Hywel Dda's activities included the codification of the Law of Wales. No text survives of the original Law of Hywel, but forty-two texts written between 1230 and 1500 are extant. The surviving versions, six of which are in Latin, contain material that is much later than the age of Hywel, but some at least of their contents has a distinctly early flavour. Welsh was the language of the law: 'there can be no doubt', stated H. D. Emanuel, a leading authority on the subject, 'that the oral legal tradition was in the vernacular'. The Welsh Lawbooks are proof of the rich legal vocabulary of the Welsh language, and because of their form and style they are works of literature as well as of law.

The Law of Hywel was as central to the identity of the Welsh people in the medieval period as was the Welsh language. It was suggested in 1282 that Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, prince of Wales, should abandon his principality and accept an earldom in England. The prince's advisers retorted:

> The prince should not throw aside his inheritance and that of his ancestors in Wales and accept land in England, a country

> with whose language, way of life, laws and customs he is unfamiliar . . . Let this be clearly understood: his council will not permit him to yield . . . and even if the prince wishes to transfer [his people] into the hands of the king, they will not do any homage to any stranger, as they are wholly unacquainted with his language, his way of life and his laws.

The Mabinogi

Even more impressive as literature than the law is the collection of stories known as the Mabinogi. Although they are thought to have been written down sometime between 1050 and 1120, the tales of Pwyll and Pryderi, of Branwen and Bendigeidfran are links with the remote Celtic past, for their heroes are lineal descendants of the old Celtic gods whose deeds had been celebrated by the *cyfarwydd* (the storyteller) over many centuries. The stories of the Mabinogi, to quote Gwyn Jones, 'are Wales's own distinctive contribution to medieval prose literature', and Thomas Parry claims that it is 'difficult to exaggerate the literary gifts of the man [*sic*] who gave the Mabinogi its final form'.

By the end of the eleventh century, Welsh was a rich, supple and versatile language. It had an oral literary tradition which was one of the longest in Europe. It had an enviable coherence, for the literary language was the same in all parts of Wales. It was spoken throughout the land to the west of Offa's Dyke and in some communities to the east of it. The conquests of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn (d.1063) had strengthened the Welsh language in Herefordshire – so much so that bishops of Hereford were obliged to address some of their charges through interpreters. The language was even stronger in parts of Shropshire, with the streets of Oswestry being known by

Welsh names. Within Wales, the language was deeply rooted in the territory of the people who spoke it. They had used it to name their churches and their settlements, their rivers and their hills. Although the language had borrowed words from Latin and from English (surprisingly little from English, compared with what was to come), it remained overwhelmingly Celtic in its vocabulary and syntax. Following the Battle of Hastings in 1066, it was to come face to face with the French of the Normans, the most powerful of the vernacular languages of medieval Europe.

WELSH BORROWINGS

FROM ENGLISH BEFORE 1100	FROM NORMAN-FRENCH
capan (cap)	cwarel (windowpane)
sidan (silk)	palffrai (palfrey)
berfa (wheelbarrow)	ffiol (viol)
bwrdd (table)	barwn (baron)
llidiart (gate)	gwarant (warrant)

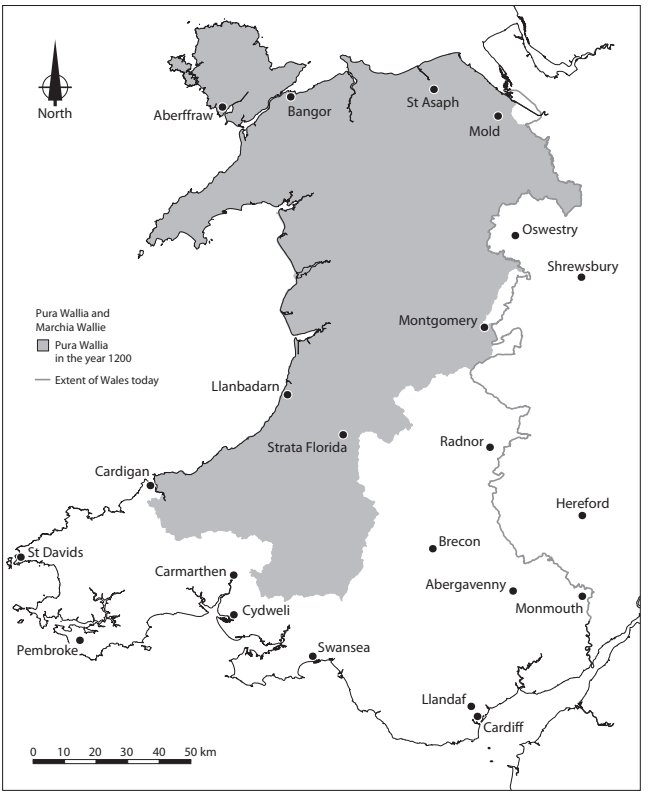
3

Welsh in the Middle Ages

The coming of the Normans and the conquest of Wales

The victory of William of Normandy led to the expropriation of the land of England by the new king and his followers. The English language, which had enjoyed high prestige and been the medium of a distinguished literature, fell upon hard times. With the conquest, French became the language of the English court, of the homes of the nobility and of high culture. As late as 1300, an English chronicler lamented that 'there is not a single country which does not hold to its own language save England alone'.

The Welsh language did not, at that time, suffer a fate similar to that of English, although the Normans made their presence felt in Wales also. By the reign of Henry I (1100–35), much of the border and the southern coastlands of the country were in their hands. They organized their territories into quasi-independent marcher lordships, each centred upon a castle and a borough. Thus Wales became divided into *Pura Wallia* and *Marchia Wallie*, a division that survived until the Act of 'Union' of 1536. Norman French, the language of the leaders of the invaders, struck roots within the lordships. Fulk Fitzwarin, who died in *c.*1256, is celebrated in a French saga written on the borders of Wales.



Map showing *Pura Wallia* and *Marchia Wallie*. The shaded area shows the extent of *Pura Wallia* in the year 1200. The border on the right shows the extent of Wales today.

Native Welsh rulers such as Rhys ap Gruffudd of Deheubarth (d.1197) and Llywelyn ap Iorwerth (d.1240) and Llywelyn ap Gruffudd (d.1282) of Gwynedd undoubtedly had a command of French, and Llywelyn Bren (d.1317), a nobleman of northern Glamorgan, owned a copy of the French poem *Roman de la Rose*. French words became assimilated into Welsh, and Welsh literature came to be influenced by French forms and conventions. A few places in Wales, such as Beaupre, Beaumaris, Grace Dieu and Hay (La Haie Taillée) were given French names, and Norman-French personal names such as Richard, Robert and William eventually won popularity among the Welsh. The fact that Llywelyn ap Iorwerth married the natural daughter of King John and that Llywelyn ap Gruffudd married a niece of Henry III gave rise to the notion that the Gwynedd court was French in speech, a notion at odds with the popularity of Welsh verse at feasts and gatherings, and with the strength of Welsh in the courts of law. In the thirteenth century, Welsh certainly enjoyed a more pivotal role in the centres of power in Gwynedd than did English in the centres of power in England.

While the leaders of the invasion were French-speaking, the humbler of their fellow-colonists were not. *Brut y Tywysogyon* (the Chronicle of the Princes) notes that, in 1105, Henry I permitted a colony of Flemings to settle in the hundreds of Rhos and Daugleddau in Dyfed. They were joined by English speakers (English and Flemish would have been very similar in the twelfth century) and, as a result, the Welsh language was uprooted from what later became south Pembrokeshire. In addition, extensive English settlement took place in Gower, the Vale of Glamorgan and parts of Gwent and the north-east, though some of the areas anglicized were re-Cymricized through later demographic movements. The towns planted by the Normans were also centres of English and French speech, thus giving rise in later centuries to the erroneous belief that urban

life is alien to the Welsh people. As a result of these population movements, English has been the spoken language of some communities in Wales for at least 800 years. There was a further wave of English immigration following the defeat of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, prince of Wales, and the collapse of his principality in 1282–3. In particular, the chief garrison towns of Gwynedd – Caernarfon, Conwy and Beaumaris – became bastions of English influence.

Despite the influx of French and English speakers, Wales remained overwhelmingly Welsh-speaking throughout the Middle Ages and beyond. In most of the marcher lordships – Brecon and Abergavenny, for example – the vast majority of the population was monoglot Welsh, and in lordships such as Knockin and Clun (now in Shropshire) and Huntingdon and Clifford (now in Herefordshire) the Welsh-speaking population was considerable. The spoken language had a variety of dialects and there are references to Gwyndodeg (Venedotian: the speech of Gwynedd) and Gwenhwyseg (the speech of Gwent). Giraldus Cambrensis (d.1223) believed that Welsh 'is more delicate and richer in north Wales, that country being less intermixed with foreigners', but he also recorded the opinion that 'the language of Ceredigion in south Wales, placed as it is in the middle and heart of Cambria, is the most refined'.

Welsh as a language of learning and literature

While there was a variety of dialects, there was only one literary language. The historian Llinos Smith notes that 'it is difficult to determine the geographical source of the different versions of *Brut y Tywysogyon* on the basis of the idioms in the text'. This was a marked contrast with English: Chaucer lamented *c*.1380 that there 'is so great diversity . . . in the writing of our

tongue'. The texts of the *Brut* were translations from Latin, and their existence shows that Welsh had won its place side by side with Latin as a language of learning and culture. Welsh also became an effective medium for religious literature, as the treatises on the Paternoster and the Creed and the translations of biblical passages contained in manuscripts of about 1250 testify. Even with the collapse of Llywelyn's principality and Edward I's insistence that the law of England should replace the law of Wales in many spheres, Welsh continued to be extensively used in legal texts. In addition, it was used in works on medicine, heraldry and husbandry, and in a wealth of prose sagas and romances.

Above all, it was used in poetry. The poets who sang to the Welsh princes between 1100 and 1300 are known as Y Gogyn-feirdd (the fairly early poets) or the Poets of the Princes. They were a class of professional poets who expressed themselves in intricate forms and archaic diction, and their art reached its apex with the magnificent elegy of Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch to Llywelyn ap Gruffudd:

> Pa beth y'n gedir i ohiriaw?
> Nid oes le y cyrcher rhag carchar braw;
> Nid oes le y triger; och o'r trigaw!
> Nid oes na chyngor na chlo nac agor,
> Unffordd i esgor brwyn gyngor braw.
>
> What thing is left us that we linger here?
> There is no place to flee from the prison of fear,
> There is no place to abide in; alas, the abiding!
> There is no counsel nor key nor open way
> To cast from our souls the sad conflict of fear.
>
> Lament for Llywelyn ap Gruffudd
> by Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch

The extinction of the major Welsh dynasties in the 1280s robbed the poets of princely patrons, but they continued to practise their craft under the patronage of gentry families. The work of about 150 Beirdd yr Uchelwyr (the poets of the gentry) has survived, extending from about 1300 to about 1600. The content of the poems is largely praise of the patron, his home and his hospitality, and the more accomplished the poet, the higher the social status of the family whose patronage he enjoyed. Their work, noted H. I. Bell and David Bell, is 'linguistically one of the most difficult bodies of work in any European language . . . It aims at the maximum of force and compression . . . giving us not so much a meaning as clues to a meaning.'

Crefft ddigerydd fydd i ferch –
Cydgerdded coed â gordderch
Cadw wyneb, cydowenu,
Cydwerthin finfin a fu,
Cyd-ddigwyddaw garllaw'r llwyn,
Cydochel pobl, cydachwyn,
Cydfod mwyn, cydyfed medd,
Cydarwain serch, cydorwedd,
Cyd-ddaly cariad celadawy
Cywir, ni menegir mwy.

It is a blameless occupation for a girl
to wander through the forest with her lover,
together to keep face, together smile,
together laugh – and it was lip to lip –
together to lie down beside the grove,
together to shun folk, together to complain,
to live together kindly, drinking mead together,
to rest together and express our love,
maintaining true love in all secrecy:
there is no need to tell any more.

Dafydd ap Gwilym, 'Y Serch Lledrad' (Love Kept Secret)

Some wrote in the *awdl* form, which dated back to Taliesin and Aneirin. By the later Middle Ages, the *awdl* had developed a fixed pattern and would generally include a number of *englynion*. The favourite metrical form of the Beirdd yr Uchelwyr, however, was the *cywydd*, which was devised *c*.1350. *Awdl*, *englyn* and *cywydd* are written in *cynghanedd* (literally, harmony), an intricate system of sound-chiming which has characterized Welsh poetry from its beginnings. The greatest master of the *cywydd* – indeed, the greatest figure in the whole of Welsh literary history – was Dafydd ap Gwilym (*fl*. 1320–70), but there were others of great distinction. The church attempted, as the historian Glanmor Williams put it, 'to impose its imprimatur on a poetic tradition which had in origin and early development been completely independent of it', but the existence in medieval Wales of a considerable body of exceedingly lewd verse suggests that its attempts were not always successful. Among the patrons of Beirdd yr Uchelwyr were the Turbervilles and Stradlings in Glamorgan and the Salesburys and Pulestons in the north-east, a fact which suggests that gentry families of English origin were being assimilated into Welsh-language culture. There were similar developments in the rural areas that had been anglicized during the Norman Conquest. Although the linguistic boundary or Landsker in Pembrokeshire proved remarkably stable, other areas, particularly in the Vale of Glamorgan, became increasingly Welsh-speaking in the later Middle Ages. The same was true of the towns, as migration from the countryside overwhelmed the English elements planted in earlier centuries. Indeed, Llinos Smith writes of an obvious revival of the Welsh language in the later Middle Ages.

The resurgence of English

If Welsh was making a comeback, so also was English. In the fifteenth century, English came to replace French and Latin in law, in administration and in the social life of the upper classes. By *c*.1390 the English were writing wills and letters in English, and by *c*.1450 land deeds in English were the norm. There was a strongly surviving tradition of using Welsh for official purposes – the accounts of an estate in north-east Wales, prepared in the 1490s, are wholly in Welsh, and offer evidence of a rich vocabulary. Determined efforts were made to ensure the appointment of senior clergy who were fluent in Welsh, and one of the demands made by Owain Glyndŵr in 1406 in his letter to Charles VI of France – the letter in which he promised Welsh allegiance to the French-backed pope at Avignon – was that the clergy 'should know our language'. Although the official documents that survive from independent Wales are in Latin, the law courts of the Welsh princes were held in Welsh. After the Conquest, it was found necessary to translate Edward I's Statute of Rhuddlan into Welsh, and there are examples of land deeds in Welsh in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Nevertheless, as English law increasingly replaced Welsh law and as the task of framing official documents came to be undertaken by professional scribes, it became usual for official documents in Wales to imitate those of England in language as well as in content.

As English came increasingly to be the medium of legal transactions, it is hardly surprising that Welsh gentry, even in the more remote parts of the country, came to feel a need to be fluent in the language. John Wynn (1553–1627), the choleric squire from the Conwy valley, notes that his great-grandfather, probably *c*.1470, went to Caernarfon to gain a knowledge of English. Thus when Henry VII, a descendant of the Tudor

family of Penmynydd, Anglesey, ascended the throne of England in 1485, English had already gained a role in official life in Wales.

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4

From the Act of 'Union' to the Industrial Revolution

The Act of 'Union'

In 1536 the advisers of Henry VIII secured the passage through the English parliament of the so-called Act of Union. The Act incorporated Wales into England and made the inhabitants of Wales subjects of the English Crown in the same way as were the inhabitants of England. Thereafter, in the eyes of the law, the Welsh were English. Yet it would be equally valid to argue that, as there was no longer any advantage in boasting of the condition of being English, henceforth everybody living in Wales was Welsh, a principle that would be built upon in subsequent generations.

Much of the Act was concerned with the boundaries of the shires, and the delineation of the border meant that Archenfield became part of Herefordshire, and Clun part of Shropshire. The two areas had contained thriving Welsh-speaking communities and, during harvest time, experienced a regular influx of Welsh speakers from further west. These enclaves in England underwent increasing anglicizing influences, although the fact that, in 1563, the bishop of Hereford was charged, together with the four Welsh bishops, with the duty of ensuring that there would be a Welsh translation of the Bible, suggests that

there was official awareness of the linguistic nature of the diocese.

In the border counties of Wales, the fertile valleys of the Dee, Severn and Wye and the valleys of tributaries such as the Arrow and the Lugg provided entry points for English, and by the early eighteenth century the inhabitants of lowland Radnorshire were largely monoglot English. The anglicization of their trading centres caused the inhabitants of the county's uplands to follow suit. Differences between the chronology of linguistic change in the uplands and the lowlands may also be found in Monmouthshire, Breconshire, Montgomeryshire, Denbighshire and Flintshire. In the non-border counties, the prospects for Welsh were brighter: the Vale of Glamorgan was so extensively re-Cymricized in the eighteenth century that Iolo Morganwg could declare that Welsh was the *vernaculum* of the vale.

The Act of 1536 also laid down that English should be the language of the courts of Wales and that no person using Welsh should have public office.

> ALSO BE IT enacted by auctoritie aforesaid that all Justices Commissioners Shireves Coroners Eschetours Stewardes and their lieutenauntes and all other officers and ministers of the lawe shall proclayme and kepe the sessions courtes hundredes letes Shireves and all other courtes in the Englisshe Tonge and all others of officers iuries enquestes and all other affidavithes verdictes and Wagers of lawe to be geven and done in the Englisshe tonge. And also that frome hensforth no personne or personnes that use the Welsshe speche or langage shall have or enjoy any maner office or fees within the Realme of Englonde Wales or other the Kinges dominions upon peyn of forfaiting the same offices or fees onles he or they use and exercise the speche or language of Englisshe.
>
> The 'Language Clause' of the Act of 'Union', 1536

It may be doubted that Thomas Cromwell, the framer of the Act, was intent upon the obliteration of Welsh, which was the sole language spoken by the great majority of the inhabitants of Wales. What he sought was uniform administration and the deployment of the Welsh gentry as the agents of royal administration. The gentry became Justices of the Peace and Members of Parliament, positions for which a command of English was essential. Thus, implicit in the Act was the creation of a Welsh ruling class proficient in English, a development assisted by the growing tendency of the Welsh gentry to send their sons to English public schools. The learning of English by the gentry did not necessarily mean that they abandoned Welsh. One of the leading noblemen of the reign of Elizabeth I, William Herbert, earl of Pembroke, was more at home in Welsh than in English, and in 1591 the parents of Edward Herbert of Cherbury 'thought fit to send me to some place where I might learn the Welsh tongue, as believing it necessary to enable me to treat with those of my friends and tenants who know no other language'.

Nevertheless, upper-class families in Wales became increasingly assimilated into the English ruling class through education, intermarriage and association, a process that provided a constant reminder that knowledge of Welsh was divorced from any form of political power. The notion that the inability to speak Welsh was a mark of high status proved long-lasting. Writing of his youth in a quarrying village of Caernarfonshire in the 1870s, Henry Morris-Jones, later an MP, remembered a retired army officer who lived there. 'Children', he wrote, 'took off their hats to him, for he spoke no Welsh.' As it came to be believed that the ability to speak polished English – the touchstone of gentility in later centuries – was marred by even a nodding acquaintance with Welsh, the gentry eventually abandoned the Welsh language. The chronology of

abandonment varied according to locality and status. The first to cease to speak Welsh were the greater squires of the borderland, and the last were the lesser squires of the west. The process took at least 250 years and was virtually complete by the late eighteenth century. It had profound consequences. Welsh culture, which had been essentially aristocratic, came into the guardianship of the peasantry and the 'middling sort of people' – craftsmen, artisans and the lower clergy. As the inhabitants of the gentry houses ceased to speak Welsh, the system of patronage that had maintained the Welsh poets over the centuries collapsed, and the standardized Welsh they had jealously defended was in peril of deteriorating into an assortment of mutually unintelligible dialects.

It is obvious, however, that some use of Welsh was necessary in view of the monolingualism of the vast majority of the inhabitants of Wales. Some important political declarations were made in Welsh and parliamentary candidates used the language to attract the support of monoglot voters. Welsh translations were extensively used in law courts, although the standard of the translations was allegedly atrocious.

Personal names

Indicative of the growth of English influence was the abandonment of Welsh patronymics, and the adoption of fixed surnames after the English pattern. Thus Richard ap Meurig ap Llywelyn of Bodorgan in Anglesey became Richard Meyrick, and John ap Rhys ap Gwilym of Brecon became John Price. Most of the new surnames were based upon the father's first name – Jones (John), Davies (David), Powell (ap Hywel), but some were based on a nickname – Lloyd (Llwyd – grey), Voyle (Moel – bald); an occupation – Gough (Gof –blacksmith); or a place-name –

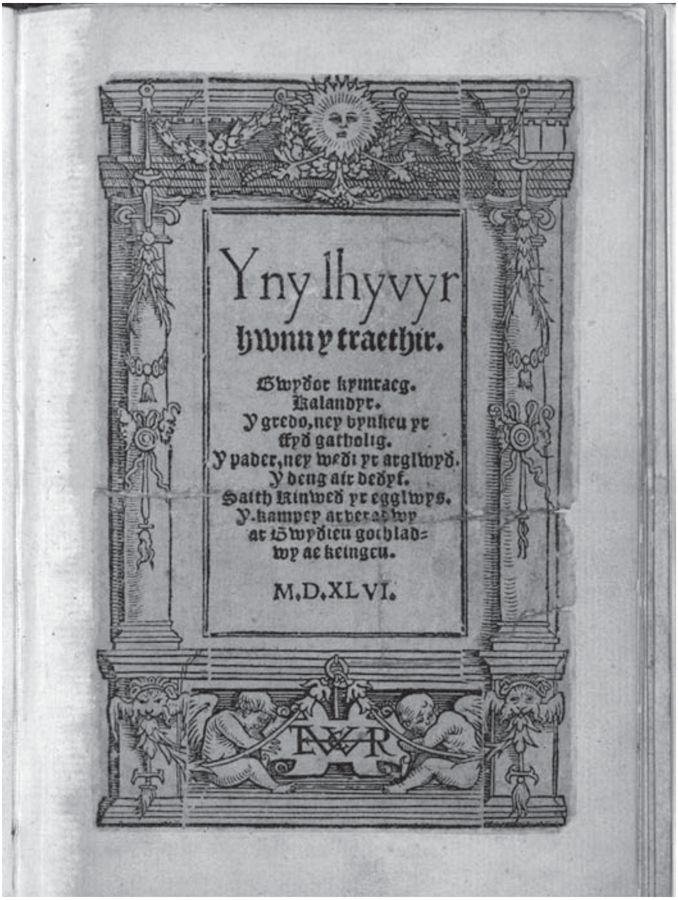
Trevor (Trefor). The change had occurred among the gentry by the late sixteenth century; it was virtually complete among all classes by the late seventeenth century, but as late as the mid-nineteenth century there were examples of a son taking his father's first name as his surname.

The paucity of Welsh surnames is largely the result of the scarcity of male personal names in use in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Wales. There may be some substance to a doggerel attributed to a Tudor judge:

> Take ten, he said, and call them Rice
> Another ten and call them Price,
> Take fifty more and call them Hughes
> A hundred more I'll dub them Pughes.
> Now Roberts name a hundred score
> And Williams name a legion more,
> And call, he moaned in languid tones,
> Call all the others Jones.

The Reformation and the translation of the Bible

The danger posed to Welsh in the wake of the abandonment of the language by the upper classes was averted by the Protestant Reformation. Protestantism elevated the vernacular as the language of worship. In the kingdom of England (which included the Welsh speakers of Wales and the Cornish speakers of Cornwall) that meant that the language of worship would be English. Unlike the Cornish, the Welsh did not revolt against the anglicization of devotion, but there were many in Wales who considered it invidious that the mass of the people – who had no knowledge of English – should be denied an understanding of the new religion. One of them was Sir John Price of Brecon who, in 1547, published the first printed book in

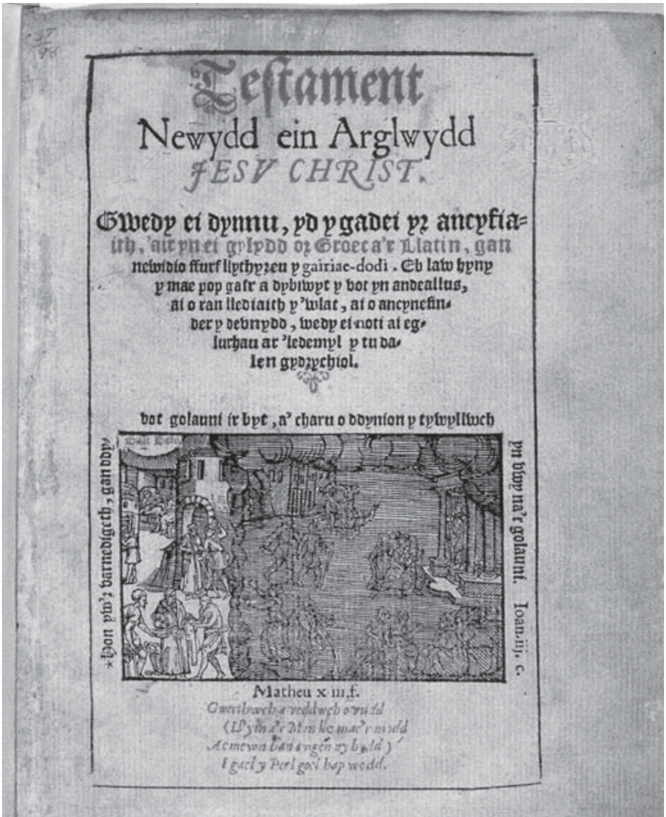

Yny lhyvyr
hwnn y traethir.
Gwydor kymraeg.
Kalandyr.
Y gredo, ney bynkeu yr
ffyd gatholig.
Y pader, ney wedi yr arglwyd.
Y deng air dedyf.
Saith Rinwed yr egglwys.
Y.kampeu arveradwy
ar Gwydieu gochlad-
wy ae keingeu.
M.D.XLVI.

Title page of *Yn y lhyvyr hwnn*, the earliest printed book in Welsh

Welsh. The book had no title and is generally known as *Yn y lhyvyr hwnn* (In this book), after its opening words. It contained the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and the Ten Commandments, together with instructions on how to read Welsh.

Another advocate of religious literature in Welsh was William Salesbury, whose *Kynniver Llith a Ban*, a translation of the Epistles and Gospels of the first Book of Common Prayer, appeared in 1551. With Europe torn by religious dissension, the government came to realize that religious conformity was more important than linguistic uniformity. It was this consideration that led parliament in 1563 to pass an Act commanding the bishops of Wales and Hereford to ensure that Welsh translations of the Bible and the Prayer Book should be available by 1567 and that 'divine service shall be said throughout all the dioceses where the Welsh tongue is commonly used in the said Welsh tongue'. It was not the intention of the government to confirm the mass of the Welsh people in their monoglot state. The Welsh translations were to be placed in every parish church, but they were to be accompanied by English versions, so that those reading them might 'by comparing both tongues together the sooner attain to a knowledge of the English tongue'. The challenge was accepted by Richard Davies, bishop of St David's, and it was in his palace at Abergwili that the work of translating the New Testament and the Prayer Book was accomplished, largely by William Salesbury. The translation was published in 1567.

The task of producing a translation of the entire Bible was undertaken by William Morgan, vicar of Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant on the borders of Denbighshire and Montgomeryshire. Its publication in 1588 was a crucial event in the history of the Welsh language. Since Morgan used the exalted diction of the poets of the strict metres, his style and vocabulary were highly literary and somewhat archaic. Even when published,



Testament
Newydd ein Arglwydd
IESV CHRIST.

Gwedy ei dynnu, yd y gadei yr ancyfiaith, 'air yn ei gylydd or Groec a'r Llatin, gan newidio ffurf llythyren y gairiae-dodi. Eb law hyny y mae pop gair a dybiwyt y bot yn andeallus, ai o ran llediaith y 'wlat, ai o ancynefinder y deunydd, wedy ei noti ai eglurhau ar 'ledemyl y tu dalen gydrychiol.

Hon yw'r barnedigeth, gan ddy-
vot golauni ir byt, a' charu o ddynion y tywyllwch
yn vwy na'r golauni. Ioan.iij. c.

