



National Museums in Wales

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Summary

This report considers national museums in Wales. Welsh MPs have sat at Westminster since the early sixteenth century, and the country was integrated with England to a greater extent than other nations making up the UK. In addition, there are strong contrasts between the rural centre and north of the country and the industrial south. The country is very mountainous which has affected its development.

Nationalism in Wales reflected this, and is outlined in the Introduction. For a range of reasons, including conquest by the English in the medieval period, and the Tudor incorporation of Welsh leaders into the English elite, together with the country's shared border with southern England, nationalism in Wales was less strident than that in Scotland and Ireland. For reasons explored below, there was something of a rift between the Anglican Church, which became associated with the English, and 'Dissenters' who were associated with Welshness. In the nineteenth century, the mineral reserves of South Wales, especially coal, led to an industrial revolution that provided employment for many Welsh people (and drew in English immigrants). As with other British nations, the experience of the Second World War helped develop a shared unity with the rest of the UK. Nevertheless, Welsh culture, which varied somewhat in different areas, remained distinctive, especially obvious in language and music.

Some of the reasons for the rise of nationalism are explored in the report. Welsh nationalism is complex and is usually defined as a form of cultural and ethnic nationalism that emphasises language, songs, literature and poetry, along with Welsh antiquities and the idea of the Welsh associated with the landscape and territory of Wales. In the nineteenth century this began to take a more political form though always within the notion of Wales remaining within the United Kingdom. It made little headway in the first half of the twentieth century as Britain fought and won two World Wars. In the 1970s it failed to gain enough support to prompt legislation giving more powers to Wales, but in 1997 a referendum resulted in a small majority in favour of devolution. An Act of Parliament implemented this in 1998. Since then, the Welsh Assembly has had direct responsibility for funding and policy for national museums in Wales.

The early history of national museums in Wales can be traced to the activities of learned societies. These had many features in common with similar activities by elite groups elsewhere in Britain; they were formed in Wales and were made up of Welsh people. Elements of Welsh culture – literature, song, poetry, the Welsh language and antiquities – were therefore prominent, as well as scientific subjects, especially those relating to science and industry, which might have more in common with British scholarly activities. Later, museums became implicated in the civic competition between leading towns in the country, where sections of the local elites regarded museums as positive institutions and a mark of civic pride. When the competition for

recognition as 'capital' of Wales became an issue, civic leaders similarly saw the possession of a major museum as an advantage. In these early years, Welsh nationalism was rarely explicit in the founding of museums. In this Wales resembles, to a certain extent, Scotland, where the idea of a national museum was, for some time, a museum in a capital city.

The gaining of national status (the National Museum of Wales was granted its charter in 1907) was therefore not in itself associated with driving nationalism. Nevertheless, by the time the Museum opened in 1912 '[T]he promotional literature of the Museum, the coverage in the local press and even the speech by the British Monarch himself all point towards a a more public acceptance of Welsh distinctiveness' (Mason 2007a: 134). To what extent the development of a national institution such as the Museum in Cardiff contributed to this increased interest in Welshness and to what extent it reflected it is impossible to say. In the succeeding decades, the National Museum (NMW or in Welsh, 'Amgueddfa Cymru') established strong links with regional museums, and incorporated some other museums into its structure. In outline, the National Roman Legion Museum, Caerleon, dated back to the nineteenth century, but was incorporated into the National Museum in 1930; St Fagans, a folk park, was set up as part of the museum, in 1948; the National Woollen Museum was opened as part of the National Museum in 1976; Big Pit, initially a local authority museum created partly in response to the closure of the coal industry, was incorporated into the National Museum of Wales in 2001; and the National Waterfront Museum, previously a local authority industrial museum, was opened in 2005 as a national museum in a new building in Swansea. Whilst these newer museums often addressed a uniquely Welsh past, it is questionable whether nationalism played a significant role in their development. At the same time, there is a sense in some of the works studied for this report, that successive British governments treated Wales as simply another part of England, and (in some official reports into museums) ignored the National Museum of Wales altogether. By contrast the Welsh Assembly has much more interest and more effective control of heritage organisations in Wales. This gives the National Museum a consciously and distinctly Welsh context in which to operate, responding to more coherent government policies. Nevertheless, the different institutions combining to make the National Museum, present very different aspects of Welsh life and culture.