Matheu x iii.f.

Title page of the New Testament, 1567

the language of the Welsh Bible was markedly different from spoken Welsh, and over the centuries the difference widened as the spoken language evolved. Yet despite the archaisms (which became more marked in the revised edition of 1620) the Bible provided an exalted model of correct and majestic Welsh. As congregations heard its splendid rhythms Sunday after Sunday, the Welsh people became accustomed to a lofty image of their language. Welsh was the only one of the non-state languages of Europe to become the medium of a published Bible less than a century after the Protestant Reformation, a factor that goes far to explain the difference between the subsequent history of Welsh and that of others of those languages, Irish and Scots Gaelic in particular. But perhaps too much should not be claimed. Finnish, which was Bible-less for generations after 1588, is now sovereign in its territory in a way in which Welsh is not.

The Welsh humanists

The revised Bible of 1620 was the work of John Davies of Mallwyd in Meirionnydd, the most distinguished Welsh scholar of his day. He, like William Morgan, had been brought up in the Venedotian dialect, and their work may have elevated northern forms of Welsh and have caused speakers of southern dialects to be diffident about their competence in the language. Davies also published a Welsh grammar in Latin and a Latin–Welsh dictionary. He was a member of the remarkable band of Welsh lexicographers and grammarians who were imbued with the humanist ideas of the Renaissance. Indeed, Welsh was the sole Celtic language in which Renaissance learning was successfully combined with the ideals of the religious reformers. The earliest of Wales's humanists was William

Salesbury who, in addition to his translation of most of the New Testament, published a collection of Welsh proverbs, a Welsh–English dictionary and a guide to Welsh pronunciation. Salesbury, an ardent Protestant, had a Catholic counterpart in Gruffydd Robert, an exile in Italy, who published a Welsh grammar in parts in Milan between 1567 and the 1580s. The Welsh humanists were concerned to demonstrate the richness of the Welsh language in idiom and vocabulary and to prove that it had been the language of learning and religion from its earliest days.

Yet, despite their pride and confidence, the Welsh humanists were deeply aware that their language was under siege. While Davies and Morgan were labouring, there were other senior Welsh clerics who, according to the poet Morris Kyffin, were saying that 'it was not expedient to allow the printing of any kind of Welsh book [for] the people should learn English and forget their Welsh'. 'Could the devil himself', asked Kyffin, 'put the matter better?' Several commentators lamented that Welshmen, after crossing into England, were determined to forget their Welsh, and in about 1600 the poet Edward ap Raff despairingly cried: 'The world has gone all English.' The decay of the bardic order, brought about not only by the anglicization of the greater gentry, but also by the disastrous effect of inflation on the lesser gentry and the new tastes created by the availability of the printed book, caused anguish to those who continued to compose in the strict metres. 'This world is not with the poets', mourned Edward Dafydd in 1655.

Welsh-language culture in the seventeenth century

By the seventeenth century, Welsh had lost its status as a language of high culture. In that century, wrote the authors of

the 1927 report *Welsh in Education and Life*, 'the language was in a state of suspended animation'. Literature of distinction continued to be written, the work of Morgan Llwyd (1619–59) being pre-eminent. There were still those who had an interest in the literature of previous ages. Scribes such as John Jones, Gellilyfdy (died *c.*1658) tirelessly copied the works of early poets, and a few squires – Robert Vaughan (1592–1667) of Hengwrt near Dolgellau in particular – took pride in their collections of manuscripts. Yet such men as Vaughan were becoming increasingly rare. It was widely assumed that the extinction of Welsh was imminent, the author of the satirical volume *Wallography* (1682) hoping that 'if the stars prove lucky, there may be some glimmering hope that the British language may yet be English'd out of Wales'.

Yet the vast majority remained monoglot Welsh, and they demanded some sort of literature. New poets of humble stock answered the call, and the old strict metres were elbowed aside by free-metre poetry. 'Although the new generation of Welsh poets were pale shadows of their illustrious professional forebears', wrote Geraint H. Jenkins, 'their poetry fulfilled a much wider social function. Welsh poetry became an open rather than a closed shop.' Folk literature, previously too humble to be written down, began to be published. Thomas Jones, the almanacker, established himself in Shrewsbury in 1685, and his success was proof that literacy was no longer confined to the wealthy and leisured classes. The first book to be printed on a permanent printing press on Welsh soil – the press established at Atpar near Newcastle Emlyn by Isaac Carter in 1718 – was a ballad: *Cân o Senn i'w Hen Feistr Tobacco* (A Song of Rebuke to his Old Master Tobacco). Carter soon transferred his press to Carmarthen, which became the first town in Wales to be the centre of vigorous publishing activity in the Welsh language, a role later undertaken by other

towns, in particular Merthyr, Aberdare, Denbigh and Caernarfon.

Side by side with the growing stream of print was the revival of the eisteddfod. The use of the word *eisteddfod* dates from *c*.1523, but the poetic and musical contest held by Rhys ap Gruffudd in Cardigan in 1176 is generally held to be the first recorded eisteddfod. Others were held in Carmarthen in about 1451 and in Caerwys in Flintshire in 1523 and 1567. Thomas Jones's almanacs advertised eisteddfodau from 1700 onwards and by the 1730s they had become fairly numerous, particularly in the north. In them, poets tested their skills and the victor was chaired and his health toasted. The meetings were often drunken and raucous affairs, but they were transformed into more decorous assemblies in the late eighteenth century, thus initiating an activity that was to become central to Welsh cultural life.

Religious education and the Welsh language

The jollifications of the poets caused grave concern to the godly, particularly those of Puritan sympathies. Puritans unable to accept the doctrines of the Church of England left the Anglican communion. They formed nonconformist sects – Congregationalist, Baptist, Presbyterian and Quaker – and, following the Toleration Act of 1689, they were able to build chapels and organize themselves with a fair degree of freedom. Before the Act of 1689, however, they were subject to persecution. The main element within dissent was the 'middling sort' of people, and that became even more true as persecution drove the wealthy and the ambitious back to the Established Church. Thus, Nonconformity in Wales became increasingly reliant upon people wholly Welsh in speech, with the result that

it came to be, despite its English origins, an integral part of the life of Welsh-speaking Wales. The growth of Nonconformity was to have a profound impact upon the growth of the Welsh language – so much so that, by the late nineteenth century, there was a widespread assumption that a Welsh speaker was by definition a chapel-goer.

In 1700, when nine out of ten of the people of Wales were Anglican in their religious allegiance, it was by no means apparent that this would be so. Although antagonism between church and chapel was to become a major theme in Welsh history, there were people on both sides of the denominational divide who were anxious to evangelize the people. In 1674, Thomas Gouge, a London Dissenter, established the Welsh Trust. Aided by contributions from Anglicans and Nonconformists, he sought to establish schools in which children would learn English, thereby making them 'more serviceable to their country' and capable of reading English devotional works. Many of Gouge's views were shared by Stephen Hughes, the 'Apostle of Congregationalism' in Carmarthenshire. Hughes, however, was appalled by the notion that children should have to learn English before their souls could be saved. 'It would be excellent', he wrote, 'if everyone in Wales could understand English. But Lord, how will that come about if thou dost not make miracles?' He persuaded Gouge to spend part of the funds of the trust on publishing and distributing Welsh books.

The work of the Welsh Trust was continued by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (the SPCK), founded in 1699. As a result, some 545 books in Welsh were published between 1660 and 1730, five times the number published between 1540 and 1660. They included eleven editions of the Bible, four editions of the Welsh translation of *Pilgrim's Progress*, and fourteen editions of *Canwyll y Cymru* (The Welshman's Candle), a collection of edifying verses by Rhys Prichard of

Llandovery. The finest literary work of the period was Ellis Wynne's *Gweledigaetheu y Bardd Cwsc* (The Visions of the Sleeping Bard; 1703), a book rich in satire and powerful language. Thus, by the early eighteenth century, publications in Welsh were becoming increasingly numerous; their content was largely devotional, and they made a vital contribution to the religious and educational awakening of the eighteenth century. Like the Welsh Trust, the SPCK established schools; it assumed that the children would be taught in English, but in some districts, particularly in the north, Welsh was used – a marked contrast with Scotland, where the SSPCK was strongly opposed to any use of Gaelic.

The eighteenth-century renaissance

The readiness to use Welsh to advance religious knowledge stemmed from expediency rather than from a belief in its inherent value. Yet the language did have its champions. The great lexicographer John Davies had argued that Welsh was a sister language of Hebrew and had thus been in existence before the Tower of Babel. According to Paul-Yves Pezron, a Breton monk, the Welsh were directly descended from Gomer, son of Japheth, son of Noah. There were still believers in the work of Geoffrey of Monmouth, who had claimed *c*.1137 that, as the Welsh were descendants of the Trojans, their lineage was among the most distinguished in Europe. In the early eighteenth century, druidism came into vogue and the Welsh poets were seen as the heirs of the learned druids. Belief in the ancient and lofty origins of the Welsh and their language served to swell a national pride that found expression in *Drych y Prif Oesoedd* (The Mirror of Past Ages; 1716), the work of Theophilus Evans, the vicar of Llangamarch, Breconshire.

Presenting the history of the Welsh as a glorious epic, Evans greatly enhanced their pride and at least twenty editions of his book had been published by 1900. He treated evidence quite uncritically and was totally unconcerned to distinguish between myth and historicity.

When *Drych y Prif Oesoedd* appeared, the origins of the Welsh and their language had already become the subject of scholarly investigation. In 1697, Edward Lhuyd, the Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, set out on a four-year journey through the Celtic countries. He collected a vast amount of material and, through his analysis of it, became the founder of comparative Celtic philology. Lhuyd's scholarship proved too rigorous to find widespread acceptance, and myth and bizarre linguistic notions continued to play a major role in the Welsh consciousness. Nevertheless, his spirit of critical enquiry did find emulators. William Gambold, a protégée of Lhuyd, published in 1727 *A Grammar of the Welsh Language*, the first English book to be printed in Wales.

Lewis Morris of Anglesey (1701–65) also considered himself a follower of Lhuyd. Morris and his brothers were fired by an enthusiasm for the language and history of Wales; their letters, a thousand of which have been preserved, offer a panorama of Welsh cultural life in the mid-eighteenth century. Lewis Morris, the deputy steward of Crown manors in Cardiganshire, longed to prove to the anglicized Welsh gentry 'a fact that they have never heard of, that there was once culture and learning in Wales'. He encouraged his brother Richard, a clerk in the Navy Office, to establish in 1751 the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion. Based in London, the Cymmrodorion had corresponding members in Wales and its founders hoped that the society would transform Welsh cultural life. Their hopes were not fulfilled, but the activities of the Morrises and their circle undoubtedly stimulated interest in the Welsh language

and its literature. Perhaps the greatest achievement of the circle was the publication in 1764 by the cleric Evan Evans (Ieuan Brydydd Hir) of *Some Specimens of the Poetry of the Antient Welsh Bards*, a work which provided for the first time a serious study of early Welsh poetry.

The spread of literacy

The activities of the Morris circle coincided with the much more momentous campaign of Griffith Jones, rector of Llanddowror, Carmarthenshire (1683–1761). In 1731, Jones began establishing schools with the aim of teaching both children and adults to read the Bible and to learn the catechism of the Anglican Church. The schools were held mainly in the winter when the demands of agricultural work were less. When the pupils had grasped the essentials of reading and had learned the catechism, the teacher moved to another parish. They were therefore circulating schools and were cheap, flexible and efficient; above all, they were, outside the English-speaking enclaves, conducted in Welsh. The SPCK supplied teaching materials, including over 70,000 Bibles, and the pious among the affluent provided the teachers' salaries, for virtually no support was given by the higher clergy of the Established Church. Between 1731 and his death in 1761, Griffith Jones established a total of 3,325 schools in nearly 1,600 different locations; they were attended by perhaps as many as 250,000 pupils. Assuming that the total population of Wales in the mid-eighteenth century was *c.*480,000, this very remarkable achievement was one of the most successful initiatives of its kind in Europe. Literacy gave Welsh a new prestige and enormously stimulated publications in the language: over 2,500 books in Welsh were published in the eighteenth century. In the

period between the translation of the Bible and the Industrial Revolution, the circulating schools were undoubtedly the most crucial happening in the history of the Welsh language.

The Methodist Revival

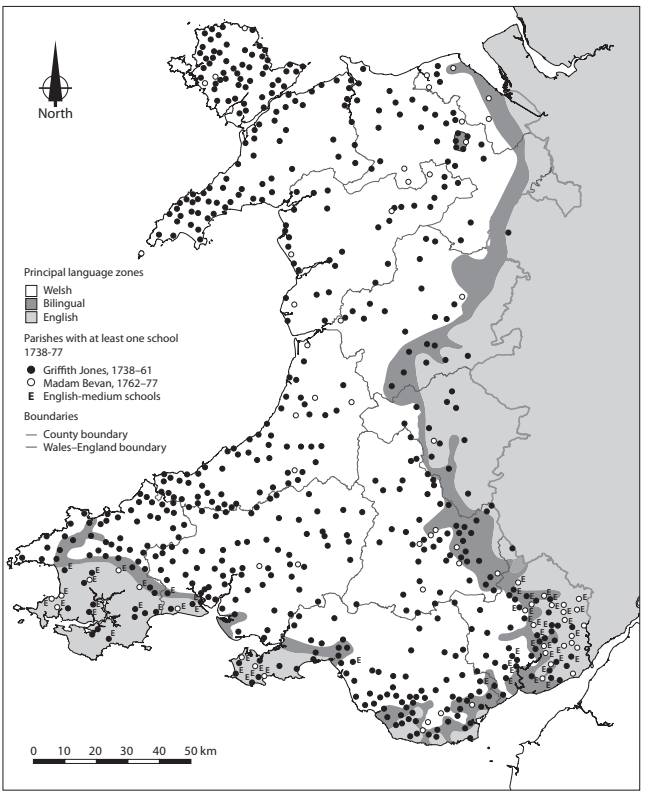
The literacy campaign intertwined with the Methodist Revival. Methodism began as an evangelical movement within the Church of England, but the Methodism of Wales took a different path from that of England, for its leaders adopted Calvinist theology in contradistinction to the Arminianism of John Wesley. The Welsh Calvinistic Methodists remained within the Church of England from their beginnings in the 1730s until 1811, when they became a separate denomination. By 1811, membership of the denominations that had sprung from the Old Dissent had greatly increased because of the impetus of revivalism; with the creation of the new Calvinistic Methodist denomination, adherents of the Church of England became a minority in Wales, a fact that was to have a profound effect upon the concept of the Welsh nation. The Methodists were not particularly concerned to foster the Welsh language but, as they sought their converts among monoglot Welsh speakers, they were obliged to cultivate the language as a vehicle of evangelical zeal. Indeed, they used the language in a more direct and less self-conscious way than did those who were deliberately seeking to contribute to the Welsh literary tradition.

The sermons of the early Methodist leaders, particularly those of Daniel Rowland, created a tradition of powerful preaching in Welsh. The travels of itinerant preachers to address those who spoke a different dialect led to the emergence of a standard spoken Welsh which could be understood throughout the country. The use of the hymn as a central feature of

worship caused the superb compositions of William Williams of Pantycelyn, Carmarthenshire, and those of later hymn-writers such as Ann Griffiths to become the new folk songs of the nation. The Calvinistic Methodists were the pioneers of Sunday schools; like the circulating schools, these were attended by adults as well as children, and they helped to maintain the levels of literacy in Welsh achieved by Griffith Jones. The new denomination developed a more structured and centralized form of government than that of the older denominations such as the Baptists and the Congregationalists; it operated at all levels through the medium of Welsh, thus giving ministers and laymen opportunities to make public use of their mother tongue.

The Established Church and the Welsh language

One of the major reasons for the advance of Methodism and the growth in the membership of the old dissenting denominations was the perception that they were more prepared to serve the needs of Welsh speakers than was the Church of England. From the time of William Salesbury and Richard Davies, the Anglican Church had made an honourable contribution to Welsh-language culture, but by the late eighteenth century the upper reaches of the Church of England in Wales had become thoroughly anglicized. No native Welshman was appointed bishop in Wales from the accession of the Hanoverian dynasty in 1714 until 1870, and Welsh-speaking clerics, viewed by their superiors as rustics, rarely received a position beyond that of parish clergyman. The scholar Evan Evans, who spent his life as a curate, angrily denounced the *Esgyb Eingl* (the English bishops) who, by appointing 'unfit shepherds', were driving their flocks into the arms of the Methodists.



Principal language zones *c.*1750

One of the 'unfit shepherds' was Thomas Bowles, a septuagenarian Englishman who in 1766 was appointed rector of two parishes in Anglesey in which only five of the 500 parishioners had a knowledge of English. Members of the Cymmrodorion and others sought to oust him from his living but, in the court proceedings, Bowles's attorney argued that as 'Wales is a conquered country . . . it is the duty of the bishops to promote the English in order to introduce the language'. Because he had been legally inducted, Bowles was permitted to keep his living, but the judge declared that ignorance of Welsh should debar a clergyman from being appointed to a parish where the majority of the parishioners spoke only Welsh.

The distribution of Welsh speakers in 1750

Despite the appointment of monoglot Englishmen such as Thomas Bowles, the parish clergy in the greater part of Wales were Welsh-speaking and the services were in the Welsh language. Indeed, information relating to the language of services is the best available evidence regarding the distribution of the Welsh language in the eighteenth century. The information may not be wholly reliable, for clerics such as Thomas Bowles or pressures from assertive immigrants or anglicized landowners may have caused services to be held in English in parishes where Welsh would have been more appropriate. Nevertheless, details of the language of services in parish churches provide a convincing picture of the language zones of Wales. In about 1750 Welsh was the sole language of services in over 80 per cent of the country; some western towns were centres of anglicization, and a bilingual zone along the eastern border and the southern coastlands divided the solidly Welsh areas from districts which were almost totally anglicized. Of

these districts, the largest were south Pembrokeshire, which had been anglicized in the Middle Ages, and Radnorshire, where the Welsh language collapsed in the eighteenth century.

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5

The Welsh Language in the Era of Industrialization

Demographic and economic change

Wales in 1750 was a country almost wholly rural in its economy, with hardly a town exceeding 3,000 in population. This pattern was to become vastly more complicated as a result of the surge of economic activity which occurred from about 1770 onwards. Wales probably had about 489,000 inhabitants in 1770, most of whom were employed in the cultivation of the land or in work directly dependent upon agriculture. By 1801, when the first official census was held, the population had risen to 587,000 and by 1851 Wales had 1,163,000 inhabitants, only a third of whom were involved in agriculture. A wide variety of industries developed in north-east Wales, including copper and lead smelting, ironworking, brick-making and the production of chemicals. The north-west was involved in copper-mining and quarrying, while in mid Wales woollen production was entering its factory phase. Even more momentous developments were afoot in south-east Wales. The exploitation of the south Wales coalfield, initiated in the 1770s, gathered pace in the early nineteenth century. The ironworks of Dowlais and Cyfarthfa near Merthyr Tydfil became the largest in the world. In the 1840s, the coalfield was producing 700,000 tons of iron a year

and Sir John Guest of Dowlais probably had more employees than any other industrialist on earth. By 1851, there were 46,000 people living in Merthyr, making it by far the largest town in Wales. Mass communities were developing elsewhere in the narrow valleys of northern Glamorgan and Monmouthshire, in areas which a hundred years previously had been virtually uninhabited. It should be borne in mind, however, that despite the influx of people, the industrial areas of Wales were essentially a collection of village communities; it was not until the twentieth century that those industrial areas developed a character that could be considered urban. As Welsh prospered in rural village communities, it could also prosper in industrial village communities.

The growth of industry allowed Wales to sustain far more people than had been possible under the old agricultural economy. Some of them came from beyond the borders of Wales. In 1851, the Welsh population included 115,000 people born in England and 20,000 born in Ireland. The vast majority of the inhabitants of the industrial districts had, however, either been born there or had moved there from the rural areas of Wales. Most of those areas were Welsh-speaking and, in colonizing their own country, the Welsh brought their language from the countryside to the towns. This was true of the old towns as well as of the new industrial districts: Welsh was widely spoken in Newport in the 1830s, and in that decade perhaps half the population of Cardiff had a knowledge of the language. Alone among the Celtic languages, Welsh has had a considerable degree of success in becoming an urban tongue. This is reflected in the rise in the number of Welsh speakers. Although official statistics relating to the numbers in Wales able to speak Welsh and English are not available until 1891, it is likely that Wales had about 470,000 Welsh speakers in 1801 and about 800,000 in 1851. By 1851, large numbers of

Welsh speakers lived in urban communities in which the language could be used in a new range of activities, a development particularly evident in the vibrant Welsh-language culture of industrial northern Monmouthshire. Welsh speakers were becoming not only more numerous but also more prosperous. This helps to explain the far greater scale of activities carried out through the medium of Welsh by the first half of the nineteenth century. Cultural societies proliferated, eisteddfodau multiplied and publishing expanded vastly. Between 1800 and 1850, about 3,000 books were published in Welsh and dozens of periodicals were established.

Although the number of Welsh speakers increased in absolute terms between 1801 and 1851, in proportionate terms there was a decline, from about 80 to about 67 per cent. Welsh-speaking communities proved adept at assimilating incomers and in the late nineteenth century many Welsh speakers were descendants of earlier incomers. But where incomers were very numerous, assimilation proved difficult. It is estimated that 12 per cent of the population of Merthyr in the 1840s came from outside Wales, a percentage low enough to permit large-scale assimilation; it was 35 per cent in Blaenafon and 44 per cent in Pontypool, districts that were being rapidly anglicized by the mid-nineteenth century. In north-east Wales, some industrial centres remained stubbornly Welsh, probably because of selective migration, but in general the bilingual zone was becoming wider; Daniel Owen, the most talented of the Welsh-language novelists of the nineteenth century, was born in Mold, Flintshire, in 1836, and his work is clearly based on experience of a bilingual community. However, in the quarrying areas of the north-west, where the industrial districts attracted only short-distance migrants, monolingualism in Welsh persisted well into the twentieth century.

Despite what seemed to be the remorseless western movement of English, nineteenth-century Wales had a myriad different linguistic zones, with wide contrasts evident in closely proximate localities. Most of eastern Monmouthshire had been thoroughly anglicized by the early nineteenth century, but in 1854 George Borrow found that half of those he addressed in Welsh at Penhow, east of Newport, answered him in that language, and the dead of Marshfield, west of Newport, were still being buried under Welsh-inscribed gravestones in the 1880s. In 1891, J. E. Southall was informed that in Penyffordd, near Broughton, everyone who was respectable spoke Welsh. In what became the Cardiff suburb of Llanedeyrn, 57 per cent of the inhabitants were Welsh-speaking in 1891 and the proportion in Lisvane was 65 per cent. The whole pattern was so varied and complex that any generalization can fall foul of the evidence.

Linguistic and cultural innovation

While the Industrial Revolution was transforming the Welsh economy, the Welsh language and its culture were being transformed by the work of scholars and enthusiasts. John Walters's English–Welsh dictionary, published between 1770 and 1794, contained many new words invented to meet contemporary demands. William Owen Pughe was so enthusiastic a coiner of words that his Welsh dictionary, published in 1803, contained far more entries than did Dr Johnson's English dictionary. Some of the coinages proved unacceptable, but so numerous were those that were adopted in speech and print that the historian Prys Morgan claims that no intelligent discussion could be held in Welsh today but for the energy and the ingenuity of the neologists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

COINAGES OF THE LATE EIGHTEENTH AND EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURIES

diddorol (interesting)	darganfyddiad (discovery)
geiriadur (dictionary)	cyfrifoldeb (responsibility)
cyngerdd (concert)	pwyllgor (committee)

In addition to his dictionary, Pughe compiled two grammars of the Welsh language in which his inventiveness found full range. He believed that the task of the grammarian was to describe a language not as it is but as it should ideally be. He therefore devised a new orthography for Welsh, and sought to eliminate irregular verbs and plurals and to create a consistent grammar. His work had an unfortunate influence upon nineteenth-century Welsh literature, for it encouraged an affected style of writing and led to the adoption of idioms alien to the spoken language. In the early twentieth century, despising the quality of nineteenth-century Welsh literature was a constant theme; later in the century attitudes softened somewhat.

Pughe was also involved in the publication of *The Myvyrian Archaiology* (1801–7), three volumes which made available a wide sweep of medieval Welsh poetry and prose. The chief editor of the *Archaiology* was Edward Williams of Flemingston in the Vale of Glamorgan. Better known as Iolo Morganwg, he is the most exotic figure in the whole history of the Welsh language and its literature. He allowed his enthusiasm for the past and for the history of his native county of Glamorgan to run out of control. Where material did not exist, he invented it; much of the second and third volumes of the *Archaiology* consists of Iolo's forgeries. The fabrication of literature was a widespread phenomenon in the eighteenth century, and so skilled was Iolo that the full extent of his forgeries was not discovered until the twentieth century.

Forging literature was only a part of Iolo's invention of tradition. He claimed that the Welsh bardic order was descended from the druids, that the Gorsedd (congress) of the Bards of the Isle of Britain had existed from time immemorial and that knowledge of the druidic lore had survived only in Glamorgan. He made public the ceremonies of the druids at a gathering of London Welshmen on Primrose Hill in 1792 and persuaded the Welsh literati to join the order of bards. Throughout the nineteenth century there were firm believers in the antiquity of the Gorsedd, and the supposed venerability of the tradition gave added prestige to the Welsh language with which it was associated.

The development of the eisteddfod

In the late eighteenth century, the Gwyneddigion Society, an association of London Welshmen more populist and radical than the Cymmrodorion, became involved in organizing eisteddfodau. They were more formal occasions than the rather ramshackle meetings held earlier in the century; competitions were announced in advance, programmes were printed, adjudications were published and medals were awarded to successful competitors. The meeting at Corwen in 1789 is considered to be the first modern eisteddfod. Others were held in the 1790s but, with the worsening of the conflict with France, they petered out. They were revived after 1815, and in 1819, at Carmarthen, Iolo Morganwg succeeded in linking the eisteddfod with the Gorsedd, a linkage that still survives. In the 1820s and 1830s, the eisteddfod was organized on a provincial basis, largely through the efforts of a group of Anglican clergymen. Chief among them was Thomas Price (Carnhuanawc), who was the leading figure in the eisteddfodau held at Abergavenny from

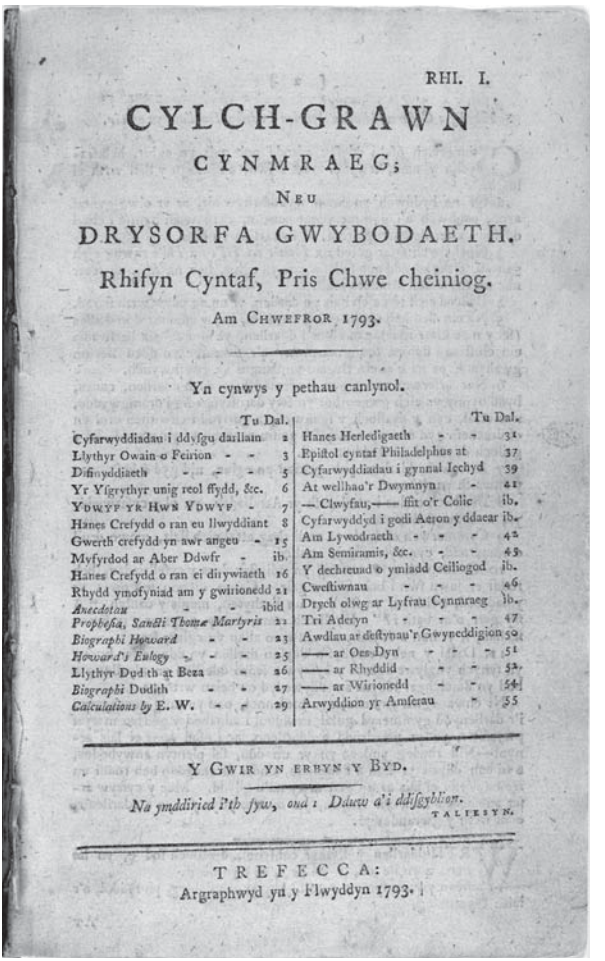
The National Eisteddfod, Chester, 1866

1834 to 1853. The Abergavenny eisteddfod received the patronage of Lady Llanover, who provided hospitality at Llanover Court for Celtophiles from all over the world. The meetings at Abergavenny and elsewhere created a widespread literary enthusiasm and the prizes they offered stimulated the production of scholarly works; the most important of these was *The Literature of the Kymry*, submitted to the Abergavenny eisteddfod of 1848 by Thomas Stephens, a chemist at Merthyr. Merthyr's vigorous literary life attracted Lady Charlotte Guest, the wife of Sir John Guest, proprietor of the Dowlais Iron Company; her English translations of the Mabinogi appeared in three volumes between 1838 and 1849. The example of the provincial eisteddfodau led to the establishment of local meetings, and by the late nineteenth century there was hardly a village or hamlet in Welsh-speaking Wales that did not have its eisteddfod. The provincial eisteddfodau, with their reliance

on upper-class patronage, tended to give precedence to English, but the smaller ones were conducted entirely in Welsh.