Summary table, Wales

Name	Inaugurated	Initiated	Actors	Ownership	Type	Values	Temporal reach	Style Location
National Museum Cardiff	Late 19 th century	1912	Local and national politicians	British government Later, Welsh Assembly	Art and Geology	Universal art and national collections	Prehistory to the present	Classical style, with Doric columns, in Cathays Park, the civic centre of Cardiff.
St. Fagans National History museum	1946	1948	Aristocracy and National Museum of Wales	As above	Folk Museum	National	Pre-history to 20 th c.	Open-air museum with many buildings from different periods in the grounds of St Fagans Castle, a late 16th-c. manor house, outside Cardiff city centre.

Introduction

Wales was part of Britannia in Roman times. After the withdrawal of Roman troops the native Britons continued to live in what is now Wales and maintained a separate existence from Saxon settlers who pushed many of the original inhabitants of Britain westwards into the area. The Welsh had their own Celtic language and traditions and the mountainous nature of most of their country led to the establishment of separate principalities. Thus historians such as K. Morgan claimed that an 'awareness of an identity of language, culture and race' existed as early as the sixth century AD (Morgan, 1971: 154).

Following the Norman Conquest of England in 1066, Norman lords built castles and raided across the border with Wales, and this area became known as the Welsh Marches. In 1282, the Prince of Wales, Llewellyn, was defeated by Edward I and Wales came increasingly under full English control. The Tudor monarchs in the sixteenth century brought the administration of Wales much closer to that of England, with Welsh MPs sat in the Westminster parliament.

Although most of Wales was (and is) rural and agricultural, the southern part of Wales became heavily industrialised in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, based on coal mining and the smelting of metals. This area suffered badly during economic slumps, and during 'de-industrialisation' from the 1970s, leading to serious unemployment.

Wales (like Scotland) had separate flags, saints' days, language, sporting teams, and media provision. Specific educational provision recognised its separateness. However, Wales had no powers to raise taxes, decide foreign policy or to make laws. Until the recognition of Cardiff in 1955, Wales also lacked a capital city, and until that time London was the capital of Wales. Since devolution in the late twentieth century Wales has acquired some legislative powers.

Welsh nationalism

Welsh nationalism was not asserted with the vigour of Scots or especially Irish nationalism. Hechter (1999) [original 1975] along with Bala (1999) and Lord (1992) have seen Wales as dominated by England and have argued that as a 'stateless nation' Wales has suffered culturally. Hechter postulates an internal colonial model for Britain through which, though industrialised and thus more homogenous in some respects, different nations within Britain retain a heightened distinctive ethnic awareness, partly because of regional economic inequality. According to the theories adopted by these commentators a nation such as Wales is oppressed and tends to over identify with the culture of the oppressor, losing its own distinctiveness in the process. However, Mason (2007a: 15) points out that we cannot begin to equate the experiences of Wales and Scotland with those of modern previously colonial nations in Africa. She points to the work of Aaron and Williams (2005) who look at the historical context of this colonial relationship. Legislation (Acts of Union) in 1536 and 1534 resulted in a system by which Welsh voters sent MPs to Westminster and the Welsh acquired equal status under English law.

For all intents and purposes the Acts of Union abolished the distinctions between Wales and England: Wales was no longer a colony, but part of an expanded England or Greater Britain. After the Act of Union all legislation that applied to England applied also to Wales. The border between the two countries ... largely ceased to have any meaning [and]... Wales

became a junior partner in the expanding British state. (Williams 2005: 4 – 5 cited Mason 2007a: 16)

Morgan summed up nationalism in Wales in 1971, and argued that 'an identity of language, culture, and race' survived after the sixteenth century legislation, 'but lacked any institutional focus', while 'the the natural leaders of Welsh society, the landed gentry, adopted the speech and customs of their English counterparts [...] and became increasingly isolated from the great mass of a peasant population' (Morgan 1971: 154). All this suggests that Welsh nationalism is complex and interpretations depend upon the approach taken to the question. Whatever theory is adopted it cannot be denied that the establishment of the Welsh Assembly has brought with it a growing enthusiasm for the Welsh to govern their affairs, as witnessed by the referendum 'yes' vote in March 2011 to the question on whether the National Assembly for Wales should gain the power to legislate on a wider range of matters.