The growth of the Welsh-language press

The early years of the eisteddfod movement coincided with the rise of the Welsh provincial press. In 1735, Lewis Morris had sought to establish a Welsh periodical, but he succeeded in bringing out only one issue. Several magazines were launched by the radicals of the 1790s, but they were discontinued because of the hostility of the authorities, the burden of stamp duty and the lack of an effective distribution system. The periodicals that had the best chance of survival were those which could rely on a denominational network: *Yr Eurgrawn Wesleyaidd*, the organ of the Welsh Wesleyan Methodists, was published from 1809 to 1983. The first weekly newspaper published in Welsh was *Seren Gomer*, launched at Swansea by Joseph Harris in 1814; it died within the year, but was revived as a fortnightly in 1818 (it became a monthly in 1820). A number of other monthlies were launched in the 1820s; in the main, they were intended to serve the denominations, but they also contained articles on politics and literature. *Y Diwygiwr* (The Reformer), begun in 1835, was more openly political; far more political were *Y Gweithiwr/The Worker*, a bilingual trade-union paper published in Merthyr in 1834, and *Utgorn Cymru* (The Trumpet of Wales), a Chartist journal published, also in Merthyr, from 1840 to 1842. The first true newspaper in Welsh was *Yr Amserau* (The Times), founded in Liverpool in 1843. In 1859, it was merged with *Baner Cymru* (The Banner of Wales), published by Thomas Gee at Denbigh, and by the late nineteenth century *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, which then appeared twice a week, claimed a readership of



RHI. I.

CYLCH-GRAWN
CYNMRAEG;
NEU
DRYSORFA GWYBODAETH.

Rhifyn Cyntaf, Pris Chwe cheiniog.

Am CHWEFROR 1793.

Yn cynwys y pethau canlynol.

Y GWIR YN ERBYN Y BYD.

Na ymddiried Pth fyw, ond i Ddiuw a'i ddiſgyblion.
TALIESYN.

TREFECCA:
Argraphwyd yn y Flwyddyn 1793.

Y *Cylchgrawn Cymraeg*. Five numbers of this quarterly appeared in 1793–4

over 50,000. In 1845 Thomas Gee launched *Y Traethodydd* (The Essayist), a quarterly modelled on the great English quarterlies of the period. The Welsh periodical press was highly influential in expressing and moulding public opinion, and its existence proved that the language was capable of being a medium of mass communication.

Attitudes to Welsh in the first half of the nineteenth century

The Welsh press was written by and for members of the lower middle and working classes, for, by the nineteenth century, there were hardly any upper-class Welsh-speaking families. In the Welsh countryside, the anglicization of the gentry had long linked the speaking of English with superior status. Although Wales was to produce native industrialists, most of the pioneers of industrialization were incomers. As the poet, Walter Davies, put it in 1815: 'The Welsh have the labour, the strangers have the profit.' The 1847 Report on Education in Wales considered that the language of a Welsh workman 'keeps him under the hatches . . . he is left to live in an underworld of his own and the march of society . . . goes completely over his head'. Schools conducted through the medium of English were considered to be the means whereby this undesirable state of affairs could be brought to an end. English education, it was believed, would also curb the Welsh tendency to riot, of which there was much evidence in the 1830s and 1840s. 'A band of efficient schoolmasters', wrote one commentator, 'is kept up at a much less expense than a body of police or soldiery.' A complete network of elementary schools was not created in Wales until the 1870s. The main provider of elementary education in the first half of the nineteenth century

was the National Society, which was concerned to teach the principles of the Established Church. Its schools generally taught through the medium of English, much to the confusion of monoglot Welsh children.

Yet, in the first half of the nineteenth century at least, the impact of English-medium schools can easily be exaggerated. In the counties of Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Glamorgan in 1846 only 30,000 pupils attended day schools, compared with the 80,000 who attended the largely Welsh-medium Sunday schools. The use of English in day schools probably represented the general wish of parents; after all, Welsh could be learned at home and in the chapel. In 1846, a small farmer in Carmarthenshire declared that 'he would sooner pay twice as much to an English master who knew no Welsh'. English was perceived as being useful and profitable, a viewpoint encouraged by the Utilitarianism which was winning increasing numbers of adherents among the Welsh middle class. The belief arose that Welsh should be the language of sacred matters and English of secular matters, a belief that did much to narrow the sphere in which the Welsh language operated.

The Blue Books controversy

In 1846 the role of the Welsh language in education was extensively investigated by a commission set up to inquire into the state of education in Wales and 'especially into the means afforded to the labouring classes for obtaining a knowledge of the English language'. The inquiry was instituted following a speech by William Williams, MP for Coventry and a native of Llanpumsaint, Carmarthenshire, in the House of Commons on 16 March 1846. The commission consisted of three young barristers, English and Anglican; they collected a vast quantity

of material, and their report, 1,252 pages long, was ready by 1 April 1847.

The language of the commissioners' report has been described as colonial prejudice at its most blatant. The report drew a dark picture of Welsh society, emphasizing the vast gulf that separated the almost totally English-speaking wealthier classes from the largely monoglot-Welsh poorer classes. Although there were some schools of distinction, most were hopelessly inadequate; in any case, the numbers attending schools represented no more than a third of the children between five and ten years of age. The commissioners were convinced that the Welsh language was a vast drawback and they quoted a large number of letters, mostly from Anglican clergymen, which insisted that the moral and material condition of the Welsh could not be improved without the general introduction of the English language. Some of the letters went further, claiming that Welsh women were nearly all unchaste and suggesting that the meetings of the Nonconformists were occasions for illicit sex.

> They [the young people] often meet at evening schools in private houses for the preparation of the pwnc and this frequently tends to immoralities between the young persons of both sexes, who frequently spend the night afterwards in the hay-lofts together. So prevalent is the want of chastity among the females, that, although I promised to return the marriage fee to all couples whose first child should be born after nine months from the marriage, only one in six years entitled themselves to claim it. Most of them were in the family-way. It is said to be a customary matter for them to have intercourse together on condition that they should marry if the woman becomes pregnant; but the marriage by no means always takes place. Morals are generally at a low ebb, but want of chastity is the giant sin of Wales. I believe that the best remedy for the

> want of education is that of the establishment of good schools such as I have described.
>
> Evidence of Revd L. H. Davies, Troed-yr-aur, Cardiganshire, published in the Education Report of 1847.

The 'Treachery of the Blue Books' gave rise to a great furore which has been seen as the wellspring of many of the most important developments in Wales in the second half of the nineteenth century. It greatly exacerbated the relationship between church and chapel; it forced the Methodists into alliance with the denominations of Old Dissent; it inspired the Welsh to seek to prove that their purity and respectability were unrivalled. The attack upon the morals of Welsh women led to much discussion of the mother as the 'angel of the hearth', and perceptive studies have been published on the role of gender in language maintenance and change. The household language was usually determined by the 'angel of the hearth', who was more likely than was her husband to be monoglot Welsh. Yet the notion that women were more devoted to Welsh than were men was belied by the experience of George Borrow at Pentraeth in Anglesey, where a young Welsh-speaking woman informed him in 1854 that English was the most genteel of all languages. 'Gentility', wrote Borrow, 'will be the ruin of Welsh, like it has been of many other things.'

Where the Welsh language was concerned, the Blue Books controversy had conflicting effects. For some Welsh leaders, evidence of English contempt was a goad to action and, by mid-century, men like Michael D. Jones were giving voice to a new linguistic nationalism; to others of those leaders – perhaps the majority – the removal of English contempt could only be ensured by making the Welsh as similar to the English as possible.

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6

Welsh in the Later Nineteenth Century

Threats and advances

The history of the Welsh language in the second half of the nineteenth century is extremely complicated, with wholly contradictory forces at work. Although the period saw the birth of modern Welsh nationalism, some of the clearest voices from within Welsh-speaking Wales were those accepting, indeed welcoming, the demise of Welsh distinctiveness. The legacy of the 'treachery' of 1847 was not the only factor involved. These years saw the virtual completion of the Welsh railway network; with the country so manifestly being opened up to English influence – often by discriminating against Welsh-speaking potential employees (an issue raised by Lloyd George) – it seemed that the maintenance of linguistic distinctiveness was no longer a viable proposition. Indeed, Dot Jones considers that the coming of railways was a principle agent of language change in nineteenth-century Wales. Railways were central to the development of tourism, especially along the coast and in parts of Snowdonia. In 1883, over three-quarters of the visitors to Aberystwyth were from England, and Welsh lost any role it might have had in leisure industries, a development which became increasingly obvious in the twentieth century.

The later decades of the nineteenth century were also years in which Britain could be convincingly portrayed as the greatest and most envied country on earth; to be an integral part of that glory, to share in it as equal partners with the English and the Scots, seemed a wholly laudable ambition. Although Darwin's theory of evolution (1859) caused distress to the devout, his notion of the survival of the fittest was soon adapted to the social field, and there were many who believed that it was scientifically possible to prove that wholly inevitable forces would bring about the extinction of the Welsh language. The emphasis on competition, implicit in Darwinism, coincided with the tenets of capitalism. To resist the effects of competition, between species or languages, was to resist the ordinances of God. Utilitarianism, the advocacy of what is useful and what furthers progress, was the dominant creed of middle-class Nonconformists. Welsh, it was believed, stood in the way of progress and was therefore doomed. The qualities enshrined in Welshness would not, it was argued, be threatened by the demise of the language for, as Matthew Arnold claimed in 1867, the genius of the Celts lay in their imagination and their awareness of the spiritual and the mystical; these were qualities central to Britain's greatness and were independent of language.

Indicative of such prevailing intellectual ideas was the effort to anglicize Nonconformity. It was believed that newcomers to Wales could be assimilated religiously if not linguistically, and denominational leaders accordingly set about establishing English-language chapels in largely Welsh-speaking areas. They urged prominent members of Welsh-language chapels to attend them in order to create a core congregation which might prove attractive to English incomers. Among the Calvinistic Methodists, Lewis Edwards, the editor of *Y Traethodydd*, was a particularly active advocate of the 'English causes', and

he believed that the campaign was comparable with Paul's mission to the Gentiles.

Yet, although many of the developments of the later nineteenth century seemed to augur ill for the wellbeing of the Welsh language, there were other more positive factors. In many ways, the position of Welsh was more favourable than that of some of the other non-state languages of Europe. It had a standard literary form that the majority of the population could read; in religion, particularly where the Nonconformist chapels were concerned, it had a recognized and dignified role; although some communities in Wales were suffering severe poverty, the generality of Welsh speakers were not abject paupers, and their language could therefore be maintained by material means. Although the creation of the railway network seemed to pose a threat to the continuance of Welsh, that network could function as an ally of the language; it greatly facilitated the distribution of Welsh publications, it allowed people to travel on a wholly unprecedented scale to gatherings such as eisteddfodau and it assisted the agricultural economy of the west by ensuring the rapid and cheap transport of farming products. Furthermore, railways undermined the localism of Welsh communities, giving rise to a concept of a wider Welsh allegiance. The growth of that allegiance led to a demand for specifically Welsh institutions. The University of Wales was founded in 1895, a federal institution consisting at that date of three university colleges. Charters were secured in 1907 for the National Museum and the National Library. In the history of the Welsh language, the establishment of the National Library was particularly significant, for it provided a permanent home for the manuscripts that were proof of the longevity and richness of the Welsh literary tradition, and it ensured that much of the material necessary for a study of the language was available under a single roof.

Welsh-language culture in the later nineteenth century

While Welsh in the later nineteenth century was being subjected to contradictory forces and was the subject of contradictory attitudes, the culture expressed through the language showed marked vitality. Although Welsh had lost ground in the rural borderlands, particularly in Radnorshire and in the eastern parts of the counties of Montgomery, Brecon and Monmouth, it continued to be the main – indeed, frequently the sole – language of the inhabitants of most of the rest of Wales; George Borrow, on his walking tour in 1854, noted many instances of English greetings being answered with the words: 'Dim Saesneg' (No English).

As the majority of Welsh speakers knew no other language, there was a demand for reading material in Welsh on almost every subject. In 1854, Thomas Gee began publishing his *Gwyddoniadur* (Encyclopaedia), a venture in ten volumes, completed in 1871 at a cost of £20,000. Books of poetry were extensively bought, with volumes by the highly popular Ceiriog (John Ceiriog Hughes) selling over 30,000 copies. The Welsh periodical press entered its golden age. In 1866, it was estimated that the five quarterlies, twenty-five monthlies and eight weeklies published in Welsh had a combined circulation of 120,000.

Welsh-language culture was not confined to Wales. In 1865, 163 Welsh people sailed to Patagonia, a venture largely initiated by Michael D. Jones; they were later joined by other colonists, establishing in the Chubut valley a self-governing community which ran its affairs entirely through the Welsh language. The community eventually came under pressure from new migrants and from the Argentine government, but there are still Welsh speakers in Patagonia. In numerical terms, migration to North America was far more significant. By 1872, there were 384 Welsh-language chapels in the United States

Pupils and teacher at Chubut, Patagonia, 1908

and, in industrial Pennsylvania, up-state New York and rural Wisconsin in particular, there were extensive communities which were largely Welsh in speech. More substantial were the Welsh-speaking communities in England. By the late nineteenth century, there were almost a quarter of a million people born in Wales living in England. The largest community was that of Merseyside; Liverpool had over fifty Welsh chapels and it has been claimed that the city produced the only example in the nineteenth century of a Welsh-speaking urban elite.

Within Wales and in immigrant communities outside Wales, Welsh-language culture in the later nineteenth century was above all the culture of Nonconformity.

> 'I see the Methodists' [says Dr Jones] 'turning Wales into a country without history, without a memory, without a past.'

> 'A chosen people, a holy nation', [replies John Elias] 'that is our Wales, a nation with the Lord as its God. The goal of the Methodists is to create that nation.'
>
> J. Saunders Lewis, *Merch Gwern Hywel*, Llandybïe, 1964 (translation).

The chapels were a vast arena of Welsh-language activity, with millions of Welsh sermons being preached annually and Welsh books of hymns and of biblical commentary being brought out on a massive scale. The close link between the Welsh language and Nonconformity had its negative aspects. As Professor Ieuan Gwynedd Jones put it, the language 'entered into alliance with the chapel on the terms of the chapel and English became the language for what [Welsh] scorned or feared to express'. Welsh-language culture came to be permeated by the Nonconformist ethos to such an extent that it was rejected by many, particularly by those of hedonistic, libertarian or modernistic sympathies. Those with a sound command of English could easily abandon the entire scene. The English world was open to them; they could 'escape into the universal', to quote Sartre's comment on those Jews who were in a not wholly different situation.

Awareness among the Nonconformists of their numerical preponderance led them to portray the Church of England in Wales as an alien force and to demand the abolition of its status as the Established Church. Over the centuries, the Anglicans had been the chief sustainers of Welsh traditional culture; indeed, many aspects of that culture had been spurned by the people of the chapel, particularly by the Calvinistic Methodists. In order to defend the establishment, the Anglicans were obliged to rely upon their links with England, and the denominational divide served to vitiate attempts to create a united

Welsh patriotism. Although individual Anglicans continued to be active in Welsh-language movements, the vehemence of the disestablishment campaign cooled the ardour of many. The campaign culminated in 1920 with the Act disestablishing and disendowing the Church of England in Wales. However, the campaign which led to that result – widely considered a national victory – was probably conducted at the expense of other activities which could have been based upon consciousness of a shared heritage.

Welsh and education in the later nineteenth century

Denominational bitterness was particularly marked in the field of elementary education. Indeed, the dispute over the nature of religious education in elementary schools delayed the establishment of a complete network of such schools until the 1870s. Nevertheless, the 1850s saw a marked rise in the number of elementary schools and the state became increasingly involved in financing them. In 1861, through the 'Revised Code', government payments to schools were replaced by a capitation grant of twelve shillings per child per year; two-thirds of the money could be withheld if pupils failed to satisfy inspectors in annual examinations that they were making progress in arithmetic and in the reading and writing of English. The new code did not prohibit the use of Welsh, but as the livelihood of teachers depended to a large extent upon whether or not their pupils had at least a mechanical knowledge of English, they had a pecuniary interest in boycotting the Welsh language. There was therefore no motive for equipping them to teach the language and it disappeared completely from the timetable of training colleges. Some teachers actively persecuted children who spoke Welsh in school, but the 'Welsh

Not' – the tallystick worn by erring pupils – was probably not as widely used as twentieth-century mythology would suggest.

Public involvement in elementary education increased greatly after the passage of the Education Act of 1870. Local school boards were created with the duty of establishing schools in those areas not adequately provided for by the voluntary societies, a much-needed reform which had been long delayed because of disputes over the kind of religious education to be offered in state schools. By 1880, when attendance became compulsory, elementary education was available everywhere in Wales. The payment-by-results system was retained and thus the completed network of schools provided education which was almost entirely in English. The Education Act of 1870 is widely considered to be one of the most grievous blows ever suffered by the Welsh language. Its impact has been exaggerated. It did not suddenly impose a system of English-medium education; as has been seen, the practice of teaching Welsh-speaking children in English goes back to the seventeenth century. In those areas where the language was already weak, compulsory education through the medium of English probably proved to be the final blow, but there were so many factors at work that it would be naive to consider the language used in schooling to be the sole determinant of linguistic change. Nevertheless, the link between personal advancement and English was powerfully reinforced by the spread of English-medium education, not only at the elementary but also at the intermediate and higher levels.

Welsh did, however, make a crucial breakthrough in the field of education. In the late nineteenth century, many educationists were disturbed by the practice of teaching monoglot Welsh children solely through the medium of English; others accepted that the primary purpose of the elementary schools was to give the pupils a knowledge of English, and argued

that this could best be done through the medium of the mother tongue. Chief among them was Dan Isaac Davies, an inspector of schools in Glamorgan. At the National Eisteddfod at Aberdare in 1885, he established the Society for the Utilization of Welsh in Education, a title to which the words 'for the better teaching of English' were sometimes added. English was emphasized partly to allay the suspicions of the authorities, for Davies and his fellows undoubtedly had a sincere concern for the wellbeing of Welsh. The usual title of the society was the simpler and more direct Welsh Language Society or Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg (of the first creation). In 1885, Davies published a collection of his articles, *Tair Miliwn o Gymry Dwyieithawg* (Three million bilingual Welsh people), in which he foresaw that, given an enlightened educational policy, Wales would have three million bilingual citizens by 1985. He was largely responsible for the memorandum on the use of Welsh submitted to the Royal Commission on Elementary Education, and in 1886, shortly before his untimely death, he gave evidence before the commission. On the basis of the Royal Commission's report, capitation grants were made to schools which taught Welsh; the use of bilingual books was authorized and the teaching of the geography and history of Wales was encouraged. The concession, made in 1890, was niggardly enough. Wales experienced nothing comparable to the successful campaign of the Czechs to achieve a fully-fledged mother-tongue education system. Under the arrangements of 1890, no school was obliged to use Welsh; where it was used, it was grafted upon a basically English curriculum, and it was very rare for schools to make the step from lessons on the mother tongue to lessons in the mother tongue. It was, nevertheless, a development of fundamental importance that Welsh had won a toehold in the education system; indeed, all the advances made by Welsh in schools in the twentieth century had their origins in the victory

of 1890. Those advances became more marked in the early twentieth century under the influence of Owen M. Edwards, the Welsh Board of Education's Chief Inspector of Schools from 1907 to 1920. Edwards was also a tireless producer of children's books and his monthly, *Cymru'r Plant*, had a circulation of over 12,000. Developments at the secondary level were less marked. The Welsh Intermediate Education Act of 1889 had led by 1900 to the establishment of ninety-five secondary schools, fewer than half of which offered Welsh lessons. The Central Welsh Board, created as an examining body in 1895, prepared examination papers in Welsh at the senior and higher level. Gradually, the language and its literature became a recognized subject at the secondary level, although the atmosphere of the secondary schools, even in the most intensely Welsh-speaking areas, remained almost wholly English. Too much should therefore not be claimed; in 1920, the year of Owen M. Edwards's death, 3,853 of Wales's secondary-school pupils were examined in Welsh, 5,924 in French and 4,988 in Latin. As Geraint H. Jenkins notes: 'Not until after 1945 was the role of the Welsh language in primary and secondary education seriously addressed.'

The academic study of Welsh

The publication of Kaspar Zeuss's *Grammatica Celtica* in 1871 at last placed Celtic philology on a sound basis. German scholarship inspired the work of John Rhŷs, the first professor of Celtic at Oxford (1877), whose *Lectures on Welsh Philology* proved that the seed sown by Edward Lhuyd was at last bearing fruit. The chair of Celtic at Oxford was established on the urging of Matthew Arnold who, although anxious to see the demise of the Celtic languages, was an ardent advocate of their academic

study. With Celtic studies gaining respectability, they were deemed to be worthy of a place in the new university colleges established in Wales. The college at Aberystwyth, opened in 1872, created a chair of Celtic in 1875. Of the colleges opened in 1884, Cardiff acquired a chair of Celtic in 1885 (in the 1920s it became known as the chair of Welsh), and Bangor a chair of Welsh in 1894. Swansea, opened in 1920, had a chair of Welsh from 1921. The establishment of university departments of Welsh was a crucial development in the history of the language, although the growth in the number of students was slow: in 1903, only six students in the entire university sat for a honours degree in Welsh. Until the 1920s at least, lectures in departments of Welsh were given in English and the work of the departments was hindered by a lack of adequate linguistic studies and of published texts; the situation was gradually rectified by the labours of university teachers, whose academic work transformed Welsh scholarship. Chief among them was John Morris-Jones, who taught Welsh at Bangor from 1889 until 1929. Through his efforts, the orthography of Welsh was firmly established, its grammar rigorously described and the system of strict-metre poetry lucidly analyzed. The succession of graduates in the language added greatly to its prestige; in the twentieth century, students of and graduates in Welsh have provided the shock troops of Welsh-language movements and have constituted a very high proportion of the practitioners of Welsh literature.

Welsh in law and administration

The partial success in anchoring the Welsh language in the education system was not paralleled in the fields of law, administration and commerce. Unlike the Czechs, who made

official status for their language the cornerstone of their policy, the Welsh of the late nineteenth century were pusillanimous when it came to their linguistic rights. Small rural businesses did exist which conducted their affairs in Welsh, and official notices in the language were not unknown. There were occasional agitations against monoglot English judges, but the matter was only fitfully pursued. In courts and official meetings, translations were frequently used – 34 per cent of the witnesses who appeared before the Royal Commission on Land in Wales in the 1890s gave their evidence through a translator – but there were few who advocated the notion that official bodies should conduct their business in Welsh. One who did do so was Michael D. Jones, the architect of the Patagonia venture and the father of modern Welsh nationalism. Another was Emrys ap Iwan (Robert Ambrose Jones, 1857–1906), who was aroused to anger by the efforts of his denomination, the Calvinistic Methodists, to establish English causes. Emrys ap Iwan was a tireless journalist and pamphleteer; his ardent advocacy of the Welsh language and his vision of a group of 'covenanters' prepared to defend it made him the hero of subsequent generations of language enthusiasts. The issue of the use of Welsh for official business came to the fore following the creation of the county councils in 1889. Michael D. Jones raised it at the first meeting of the Meirionnydd County Council, a body consisting of six English monoglots, three Welsh monoglots and fifty-seven members who were far more fluent in Welsh than in English. The matter was put before the Attorney General, who ruled that 'the proceedings of county councils must be carried out and recorded in the English language'. Michael D. Jones distanced himself from the council, the members of which struggled on as best they could in English.

The census of 1891

In the 1890s, official statistics relating to the distribution of Welsh and English in Wales became available for the first time. The census of 1891 was the earliest to concern itself with the linguistic situation in Wales and in the Isle of Man (censuses had been concerned with Irish since 1851 and with Scots Gaelic since 1881). In Wales, forms were distributed asking the country's inhabitants to note 'English' if they spoke English only, 'Welsh' if they spoke Welsh only and 'Both' if they spoke both languages. In January 1992 the enumerators' returns for 1891, giving information household by household, became available for public inspection; thereafter, decade by decade, further sets of returns became available, making possible a minute scrutiny of linguistic change in twentieth-century Wales.

The census of 1891 showed that 54.4 per cent of the population of Wales over the age of two spoke Welsh, the percentage varying from 95 per cent in Cardiganshire to 6 per cent in Radnorshire. The total number of Welsh speakers in Wales was 910,289. There were tens of thousands of Welsh speakers elsewhere in the United Kingdom, but they were not recorded; if the numbers of Welsh speakers in other parts of the United Kingdom, the colonies and dominions, the United States and Patagonia are added to those in Wales, the total number in 1891 undoubtedly exceeded a million. Of the 910,289 in Wales, 56 per cent (508,036) were returned as speaking Welsh only. The number of monoglots declined to 208,905 in 1901 and to 190,292 in 1911, suggesting that they were either overestimated in 1891 or underestimated in subsequent censuses. It is likely that many of those returned as bilingual in the censuses of the early twentieth century had only a very minimal knowledge of English; however, the drastic drop in Welsh monolingualism

between 1891 and 1901 – from 32.1 per cent to 7.3 per cent in Merthyr, for example – indicates that the way the question was posed in 1891 led large numbers who spoke Welsh habitually, but who had some knowledge of English, to return 'Welsh' rather than 'Both'. Sometimes the enumerator felt obliged to alter the returns; in those for Clydach Dingle near Brynmawr in Breconshire, for example, 'Welsh' was frequently crossed out and 'Both' substituted.

If the figures for 1891 are taken as they stand, they show that in that year 54.4 per cent of the inhabitants of Wales claimed a knowledge of Welsh and 69.7 per cent claimed a knowledge of English. The situation had changed markedly since 1801, when the population was probably 70 per cent monoglot Welsh, 20 per cent monoglot English and 10 per cent bilingual. Between 1801 and 1891, the population of Wales trebled; the number of Welsh monoglots rose by 25 per cent and the number of English monoglots increased sevenfold; the number with a knowledge of Welsh doubled and the number with a knowledge of English increased seventyfold. Although English was widely known in 1891, Welsh was probably more widely spoken. Furthermore, there were areas where English had hardly penetrated at all. All the inhabitants of the parish of Blaenpennal were Welsh-speaking and 96 per cent of them claimed they had no knowledge of English. Blaenpennal lay in the heart of Cardiganshire, but the situation was not widely different in Llangadwaladr in Denbighshire, a parish only three miles from the English border: there 99.5 per cent of the inhabitants were Welsh-speaking and 88 per cent claimed that they had no knowledge of English.