Thus any study of the national museum institution in Wales will need to take account of the shifting sense of nationhood within Wales over time, and be aware that some nationalists may attempt to place nationalism earlier than most academics would expect to find it. In addition, it must take account of different places: for example, those working for a national museum in the industrialised south had different ideals from those of the more traditional, agrarian north, and this helps to explain the rivalry between Caernarfon in the north and Cardiff in the south as the sites for the national museum.

Welsh nationalism in the nineteenth century

During the Victorian period there was increasing interest in Welsh folk life and history and a greater sense of Welsh separateness (which would continue into the twentieth century with Welsh arts organisations celebrating the distinctiveness of Welsh culture). In Morgan's view (1971: 155-56), two factors played a significant role in this developing nationalism. The first was the industrialisation of the south. Here, the exploitation of high quality Welsh coal reserves was the basis of mining communities, and the area became a mainspring of British industrial might by 1914. This was reflected in rapid urbanisation and the growth of towns such as Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Merthyr Tydfil. The surplus population of impoverished farms found employment here (rather than in England or America) and the economy helped support a Welsh language press and cultural expression through local *eisteddfodau* (traditional literary, musical and performance festivals) and choral festivals.

The second factor Morgan highlights was the explosive rise of non-conformity (1971: 156-7). A series of religious revivals in Wales in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries meant that large sections of the population were strongly influenced by a 'non-conformist' form Christianity, that is, they did not 'conform' to Anglican custom or organisation. Since the Anglican Church was the 'established church' and was closely allied to the British elite, this caused difficulties. For example, the 1902 Education Act made local authorities (county councils) support schools, including Anglican schools, from local taxes. In parts of Wales, the bulk of the population (and usually the councils too) were staunchly nonconformist, and they deeply resented paying for Anglican schools. As Morgan notes:

Sparked off by the Methodist revival, finding a new buoyancy in the 'older dissent' of the Baptists and the Independents, non-conformity gave a new unity to Wales. Migrants from

the countryside brought the institutions and the ethos of the chapels with them into the new industrial communities, and shaped their character in fundamental respects. (Morgan 1971: 156)

Although they shared many of the ambitions of English non-conformists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Morgan (1971: 154) claims that, by the 1840s, it was clear that Welsh non-conformists were developing a separate culture and momentum. An example can be seen in the 'Blue Books scandal', around a government commission into the state of education in Wales in 1847. The three commissioners spoke no Welsh, and took evidence only from English speakers, many of whom were Anglican clergymen. They submitted an extensive report, some sections of which were sharply critical of the Welsh. Non-conformism and the Welsh language were cited as causes of the 'laziness' and 'backwardness' of the inhabitants. The report drew a mixed but sometimes hostile response from the Welsh.

Thus the (English) Anglican establishment was increasingly rejected, and legislation in the late 1800s and early 1900s led to the dis-establishment of the Anglican Church in Wales, completed in 1920 (having been delayed by the First World War). Alcohol abuse was high on the list of reforms wanted by these keen nonconformists, and moves were made to impose restrictions on the sale of alcohol in Wales. Meanwhile, electoral and local government reform in the nineteenth century meant that local landowners and gentry lost control of many Westminster seats and county councils, which passed to non-conformists and Liberals.

In the later nineteenth century, with electoral reforms, Welsh nationalism began to influence politics. This was not a strident nationalism, and there was no widespread movement for independence or even home rule, but it expressed itself more in those areas where Welsh identity was not recognised. For example, the 1880s saw the establishment of *Cymru Fydd* ('Young Wales'). It had a somewhat romantic view of the Welsh past and was in favour of a national library and museum. Furthermore Welsh living in London initially promoted it, although it soon established branches in Wales. Morgan notes that whilst Welsh MPs might talk of nationalism, the 'supreme object of these Welsh national leaders was essentially equality within the United Kingdom and an expanding empire, not severance from it [...] As a result, the demand for Welsh home rule was a relatively minor feature of Welsh politics down to 1918' (Morgan 1971: 165). *Cymru Fydd* was relatively short-lived, but did have close links with the British Liberal Party, and many Welsh MPs belonged to it.