Blaenpennal and Llangadwaladr were rural districts where depopulation was already taking its toll. The 1880s were particularly difficult years in such areas, accelerating the haemorrhage of rural communities which was to have a profound

effect upon the fortunes of the Welsh language. Between 1881 and 1901, 160,000 people migrated from the Welsh countryside. In the same period, 130,000 people migrated to the industrial areas of south-east Wales. Up to the late nineteenth century, the bulk of those moving into the valleys of the coalfield came from the rural counties of Wales, which were largely Welsh in speech. The migration added to the number of Welsh speakers in the coalfield, and the census of 1891 shows that almost half those claiming to speak Welsh lived in the industrial belt between Llanelli and Pontypool. In the Rhondda, of the first seven households in Dumfries Street, Treorchy, one was monoglot English, two were bilingual and four were monoglot Welsh. Many English-speaking migrants had been assimilated, and it was claimed that the collieries of the Rhondda were the best linguistic schools in Wales. The returns for 1891 suggest that, in the upper Rhondda at least, there was very little linguistic loss between generations, the children of Welsh-speaking parents almost invariably having a knowledge of the language.

Further east, the pattern was rather different. In Brynmawr, there was a high incidence of marriages between monoglot English speakers and bilinguals, with the children almost always being monoglot English. English monolingualism in offspring was also common where both parents were bilingual, and there are examples of families in which the older children had a knowledge of Welsh and the younger ones did not. Even more striking were three-generation households with grandparents who were monoglot Welsh, parents who were bilingual and children who were monoglot English. There is some evidence that English-speaking families had more children, a phenomenon that, if widespread, could have been of considerable significance. Yet, even on the eastern fringes of the coalfield, there is evidence that English incomers mastered Welsh; Sir Joseph Bailey's mansion in the parish of Llangattock

Road, street & number of house	*Name and surname of person*	*Relation to head of family*	*Age last birthday*	*Profession or occupation*	*Where born*	*Language spoken*
39 Cwmnantgam	William Bowen	Head	41	Blacksmith	Llanelly	Both
	Elizabeth Bowen	Wife	40		Llanelly	Both
	Elizabeth Bowen	Daughter	16		Llanelly	English
	Keturah Bowen	Daughter	14		Llanelly	English
	John Bowen	Son	12		Llanelly	English
	Anne Bowen	Daughter	9		Llanelly	English
	Charlot Bowen	Daughter	6		Llanelly	English
	Harriet Bowen	Daughter	3		Llanelly	English
	John Parry	Father-in-law	66		Llanelly	Welsh

Extract from the 1891 census for the parish of Llanelly, Breconshire

had a number of servants from England, a feature of many gentry households and a potent cause of anglicization, yet his gamekeeper, a native of Bermondsey, is recorded as speaking Welsh.

The decline of unilingualism had implications for publishing businesses. When the majority could be reached only through Welsh, there was a need for material in Welsh on every subject. With the growth of bilingualism, readers could draw upon the inexhaustible riches of the material published in English. Consequently, there was a contraction in the number of subjects dealt with in Welsh, as can be seen from the list of publications of the Gee Company of Denbigh. The decline of Welsh unilingualism also allowed meetings containing numerous bilingual people and a few monoglot English speakers to be conducted entirely in English. Bilingualism meant that English came to influence the language spoken by Welsh speakers, especially as Wales was flooded by lively publications with which the Welsh press could not compete. In the early twentieth century, at least a third of the population of Gwynedd was monoglot Welsh, and there purity of speech was maintained. Up to 80 per cent of Welsh-language periodicals were published there and the region was the cradle of the Welsh literary revival. These considerations led to the widespread belief that most Welsh speakers live in Gwynedd – although it should be borne in mind that 30 per cent of a 100,000 gives rise to a far greater number of people than 90 per cent of 5,000.

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Welsh in the First Half of the Twentieth Century

The censuses of 1901 and 1911

The censuses of 1901 and 1911 differ from that of 1891: they give details of children over the age of three rather than two, they break down their figures by age group and their tables are arranged by county rather than by registration district. They record an increase in the number of Welsh speakers – 929,824 in 1901 and 977,366 in 1911 compared with 920,389 in 1891 – but a decrease in the proportion of the Welsh population claiming to speak the language – 49.9 per cent in 1901 and 43.5 per cent in 1911, compared with 54.4 per cent in 1891. At the same time, the proportion claiming to speak English rose to 84.9 per cent in 1901 and to 91.5 per cent in 1911. Thus, by the early twentieth century, the majority of the inhabitants of Wales no longer had a knowledge of the Welsh language. It was a change of momentous importance. Until the twentieth century, it was possible to define the Welsh as a people who were predominantly Welsh-speaking. That definition was no longer viable, and a new definition was needed. Welsh speakers continued to use *Cymro* to mean cambrophone, and *Sais* to mean anglophone but, when the words were translated as Welshman and Englishman, they carried the implication that

those lacking a knowledge of Welsh were not part of the Welsh nation, a suggestion fraught with controversy and bitterness. In central Europe, one's nationality and one's use of the national language frequently became one and the same thing. That did not happen in Wales. Indeed, it could be argued that the concept that the non-Welsh-speaking Welsh are integral members of the Welsh community has been central to the viability of Welsh nationality.

Industrialization and the Welsh language

The population of Wales rose from 1,771,451 in 1891 to 2,420,921 in 1911. The rise was partly the consequence of the excess of births over deaths, particularly in the coalfield, an area of high fecundity. It was also the result of very considerable immigration into Wales: in the first decade of the twentieth century, Wales was, according to the economist Brinley Thomas, 'absorbing population at a rate not much less than the United States'. In that decade, over 100,000 people moved into industrial Wales from England, causing a government report in 1917 to comment:

> Until some fifteen or twenty years ago, the native inhabitants had in many respects shown a marked capacity for stamping their own impress on all newcomers . . . [but] in more recent years the process of assimilation has been unable to keep pace with the continuing influx of immigrants.

The ability of the industrial areas to attract migrants from England and the anglicization caused by the rapid inflow gave rise to the belief that the industrialization of Wales was fundamentally harmful to the Welsh language. This belief

was strongly contested by Brinley Thomas, who argued that 'from the point of view of the Welsh language, industrialization in the nineteenth century was the hero not the villain of the piece'. Without industrialization, Wales would have been able to sustain a population of hardly more than half a million, and its resources would have been inadequate to support ambitious cultural activities and institutions. Indeed, the Welsh language might well have met the same fate as Irish, which virtually collapsed under the weight of poverty, famine and emigration. 'The unrighteous Mammon', wrote Thomas, 'in opening up the coalfields at such a pace, unwittingly gave the Welsh language a new lease of life, and Welsh Nonconformity a glorious high noon'. Yet Thomas acknowledged that the helter-skelter growth of the early twentieth century was harmful to Welsh, although he maintained that the rapid expansion of the Welsh economy in the early years of the century did less harm than did the rapid contraction which that economy was subsequently to experience.

The period of the coalfield's most rapid expansion was also that in which socialism, trade unionism and labour politics became dominant forces. The South Wales Miners' Federation was founded in 1899; Keir Hardie was elected for Merthyr Tydfil as the sole socialist member of the House of Commons in 1900, and by 1914 anti-capitalist and syndicalist ideas had made the south Wales valleys a veritable industrial cockpit. Ever since the emergence of the New Unionism in the 1880s, many Welsh workers had been drawn into British unions which had little interest in specifically Welsh issues. While the sympathies of the coalminers were always more localized, the desire for community solidarity created hostility towards any factor that could be considered socially divisive. The Welsh language could appear to be one such factor. Describing the different groups that settled in the Rhondda valley, the author

Gwyn Thomas noted: 'The Welsh language stood in the way of our fuller union and we made ruthless haste to destroy it. We nearly did.' The alliance between liberalism, Nonconformity and Welshness was so strong that it seemed consistent, on rejecting one, to reject all three. Many, but not all, of the socialists of Wales embraced what Robin Okey described as the 'naive cosmopolitanism' which characterized most socialists in England and was a feature of socialism in many dominant nations. As John Davies, a dedicated socialist and later the hugely successful organizer of the WEA in south Wales, put it: 'There are many in the movement who are inclined to take no account of the national feeling. They neglect their own country; like the imperialist their eyes are fixed on the furthest corners of the earth, and they ignore the existence of their next-door neighbour.'

The First World War

By the second decade of the twentieth century, the Welsh language was subject to formidable forces, both negative and positive, and from 1914 to 1918 it experienced the pressures of total war. The most obvious impact of the First World War upon the Welsh language was the carnage it caused among young, Welsh-speaking Welshmen. There was a lost generation of Welsh speakers, probably at least 35,000 in all. The best remembered of the casualties was Hedd Wyn (Ellis Humphrey Evans), the shepherd-poet of Trawsfynydd, who was killed twenty-seven days before he should have been chaired at the National Eisteddfod held at Birkenhead in 1917. The treatment of Welsh recruits, particularly the Welsh speakers among them, was, according to Silyn Roberts, 'caddish and cowardly'. As *The Welsh Outlook* put it in 1917: 'In order to fight for the

freedom of the Belgian, it is not absolutely essential to oppress and bully the Welshman.' Service in the British armed forces undoubtedly led to a decline in the number of monoglot Welshmen, and the sense of Britishness created by joint suffering probably more than cancelled out the resentment caused by the arrogance of English officers – although the lesson learned by some Welshmen who had served in the war was to devote themselves unreservedly to Welsh causes.

The ravages of the decade from 1911 to 1921 are apparent in the census of 1921, the first to provide statistics at parish level. It showed that the proportion of the inhabitants of Wales speaking Welsh had fallen from 43.5 per cent to 37.1 per cent and that the total number had declined from 977,366 to 922,092.

The interwar years

By 1921, the social and economic impact of the First World War was becoming clear. Pressures upon the owners of great estates, which had been multiplying since the mid-nineteenth century, had become intense from 1914 onwards and, when the war ended, most landed proprietors placed much of their land on the market. The gentry houses, which had been centres of anglicization since the sixteenth century, became virtually extinct. Yet rural communities hardly benefited. The post-war depression in agriculture continued almost until the Second World War, and the 1920s and 1930s were a period of severe hardship among those cultivating the land. Rural depopulation continued apace, leaving an ageing population in the countryside. In every year of the late 1920s and the 1930s, deaths exceeded births in the counties of Anglesey, Caernarfon, Meirionnydd and Cardigan. They were the only counties in

Wales in which that happened; as they were also the counties where knowledge of Welsh was most prevalent, the consequences for the language were severe.

The impact of the post-war depression on heavy industry was far more dramatic. By 1925, the coal industry of south Wales was in dire straits and it experienced virtually no recovery until the Second World War. Migration into the coalfield ceased, giving rise to the hope that, with a more stable population, the linguistic assimilation of earlier newcomers could be accomplished. But the population did not remain stable. In August 1932, unemployment among insured males in Wales reached 42.8 per cent, and to abandon Wales seemed to be the only option for those who sought a future. Between 1925 and 1939, 390,000 people moved out of Wales, mainly to the English Midlands and to the south-east of England. The districts worst hit by the depression were the valleys of the eastern half of the coalfield, where the Welsh language was already in decline. If abandoning Wales was the only option for the younger generation, there seemed little point in ensuring that they had a command of Welsh – a consideration similar to that which had caused huge numbers of Irish speakers in the famine years to fail to pass Irish on to their children. By the 1930s, there were communities in the coalfield in which Welsh speakers constituted three-quarters of those over sixty-five, but less than a quarter of those under eleven.

The penury of chapel-goers prevented them from maintaining the range of chapel-based activities which had been central to the Welsh-language culture of the coalfield. Furthermore, it was widely believed that scientific socialism was the only answer to the depression and to the injustices of society; those holding such beliefs frequently regarded religion as 'the opium of the people', and were contemptuous of chapel activity and of its close associate, the Welsh language. The decline in chapel

attendance – the Calvinistic Methodists, for example, lost 100,000 adherents and 91,000 Sabbath scholars between 1914 and 1945 – was both a cause and a consequence of the decline of the Welsh language. Decline in the appeal of the chapel was partly the result of the availability of other forms of diversion; indeed, attendance at Sunday school declined in exact reverse proportion to the rise of car ownership. Many adherents attending Welsh-language services had only a slight understanding of the language of the sermons that they heard, and their conversation as they stood chatting outside their chapel after a service would be in English. Such changes meant that, as the twentieth century advanced, Welsh-language institutions were, in the main, rooted in secular assumptions.

There were other developments that represented a threat to Welsh. London daily newspapers had been reaching Wales from the late nineteenth century onwards. The demand for fresh news soared during the First World War, and it was a demand that the Welsh weeklies and monthlies were unable to meet. In the 1920s, when the popular dailies indulged in a lively circulation war, the taking of a London daily newspaper became an ingrained habit over much of Wales. Sales of Welsh periodicals declined sharply; indeed, some formerly successful newspapers, *Y Darian* among them, ceased publication. The cinema also won huge popularity in the 1920s and talkies were widely available after 1927. The films were largely imports from the United States, but wherever they came from, they were not Welsh. The BBC began broadcasting from Cardiff in 1923 and from Swansea in 1924. Cardiff became the headquarters of the West Region, created to serve south-west England as well as Wales. Its programmes included an occasional song in Welsh and sometimes a talk in the language, but the service was overwhelmingly English. The 1920s saw the completion of a network of bus routes and the growing popularity of the private

car and the motorcycle, with the result that the population became increasingly mobile. The charabanc won wide favour, allowing areas distant from railways to be opened up to mass tourism. Remote villages, where no language but Welsh had been heard for fifteen centuries, now resounded in summer with English voices.

Yet, not all the developments of the interwar years were hostile to Welsh. Indeed, considering the impoverishment of Wales in the 1920s and 1930s, the promoters of the language proved remarkably active and inventive. A development of the greatest importance occurred in 1922 with the launching by Ifan ab Owen Edwards (the son of O. M. Edwards) of Urdd Gobaith Cymru (the Welsh league of youth). The Urdd sought to attract the young to the Welsh language through games, athletics and camps, as well as through more traditional cultural activities. By 1934 it had 50,000 members and its rapid growth is the clearest evidence in the interwar years of the strong appeal of Welshness.

Three years after the launching of Urdd Gobaith Cymru came the establishment of Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru (the National Party of Wales). Saunders Lewis, its leading figure, insisted that the new party should concentrate its efforts upon the defence of the Welsh language. Initially it functioned entirely through the medium of Welsh and its activities were almost wholly centred upon Welsh-speaking areas. Although the party attracted minimal support, its concept of the sovereignty of Welsh brought a new element into discussions about the Welsh language.

Welsh writing in the 1920s and 1930s

Welsh-language literature, which had been undergoing a renaissance since the beginning of the century, reached new heights in the 1920s and 1930s. A more naturalistic style of poetry replaced what were considered to be the turgid productions of the nineteenth century, and was splendidly exemplified in the work of T. Gwynn Jones, T. H. Parry-Williams and R. Williams Parry. In the field of prose, there were the short stories of Kate Roberts, the essays of R. T. Jenkins, the early writings of Saunders Lewis and the reviews of Gruffydd John Williams. The 1920s and 1930s were also a key period in the emergence of Welsh writing in English. Sadly, it was not until recent decades that the two streams came together in the realization that they sprang from similar sources. Welsh writing in English was heavily magazine-dependent; so too was writing in Welsh, as can been seen from the towering presence of *Y Llenor*, the quarterly edited by W. J. Gruffydd, the professor of Welsh at Cardiff. Gruffydd represented a new phenomenon – a professional man and a figure of power in academic circles who was dedicated to the Welsh language and always ready to defend it with total confidence and brilliant satire.

The Welsh language in education in the 1920s and 1930s

Among W. J. Gruffydd's contributions to the Welsh language was his role in drawing up the report *Welsh in Education and Life*, published in 1927. The report was prepared by a committee appointed by the president of the Board of Education, who requested its members to 'inquire into the position occupied by Welsh in the educational system of Wales, and to advise how its study may be promoted'.

The tone of the 1927 report was vastly different from that of the infamous Blue Books of eighty years previously. Indeed, a later government report was to comment that *Welsh in Education and Life* was imbued with 'an almost religious zeal'. Its authors noted that, although Welsh had made remarkable advances in schools since the 1880s, the policies of local authorities were imprecise, the training of teachers was inadequate and the resources available to them were insufficient. In their recommendations, they set out policies for the different linguistic areas of Wales and urged the allocation of considerable resources to the training of teachers and the preparation of teaching materials. They were particularly concerned about the education of the children of Welsh-speaking families in the larger towns. 'Welsh Wales', they wrote,

> will be unable to develop a middle class because the members of that class will necessarily become Anglicized as they rise in the social scale, unless some immediate provision is made for their children in those areas in which economic conditions have forced the parents to settle.

Interestingly, in view of subsequent developments, they did not recommend that some of the schools in places like Cardiff should be designated Welsh schools, on the grounds that the distance the children would have to travel would be too great, and that such designation 'might cause the relinquishing of all Welsh teaching in the other schools'. Some of the recommendations of *Welsh in Education and Life* were implemented but most were ignored, largely, Gruffydd believed, because the hostility of head teachers, councillors and local authorities overcame the enlightened attitudes of the Welsh department of the British government's Board of Education.

Developments in broadcasting

Attitudes to Wales among the staff of the BBC in London are encapsulated in a memorandum written by a head office emissary in 1935:

> The average Englishman, who is perfectly prepared to regard the Scotch [*sic*] and the Irish as being essentially different . . . from the English . . . is seldom prepared to believe that the Welsh are a different nation – in fact, if there is any general attitude towards the Welsh, it is that they are a nuisance.

The authors of *Welsh in Education and Life* had been particularly concerned about the impact of broadcasting. 'We regard the present policy of the British Broadcasting Corporation', they wrote, 'as one of the most serious menaces to the life of the Welsh language.' Agitation to secure a broadcasting station for Wales by breaking the link with south-west England intensified in the 1930s, when there were some who considered direct action against the BBC.

The corporation eventually acquiesced in the demand, and the Welsh Region of the BBC came into existence on 4 July 1937. Much of its output consisted of the London regional programme, but Cardiff 'opt-outs' were greatly facilitated once listeners in south-west England had their own service. To make the best of resources, the producers and presenters appointed at Cardiff were expected to be able to deal with programmes in both English and Welsh. The new recruits to the station were therefore largely drawn from the Welsh-speaking community, giving rise to the notion that Welsh speakers had a stranglehold on broadcasting in Wales. The recruits were, however, anxious to be even-handed; work in English by Welsh writers found a generous patron in the BBC.

Initially, Welsh-language programmes tended to be rather stilted versions of English programmes, but the service eventually found its own voice, despite the setback occasioned by its suspension during the Second World War. The BBC became a significant patron of Welsh literature, commissioning plays and supplementing the income of indigent Welsh writers. Standard spoken Welsh, pioneered by itinerant evangelists in the eighteenth century, was heard by fewer people as chapel-going declined; the BBC stepped into the breach and evolved a suppler, more popular, speech, which did much to unite a language in which dialect differences were still considerable. In a country that had so few national bodies, the Welsh Region became a cherished institution. Created for sound radio, it offered a ready model when television ultimately arrived, although, like the Welsh radio service, the Welsh television service was not won without a struggle.

The Welsh Courts Act, 1942

Recognition in schools, in academic studies and in sound radio notwithstanding, in the courts of law the spirit of the language clause of the Act of Union still held sway. This became apparent at the assizes in Caernarfon in 1936, when Saunders Lewis and two fellow members of Plaid Cymru were on trial for setting fire to a bombing school on the Llŷn peninsula. Plans for bombing schools in England had been frustrated by the opposition of naturalists and historians, but the government refused to accept a deputation opposing the one in Llŷn. Incensed by the government's attitude and fearful that the Welsh language would be threatened in 'this essential home of Welsh culture, idiom and literature', Saunders Lewis and his associates committed arson and then gave themselves up

to the police. At Caernarfon, the judge contemptuously refused their demand to address the court in Welsh. The Caernarfon jury failed to agree on a verdict; the case was transferred to the Old Bailey, where the three defendants received prison sentences of nine months. The subordinate status of the Welsh language, starkly revealed by the behaviour of the judge at Caernarfon, inspired the launching at the National Eisteddfod of 1938 of a petition seeking the repeal of the language clause of the Act of Union, and demanding that Welsh be granted equal status with English. More than a quarter of a million people signed the petition, which was supported by thirty of the thirty-six Welsh MPs.

The petition led to the Welsh Courts Act of 1942, which laid down that 'the Welsh language may be used in any court in Wales by any party or witness who considers that he [or she] would otherwise be at a disadvantage by reason of his [or her] natural language of communication being Welsh'. It also declared that the court, rather than the person using Welsh, should be responsible for paying the interpreter. The Act fell far short of what the petition had demanded; indeed, in the matter of payment, it merely brought Welsh into line with languages such as Greek or Arabic, which were occasionally used in courts in the south Wales ports.

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The Second World War and After

The Second World War

The impact of the severe depression of the 1930s upon the Welsh language cannot be measured with exactitude because, with the Second World War raging, no census was held in 1941. When hostilities broke out, there were many in Wales who believed that another experience of total war would lead to the obliteration of the distinctiveness of Wales. The founding in December 1939 of Pwyllgor Amddiffyn Diwylliant Cymru (The Committee for the Defence of the Culture of Wales) reflected that concern. The committee later became known as Undeb Cymru Fydd (The New Wales Union). In fact, the war proved less of a threat than had been feared. Casualties were a third of those of the First World War. The belief that the major cities of England would be destroyed by bombing caused over 200,000 people to move to Wales in the first two years of the war; most of the adults stayed only briefly, and many of the young evacuees billeted on Welsh-speaking households were rapidly assimilated. Yet the tentative pro-Welsh policies of some Welsh local authorities were abandoned on the outbreak of war. In the 1930s, the Rhondda had sought to ensure that the reception class would be taught by a bilingual teacher,

for in that decade children there might well start school with no knowledge of English. The policy was abandoned when evacuees and their teachers arrived in the valley in 1939. Parents who complained were told: 'Don't you know there is a war on, and that England is in danger?'

By 1945, the War Office had taken over at least 10 per cent of the land of Wales, but most of it was returned to civilian use after the war ended. In one district, however, the activities of the War Office had a marked impact on the Welsh language. Mynydd Epynt in Breconshire – an area of 16,000 hectares – became a permanent military training ground. It had been the home of a Welsh-speaking community of about 400 people: they were dispersed, and the boundary of Welsh-speaking Wales was pushed fifteen kilometres westwards.

The cessation of the broadcasts of the Welsh Region of the BBC created considerable resentment; the establishment of the region had resulted in at least half the households of Wales holding BBC licences, and the argument that the Welsh wavelength would be needed to broadcast in Albanian, the language of a country none of whose inhabitants were known to be able to receive radio broadcasts, caused some confusion.

The Welsh language in the mid-twentieth century

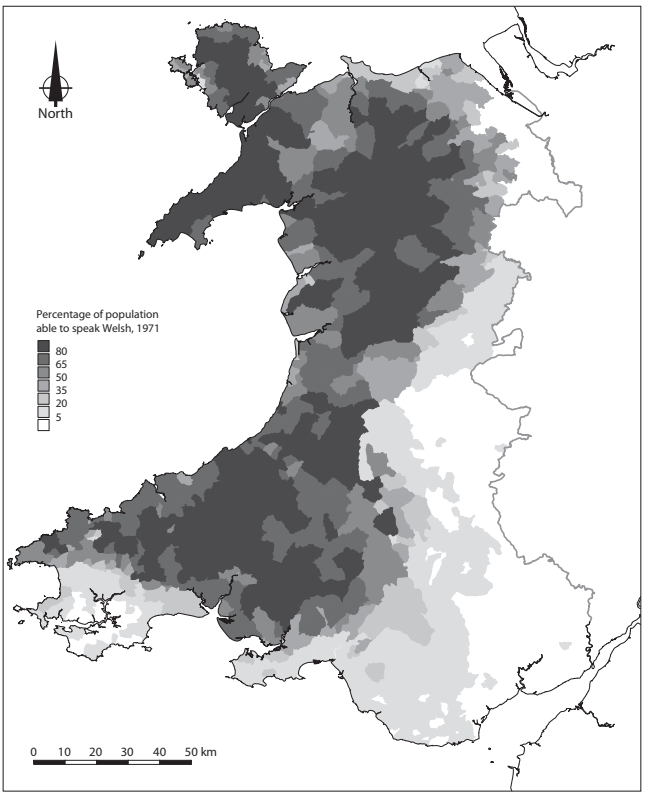
In 1931, 36.8 per cent of the inhabitants of Wales – 909,261 people in all – claimed to be able to speak Welsh; by 1951, the figures had declined to 28.9 per cent and 714,686. While most of the western rural counties recorded a decline of about 8 per cent, the decline in Glamorgan was 33 per cent, an indication of the ravages of the depression. In 1951, apart from an area north of Llanelli and Swansea in the western part of the south Wales coalfield and a group of parishes in the quarrying

districts of the north-west, all areas with a high percentage of Welsh speakers were in rural areas. As some of them were thinly populated upland regions, percentage surveys over-emphasized the importance to the language of communities that were rural and underestimated the importance of those that were urban. Indeed, one family moving away could cause the proportion of Welsh speakers in some upland parishes to decline from 60 per cent to 0 per cent. Less than 10 per cent of the population of Cardiff spoke Welsh, yet the city had almost 10,000 Welsh speakers in 1951, nearly a third of the number in the county of Meirionnydd.

One striking feature which emerged from the census of 1951 was that, although the majority of the inhabitants in the rural areas which made up the greater part of the surface area of Wales still had a command of Welsh, the language was no longer the prevailing medium over unbroken swathes of territory, as it had been a generation earlier. Instead of a solid, Welsh-speaking bloc, there was a series of nuclei, surrounded by areas of considerable anglicization – a feature that was to become more marked in the future. Another of the census's revelations was the virtual disappearance of monolingualism in Welsh. (Welsh monolingualism had lasted well into the interwar years; in 1921, 26 per cent of the inhabitants of the industrial parish of Llanddeiniolen claimed they knew no English and in one of the parishes of Llŷn (Bodferin), the entire population was monoglot Welsh.) Although adults who had no knowledge of English were to be found until the 1960s, entire communities living their lives exclusively through the medium of Welsh had ceased to exist by the mid-twentieth century.

The numbers and distribution of Welsh speakers 1951–81

The percentage of the inhabitants of Wales able to speak Welsh declined from 28.9 per cent in 1951, to 26 per cent in 1961, to 20.9 per cent in 1971 and to 18.7 per cent in 1981. The number able to speak the language was 714,686 in 1951, 656,002 in 1961, 542,425 in 1971 and 503,520 in 1981. Numbers declined by 8 per cent in the 1950s, 17 per cent in the 1960s and 6 per cent in the 1970s. The dramatic drop in the 1960s was partly the result of a change in the questions asked in the census; the census of 1971, unlike previous ones, contained questions on the ability to read and write Welsh, in addition to one on the ability to speak the language. Many of those able to converse in Welsh were reluctant to admit that they were illiterate in the language and therefore stated that they were monoglot English speakers. Indeed, most informal surveys suggest that Wales has a higher proportion of Welsh speakers than the census indicates – almost as if some form-fillers fear that officials are likely to call to discover whether the census form has been completed honestly. As the census records the linguistic abilities of all those over the age of three, and therefore includes children under school age, it is hardly surprising that there were in all districts Welsh speakers unable to read and write the language. Literacy levels varied: Dwyfor (essentially the Llŷn peninsula) scored highest with 89.76 per cent and Port Talbot lowest with 54.83 per cent. High percentages in Cardiff (72.14) and Taff-Ely (much of the southern part of the present borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf) (76.4) can be attributed to the attraction those areas had for middle-class Welsh speakers and to the growth of Welsh-medium education.

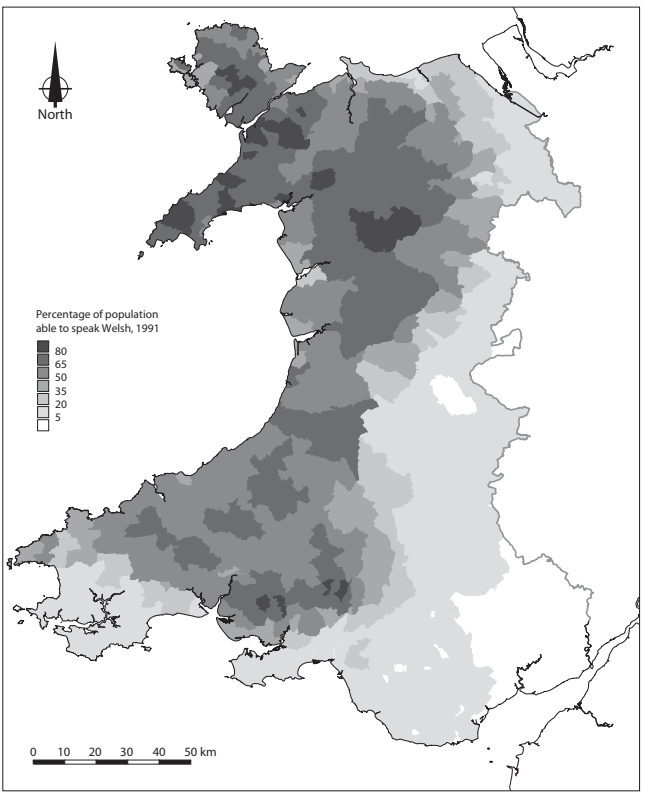


Percentage of population able to speak Welsh, 1971

Until 1991, the census concerned itself not only with the ability to speak Welsh but also with the ability to speak English. It was probably in the 1960s that the last adult Welsh speaker with no knowledge of English died, but monolingualism in Welsh among small children continued to be considerable. There were, however, bilingual persons who chose to declare themselves to be monoglot Welsh. Saunders Lewis argued in 1962 that the census was not a disinterested attempt to collect data on the linguistic situation in Wales. Rather, it was the authorities' way of finding the answer to the question: 'Can Wales be administered solely in English?' Those who wished to be administered through the medium of Welsh should, he declared, state that they were monoglot Welsh. Such a consideration helps to explain the 25 per cent increase (from 26,223 to 32,725) in recorded Welsh monolingualism between 1961 and 1971. In 1981, the figure fell back to 21,283, representing 0.8 per cent of the inhabitants of Wales over three years of age. The census form of 1991 did not contain a question about English, largely, no doubt, because those who compiled it believed that monolingualism was no longer an issue.

Areas with a high percentage of Welsh speakers, 1951–81

In the Welsh-language census returns for the period 1951 to 1981, the most prominent feature was the continuing contraction of districts having a very high proportion of Welsh speakers. In 1961, 36.8 per cent of the surface area of Wales consisted of civil parishes – 279 in all – in which over 80 per cent of the inhabitants had a knowledge of Welsh. The replacement of civil parishes by communities means that later figures are not strictly comparable; however, Wales in 1981 had only



Percentage of population able to speak Welsh, 1991

sixty-six communities in which 80 per cent of their inhabitants had a knowledge of Wales, their acreage representing 9.7 per cent of the surface area of Wales.

By the later twentieth century, six core areas with high percentages of Welsh speakers could be identified: central Anglesey, the old quarrying areas of Gwynedd, much of the Llŷn peninsula, an extensive area centred upon Penllyn in eastern Meirionnydd but extending into Conwy, Denbighshire and Montgomeryshire, a group of scattered nuclei in the upland south-west and an extensive area of the most westerly valleys of the south Wales coalfield. By 1991, the position of the language had deteriorated in all these areas, although the first four still contained areas where the ability to speak Welsh was well-nigh universal.

The core areas were surrounded by extensive tracts in which over half the inhabitants had a knowledge of Welsh. In 1961, 57 per cent of the surface area of Wales had a Welsh-speaking majority, a proportion that had fallen to 47 per cent by 1981. In 1991, seven of the thirty-seven districts of Wales had Welsh-speaking majorities, and those districts constituted 33.9 per cent of the surface area of Wales. The Welsh speakers of that area represented 41.6 per cent of the total number of Welsh speakers in Wales.

Areas with high numbers of Welsh speakers, 1951–81

By the late twentieth century, a new phenomenon had emerged: the majority of the speakers of Welsh were, by then, living in areas where the language was not the language of the majority. That did not necessarily mean that Welsh speakers in such areas made little use of the language: many of them consciously

sought opportunities to do so and, thus, over the greater part of the surface area of Wales, Welsh became the language not of the entire community, but of networks within the community.

In the quarrying districts of Caernarfonshire and the westernmost region of the southern coalfield, there were in the later twentieth century substantial clusters of Welsh speakers still living in largely Welsh-speaking environments. The other substantial clusters of Welsh speakers were in areas where only a minority of the inhabitants had a knowledge of the language. They included the resorts of the north Wales coast, the districts around Wrexham, Llanelli, Swansea, Cardiff and parts of mid Glamorgan. Thus, statistics concerned with percentages give the impression that the strength of the language lies in the western inland areas of Wales, but those concerned with absolute numbers suggest that its strength lies along the northern and southern coasts.

The areas in which there were considerable numbers, but not a majority, of Welsh speakers fell into two categories. On the one hand, there were those in which Welsh speakers had been the majority in the fairly recent past, but where slippage between generations had caused knowledge of the language to be heavily concentrated among the older age groups. This was particularly true of parts of the north-eastern coalfield and of much of west and north Glamorgan. In 1971, 41 per cent of the Welsh speakers in the borough of Merthyr Tydfil could be found among the 15 per cent of its inhabitants who were over sixty-five. As the older generation died, knowledge of the language slumped dramatically. Indeed, the loss of 206,479 Welsh speakers between 1951 and 1981 can largely be explained by the generational slippage in such places as Merthyr, slippage that had its roots in the interwar depression. The other category was markedly different. It consisted of

areas where the percentage of Welsh speakers had long been low, but where employment opportunities had encouraged an inflow of substantial numbers of people from Welsh-speaking areas. Such areas included towns of planned expansion, like Newtown, and growing administrative centres such as Mold and Llandrindod. Above all, they included Cardiff and its immediate hinterland.

Economic change

While economic migration was strengthening the position of the Welsh language in some parts of Wales, economic change was undermining the viability of traditional Welsh-speaking communities. Particularly significant was the contraction of employment in the industries that had been the mainstay of those communities. The quarries of Gwynedd, which had employed 20,000 men in the 1890s, employed only 500 in the 1990s. The coalmines and tinplate works of east Carmarthenshire and west Glamorgan – districts that had contained about a quarter of all the Welsh speakers of Wales – contracted rapidly. Carmarthenshire had 14,644 coalminers in 1921 and only a few hundred in 1991. Also significant numerically was the decline of employment in agriculture. Anglesey, Caernarfon, Meirionnydd, Ceredigion and Carmarthen – the only ones among the ancient counties to have Welsh-speaking majorities – had 40,000 families involved in agriculture in 1921 and hardly a third of that number in 1991. Farming has a rich Welsh vocabulary, and this is also true to a considerable extent of slate-quarrying and coalmining. As employment in those industries contracted, tens of thousands of Welsh speakers found jobs in new fields – in offices, the service industries and light manufacturing, in particular – fields in which any

traditional use of Welsh was minimal. Many – young people especially – failed to find any work in their home neighbourhoods; they moved out, thus distorting the age structure of the population. Between 1921 and 1971, the population of the strongly Welsh-speaking industrial parish of Llangiwg in west Glamorgan fell by 25 per cent, and that of the quarrying parish of Llanddeiniolen in Caernarfonshire by 20 per cent. Even more striking was the population decline in the countryside, with the number of inhabitants declining by 43 per cent in the Rural District of Penllyn and by 38 per cent in the Rural District of Tregaron.

The impact of in-migration

In 2011, the percentage of the inhabitants of Wales born outside the country varied from 9.7 in Blaenau Gwent to 50.2 in Powys; the figure for the traditionally Welsh-speaking county of Ceredigion was 44.7. Those hearing people interviewed at the time of the flooding in 2012 at Talybont – traditionally considered to be a Welsh-speaking area – could not but be aware that the majority spoke in accents that originated east of Offa's Dyke. The contraction of employment in agriculture meant that the housing stock in the countryside often exceeded the needs of the local economy. Many of the houses were bought as holiday homes; by the 1970s, areas such as the Llŷn peninsula had parishes in which over a quarter of the dwellings were holiday homes. As their purchasers came largely from the conurbations of England, this growth created a temporary English-speaking presence in even the remotest parts of Welsh-speaking Wales. Many owners settled permanently in their second homes on retirement. Others from over the border who settled permanently in Wales included those inspired by the self-sufficiency

movement which flourished in the 1960s. As land appeared cheap in Wales, there was a marked influx, particularly into the rural south-west, where in some of the parishes of south Cardiganshire and north Carmarthenshire the proportion born outside Wales rose to almost 50 per cent. (When the television programme *The Good Life* portrayed a couple pursuing self-sufficiency in Surbiton, a commentator remarked: 'Surely, they should have moved to Dyfed by now.') Tourist resorts, which had long been centres of anglicization, became increasingly attractive to incomers. By the 1970s, the majority of the inhabitants of Colwyn Bay, Abergele and Prestatyn had been born in England, but the same was true of more remote districts, such as Llanfair Mathafarn Eithaf on the east coast of Anglesey. The Snowdonia region, traditionally considered a heartland of the Welsh language, proved so attractive to English mountain-lovers that those born in Wales became a bare majority in communities such as Capel Curig. The existence of military bases, such as those at Valley in Anglesey and Aberporth in Ceredigion, meant that many of the inhabitants of the surrounding area came from England. The expansion of centres of higher education led to the appointment of English academics, and attempts to industrialize rural Wales created jobs which attracted English managers and key workers. Some of the incomers were intrigued by the distinctiveness of Wales and set about learning Welsh. Others, feeling that all they had done was to move from one place to another within their country of Britain – or, indeed, England – were annoyed at any suggestion that they should be assimilated into a culture which they considered inferior. There were incomers who were perturbed at finding that they had, by moving, deprived themselves of some of their favourite television programmes. Many were parents of school-age children who reacted angrily to the discovery that lessons in the local primary school were

conducted largely through the medium of Welsh. At the same time, the Welsh-speaking population, feeling under siege and fearing that the influx would squeeze them out of existence, also began to voice concern. Thus the traditionally Welsh-speaking areas of Wales became areas of potential conflict, although there was an acknowledgement that the influx had made many parts of the countryside more interesting. Attempts to ensure that newcomers became familiar with the cultural traditions of the places in which they had settled led to the establishment of Pont (bridge), a movement in which Gwynfor Evans, president of Plaid Cymru, was prominent. However, the essence of a bridge is that the piers on either side are of equal strength; as that was hardly true of the pier of Welshness and the pier of Englishness, the movement had little success. Not all incomers lacked contact with the Welsh language. In 1991, 10 per cent of the Welsh speakers of Wales had been born outside the country, among them Derby-born Dafydd Wigley, Gwynfor Evans's successor as president of Plaid Cymru, whose Welsh-speaking parents had settled for a time in England.

The Welsh language and political developments

The Labour government elected in 1945 believed that the answer to deprivation was to ensure that the kingdom as a whole should be subject to firm planning from the centre. They thus had little sympathy for the concerns of Welsh speakers, although the Council of Wales, founded by the government in 1948, had a doughty champion of the language in its chairman, Huw T. Edwards.

In 1957, parliament passed a Bill permitting the Liverpool Corporation to drown the Tryweryn valley in Meirionnydd. As the community that would be displaced was wholly Welsh

in speech and culture, and as not a single Welsh MP had voted for the Bill, there was a belief that the British authorities were deliberately seeking to destroy Welsh-speaking communities.

In 1964, the Labour government elected in that year established the Welsh Office and appointed a Secretary of State for Wales with a seat in the British Cabinet, thus creating a new context for discussions of Welsh public life. By the mid-1960s, there was an upsurge in political nationalism, with Gwynfor Evans's victory in the 1966 Carmarthen by-election, and a further good showing by Plaid Cymru in Rhondda West and Caerphilly and in local government elections.

In 1972, Wales at last had a designated north-south road. It was the A470, which became the thoroughfare for the many travelling north from Cardiff and south from Gwynedd and Clwyd. Its restaurants, particularly the Halt near Rhayader and the Little Chef at Builth, became almost the only places in central Powys in which conversations in Welsh could almost always be heard.

In 1974, local government was reorganized, with the thirteen counties, four county boroughs and 164 boroughs and urban and rural districts being replaced by eight counties and thirty-seven districts. Perhaps the chief significance of the change in language terms was the decision of Dwyfor to ensure that Welsh was the chief language of the district's administration. Gwynedd County Council adopted a bilingual policy for all aspects of its work. The adoption was greatly assisted by new technology, in particular the introduction of instantaneous translation facilities. Such facilities were installed in the Gwynedd council chamber, where Welsh came to be more widely used than English. The long-held view that if there was a possibility that some non-Welsh speakers might be present at a meeting, that meeting should be held in English, withered in the face of the availability of instantaneous translation.

The year 1974 also saw significant advances by Plaid Cymru. In the first general election of the year, the party won Caernarfon and Meirionnydd, and in the second Gwynfor Evans recaptured Carmarthen, a constituency that he had held from 1966 to 1970. These victories, and other later ones, fuelled the belief that Wales had a future as a national community and increased the confidence of Welsh-language activists. By the end of the twentieth century, election results were suggesting that a large proportion of Welsh speakers voted for Plaid Cymru. This can be regarded as a highly significant development, for it suggests an increasing resolve to assert linguistic identity. However, if the party were to become exclusively identified with Welsh speakers, it would be unable to claim to be the party of Wales as a whole.

Another significant development of the 1970s was the entry of Britain into the European Community in 1972, a step that created in Wales a deeper awareness of the existence of linguistic minorities elsewhere in Europe. In 1985, the European Bureau of Lesser-Used Languages was founded. It had consultative status in the European Parliament, and a branch of its research network, Mercator, was established in Wales. In 2010, the bureau was closed for reasons difficult to fathom, but the Mercator Institute for Media, Languages and Culture still flourishes in Aberystwyth.

Local government was reorganized once again in 1996, when the eight counties and thirty-seven districts were replaced by twenty-two unitary authorities. There were fears that the district of Dwyfor's unique linguistic arrangements would disappear, but the new Gwynedd County Council maintained many of them. Dyfed County Council took tentative steps along the road trodden by Gwynedd; some of its districts, Ceredigion in particular, made extensive use of Welsh, but elsewhere policies can be seen as little more than tokenism.

The National Assembly for Wales, established in 1999, ushered in an era of unprecedented expectations for the future for Wales. The Assembly received responsibility for the duties hitherto shouldered by the Secretary of State for Wales, and in 2011 gained limited legislative powers as the result of a referendum. The substantial majority in the referendum in favour of strengthening the role of the Assembly gave rise to the belief that hopes of a national future for Wales were not unfounded. However, some feared that the Assembly could become so powerful a symbol of national distinctiveness that other symbols, the Welsh language in particular, might become less important – a phenomenon they claim can be seen in the history of Ireland. In the Assembly, the English and Welsh languages enjoy equality, but some wonder whether an Assembly representative of the entire population of Wales, and therefore necessarily dominated by representatives of the country's large non-Welsh-speaking majority, will be as sympathetic to the Welsh language as was a British government, which may have been more open to manipulation by a committed minority. However, decisions made by an all-Wales Assembly will have the approbation of the population of Wales as a whole. Even if the decisions fall short of the hopes of Welsh-language enthusiasts, they will have validity and endorsement which previous linguistic arrangements have lacked.

Welsh in public life in the mid-twentieth century

In the mid-twentieth century, Welsh had virtually no public status. Indeed, the Welsh-language movements active from the mid-century onward were, as Colin Williams put it, 'a struggle to overcome the effects of centuries of discrimination and hostility at the hands of a powerful, ethnically-differentiated

state oligarchy'. Although those who would be disadvantaged by using English in a court of law could use Welsh, Welsh speakers had no absolute right to use their language in court proceedings. Welsh was hardly ever seen on an official form, and public notices, apart from those on such buildings as Welsh chapels, were almost wholly in English. Although most of the inhabitants of south Ceredigion referred to their local town as Aberteifi, that name was seen on virtually no sign-posts. Awkwardly anglicized versions of Welsh place-names abounded on road signs, post offices rigorously excluded the language and any suggestion that public servants should regularly use Welsh was greeted with hostility. Even where there was some Welsh, it was often phrased in a way that those reading it might well find insulting. English signs in telephone kiosks informed users that they should dial the number they wanted; Welsh signs informed them that they should place a finger in the hole showing the first figure of the number they wanted, and then push the dial to the left as far as it would go; they were then to do the same, in sequence, with the rest of the figures in the number.

The Welsh Courts Act of 1942 had long been seen as inadequate. An incident at Ammanford in 1961, when a returning officer refused to accept nomination papers because they had been completed in Welsh, publicized the imprecision of the legal standing of the language. In 1963, the government established a committee, under the chairmanship of the distinguished jurist David Hughes-Parry, 'to clarify the legal status of the Welsh language and to consider whether any changes in the law ought to be made'. Internal memoranda make it clear that government officials were anxious that as little as possible should be recommended. The evidence presented to the committee is fascinating. Some evidence-givers were impressed by the fact that languages which had once

suffered discrimination – Flemish, for example, or Finnish – had achieved sovereign status though legislation; the legislation also recognized the sovereign rights of other languages spoken within the state, which meant a degree of zoning. The notion that Welsh should have sovereign status anywhere within Wales was, however, treated with contempt, although it has been revived in the recent past.

While discussions on the Hughes-Parry Report were afoot, two occasion arose which underlined the uncertain position of the Welsh language. In 1965, Brewer Spinks, a factory supervisor in Blaenau Ffestniog, gave the workers under him a choice between the signing of a guarantee that they would not speak Welsh at their workplace and dismissal. An outcry ensued and Brewer Spinks was forced to back down, but it would appear that he had not exceeded his statutory rights. There was another protest in the same year, when the Commission for Racial Equality supported two care assistants who alleged that Gwynedd County Council had discriminated against them because they did not speak Welsh. The county council argued that, as many of those cared for had little knowledge of English, the ability of a carer to speak Welsh was an essential skill. The commission argued that knowledge of Welsh was the inheritance of a racial group. The court initially decided in favour of the care assistants and the Commission for Racial Equality, but the decision was reversed following an appeal by Gwynedd County Council.

The Hughes-Parry Report was published before the end of 1965. It recommended that anything done in Welsh should be as valid in the eyes of the law as if it had been done in English. The committee also urged that more forms and official documents should be available in Welsh and that anyone wishing to use Welsh in a court of law should have an absolute right to do so. A watered-down version of the concept of equal

Saunders Lewis reading his radio lecture *Tynged yr Iaith* in 1962

validity was incorporated in the Welsh Language Act of 1967, although the fundamental principle of the language clause of the Act of 'Union' – that English should be the language of record in the courts – was retained.

In the 1950s, some organizations – the Carmarthenshire County Council and the National Library of Wales, for instance – acquired bilingual notices. The National Library painted a bilingual sign on the road leading to it. The sign ARAF (slow) aroused hilarity, with questions being asked about the library's desire to give prominence to the Australian Royal Air Force – an example of the unfamiliarity of visible Welsh. A few local authorities began to publish bilingual rate demands. Yet, when Eileen and Trefor Beasley of Llangennech asked the Llanelli Rural District Council in 1952 to send them a bilingual rate demand, they received a peremptory refusal. When the Beasleys refused to pay the rates, their property was seized; they continued the battle until the council yielded in 1960.

Cymdeithas yr laith Gymraeg (The Welsh Language Society)

On 13 February 1962, Saunders Lewis, who had shunned public life since the war, gave the annual Welsh-language lecture of the BBC in Wales. Taking the theme 'Tynged yr Iaith' (the fate of the language), he stressed the significance of the Beasleys' campaign and urged his listeners to 'make it impossible to conduct local authority or central government business in Wales without the Welsh language'. 'To revive the Welsh language in Wales,' he declared, 'is nothing less than a revolution. Success can only come through revolutionary methods.' The challenge was taken up by a group of young patriots who founded Cymdeithas yr laith Gymraeg (the Welsh Language

Society). The title was adopted out of respect for the similarly named society of the 1880s. They began with a campaign to secure court summonses in Welsh, organizing a day of mass law-breaking in Aberystwyth on 2 February 1963. The society then turned its attention to the use of Welsh in the post office, on car licences and on signposts. In the late 1960s, it conducted a large-scale campaign against monolingual road signs, first painting them out and then removing them altogether. The signpost campaign achieved success following the publication of the Bowen Report in 1972, which recommended that bilingual road signs should be systematically erected in all parts of Wales. Ensuring that Welsh was visible throughout the country was probably the greatest single achievement of Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg.

The society's members were involved in a host of court cases, and periods of imprisonment became part of the experience of many Welsh-language campaigners. While they were almost exclusively young people, large numbers of older Welsh speakers viewed their activities with tacit approval. In 1970 a group of magistrates, encouraged by the editor of the magazine *Barn*, Alwyn D. Rees, arranged to pay the fine of an imprisoned protester, indicating that members of the respectable middle class in Welsh-speaking Wales were prepared to condone law-breaking. This became even more apparent in the late 1970s and the early 1980s when the society's members were closely involved in the campaign to establish a Welsh television channel. Since the 1980s, despite the society's involvement in issues such as housing, its impact has been more diffuse than in earlier years.

Welsh in public life since the 1970s

In the 1970s and 1980s there was a growing demand for a new Welsh Language Act which would clarify and strengthen the provisions of the Act of 1967. That demand, together with the desire of the Conservative Party to show increasing sympathy towards Welsh-speaking voters, led in 1993 to the passage of another Welsh Language Act, which gave statutory recognition to a Welsh Language Board and established 'the principle that in the conduct of public business and administration of justice in Wales the Welsh and English languages should be treated on a basis of equality'. The board was charged with the duty of advising central government and all bodies providing services to the public on methods of giving substance to that principle. It was also charged with the duty of investigating complaints and of overseeing the preparation and implementation of Welsh-language schemes: over 500 such schemes were endorsed by the board. The Act fell short of acknowledging that Welsh was an official language. Although the board could conduct statutory investigations to see whether promised schemes were being adhered to, it had no mandatory powers.

Phrases in the 1993 Act such as 'reasonably practicable' and 'wherever appropriate' caused Cymdeithas yr Iaith to begin a campaign for stronger legislation. Nevertheless, the board showed considerable vigour. Public bodies other than those concerned with law and government – among them the main utilities, the health service, the Ordnance Survey, social security offices and the university colleges – have adopted varying degrees of bilingualism. Although the board had no powers where the private sector was concerned, there was some advance in the commercial field, with banks, building societies and companies such as Boots, W. H. Smith and the main supermarket chains erecting Welsh signs. Some of the signs offer

examples of execrable Welsh, but many language enthusiasts feel that it is churlish to attack such well-meaning gestures.

The Labour-Plaid Cymru coalition in power from 2007 to 2011 agreed to authorize positive action to encourage the employment of young Welsh speakers. In 2011 the Welsh National Assembly passed a Measure which gave the Welsh language official status in Wales, thus making it the only language which is *de jure* official in any part of the United Kingdom. (While English is certainly the de facto official language of the United Kingdom, its status is not enshrined in legislation.) The same Measure abolished the Welsh Language Board, many of the duties of which were transferred to the Welsh Language Commissioner, who is currently Meri Huws, the one-time chair of the board. She has stated that 'people should be able to live their lives in Wales through the medium of Welsh, if that is what they wish', an aspiration which chimed in with the slogan, 'Dwi eisiau byw yn Gymraeg' (I want to live in Welsh), which enjoyed great vogue in 2013 on the occasion of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the first protest of Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg.

Education and the Welsh language

In any community in which the original native language co-exists with the dominant language of the state, the issue of language in education is almost certain to be a contentious matter. It was a major cause of dissension in the old Austro-Hungarian Empire and has aroused passions among peoples such as the Québécois and the Basques. It also arouses passions in Wales. Broadcasting has perhaps been the most disputatious issue where the Welsh language is concerned, but education has been a close second. The greater part of the energies of

those concerned with the wellbeing of the Welsh language over the past fifty years has been channelled into efforts to enhance its role in schools and in higher and adult education, efforts much assisted by members of Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru, founded in 1926.

The Welsh language in primary and nursery schools

By the mid-1940s, Welsh had become the main medium of primary-school instruction in those areas where Welsh was overwhelmingly the most widely spoken language. In the rest of Wales, efforts to teach the language to monoglot English-speaking pupils varied according to the policy of the local education authority. Some beginners' Welsh was taught, but there was little specific provision for the minority of pupils who were themselves Welsh speakers. Indeed, such pupils tended to abandon Welsh lessons, because they learned little that they did not know already. This meant that hardly any Welsh speakers from areas in which only a minority had a knowledge of Welsh gained academic qualifications in the language. Teachers of Welsh tended to come from areas where Welsh was widely spoken, and they often had little intuitive understanding of the problems of their pupils. A highly significant step was taken in 1947, when the Carmarthenshire Education Committee designated one of its primary schools at Llanelli as a Welsh school, an option open to the committee following the passage of the Education Act of 1944. (Sir Ifan ab Owen Edwards, the founder of Urdd Gobaith Cymru, had established a Welsh school at Aberystwyth in 1939, but, as it was a private institution, its foundation was not as momentous as the step taken at Llanelli.) Another dozen schools were opened in the following four years, and in 1951 the private

school at Aberystwyth came under local authority control. In the 1950s, two counties – Flintshire and Glamorgan – made a determined effort to ensure that Welsh-medium primary education was extensively available, a development much assisted by the establishment of Undeb Cymdeithasau Rhieni Ysgolion Cymraeg (the Union for the Parents' Societies of Welsh Schools) in 1952. The new schools were originally established to enable children of Welsh-speaking families to be educated in their mother tongue. However, they rapidly attracted the interest of non-Welsh-speaking parents, and by the late 1950s the majority of their pupils came from English-speaking homes. Parents who knew no Welsh were astounded on discovering that their small children were effortlessly bilingual and had an uncanny knack of knowing who could and who could not understand them when they spoke Welsh. In 1962, there were thirty-six designated Welsh-medium primary schools in Wales, attended by 3,795 pupils. By 2012, 52,336 children attended Welsh-medium primary schools and a further 16,492 attended schools offering varying degrees of bilingualism. Closely associated with the growth of Welsh-medium schools was the development of Welsh-medium nursery education. The first Welsh-medium nursery school was established soon after the war, in Maesteg. By 1971, the year of the foundation of Mudiad Meithrin (the nursery schools movement), there were sixty-eight schools with 950 pupils, a number that had grown to over 500 schools with about 13,000 pupils by 2012. In addition, there were, in 1998, 393 mother-and-child groups with 4,525 pupils, numbers that also expanded rapidly. The expansion of nursery schools created the need and demand for Welsh-medium primary schools. This was particularly the case in Cardiff where, in 2011, 36,735 people claimed that they could speak Welsh compared with 34,964 in Ceredigion. The city's original Welsh-medium primary

school, established with nineteen pupils in 1949, had expanded to become nine schools with 1,925 pupils by 1998 and fifteen schools with 3,832 pupils by 2012. (There were also two dual-stream schools attended by 619 pupils.) Cardiff had 2,190 Welsh speakers under the age of fifteen in 1971, 4,685 in 1981, 5,208 in 1991 and 11,979 in 2011. In 2011, the ability to speak Welsh among Cardiffians was 420 per cent higher in the age groups from five to fourteen than it was among those over sixty-five. The contrast was equally marked in neighbouring areas such as Llantrisant, Pontypridd and Caerphilly, and also in Mold in the north-east.

The growth of Welsh-medium education in places such as Cardiff brought into being considerable numbers of young Welsh speakers whose experience of life was that of large towns and cities, thus greatly varying the social base of the language. The fear expressed in 1927 that Welsh-speaking Wales was unable to develop its own urban middle class seemed allayed. The growth of the language in the anglicized districts – the fact, for example, that a quarter of the pupils of the Taff-Ely district attended Welsh schools – created a sense of optimism, even of euphoria. Yet, in 2012 those attending Welsh-medium primary schools constituted a small percentage of the number of pupils in Wales between the ages of five and eleven. In that year there were in all ninety-eight primary schools in Cardiff, eighty-one of which were English-medium.

The pupils in Welsh schools in highly anglicized areas live in an environment in which English is overwhelmingly the dominant language. In advocating English education for Wales, the authors of the report of 1847 had their doubts whether 'the language of lessons can make head against the language of life' – a comment highly relevant to Welsh schools in places like Cardiff. A survey by Professors Carter and Aitchison,

conducted in 1988, indicated that at least half the pupils receiving a Welsh-medium education rarely make use of the language outside school, although more recent research on the Bridgend area suggested that Welsh was increasingly used in adult life by those who had learned the language at school. There is also considerable evidence that Welsh speakers who conversed in English with fellow Welsh speakers in their teenage years spoke to them in Welsh as they grew older.

Initially, the specifically designated Welsh schools were in the largely English-speaking areas of the north-east and the south-east, or in western towns where considerable anglicization had occurred. It was assumed that primary schools in the Welsh-speaking areas would be naturally Welsh. As pressures, caused in the main by in-migration, posed a threat to the natural Welshness of many rural schools, there were demands that those schools should also be designated Welsh schools. In the areas where designated Welsh schools had already been established, there was also a wide choice of English-medium schools. Offering a similar choice in rural areas was deemed to be fraught with difficulties. If schools that had been naturally Welsh were to become designated Welsh schools, there would be resistance from the large number of incomers who were demanding English-medium education – and, in their resistance, they might receive support from some at least of the Welsh-speaking parents. If their demands were met, Welsh would be squeezed out of schools over large areas in which it had been the dominant language only a few years previously. Thus, it was obvious that careful planning was needed in the field of education.

Welsh schools, whether designated or natural, are a minority of the schools of Wales. In the majority – the English-medium schools of the largely English-speaking areas – the degree to which Welsh was taught as a second language varied

considerably. In the immediate post-war years it was taught in all the primary schools of Glamorgan but was rarely available in Monmouthshire. The effectiveness of second-language teaching was extremely uneven. For many pupils it was an exercise in futility, although there were some, even in the 1940s, whose schooling gave them a mastery of Welsh. Teaching methods improved in the 1950s and 1960s and attractive teaching materials multiplied, developments aided by the publication of *The Place of Welsh and English in the Schools of Wales* in 1952 and of *Primary Education in Wales* (the Gittins Report) in 1967.

Such developments did not occur without controversy. In the university towns of Aberystwyth and Bangor, groups of academics, imbued with the notion that they knew about education, established a body called the Language Freedom Movement, which was active in resisting all moves to make Welsh an integral part of the curriculum. Opponents of the teaching of Welsh became more vocal in the late 1970s, following the reform of local government. In 1974, the thirteen counties and four county boroughs – the bodies responsible for education – were replaced by eight counties, some of which immediately set about devising a more consistent and forceful language policy. The most far-reaching was that of Gwynedd, which sought to make every child in the county fluent in Welsh and offered special facilities to enable incoming children to gain rapid fluency in the language. Dyfed, the county which in the 1970s and 1980s experienced the highest incidence of in-migration into traditional Welsh-speaking communities, divided its schools into categories. Category A schools, which included most of the county's rural schools outside south Pembrokeshire, gave precedence to Welsh, a decision that angered some parents, who established a movement called Education First. Clwyd, Powys and West Glamorgan – the

other counties that included substantial Welsh-speaking communities – were rather less systematic in their approach. Mid Glamorgan and South Glamorgan continued to expand their network of Welsh-medium schools, although somewhat grudgingly on occasion. Gwent (the old Monmouthshire) – no longer a semi-detached county of Wales since the local government reforms of 1974 – warmed considerably towards Welsh-medium education and established three designated Welsh primary schools and a number of Welsh-language units. Following the further reorganization of local government in 1996, it was noted that there were Welsh-medium primary schools in all the twenty-two counties. The degree to which Welsh is available as a second language in primary schools varies from county to county, but the rules of the National Curriculum (1988) laid down that all pupils should have some Welsh lessons.

The Welsh language in secondary schools

In the 1940s, Welsh was available as a subject in most of the secondary schools of Wales. In the schools of the English-speaking areas, it was generally taught in the same manner as French, a major difficulty for those wishing to study the language for the Senior and Higher Certificates, examinations that were designed for those who spoke Welsh as their mother tongue. In Welsh-speaking areas, the language itself was the only subject taught through the medium of Welsh; the realization that teachers, who had spoken nothing but English in the classroom, were in fact fluent Welsh speakers frequently came as a shock to their ex-pupils. By the early 1950s, some secondary schools were using Welsh in teaching such subjects as Welsh history and religious instruction, but there were

no secondary schools teaching largely through the medium of Welsh until the Flintshire County Council established Ysgol Glan Clwyd in Rhyl in 1956 and Ysgol Maes Garmon in Mold in 1961. Glamorgan followed with Ysgol Rhydfelen near Pontypridd in 1962. By the mid-1980s there were fifteen such schools, largely in the anglicized north-east and south-east, although some of them – those at Carmarthen, Aberystwyth and Bangor, for instance – were in towns that could draw upon a traditionally Welsh-speaking hinterland. The increase in their numbers was facilitated by the reorganization of secondary education in the wake of the establishment of comprehensive schools. Most of them were bilingual rather than exclusively Welsh-medium schools, for science subjects were generally taught through the medium of English. Non-designated schools in Welsh-speaking areas, particularly in Gwynedd and Dyfed, were also offering an increasing number of subjects through the medium of Welsh by the 1980s.

The Education Act of 1988 laid down that, in Wales, Welsh was to be a core subject in the new National Curriculum. Since 1999, all secondary schools are obliged to offer Welsh as a second language to pupils up to sixteen years of age. The decision had far-reaching implications in terms of the numbers of teachers and the range of resources needed. Special bursaries became available for those wishing to train to teach Welsh, or through the medium of Welsh, and the Language Resource Centre at Aberystwyth became active in producing a wide range of materials. These activities were initially coordinated by the Committee for the Development of Welsh-medium Education (usually known as PDAG, the acronym from its Welsh title); since 1994 PDAG's functions have been taken over by the Curriculum Council for Wales.

By 2012 there were thirty-two Welsh-medium secondary schools, attended by 23,098 pupils. Fourteen of the schools

are in Gwynedd, where they draw upon traditionally Welsh-speaking heartlands. Four are in Rhondda Cynon Taf, in the anglicized south-east, where one of the earliest Welsh-medium secondary schools was established. The rest are scattered throughout Wales, and there are also thirty-two schools, attended by 25,368 pupils, which offer varying degrees of bilingualism.

Welsh in higher education

In the early years of their existence, the colleges of the University of Wales made no use at all of Welsh as a medium of instruction. Members of the department of Welsh at Cardiff began lecturing in Welsh in the 1920s and all such departments were operating almost exclusively in Welsh by the 1940s. In the 1950s, language enthusiasts argued that one of the university colleges should be designated as a college offering a full range of courses through the medium of Welsh, a notion that the university authorities considered undesirable and impractical. In 1955, however, the university promised to expand the use of Welsh hand in hand with the expansion of the number of secondary-school pupils educated through the medium of Welsh. By the end of the twentieth century, about two dozen lecturers with a special responsibility for teaching through the medium of Welsh had been appointed, almost all of them in arts departments. Although they represented a tiny proportion of the staff of the university, their appointment meant that undergraduates studying through the medium of Welsh were no longer restricted to those actually studying the language itself. The University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, launched its External Degree through the medium of Welsh in 1980, and the existence of groups of

students following university courses through Welsh proved to be a major stimulus to the production of scholarly works in the language. At Aberystwyth, the demand for a hall of residence in which Welsh would be the dominant language was met – after a ferocious controversy – in 1974, with the designation of Neuadd Pantycelyn as a mixed Welsh hall. Bangor followed with Neuadd John Morris-Jones in 1975. Welsh-medium courses became increasingly available in colleges of education; technical and further education colleges made fewer provisions, although secretarial courses in Welsh expanded considerably.

A highly significant venture launched in 2011 was Y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (the national Welsh college), which, in accordance with the dictum of William Salesbury, 'Mynnwch dysg yn eich iaith' (insist upon erudition in your language), sought to develop Welsh-medium provision in higher education. The college had a federal structure and aimed to have a presence in all Wales's universities. It had the resources to fund a hundred scholarships in subjects ranging from psychology to sports studies and to employ at least twenty-one members of staff.

Adult learners of Welsh

Over the centuries, many Welsh speakers have taken perverse pride in their belief that their language could not be learned by those not brought up to speak it, and George Borrow noted in *Wild Wales* (1862) the suspicion with which adult learners of Welsh were regarded. Such notions lost ground in the second half of the twentieth century (although they did not vanish completely) and classes for Welsh learners proliferated. By the 1960s, the most ardent advocate of the teaching of Welsh

to adults was R. M. Jones, who had himself learned the language at school in Cardiff. Also known as the poet Bobi Jones, R. M. Jones was from 1980 to 1989 professor of Welsh at Aberystwyth, the first learner to be appointed to a chair of Welsh. Equally significant was the winning of the chair at the National Eisteddfod of 1985 by Robat Powel, a learner from Ebbw Vale, and the installation in 2013 of Christine James as archdruid, the first woman and the first learner to hold the office. More intriguing than natives of Wales learning Welsh in adulthood are the increasing numbers of Welsh learners who have no ties at all with Wales – a group that Ned Thomas has described as 'the elective Welsh'. They include prominent figures in the cultural life of early twenty-first century Wales, among them the scholar and author Jerry Hunter, from Ohio, the art historian Peter Lord, from England, and the cultural historian Marion Löffler, from Germany.

The increase in the use of Welsh by public bodies was an added factor in fostering the growth of the adult learners' movement, which also owed much to the desire of parents with children in Welsh schools to master the language that was the medium of their children's education. Cyngor y Dysgwyr (CYD – the learners' council), founded in 1984, attracted considerable support, although its central organization ceased to exist in 2008. Courses under the auspices of the University of Wales and other bodies, and language lessons on radio and television, won a wide following.

Educationists developed a form of written Welsh closer to the spoken language than is the biblically based traditional written form. Known as *Cymraeg Byw* (Living Welsh), it has not found universal acceptance. Supporters of the adult-learning movement are inspired by the example of Israel, where Hebrew has become the chief language of the state; the Hebrew word *ulpan* (*wlpan*) was adopted as the name of the intensive Welsh

The Nant Gwrtheyrn language centre

courses, of which the eight-week residential course in Lampeter is an outstanding example. One notable venture was the refurbishment of the deserted village of Nant Gwrtheyrn, south-west of Caernarfon, as a year-round centre for language learning. Situated on the seashore in a deep ravine, it provides a captivating experience for those who visit it.

The growing number of learners who achieve fluency has provided a valuable boost to the Welsh-language community, despite the fact that native speakers are not always eager to assist them in their efforts to achieve proficiency. Many learners have a deeper interest in language as such than have those who have spoken Welsh from childhood; as a result, they frequently have a knowledge of a range of other languages and a richer understanding of sociolinguistics.

Welsh-language cultural activities from the mid-twentieth century onwards

The Welsh-language periodical press has experienced periods of great prosperity, particularly in the mid and late nineteenth century. However, Wales failed to produce a national Welsh-language daily newspaper and in 2008 an attempt to create such a newspaper floundered. In the twentieth century, all aspects of Welsh-language publication became increasingly precarious. Old established periodicals suffered from declining circulations, and by the 1950s *Baner ac Amserau Cymru* was a shadow of its former self. Yet, the Welsh press showed itself capable of versatility and innovation. The difficult years of the 1930s saw the launching of the illustrated weekly *Y Cymro*, the highly professional *Ford Gron* and the more radical journals, *Tir Newydd* and *Heddiw*. *Y Cymro* proved particularly lively, and in the 1950s had a weekly circulation of 20,000. From the

1950s onwards, a plethora of new periodicals appeared, including the monthly magazine *Barn*, the literary journal *Taliesin* and the scientific periodical *Y Gwyddonydd*. Yet, with the potential readership limited and the costs of publishing rising, most periodicals faced financial problems, to which *Y Faner* (as *Baner ac Amserau Gymru* had become) succumbed in 1992. The case for public subsidy was widely argued. The arts council, through its Welsh committee, had assisted Welsh ventures since its inception in 1945. Such patronage increased greatly following the establishment of the largely autonomous Welsh Arts Council in 1967, and by the 1990s most Welsh-language periodicals came to rely at least in part upon public money. They include the general-interest weekly *Golwg*, and magazines for, among others, women, naturalists, bibliophiles, anglers and members of religious denominations.

One venture in the field of periodicals which, initially at least, owed nothing to subsidy, was the movement to publish *papurau bro*, or neighbourhood newspapers. The first of these was *Y Dinesydd*, launched in Cardiff in 1973; it was followed by scores of others, and although some have disappeared, most have survived and flourished. By 2012, there were between fifty and sixty of them, with a combined circulation of up to 50,000. Some of them, like *Y Gadlas*, which serves the area around Llansannan in Conwy, are substantial publications, but others, such as *Yr Angor* at Aberystwyth, are more modest in scale. Taken together, the *papurau bro* have a far greater readership than do nation-wide periodicals like *Y Cymro* and *Golwg*, and are clear proof that the taste for reading Welsh exists on a significant scale. Most of them are monthlies, and the effort – all of it voluntary and unpaid – involved in running them is considerable. Some of the groups responsible for them have branched out into other activities, such as drama festivals and the publication of books of local interest.

Publishing in Welsh

Ever since the appearance of the first printed book in Welsh in 1547, the publication of Welsh books has been an uncertain business. As with periodicals, the Welsh book trade had its successes in the nineteenth century, the average annual number of Welsh books published rising from about forty in the 1820s to more than 120 in the 1880s. By the mid-twentieth century, however, the number had declined to little more than the early nineteenth-century figure. In 1950, the Cardiganshire Education Committee began subsidizing the publication of books for children, and its example was followed in subsequent years by other counties. From 1954 onwards, the Welsh Joint Education Committee gave grant-aid to the production of school books in Welsh, and in 1956 the government began a scheme to assist publications in Welsh for adults. The Welsh Books Council was founded in 1961 and thereafter almost every book published in Welsh has received some degree of state aid. In 1997, 553 Welsh-language books were published and distributed through the network of Welsh-language bookshops which had developed. Publishers of long standing, like Gwasg Gomer, founded in 1892, and the University of Wales Press, founded in 1922, were joined by a number of newer ventures, such as Y Lolfa (which publishes, among other things, material considered by other presses to be too titillating or too extreme), Gwasg Carreg Gwalch and Gwasg Gwynedd.

Literature

It is remarkable that a linguistic community somewhat smaller in number than the population of Bristol can maintain a full range of literary activity. Yet, in the early twenty-first century,

Recent Welsh-language publications

Welsh speakers were still proving that they could maintain such a range. Indeed, Emyr Humphreys, despite the millions of potential readers he has as an English-language author, seems to be envious of those writing in Welsh, an envy that had also been expressed by R. S. Thomas (d.2000). Of the books published in Welsh in the early twenty-first century, at least a third are either children's books or school books. Of those for adults, autobiographies have proliferated of late, but a significant number are books of verse, proof of the continuing appeal of poetry in Welsh-speaking Wales, an appeal to which the popularity of the radio programme *Talwrn y Beirdd* (the poets' cockpit) also bears witness. D. Gwenallt Jones, who wrote of industrial Glamorgan as well as rural Carmarthenshire, had emerged as a major poet by the mid-twentieth century, and Waldo Williams's *Dail Pren*, a work suffused with the poet's mystical awareness of the unity of nature and of universal brotherhood, was published in 1956. Fears that the erosion of Welsh-speaking communities would lead to the extinction of *y beirdd gwlad* (the country poets) were belied by the achievement of Dic Jones (d.2009) of Blaenporth in Ceredigion. The nostalgia for a lost utopia characteristic of much Welsh poetry was challenged by the work of Gwyn Thomas, a poet who delights in modernity. There were experiments in concrete poetry and *vers libre*, but there is also an urge to return to older traditions. A marked revival of interest in *cynghanedd* was apparent by the 1970s. It was encouraged by Cymdeithas Cerdd Dafod (literally, the society of the art of the tongue) and its journal *Barddas*, founded in 1976; the journal's editors, Alan Llwyd and Gerallt Lloyd Owen, proved themselves to be *cynganeddwyr* of astounding virtuosity. From the 1980s onwards, a succession of new, younger poets emerged to win the chief literary prizes of the National Eisteddfod, and the same period also witnessed the emergence of such notable

female poets as Mererid Hopwood, the first woman to win the chair at the National Eisteddfod (2001) and Gwyneth Lewis, who has won acclaim for her poems in both Welsh and English.

While the major accolades are still given for poetry, Welsh prose literature has gained in prestige over the last few decades. The short story and the essay, the glories of Welsh prose in the days of Kate Roberts and T. H. Parry-Williams, have lost ground to the novel. The writing of novels, which had languished since the days of Daniel Owen, was stimulated by the work of T. Rowland Hughes, who produced a novel a year between 1943 and 1947, an example upon which Islwyn Ffowc Elis successfully built. Caradog Prichard's semi-autobiographical and deeply moving novel *Un Nos Ola Leuad* was published in 1961, and has been translated into several languages. Historical novels have enjoyed a considerable vogue, particularly those of Marion Eames and, more recently, those of Gwen Pritchard Jones. T. Glynne Davies's *Marged* (1974) traced the life of a family over a century or more and Rhydwen Williams wrote a cycle of novels set in the Rhondda. Because of the geographical distribution of the language, Welsh novels with a city setting have been rare, although the growing strength of the Welsh-speaking community in Cardiff has already demonstrated its influence in the work of, among others, Harri Pritchard Jones and Siôn Eirian. Wiliam O. Roberts's *Y Pla* (1990; translated into English as *The Pestilence*) is a remarkable picaresque novel set in the time of the Black Death; his *Petrograd*, set at the time of the Russian Revolution appeared in 2008 and was followed by *Paris*, the second volume in the trilogy, in 2013. Robin Llywelyn and Mihangel Morgan exploit postmodernist developments, and present a world in which reality has been consciously undermined. Eigra Lewis Roberts continues to add to an impressive

list of novels, short stories and poetry. Ned Thomas's fascinating memoir, *Bydoedd*, was published in 2010.

Drama

Welsh-language drama received a huge boost in the post-war period from the plays of Saunders Lewis; there were other playwrights of distinction too, including John Gwilym Jones, Huw Lloyd Edwards and Gwenlyn Parry. Much of the energy of the younger dramatists was diverted to the writing of television soap operas, but Gareth Miles proved to be versatile both as the writer and the translator of plays. Others were involved in companies such as Brith Gof and Dalier Sylw, in whose productions the script was usually an artefact jointly created by writers, actors and producers. Brith Gof in particular won considerable renown, offering, all over the world, drama in Welsh which it skilfully enabled its audience to understand. Cwmni Theatr Cymru (and its English counterpart, the Welsh Theatre Company), founded in 1968, eventually collapsed under the weight of financial problems. Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru (National Theatre Wales) was reincarnated in 2004; its production *Y Bont*, performed on the streets of Aberystwyth in 2013, was a remarkable event, as was Dafydd Hughes's celebration of gay life, *Llwyth*, a play that was well received in Cardiff as well as Edinburgh and Taiwan.

Scholarship in and relating to Welsh

The tradition of Welsh linguistic scholarship initiated by Edward Lhuyd and revived in the late nineteenth century by John Rhŷs and John Morris-Jones continued to flourish in

the twentieth century. Notable landmarks include D. Simon Evans's *Gramadeg Cymraeg Canol* (The grammar of Middle Welsh, 1951), T. J. Morgan's *Y Treigladau a'u Cystrawen* (Mutations and syntax, 1952), Stephen J. Williams's *Elfennau Gramadeg Cymraeg* (1959; English version, *A Welsh Grammar*, 1980), David A. Thorne's *A Comprehensive Welsh Grammar* (1993), Peter Wynn Thomas's *Gramadeg y Gymraeg* (The grammar of Welsh, 1996) and the writings of Ellis Evans on Continental Celtic and Brittonic. This is a field of work with a marked international character and many articles on the subject have been published by scholars working in the United States, mainland Europe and Japan. The central role of the Bible in the evolution of the Welsh language was acknowledged with the publication of a revised version in 1988, 400 years after the appearance of William Morgan's masterpiece. The same year saw the translation of the Roman Catholic missal. Dialect has been the subject of considerable study; Alan R. Thomas's *Linguistic Geography of Wales* (1973), with its 288 maps, gave delight to a people much given to a discussion of their dialectical differences. Place-names are also of absorbing interest: *A Dictionary of the Place-names of Wales* (2007) by Hywel Wyn Owen and Richard Morgan was very well received. The statistical material available on the language has been analyzed by Pryce, Carter, Aitchison and others, and Welsh sociolinguistics has begun to gain recognition as an academic study. In 1992, an exhaustive study of the social history of Welsh was initiated by the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies at Aberystwyth; by 2001, the project had led to the publication of seven volumes in English and five in Welsh.

The centre at Aberystwyth was established in 1985: its first project was a thorough investigation of the work of the Poets of the Princes – y Gogynfeirdd. The earliest poets – y Cynfeirdd – had already been meticulously studied by Ifor Williams,

John Morris-Jones's successor at Bangor. The Welsh literary tradition up to 1900 was surveyed by Thomas Parry in his *Hanes Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg* (1945), an English version of which, by H. Idris Bell, was published under the title *A History of Welsh Literature* in 1955. Parry also established the definitive canon of the work of Dafydd ap Gwilym (1952) and edited the *Oxford Book of Welsh Verse* (first published in 1962), a learned anthology of the highlights of the Welsh poetic tradition. Grants to research students have enabled the vast manuscript collections of Welsh medieval poetry to become available, at least in typescript, and Welsh medieval prose has attracted considerable scholarly attention. The works of the Renaissance writers, the early Puritans, the Methodists and the eisteddfod competitors and novelists of the nineteenth century have been the subjects of substantial monographs. Twentieth-century literature has been extensively surveyed and concepts of modern critical theory have received an airing in Welsh. Much of this scholarly work has been conveniently distilled in the University of Wales Press's 'Writers of Wales' series, consisting of brief and elegantly produced studies of writers in both Welsh and English; the series now amounts to over ninety volumes. The political and cultural context of modern Welsh literature was analyzed by Ned Thomas in *The Welsh Extremist* (1971), a work which did much to popularize a radical view of Welsh ethnicity. The relationship of the two literatures of Wales has been the subject of distinguished studies by M. Wynn Thomas. The most ambitious publishing venture in a field associated with Welsh linguistic studies is *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia*: edited by John Koch at the Aberystwyth centre, it appeared in five volumes in 2006. The centre was also responsible for exciting research on the activities of Iolo Morganwg, and has begun a project on Welsh responses to the French Revolution, work that is revealing

fascinating aspects of the Welsh language in the late eighteenth century.

The use of Welsh in literary and linguistic studies was largely the consequence of the fact that the language was the medium of instruction for university students in departments of Welsh. Its use in studies of other subjects – apart from theology – was unlikely as long as those subjects were taught solely through the medium of English. The expansion of the use of Welsh at university level, slight though it was, encouraged the production of academic works in fields such as education and philosophy. The expansion proved especially encouraging to Welsh historians, particularly those working at Aberystwyth. Notable among their works are J. Beverley Smith's study of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd (1996; English version, 1998), *Cof Cenedl*, the annual volume of essays edited by Geraint H. Jenkins, and John Davies's comprehensive survey, *Hanes Cymru*, published by Penguin Books in 1990 (English version, *A History of Wales*, 1993; revised edition 2007). History also looms large in *Gwyddoniadur yr Academi Gymreig*, published, together with an English version, *The Welsh Academy Encyclopaedia*, in 2008.

New words

The coining of new words, widely practised in Wales in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, continued in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Words old and new have been collected in two of the most ambitious lexicographical projects yet undertaken in Wales. The project to produce a standard dictionary of the Welsh language was originally launched in 1920; the last of the four volumes of *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* (The University of Wales dictionary) appeared in 2002, and revised versions might yet appear.

Geiriadur yr Academi (The Welsh Academy English–Welsh Dictionary), the hugely impressive work of Bruce Griffiths and Dafydd Glyn Jones, was published in 1995; it is a volume of 1,710 pages and offers a full range of Welsh equivalents for English words and idioms. The creation of new words has been greatly stimulated by the needs of modern society. Coinages such as *darllediad* (broadcast), *tonfedd* (wavelength) and *oriau brig* (peak hours) trip naturally off the tongues of broadcasters. Sports commentaries led to a wide range of neologisms, with those for rugby – mainly the work of Eic Davies – being particularly apt and idiomatic. *Cyfrifiaduron* (computers) with their *meddalwedd* (software), *caledwedd* (hardware), *taenlen* (spreadsheet) and *safleoedd we* (websites) are one of the many fields in which a new Welsh terminology has come into being. Indeed, the rise of social networks has not proven to be wholly hostile to Welsh. Fascinatingly, the demands of 'trydar' (Twitter) have led to the revival of less periphrastic forms of the language, with '*Af*'' replacing '*Yr wyf fi yn mynd*'. Yet, as Joshua Fishman put it,

> the modern world has a tremendous fascination [for many language sustainers] . . . and understandably so, since they themselves are almost always modernized elites, who have been fashioned in the crucible of modern tensions and aspirations . . . The installation of their language in modern high-level functions [places it in areas in which] the dominant language has all the aces up its sleeve . . . The intimate domains . . . hearth, home, neighbourhood are . . . the most sheltered; they nurture inter-generational continuity [whereas] the most powerful modern domains are . . . the most exposed to the vicissitudes of power confrontation.

The young radicals of the 1960s scoffed at the commentators – considered by them to be old-fashioned and out of touch –

who insisted that Welsh could best be sustained in the home. The radicals demanded: 'How can that be, when, outside the home, Welsh is invisible?' They sought to make it visible and to install it in myriad modern high-level functions. They enjoyed a degree of success, but then had to face the arguments of Fishman, the world's greatest authority on ways to sustain lesser-used languages, who essentially maintained that the old-fashioned commentators had been correct all along.

Radio

By the second half of the twentieth century, the printed word was increasingly supplemented by the broadcast word. The late 1940s and 1950s was the golden age of sound broadcasting in Welsh. The BBC producers, who included leading Welsh writers, were ambitious, offering their listeners Welsh translations of the works of the world's greatest dramatists, as well as literary talks of distinction. In attracting a substantial audience for radio in Welsh, however, the production of popular programmes was more significant. In the 1950s, *Galw Gari Tryfan*, a serial for children, won an extensive following, and variety programmes such as *Noson Lawen* and *Raligamps* enjoyed very high ratings.

In 1953, following the publication of the Beveridge Report on Broadcasting, Wales was given its own Broadcasting Council, some members of which constantly pressed for an increase in the number of hours devoted to sound broadcasting in Welsh. As the great majority of those receiving the Welsh Home Service could not understand Welsh, any substantial expansion in Welsh programmes aroused their antagonism. A solution became available in the 1970s with the development of VHF. In 1977, the decision was taken to offer a choice in Wales's opt-out

from Radio Four, with English on the medium wave and Welsh on VHF. The division became complete in 1978 with the creation of Radio Wales and Radio Cymru. Initially, Radio Cymru did not broadcast exclusively in Welsh, but by the late 1990s it was offering an unbroken sequence of programmes in Welsh from 6 a.m. to 12 p.m. Radio Cymru's development led to considerable controversy. A determined effort in the late 1990s to make it more populist led to accusations of 'dumbing down'; its use of slovenly Welsh, its heavy reliance upon 'pop and prattle' and the broadcasting of English-language songs have aroused much antagonism. Welsh programmes are also broadcast on commercial stations, in particular Swansea Sound and Radio Ceredigion.

Television

With an established tradition of sound broadcasting in Welsh, it seemed natural, with the coming of television, that Welsh-language programmes should be seen as well as heard. The BBC's transmitting station at Wenvoe was opened in 1952 and that of the commercial company Television Wales and West (TWW) at St Hilary in 1958. Both stations served much of the south-west of England as well as south-east Wales, a pattern similar to that of the initial and much-criticized arrangements for sound broadcasting. Programmes from northern England could be received in parts of north-east Wales and those of the English Midlands in parts of central Wales. By 1960, 60 per cent of the households of Wales had a television set and, following the establishment of relay stations, the proportion had risen to 92 per cent by 1969.

Programmes in the Welsh language were included in the services from Wenvoe and St Hilary from the beginning; before

the completion of the relay system, they were also broadcast from the BBC's transmitters at Sutton Coldfield and Holme Moss, and for a brief period Granada of Manchester produced and broadcast programmes in Welsh. Following the publication of the Pilkington Report, BBC Wales was established in 1964 with the obligation of initiating twelve hours of programmes a week, half of which were to be in Welsh. An attempt was made in 1961 to create a commercial television station for north and west Wales with the launching of WWN Television or Teledu Cymru. Its object was to offer a substantial number of programmes in Welsh. As its territory was thinly populated and its resources inadequate, it was taken over by TWW after broadcasting for ten months. TWW undertook to broadcast five and a half hours of Welsh a week, an obligation inherited by Harlech Television (HTV) when the licences were redistributed in 1968.

Thus, by the early 1960s, the BBC and ITV between them were broadcasting about eleven and a half hours of Welsh a week. The transition from sound to visual broadcasting had been successfully achieved and, under the guidance of brilliant producers like Hywel Davies, Welsh-language programmes of distinction were made. Yet, as the vast majority of those served by the main transmitters broadcasting in Welsh could not understand the language, the programmes were restricted to off-peak hours, often late at night. Furthermore, where an alternative service to that offering Welsh-language programmes was available – and this was the case in the most heavily populated areas of the north-east and the south-east – aerials were aligned to receive that service. Thus, the existence of television programmes in Welsh led many people in Wales to avoid watching not only the Welsh-language programmes but also the English-language programmes emanating from Wales. In those areas where no alternative service was available,

viewers unable to follow Welsh programmes became increasingly vocal in their opposition to them. Yet, in those same areas the programmes in Welsh represented less than 10 per cent of the total output, and there was invariably an English programme on ITV when there was a Welsh one on BBC, and vice versa. As at least 90 per cent of broadcasting consisted of English-language programmes, and as what was available at peak viewing hours was almost exclusively in English, those wishing to watch Welsh programmes also became increasingly vocal. By the late 1960s, broadcasting had become a highly divisive issue and polarization between the Welsh- and English-language communities was growing apace.

Sianel Pedwar Cymru

On 1 November 1982 Sianel Pedwar Cymru (S4C, the Welsh fourth channel) went on the air for the first time. The campaign that led to its launching is one of the most remarkable episodes in the recent history of the lesser-used languages of Europe. By the early 1970s, English monoglots who did not want their viewing interrupted by programmes that they did not understand made common cause with those who wanted more Welsh programmes at more convenient hours. Both sides came to the conclusion that a separate channel for television broadcasts in Welsh was the only answer. Neither side was unanimous on the matter. On the English-language side, voices were heard doubting the need for any Welsh programmes at all, particularly in view of the fact that the number of Welsh monoglots was so small. On the Welsh-language side, there were those who pointed out that a large number of people, who were not Welsh enthusiasts, watched programmes in Welsh when such programmes happened to be shown on their favourite

channels; these viewers would be lost if all Welsh programmes were shown on a separate channel. This argument was forcefully put by Jac L. Williams, professor of education at Aberystwyth and a noted authority on bilingual schooling. There was also another group which believed that, if separate provision were made for programmes in Welsh, similar provision should be made for English-language programmes directly relating to Wales. This view was not widely canvassed in the early 1970s but has attracted an increasing number of adherents over the years. In marked contrast, Rhodri Talfan Davies, head of the BBC in Wales, suggested in a recent debate that English-medium channels serving Wales should occasionally remind viewers of those channels of the existence of Wales's Welsh speakers.

The demand that the fourth television channel, when brought into service, should be used in Wales primarily to broadcast programmes in Welsh at peak hours became in the late 1970s the chief issue of the civil disobedience campaign of Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg. In 1973, the notion of a Welsh fourth channel was endorsed at a national conference convened by the Lord Mayor of Cardiff; it was supported by Charles Curran, the director-general of the BBC, because it fitted in with his belief that the fourth channel, in Britain as a whole, should be devoted to minority interests. It also found support among leading figures in the broadcasting business in Wales, particularly those who felt that the existing situation was leading to a dangerous degree of polarization. The original plan was that the channel should be shared by the BBC and ITV, with each organization responsible for specific days but, in view of demands for a role for independent producers, opinion warmed to the concept of a separate authority. In 1974 the Crawford Committee reported in favour of the Welsh fourth channel, and its report was accepted by the Labour

government. By 1979, preparations for the channel were well advanced, and in that year the Conservatives, in their general election manifesto, committed themselves to its establishment.

In May 1979, the Conservatives were returned to power. Four months later, in a speech at Cambridge, the Home Secretary, William Whitelaw, announced that the government would not be proceeding with the Welsh channel but would instead seek to improve the existing provision. The activists of Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg, some of whom had suffered lengthy periods of imprisonment in their campaign to secure the channel, reacted angrily. So did many members of Plaid Cymru; 2,000 of them vowed not to pay the television licence fee and a number of leading figures in Welsh life made raids on transmitters. Then, on 5 May 1980, Gwynfor Evans announced that he would undertake a fast to death unless the government adhered to its original commitment. His statement won wide publicity, and the mass rallies that he addressed in the late summer led members of the government to believe that a mood of intransigence might well develop among a significant section of the Welsh population. With the archbishop of Wales, Gwilym Williams, the leader of the Labour peers, Lord Cledwyn, and the retired principal of the University College at Aberystwyth, Sir Goronwy Daniel, acting as intermediaries, the government yielded on 17 September 1980.

Two years elapsed between the government's volte-face and the launching of Sianel Pedwar Cymru. Welsh became a television language; of the languages of Western Europe that are not the chief languages of sovereign states, the distinction of having their own channel is enjoyed only by Welsh, Catalan, Basque and Galician. (The Irish-language channel, launched in 1997, broadcasts in a language that is constitutionally considered to be the chief language of a sovereign state.)

By British standards, S4C's viewing figures are low. However, its most popular programme, the soap opera *Pobol y Cwm*, can attract up to 250,000 viewers, 50 per cent of the total number of Welsh speakers, a percentage that, if expressed in British terms, would represent viewing figures in excess of 25 million. Among the programme's audience there are many who do not consider themselves Welsh speakers, for *Pobol y Cwm*, like most of S4C's other programmes, can be viewed with English subtitles. The channel's viewing figures relate only to the residents of Wales. S4C has, however, attracted numerous viewers in England and in Ireland. A new digital channel broadcasting in Welsh for twelve hours a day was launched in November 1998 and in 1999 the service became available throughout Europe by satellite.

The growth of independent companies which followed the launch of S4C, not only in Cardiff but also around Caernarfon and in Llanelli, was one of the most striking developments in Wales's cultural scene. Increasing employment in Welsh-language television was a marked feature of the early 1980s, a period when employment in other sectors of the Welsh economy slumped dramatically.

A number of S4C's programmes have been sold abroad and its animated programmes, in particular, have attracted widespread attention. *Sali Mali*, a particularly popular children's programme, appeared on the Al Jazeera channel, while in 2013 the TV detective drama *Y Gwyll* (English-language version *Hinterland*), filmed in Aberystwyth, was bought by the very successful television company DR Denmark, in the expectation that both the series and the Ceredigion landscape would appeal to Danish viewers.

Gwnewch bopeth yn Gymraeg
(do everything in Welsh)

The proliferation of organizations concerned to involve people in activities through the medium of Welsh was one of the most marked features of the Welsh-speaking community in the mid- and late twentieth century. Welsh was no longer the reserve of chapel-based social activities, a fact emphasized by the existence of Welsh-language licensed clubs. Nor was it exiled from business and professional life. Associations were founded for Welsh-speaking doctors and scientists; Welsh speakers involved in public relations and in fostering commercial skills established their own organizations; several ventures seeking to encourage economic development in Welsh-speaking areas were founded, as were housing associations operating through the medium of Welsh. Perhaps the most exciting innovation has been the establishment of over twenty Mentrau Iaith (language initiatives) aimed at developing economic activities that would allow youthful Welsh speakers to obtain employment in their home area.

The urge to extend the use of Welsh was particularly marked in the field of the arts. Leading Welsh-language writers became members of Yr Academi Gymreig (the Welsh Academy) founded in 1959, an institution which since 1968 has also had an English-language section. In 2011, its literary work became the responsibility of Llenyddiaeth Cymru (Literature Wales), the body that runs the competition for Llyfr y Flwyddyn (Wales Book of the Year) and Tŷ Newydd, the splendid writers' centre, once Lloyd George's home at Llanystumdwy. Undeb Awduron Cymru safeguards the interests of Welsh authors; Undeb Cyhoeddwyr a Llyfrwerthwyr Cymru represents publishers and booksellers; Cymdeithas Bob Owen with its magazine,

Y Casglwr, caters for bibliophiles and book collectors. The music scene, particularly in its pop aspects, has experienced remarkable developments. Over one hundred Welsh-language pop groups came into being, among them Catatonia and the Super Furry Animals, which have found success singing in both Welsh and English. Although some clubs aiming to attract a mainly Welsh-speaking audience have had to rely for much of their income on the cash received on a Saturday night from largely English-speaking audiences, new groups such as Cowbois Rhos Botwnnog, which perform in both Welsh and English, have gained an extensive following. The evergreen language activist and folksinger, Dafydd Iwan, continues to attract audiences. A different aspect of Welsh folk music is represented by *cerdd dant* (literally, string music: the musician's art, as distinct from *cerdd dafod*). *Cerdd dant* is the singing of a counter melody to a tune played on a harp. A society to promote it was established in 1934, and the art has experienced a renaissance in recent years, as the enthusiasm of those attending its annual festival bears witness.

Other Welsh-language institutions include Merched y Wawr, a women's organization established in 1967 as a reaction to the refusal of the National Federation of Women's Institutes to permit the use of Welsh at an official level. They also include Cymdeithas Mynydda Cymru for mountaineers, Cymdeithas Edward Lhuyd for naturalists, and a host of (largely male) dining clubs. Dyfodol has joined the battle to secure the future of the language, and Urdd Gobaith Cymru (the Welsh league of youth), which celebrated its ninetieth birthday in 2012, continues to work among young people, in particular through its well-equipped camps at Llangrannog and Glanllyn. The contribution of Young Farmers' Clubs has also been substantial. Some trade unions have been persuaded to make more use of Welsh, and one of them, Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon

Cymru (the National Union of Teachers of Wales), conducts its business almost entirely through the medium of the language. Also in the field of education, Mudiad Meithrin is concerned with nursery education and Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg has proved to be an effective pressure group. TAC (Teledwyr Annibynnol Cymru; the Welsh Independent Producers of Wales) represents the independent sector which developed in the wake of the establishment of S4C. The increased use of Welsh has led to a demand for translation services; Welsh translators have their own professional association (Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru) and there are a number of commercial translation companies.

The National Eisteddfod

All these groups and many more have their stands at that manifestation par excellence of Welshness, the National Eisteddfod. In addition to the National Eisteddfod, many towns and villages continue to hold their own local eisteddfodau, and large-scale eisteddfodau are held in Powys and in Anglesey and also at Cardigan, Lampeter and Pontrhydfendigaid. Urdd Gobaith Cymru's annual eisteddfod is on an even greater scale; indeed, it has been described as the largest youth festival in Europe.

For many Welsh-language loyalists, the National Eisteddfod is the highlight of the year. Apart from the crisis years of 1914 and 1940, it has been held annually on an extensive site since 1881, the location alternating between north and south Wales. It attracts an attendance of about 150,000. While the Welsh language has always had a role at the National Eisteddfod, the matter was placed beyond doubt in 1952 when the new constitution laid down that Welsh was to be the sole language

of its activities, a rule which came to be scrupulously observed. This provision led to a certain amount of controversy, with some county councils and individuals arguing that the non-Welsh-speaking majority were cut off from the eisteddfod as a result. Such feelings, however, did not prevent the national eisteddfodau at Newport (2004) or in the Vale of Glamorgan (2012) – places in which Welsh speakers are far from numerous – from being among the most successful ever.

The link between the Gorsedd and the eisteddfod forged by Iolo Morganwg continues to hold firm. The ritual of the Gorsedd is undoubtedly the most widely known aspect of the National Eisteddfod, and the ceremonies hailing the achievement of the winners of the chief prizes are the responsibility of the archdruid and fellow Gorsedd officers. Traditionally, the Gorsedd only honoured the winners of the crown and the chair, both awarded for poetry, but at Aberystwyth in 1992 the honouring of the winner of the literature medal, awarded for prose, also came under its auspices. Although established as a cultural festival, the National Eisteddfod is perhaps primarily a social event, the distinguished journalist, Trevor Fishlock, describing the experience of attending it as 'splashing about in the people bath'. While the competitions and ceremonies in the pavilion constitute the core of the eisteddfod's activities, many enthusiastic attenders find *y maes* (the field) far more fascinating. The hundreds of stands include that of the National Assembly for Wales, proof of the country's higher political profile. They also include those of political parties, philanthropic societies and book and craft shops. *Y Babell Lên* (the literature tent), where adjudications are delivered and poetry contests conducted, is the natural home of literature lovers. Devotees of drama, music, dance and the visual arts also have their stands, and *Pabell y Cymdeithasau* (the societies' tent) offers a place for the annual meetings of many Welsh-language

organizations. Indeed, it is at the National Eisteddfod, above all, that the organizational vitality of Welsh-speaking Wales can best be appreciated.

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9

The Welsh Language Today

The censuses of 1991 and 2001

A degree of official support and an enormous amount of organizational vitality, evident by the late twentieth century, seemed to augur well for the future of the Welsh language. The census of 1991 revealed that 508,100 of the inhabitants of Wales, 18.6 per cent of the population over the age of three, claimed to have a knowledge of Welsh. Because of changes in the enumeration system, these figures were not strictly comparable with those of previous censuses. Nevertheless, they offered some grounds for optimism about the future of Welsh. The percentage of 18.6 represented a minute decline from the 1981 percentage (18.7 per cent) and the number of Welsh speakers recorded represented a very slight increase over that for 1981 (503,520).

The most remarkable feature of the 1991 census was the advance among the younger age groups. In 1981, 18 per cent of those between the ages of three and fifteen claimed to be able to speak Welsh, a figure that had risen to 22 per cent by 1991. For the first time since 1891, knowledge of Welsh was more widespread among children than it was among the population as a whole. In 1991, 61 per cent of the inhabitants of the county of Gwynedd (which then included Anglesey and much of what

became the county of Conwy) had a knowledge of Welsh, compared with 77.6 per cent of those between three and fourteen; in the Llŷn peninsula, the percentages were 75.4 and 94.1.

The differentials recorded in the anglicized districts were even more striking. In the north-eastern district of Alyn and Deeside, 9.6 per cent of the total inhabitants had a knowledge of Welsh, compared with 27.2 per cent of those between three and fourteen. In Radnorshire, the percentages were 8.3 and 27.6. It is, perhaps, difficult to accept that over a quarter of the children of Radnorshire were fluent Welsh speakers in 1991. Nevertheless, parents were aware that the schools had enabled their children to gain some knowledge of the language, a fact that they were eager to record in the census. That eagerness was indicative of a change in attitude, for, in earlier censuses, many of those with some knowledge of the language were reluctant to declare the fact on the census form.

The increase in the number of Welsh speakers and the growing strength of the language among the young recorded by the census of 1991 created much optimism in Wales, with R. Gerallt Jones noting that the decline in the fortunes of the language 'continued until the 1991 census returns at last appeared to show that the decline had been checked'. The 2001 census was the cause of even greater optimism, although, again, its statistics are not strictly comparable with those of previous censuses. For example, in 2001 there was a question relating to the ability to understand, but not necessarily to speak, Welsh. The census revealed that 797,866 of Wales's inhabitants claimed they had some form of Welsh-language skill and 582,400 (20.8 per cent) claimed that they were capable of speaking it. The advance since 1991 of 74,300 in the number and of 2.2 per cent in the proportion of the population of Wales claiming to speak Welsh caused many to believe that the language had turned the corner.

Much of the growth could be ascribed to increasing knowledge of the language among younger age groups, a feature, as in 1991, of both western and eastern Wales. It was, however, eastern Wales that provided the greatest numerical boost. Between 1991 and 2001, the number of Welsh speakers increased in fourteen of the counties of Wales and declined in eight. Of the fourteen counties, Monmouthshire had an increase of 360 per cent in the number of its Welsh speakers, and increases almost as large were recorded in Newport, Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent.

Developments in Cardiff were particularly interesting. There, the number claiming the ability to speak the language rose from 17,236 in 1991 to 31,687 in 2001, an increase of 84 per cent. In a wide belt around the city, the percentages speaking Welsh doubled and trebled, admittedly from low bases. By 2001, over 12 per cent of all Wales's Welsh speakers lived within twenty-five kilometres of Cardiff, compared with less than 5 per cent forty years earlier. The phenomenon has attracted the interest of urban geographers, prompting them to write of Cardiff's 'quiet revolution'. The percentage remained low; in hardly any locality in and around the city did Welsh speakers in 2001 constitute much more than 5 per cent of the population, and doubts were accordingly expressed about whether such a scattered linguistic community could create the social networks necessary for language maintenance. Yet, with several of the wards of the city having, in 2001, up to 400 Welsh speakers per square kilometre, there were enough of them in close proximity to each other for such networks to be created. Many of the Welsh-speaking migrants to Cardiff are employed in administration, education and the media; having middle-class occupations, they have settled in middle-class areas, and it is noticeable that most of the growth in the number of Welsh speakers has occurred in the city's more affluent parts. Ever

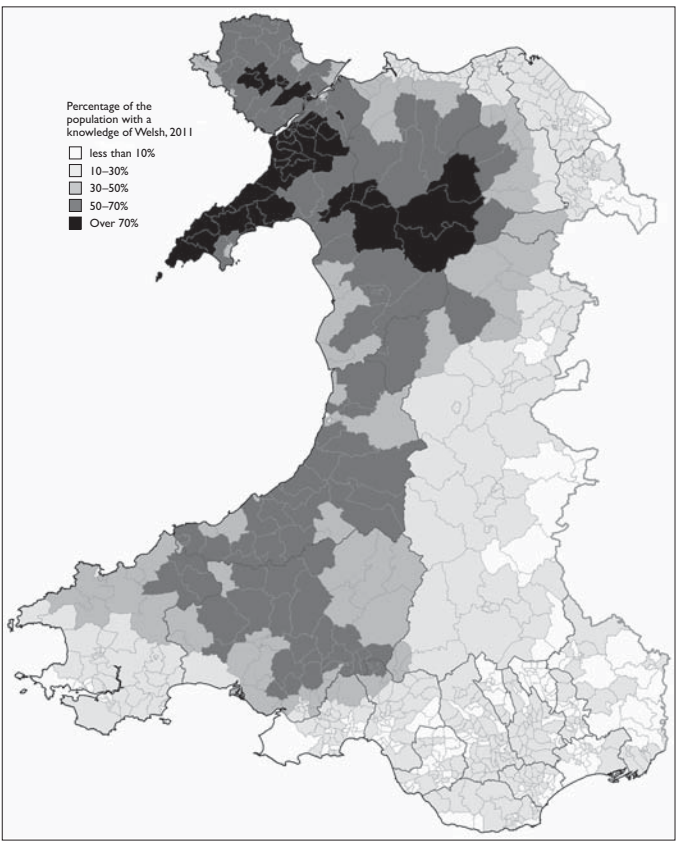
since the anglicization of the gentry, the speaking of Welsh has been associated with low social status; its association with high status, apparent in Cardiff and also elsewhere, is a new development. However, Carter and Aitchison came to the conclusion that, in Cardiff, 'Welsh is a plant which has been growing energetically, but which has not as yet produced a deep and extensive root system.

Among the eight counties recording a decline in the number of Welsh speakers in 2001 were those counties considered to be the heartland region of the language – Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire. In 1891, Welsh was the chief, and often the sole, language of at least 80 per cent of the inhabitants of most of the districts in that region. In 2001, only in nine of Wales's 867 communities – the units that replaced civil parishes in 1974 – did those recorded as speaking Welsh exceed 80 per cent. Indeed, so great was the erosion in the heartland region that the use of the term *Y Fro Gymraeg* (the Welsh-speaking region) seemed increasingly misleading.

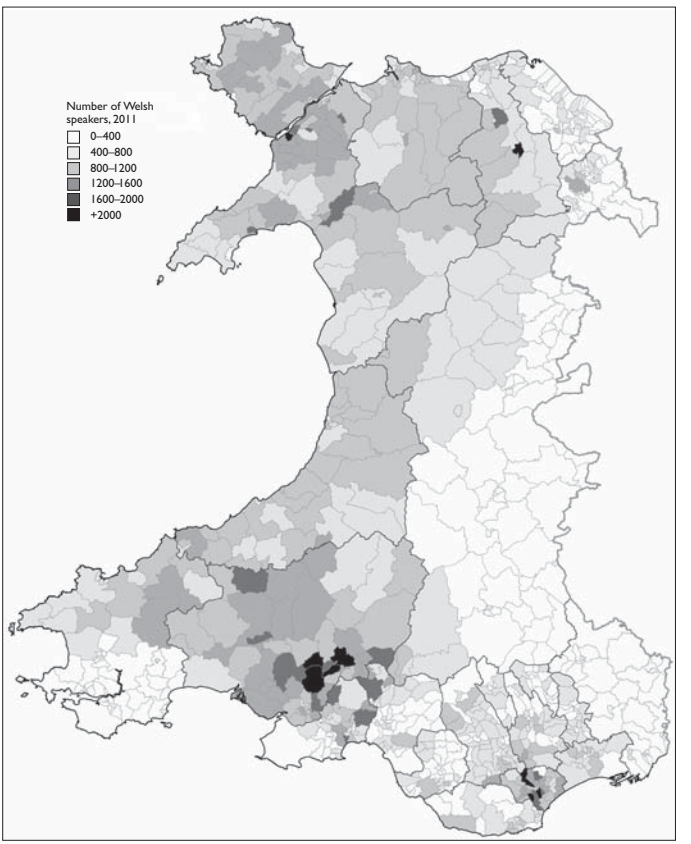
Welsh in the early years of the twenty-first century

Developments between 2000 and 2013 indicate that, while hope springs eternal in the story of the Welsh language, it is rarely unalloyed. The reassertion of national awareness among the Balkan peoples is inspiring, but the conflict – partly linguistic in origin – accompanying that reassertion provides a warning note. To seek to preserve the Welsh language can be seen as an aspect of the conservation movement, which is certain to loom large in the years ahead. Yet conservationists are often strongly opposed to the strengthening of the economic infrastructure of Wales, which is central to the viability of Welsh-speaking communities.

The financial crisis of the early twenty-first century caused many of the achievements of earlier years to come under pressure. The British government decided in 2012 to end the payment to Sianel Pedwar Cymru (the Welsh fourth channel) made by the British Ministry of Culture. From 2013, the channel will be financed mainly by the BBC and a cut in funding of 25 per cent has been mentioned. The earnings of Welsh-language singers whose work is broadcast on Radio Cymru have been reduced by as much as 85 per cent; as many musicians have refused to allow their performances to be broadcast on such terms, the station has cut its daily output and has made extensive use of material in English. Financial concerns have led to the questioning of the small grant made to assist the Welsh speakers of Patagonia, and there are worries that the National Eisteddfod will no longer be able to afford to be peripatetic. The statutory right to receive service in Welsh from some government bodies – National Savings for example – has been peremptorily ended. Other trends have also had repercussions. In western Wales the proliferating supermarkets tend to import their goods and their staff from the English Midlands. Dependence on the web has reduced reliance on publications. The unclear position of the University of Wales has caused confusion among those who considered the foundation of the university to be the greatest single achievement of the national movement. Above all, the increasing impoverishment of the inhabitants of Wales has led to the reduction of spending on matters central to the maintenance of a national linguistic culture.



Percentage of the population with a knowledge of Welsh, 2011



Number of Welsh speakers, 2011

The census of 2011

After the euphoria created by the publication of the returns of the 1991 and 2001 censuses, the returns of the census held on 27 March 2011 proved to be a rude awakening, although it should be noted that Wales's Welsh speakers were more numerous in 2011 than they had been in 1991. Nevertheless, most of the comment stressed that the advances in number and proportion seen in 2001 had been reversed. In 2011, 562,000 people in Wales (19 per cent of the population) claimed that they could speak Welsh, compared with 582,400 and 20.8 per cent in 2001. There were minimal increases in Cardiff and Monmouthshire, and the growth in the number of young Welsh speakers, a marked feature of earlier censuses, had slowed down, probably because of the decline in the size of families and possibly because of over-recording in earlier censuses.

Perhaps the most devastating revelation of the census returns was that the counties of Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire no longer had Welsh-speaking majorities. The decline in Carmarthenshire, from 50.3 to 43.9 per cent, was particularly severe, and was in part the consequence of a marked contraction of competence in Welsh in the area around Llanelli. In the mid-twentieth century, Llanelli was the largest town in the world the majority of whose inhabitants claimed the ability to speak a Celtic language. In 2001, there had been communities in both counties in which more than 70 per cent of the inhabitants had a knowledge of Welsh; in 2011, there were no such communities.

The language was stronger in Gwynedd, partly, it was claimed, because of the more robust policies of its county council. Of the county's inhabitants, 65.4 per cent claimed that they were fluent in Welsh. Llanrug, south of Caernarfon, where 87.7 per cent of the inhabitants claimed that they could speak

Welsh, was the community which topped the list. Although Gwynedd contained areas such as Abersoch, where knowledge of Welsh was slight, it had a swathe of communities in Arfon, in parts of Llŷn and between Bala and Porthmadog where more than 70 per cent of the inhabitants were fluent in Welsh. There were a few such communities in Anglesey, and one in Conwy, a county that contained almost wholly anglicized areas.

Much of the fragility of the Welsh language evident from the census data of 2011 was ascribed to in-migration. In Ceredigion, 74.6 per cent of those over three years of age who had been born in Wales claimed to be able to speak Welsh, compared with 47.3 per cent of the inhabitants of the county as a whole. The equivalent percentages for Carmarthenshire were 54 and 43.9, for Gwynedd 88.7 and 65.4 and for Anglesey 78.2 and 57.2. Of Wales's Welsh speakers, 88.2 per cent had been born in Wales. Yet although in-migration is frequently seen as the main cause of the erosion of Welsh-speaking communities, out-migration is a central factor too. The fragility of the economy in much of Wales has caused a massive outflow of young Welsh speakers; many of them moved to England, which is reputed to be the home of at least 200,000 people who have some grasp of the language. Indeed, in 2013 it was estimated that more than 5,000 Welsh speakers annually had moved from Wales to England over the previous decade.

The reaction to the 2011 returns was fascinating. Meri Huws, the newly appointed language commissioner, described them as 'very bad news' and vowed to redouble her efforts. The possible extinction of communities where more than 70 per cent spoke Welsh raised concerns, especially among those who had doubts about the viability of a language bereft of an extensive heartland where it was the everyday speech of the great majority. However, Dafydd Elis-Thomas argued that concern about 70 per cent plus communities verged upon

obsession. There were many who believed that there was still much to be learned from developments in Canada and in the Basque Country. Calls for further legislation were heard; a general framework has been created, but further involvement of the law in issues as intimate as the language a person chooses to speak is fraught with problems. Among the most interesting suggestions were those of Adam Price, the one-time MP for East Carmarthenshire and Dinefwr. Urging people to embrace innovation rather than to cower in the face of negative developments, he argued in favour of the establishment of a new eco town on the banks of the Menai Strait with a central role for the Welsh language built in from the beginning – the revival, perhaps, of the notion that there should be places in Wales in which Welsh was sovereign. It was alleged that the existence of twenty-two counties in Wales has led to waste and inefficiency; Adam Price suggested that the cultural and economic ties evident in western Wales made it a suitable region to be administered as a single authority, although there were some who thought that the idea smacked too much of the Irish Gaeltacht, an arrangement that is widely thought not to have been wholly successful. Perhaps the most apposite comment on the Welsh language in 2011 is that of Aitchison and Carter: 'Much has been achieved [and] the task ahead is Sisyphean – but not necessarily futile.'

The prospects for Welsh

When set in an international context, the prospects of Welsh are not as dire as those of many of the languages of the world. It is estimated that twenty-five languages die every year, but it can be prophesied with complete confidence that there are people still unborn who will speak Welsh as their first language,

an assertion that cannot be made in relation to at least half of the languages spoken in the world today. The linguistic expert David Crystal has estimated that Welsh is in the top 15 per cent of the languages of the world in terms of its prospects. The fact that it has always been the closest neighbour of English, now indubitably the primary world language, may be an advantage. Unlike the large swathes of the world in which acquiring English is a hugely time-consuming task, its acquisition by fluent Welsh speakers in Wales is easy and, assuming that humankind is rapidly moving towards a state of stable bilingualism or of stable multilingualism, Welsh may well be fortunately situated. Indeed, bearing in mind that English has driven into oblivion languages spoken thousands of kilometres from the coasts of England, Wales may yet receive researchers from far corners of the earth enquiring into the resilience of Welsh.

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10

Welsh and the Other Non-State Languages of Europe

About 500 million people live in Europe west of the former Soviet Union. Of these, about 455 million have as their mother tongue the major language of the state in which they live. The remaining 45 million fall into three main categories. About twelve million are recent immigrants or the children of recent immigrants to the area in which they live. Some of them – the Arabic speakers of France or the Urdu speakers of Britain, for example – have come from outside Europe, while others, like the Portuguese speakers in France or the Italian speakers in Germany, are trans-frontier migrants within Europe itself. A further twelve million or so are members of old-established communities and speak languages that have full status elsewhere but are minority languages within the state in which they live. They include the Swedish speakers of Finland, the Hungarian speakers of Romania and the Albanian speakers of Macedonia.

The rest – some 20 million in all – form the group that has immediate relevance to Welsh. They have as their mother tongue a language which is nowhere the major language of a sovereign state. The drawing up of a list of such languages is no simple matter. Should it not include Scots, Piedmontese and Alsatian, which some consider to be languages rather

than dialects? Some figures relating to the number of speakers of a language, such as the statistics for Welsh and Scots Gaelic, are based upon official censuses, but others, the languages spoken in France in particular, are a matter of guesswork; the figures for Romani are even more speculative. Where official census statistics are available, they may offer little information about the degree to which those claiming knowledge of a language actually use that language from day to day. This is an especially relevant consideration in the case of Irish, which is the first official language of a sovereign state; about a third of the population of the Irish Republic claim that they have some knowledge of the language, but it is believed that less than 1 per cent habitually makes use of it.

The languages in this group differ enormously in their strength. Where their prospects are concerned, the chief determinants are number, density and status. By far the strongest European language that is not the language of a sovereign state is Catalan. Although those who speak it argue that it has not yet achieved a state of complete normalization, it has full legal status in the autonomous region of Catalonia, where it is also the major language in the schools and is sustained by several daily newspapers and by extensive use in broadcasting. The Catalan Countries (Països Catalans) include the autonomous regions of Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearic Islands and parts of Murcia in Spain, the area around Perpignan in France, the city of Alghero in Sardinia and the state of Andorra (where it is the sole national language). Up to 11 million people in the Catalan Countries are believed to be able to speak Catalan. In Catalonia, 2,682,500 people claim to use Catalan daily – 36.7 per cent of the region's population. High levels in terms of numbers, intensity and status are also scored by Galician, which has the added advantage of being very close to Portuguese, one of the world's most widely spoken languages.

Catalan and Galician are Romance languages spoken in states in which the major language also belongs to the Romance group. This means that the difference between them and the major language is not great, and Catalonia and Galicia can therefore assimilate newcomers without great difficulty; conversely, there are few linguistic barriers to the absorption of Catalan and Galician speakers by Castilian-speaking, or in the case of the Catalans of France, by French-speaking communities.

Occitan, Sard and Friulian are also Romance languages spoken in states in which the major language belongs to the same linguistic group. Although they are quite widely spoken, their circumstances differ greatly from those of Catalan and Galician. Occitan, which includes Languedocien, Provençal and Gascon, was once the leading literary language of Europe and the universally spoken language of southern France. Early in this century it was spoken by at least ten million people, but its speech area is now greatly fragmented and consists of some of the remoter districts of the Pyrenees, Gascony and the Alps, where it shades into Franco-Provençal, which is often considered to be a separate language. Occitan has no single literary form and no agreed system of spelling. It shares these drawbacks with Sard, a language that is much less widely spoken, but which has a less fragmented speech area. The speech area of Friulian is also cohesive, consisting as it does of a compact area north-east of Venice. Although all three languages score fairly highly in terms of numbers of speakers, and two score well in terms of density, all of them fare badly in terms of status. They have little legal recognition, hardly more than a toehold in the education system and the state broadcasting systems pay them scant attention. There are movements that seek to raise their status, and some important concessions have been won. Some Sard activists aim at full

autonomy, if not independence, and there are fitful demands for autonomy among Occitan speakers, but there seems to be no overt autonomist agitation among Friulian speakers.

Of the other Romance languages – Corsican, Romansch and Ladin – Corsican has some official status. It is taught sporadically in public schools and there are occasional broadcasts in the language. Corsica has a vigorous nationalist movement which sometimes resorts to violence. Romansch is recognized as a national but not as an official language of the Swiss Federation. It has a place in the schools, in broadcasting and in public life, and the decentralized nature of Switzerland allows linguistic tensions to be defused. Romansch, nevertheless, faces many difficulties, arising from the small numbers of speakers, the fragmentation of its speech area, the lack of a single literary form and the destructive effect of tourism. Ladin, the central or Dolomitic version of Rhaeto-Romansch, has enjoyed a degree of public recognition since 1948, and it has been a beneficiary of the arrangements for giving official status to German in South Tyrol. However, the lack of a single literary language and the smallness of the language base make its situation highly precarious.

The most remarkable of the non-state languages is undoubtedly Romani. The Roma, commonly known as Gypsies, migrated from their Punjab homeland a thousand years ago, and the persecution they suffered reached a climax in the murder of half a million Roma by the Nazis. There are at least six million of them in Europe, but they are everywhere scattered and fragmented. The Romani language is extinct in most of Western Europe, although it survived among a few families in Wales until the 1950s. It is extensively spoken in Serbia, Slovakia and Romania, and in each country it has absorbed words from the language of the dominant community. Romani receives some degree of recognition in Serbia and Slovakia, and

Indian diplomats have shown an interest in its fate. As its speakers have been unable to consolidate themselves territorially, they offer virtually no parallels with other linguistic groups in Europe. The only group that has even slight similarities with them are the Sami. Like the Roma, the Sami (or Lapps) have semi-nomadic traditions, but whereas Romani speakers are found in at least a dozen of the states of Europe, Sami speakers are found in only four – Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Compared with the Roma, they are a tiny group, but the self-awareness which has developed among them is leading to increasing cross-frontier cooperation, particularly in the field of broadcasting.

In terms of numbers, the linguistic groups closest to the Welsh speakers are the speakers of Frisian, Basque and Breton. Frisian has close links with Dutch and German, the dominant languages of the states in which the Frisians live, though linguistically it is closer to English. Indeed, English might be considered to be a dialect of Frisian. Breton and Welsh are markedly different from French and English; Basque is entirely different from any of the other languages of Europe, representing as it does a speech that existed in Western Europe before the coming of the speakers of Indo-European languages. Basque speakers are situated on either side of the border between the Spanish and French states; about 663,000 live in Spain, and 51,000 in the northern Basque provinces located in south-west France. Basque has some status in Navarre, but very little in France, although the density factor is higher there than in Spain. In the autonomous community of Euskadi, however, the government has launched an ambitious programme of language restoration, with schools adopting a determined scheme of language learning. Television in Basque is broadcast for sixty-four hours a week and the language is emphasized as the symbol of the renaissance of a people.

There is nothing comparable in Breton. In Brittany, the French government's traditional hostility towards all languages other than French has in recent years been modified slightly, but Breton still has no official status, although an agency, Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg, was set up in 1999 to promote the language. The French government proved hostile to the Breton-medium schools run by the Diwan movement. However, the movement celebrated its thirtieth anniversary in 2008 and more than 3,500 pupils attended its schools in 2011–12. Nevertheless, the numbers able to speak Breton decline rapidly by age group, the number of Breton-speaking parents transmitting the language to their children being small. Yet in some fields, particularly music, Breton culture shows considerable resilience.

The status of West Frisian is markedly higher. (East and North Frisian are in a much weaker position.) There are regulations governing its use in public life and the language is extensively taught in primary schools, although it has only a limited role at secondary level. Radio programmes in Frisian are broadcast for about ten hours a week but there is virtually no television in the language. While there are a number of societies seeking to further Frisian, there is only slight evidence of anything resembling a Frisian nationalist movement.

The rest of the linguistic groups listed have fewer than 100,000 speakers. The strongest of them is undoubtedly Faroese, for all the inhabitants of the Faroe Islands, apart from the Danish governor, have Faroese as their mother tongue. The survival of Sorb, a Slav language spoken in two areas of the former East Germany, is remarkable. The Sorb community suffered grievously under the Nazis, but received sympathetic treatment from the Communist regime. Whether it will survive in the circumstances created by the reunification of Germany is as yet uncertain.

As has been noted, Irish is an anomaly in that it is the first official language of a sovereign state, but is spoken by a minority

of the citizens of that state. While the state is, in theory, concerned to advance Irish, in practice its support has been fitful. However, an Irish-language television channel was launched in 1997, and Raidio na Gaeltachta has provided a radio service since 1972. Many Irish-language enthusiasts are distressed by the fact that independence has not ensured the wellbeing of the language, although, bearing in mind the parlous condition of Irish when self-government was achieved, it would probably not have survived at all had it not received at least partial support from the state. Scots Gaelic, the sister language of Irish, was the dominant language of almost the whole of Scotland a thousand years ago, but it had retreated to the Highlands and islands by the sixteenth century. It has declined markedly on the mainland and is now spoken by the majority only in parts of the Inner and Outer Hebrides. The establishment of the Western Isles authority in 1973 led to a considerable enlargement of its role in local government. Initiatives to strengthen its position in schools have been partially successful, and there has been some expansion in Gaelic television broadcasting. However, UNESCO considers that Scots Gaelic is critically endangered.

A survey of the non-state languages of Europe leads inexorably to the conclusion that the situation of each one is unique. There is, however, a value in considering them together, if only to find areas of useful difference. When the languages are listed, a clear hierarchy emerges. In terms of numbers and status, Catalan heads the list; indeed, it is difficult to see in what sense Catalan is a 'lesser-used' language, in view of the fact that it has far more speakers than some of the sovereign-state languages of Europe. In terms of density, the winner is the modest Faroese.

Where does Welsh fit in? Among the Celtic languages, it is undoubtedly pre-eminent. Indeed, *Celtic Culture: A Historical*

Encyclopedia writes of 'Welsh exceptionalism'. Among the lesser-used languages of Europe as a whole, Welsh could be considered to be precisely in the centre, a point emphasized by Tom Nairn in his analysis of the non-state nationalities of Europe. Although the Welsh speakers are by no means among the larger groups, Welsh has a higher status than several of the more widely spoken languages. Although the density factor is fairly low, Welsh speakers live in a country in which most of the other inhabitants recognize their kinship with the language, a bonus of immense importance. The centrality of Welsh is interesting in itself. It may also be important, for if Welsh can solve its problems, other languages can hope to do so too.

11

The Characteristics of Welsh

Languages, when they are described, always appear to be more complicated than they are in reality. Contrary to what many Welsh speakers like to believe, Welsh is not a difficult language, as the thousands who have gained complete mastery of it in adulthood bear witness. In many ways, it is an easier language to learn than English. Unlike English, it has the inestimable advantage of being largely phonetic; that is, the words are pronounced as they are written, with none of the confusion which arises in English over such words as 'cough', 'bough', 'through', 'though' and 'thorough'. While English has several letters (*g*, *h* and *k*, for example), which are often not pronounced at all, every letter in Welsh is pronounced.

The Welsh alphabet

a	*b*	*c*	*ch*	*d*	*dd*	*e*	*f*	*ff*	*g*	*ng*	*h*	*i*	*l*
ll	*m*	*n*	*o*	*p*	*ph*	*r*	*rh*	*s*	*t*	*th*	*u*	*w*	*y*

The Welsh alphabet consists of twenty simple letters and eight digraphs (two letters combining to produce a different sound, as with *ch*, *rh* and *ll*). Welsh has no *j*, *k*, *q*, *v*, *x* or *z*. Most of the single letters present no difficulties, but it should be noted that *c* is always pronounced to correspond with the English *k*, *f* with *v* and *s* with *ss*.

The origins of words

Although Welsh has absorbed words from other languages, Latin, French and particularly English among them, its basic vocabulary is still largely of Celtic origin. This is also true of more technical words. Thus, while English words such as national, political, industrial and philosophical have equivalents in French, German and other European languages which are very similar, Welsh uses its own indigenous words – *cenedlaethol*, *gwleidyddol*, *diwydiannol* and *athronyddol*. Indeed, it has a very considerable ability to coin words from its own resources, although the sloppy speech of many Welsh speakers, overloaded as it is with unnecessary English borrowings, can give the contrary impression.

Mutations

The most remarkable feature that Welsh shares with the other Celtic languages is the system of initial mutations. These changes in the initial consonants of some words have become an integral part of the language, and it has been suggested that they are the result of a fusion of the Celtic languages with the languages spoken by the pre-Celtic inhabitants of Britain and Ireland. There are three kinds of mutation: soft, nasal and

aspirate. The most frequent instances of the soft mutation occur when the feminine noun is preceded by the definite article (*cath – y gath* [the cat]), when an adjective follows a feminine noun (*mawr – ystafell fawr* [large room]) and following *ei* (his) (*ci – ei gi* [his dog]). Nasal mutation occurs most frequently after *fy* (my) (*cadair – fy nghadair* [my chair]). Aspirate mutation follows *ei* (her) (*pen – ei phen* [her head]).

TABLE OF MUTATIONS

RADICAL	SOFT	NASAL	ASPIRATE
c	g	nhg	ch
p	b	mh	ph
t	d	nh	th
g	(disappears)	ng	
b	f	m	
d	dd	n	
ll	l		
m	f		
rh	r		

To the beginner, the whole matter can appear highly abstruse; yet, it is comforting to know that a learner who ignores the mutations completely can be understood without much difficulty. A mastery of them is, however, the mark of the successful learner and is ultimately acquired naturally, as if the speaker unconsciously absorbs the inherent euphony of the language.

Nouns and plurals

The noun has two genders, masculine and feminine. The 'it' of English does not exist. As in French, everything is either 'he' or 'she'. Some adjectives have masculine and feminine forms. Thus *gwyn* (white) is *(g)wen* when following a feminine noun. Some adjectives also have singular and plural forms (although adjectival plurals are used infrequently): *dyn tew* is a fat man, *dynion tewion* fat men. Where plurals are concerned, Welsh recognizes that some things come in pairs. Thus *llaw* (hand) has the plural *dwylaw* (two hands). To anyone used to English plurals, with the almost universal addition of *s*, the variety of Welsh plural forms can appear wilfully multifarious. There are seven ways of forming the plural:

adding a termination: *afal* (apple) *afalau*
vowel change: *bran* (crow) *brain*
adding a termination with a vowel change: *mab* (son) *meibion*
dropping a singular ending: *pluen* (feather) *plu*
dropping a singular ending with a vowel change: *hwyaden* (duck) *hwyaid*
substituting a plural for a singular ending: *cwningen* (rabbit) *cwningod*
substituting a plural ending for a singular with a vowel change: *miaren* (bramble) *mieri*

Numerals

The numerals in Welsh also have distinctive features. Twenty is the basic unit in counting: *ugain* (twenty), *deugain* (two twenties – forty), *trigain* (three twenties – sixty), *pedwar ugain* (four twenties – eighty), followed by *cant* (a hundred) and

sometimes by *chwe ugain* (six twenties – a hundred and twenty). The teens offer interesting complications: fourteen is *pedwar ar ddeg* (four on ten), but sixteen is *un ar bymtheg* (one on fifteen) and eighteen *deunaw* (two nines). There is now a growing tendency to adopt a decimal system – *un deg wyth* (one ten eight) for eighteen, *pedwar deg* (four tens) for forty and so on. The singular form of the noun is used after the numeral: *un afal* (one apple), *ugain afal* (twenty apples), which means that the complexities of plurals can often be avoided altogether.

Prepositions

In Welsh, prepositions are conjugated:

gan (with)	ar (on)
gennyf (with me)	arnaf (on me)
gennyt (with thee)	arnat (on thee)
ganddo (with him)	arno (on him)
ganddi (with her)	arni (on her)
gennym (with us)	arnom (on us)
gennych (with you)	arnoch (on you)
ganddynt (with them)	arnynt (on them)

Other features of Welsh

In almost all Welsh words, the stress falls on the last syllable but one: *gorýmdaith*, *áthro*, *amddiffýniad*. In those cases where the stress falls on the last syllable, it is usually the result of a contraction in the word; *Cymraeg* was originally *Cym-ra-eg*, and *paratoi* was *pa-ra-to-i*. Some words borrowed from English also retain the original accentuation: *apel*, *polisi*, *paragraff*.

In English, the order of the words in a sentence is subject, verb, object, indirect object: The girl gave a book to her friend. In Welsh, it is verb, subject, object, indirect object: *Rhoddodd y ferch lyfr i'w chyfaill* (Gave the girl a book to her friend.) This order can be varied for the sake of emphasis or to ask a question, when the object comes first: *Afal a brynodd y plentyn?* (An apple bought the child?)

The adjective is almost always placed after the noun. When it is not, the meaning may be different. *Ci unig* means a lonely dog, but *unig gi* means the only dog; *hen gyfaill* means a friend of long standing, but *cyfaill hen* means an aged friend.

The genitive, expressed in English by an apostrophe s ('s), is expressed in Welsh by putting what is owned immediately before the owner: *ci Lowri* (Lowri's dog) *tŷ y dyn* (the man's house).

The tendency to the periphrastic, or more roundabout, form is very obvious in verb forms. 'I sing' in standard written Welsh is *canaf*, but the usual spoken form is *yr wyf i yn canu* (I am singing). This use of a part of the verb 'to be' (*yr wyf i*, I am) with the verb-noun (*canu*) may have been inherited by the incoming Celts from the pre-Celtic population. The construction has been copied in English to give the form 'I am singing', a construction not found in the other Germanic languages.

The existence of the written concise form and the spoken periphrastic form of the verb is an example of the considerable difference between formal and colloquial Welsh. Another example is the continued use in written Welsh of the ending *-nt* in the third person plural of the verb, as in *daethant* (they came), which in speech becomes *daethan*. Yet another example is *hwy*, which in speech becomes *nhw*. These differences are the result of the fact that written Welsh is based upon the forms employed by William Morgan in his translation of the

Bible in 1588. Those forms were in turn based upon the usages of the classical poets, which were already archaic in Morgan's day. In preparing courses for learners, it is usual to employ more flexible colloquial forms. Thus, a learner is taught to say *Maen nhw'n dod* (they are coming), rather than *Y maent hwy yn dod*.

Welsh has no indefinite article. Thus, the dog is *y ci*, but a dog is simply *ci*. This is a feature Welsh shares with the other Celtic languages, as is the conjugation of prepositions and the absence of all-purpose words for yes and no.

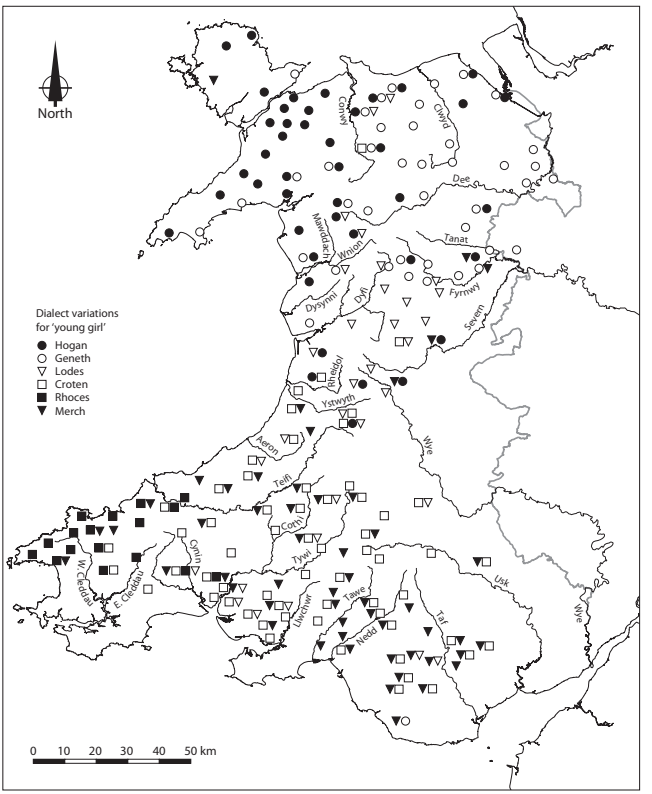
Dialect

There is no 'received Welsh' comparable with Received English; all Welsh speakers speak in dialect to a greater or lesser extent. Even those whose speech is close to formal Welsh provide indicators through their intonation and through their pronunciation of certain letters – u in particular – as to the part of Wales to which their Welsh belongs. Most Welsh speakers are fascinated by dialect and some claim to be able to identify the origins of a new acquaintance down even to parish level. Someone from Anglesey using a large number of words of local currency can present difficulties to someone from Glamorgan, and vice versa. The issue of unintelligibility, however, is often grossly exaggerated, for the difference between dialects in Wales is far less than it is in England.

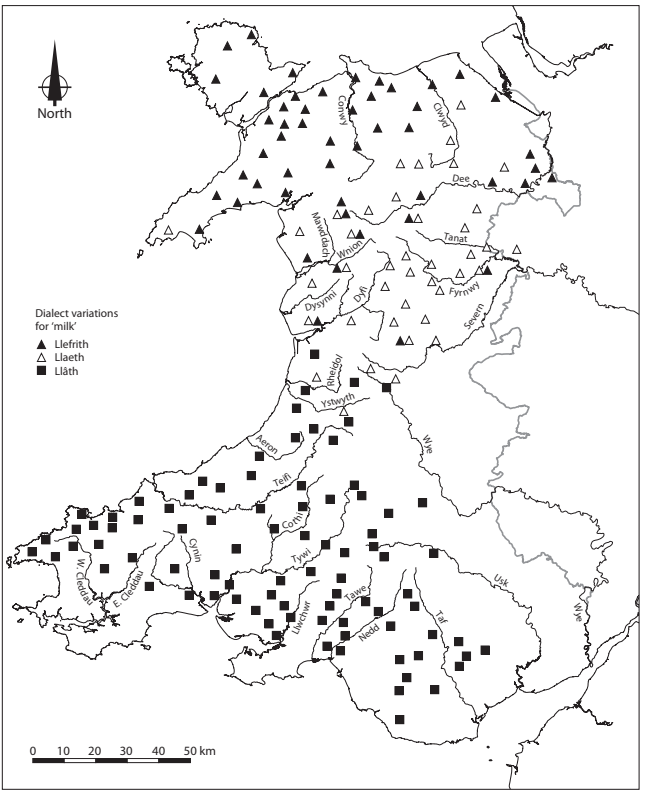
There is a widespread assumption that there are only two forms of Welsh – northern and southern. The most familiar indicators are the words for 'now' and 'with'. 'Now' is *nawr* to the south and *rwan* to the north of the Rheidol valley; 'with' is *gyda* to the south and *(h)efo* to the north of the Dyfi valley. Other words – those for 'money' (*arian/pres*), 'grandmother'

(*mamgu/nain*) and 'liver' (*afu/iau*), for example – also serve to emphasize the significance of the isogloss along the ancient border between the diocese of St David's and those of Bangor and St Asaph. Yet, the pronunciations of some words link the north-west and the south-east; thus the word *perffaith* (perfect) is pronounced *perffath* in Gwynedd and Gwent, but *perffeth* in the rest of Wales. The tendency to turn *a* into *e* – *tên for tân* (fire), for example – occurs in Montgomeryshire and Meirionnydd, and also in the south-east.

Dialectologists consider that Welsh has six major speech areas; within them, there are a further sixteen minor speech areas. The differences between some of them are slight. The Welsh of the greater part of south-western Wales, for example, is broadly the same; a speaker of the dialect of the Ystwyth valley, moving to the lower Tywi valley, eighty kilometres away, would find only two or three unfamiliar words in regular use. If the whole of Wales were Welsh-speaking, by far the most commonly spoken dialect would be Gwenhwyseg, the speech of Gwent and east Glamorgan (the home of 45 per cent of the population of Wales), but the erosion of the language in that region has undermined the dialect, which can now only be heard on the lips of the elderly in places such as Rhymney and Dowlais. As many of the teachers in Welsh-medium schools are natives of south-west Wales, their way of speaking has tended to become dominant among the new generation of Welsh speakers in the south-east.



Dialect variations for 'young girl'



Dialect variations for 'milk'

Postscript

I shall finish, as I began, on a personal note. I mentioned that in my childhood it seemed odd to me that there should be people who not only spoke Welsh effortlessly, but did so all the time. Now that I speak Welsh myself, this does not seem odd at all. What does seem peculiar, in view of the manifest vitality and innovativeness of Welsh-speaking Wales, is the constant lament that the end of the language is in sight. Perhaps I am fortunate in that, not having been brought up in a community in which Welsh was the dominant language, I cannot share the sense of despair felt by those who were brought up in such communities and who contemplate their erosion with something akin to panic. I am more aware of advances. At Blaina, near my native town – Brynmawr – there is now a Welsh-medium primary school with 310 pupils, and a few miles away over the hills stands a Welsh-medium secondary school. A great deal of the panic and despair stems, not so much from the erosion of the language in many of its former strongholds as from the realization that the way of life associated with the language in those strongholds has passed away. I did not know that way of life, and so its passing leaves me unmoved. Indeed, it could be argued that the association of Welsh with a vanishing way of life was detrimental to the

language, and that its continuance is dependent upon its ability to anchor itself in modernity, an ability which it has, to some extent, shown.

Those distressed by the erosion of virtually monoglot Welsh communities point to the way in which the English language has burrowed itself into spheres of life that were formerly exclusively Welsh. Again, I and others like me cannot share in their distress. To those brought up as I was, in an English-speaking community, the English language was and is a part of the common experience, and I cannot conceive of Wales without it. The future of the Welsh language must depend upon the ability of those who speak it to come to terms with the existence of English in Wales. That Welsh has a future I do not doubt, for the remarkable vitality it has demonstrated over the past generation shows no sign of waning.

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Index

The existence of the Welsh language can come as a surprise to those who assume that the foundation language of Britain is English – yet J. R. R. Tolkien described Welsh as the 'senior language of the men of Britain'. Visitors from outside Wales may be intrigued by the existence of Welsh and will want to find out how a language which has, for at least fifteen hundred years, been the closest neighbour of English, enjoys such vibrancy, bearing in mind that English has obliterated languages thousands of miles from England's shores.

This book offers a broad historical survey of Welsh-language culture from sixth-century heroic poetry to television and pop culture in the early twenty-first century. The public status of the language is considered and the role of Welsh is compared with the roles of other non-state languages in Europe. This new edition of *The Welsh Language* offers a full assessment of the implications of the linguistic statistics produced by the 2011 Census. The volume contains maps and plans showing the demographic and geographic spread of Welsh over the ages, charts examining the links between words in Welsh and those in other Indo-European languages, and illustrations of key publications and figures in the history of the language. It concludes with brief guides to the pronunciation, the dialects and the grammar of Welsh.

Janet Davies was born in Crickhowell and brought up in Brynmawr. She gained a BA in History at Swansea, and an MA on the Political History of Glamorgan at Aberystwyth. She has four children and six grandchildren, all of whom speak Welsh.

Cover image: The Welsh Alphabet (poster *c.*1900), based on the alphabet of T. C. Evans (Cadrawd) of Llangynwyd, illustrated by his son, Christopher Evans, and used in Glamorgan schools in the early twentieth century. By permission of Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales

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