The career of David Lloyd George (1863-1945) illustrates this. Born in Manchester, England, to Welsh parents, Welsh was his first language. He was a Liberal and entered Parliament at Westminster in 1890 as MP for Caernarfon Boroughs, in Wales. He was active in causes that might seem nationalistic (the disestablishment of the Anglican Church for example), and was initially active in *Cymru Fydd* and 'flirted with home rule in the mid-1890s' according to Morgan (1971: 164). At the same time, he was a successful British MP and was to become Chancellor of the Exchequer, introducing an element of welfare provision in Britain. He became Prime Minister in 1916 and led Britain through the First World. This is illustrative of integration of Wales and imperial Britain.

Learned societies were also founded or revived, in the nineteenth century, for example the Royal Cambrian Academy and the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion (Morgan 2007: 14-15). These had an interest in preserving specifically Welsh monuments and artefacts. The Cambrian

Archaeological Association (which was national in the sense of having branches across Wales) supported the preservation of Welsh antiquities and was arguing for museums to be established across Wales for this purpose in 1847. Campbell claims that 'whilst the Association was not at that stage promoting the idea of a national museum for Wales it was identifying the need for museums as storehouses' (Campbell 2005: 14).

Welsh nationalism in the twentieth century and after

Wales had always been divided, not least because of its mountainous geography, but by 1900 there were new divisions in Wales, most obviously between the rural, agricultural central and northern regions and the industrialised, more cosmopolitan south. As the same time, by the early years of the twentieth century nonconformist religion was weakening, whilst industrial disputes had sharpened the division between labour and other parts of society: in 1898, industrial disputes put thousands of Welsh miners out of work for six months. The Welsh, non-conformist, Liberal elites in the south were losing support, and Labour and socialist MPs began to gain seats, as Welsh miners made common cause with English and Scottish miners (in fact large numbers of English migrated to industrial Wales in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries). By the end of the First World War, the older nationalism of opposition to the 'bishop, the brewer and the squire' seemed ludicrously irrelevant (Morgan 1971: 168). As one Welsh historian argued:

Women, whose expectations had been raised by new job opportunities during the Great War, were once more enslaved in the kitchen, the wash tub, the mangle and the front door step. The expectations of men who had survived the horrors of the Western Front were cruelly dashed by a combination of harsh global economic forces and sheer ineptitude or lack of compassion on the part of stony-faced politicians at Westminster. (Jenkins 2007: 234)

The period between the wars was dominated by Labour and powerful left-wing politicians such as Aneurin Bevan (1897-1960) who could dismiss Welsh nationalism as a bourgeois illusion (Morgan 1971: 168). Some of these figures were themselves Welsh: 'it is no accident that the three seminal figures in the creation of the British welfare state – Lloyd George, Aneurin Bevan and James Griffiths – were Welsh' (Jenkins 2007: 233).

Welsh nationalism therefore made little headway in the early twentieth century. *Plaid Cymru*, a Welsh nationalist party, was founded in 1925 but did not manage to achieve an electoral victory until the 1960s. However, it did support the preservation and use of the Welsh language, and this is an indication that nationalism might express itself especially in language, when political nationalism was very weak (Miller 1984: 111). This was reflected in the formation of The Welsh Language Society, a pressure group founded in 1962. This campaigns for Welsh, and its activities have led to prosecutions and gaol sentences. Small (and largely forgotten) extremist groups also appeared from time to time. In 1955, following a referendum among local authorities in Wales, it was decided that Cardiff should be recognised as the capital of the country, despite strong opposition from Caernarfon in North Wales.

A Welsh Office, headed by a Secretary of State for Wales, was established in 1965, which took responsibility for a range of domestic issues, and expanded in the following years, illustrating that only modest, incremental changes to the status of Wales took place in these years.

Morgan was able to summarise the achievements of Welsh nationalism by 1971:

The national movement of these earlier years [*the nineteenth century*] still dominates much of the life of Wales today. It gave Wales a dis-established church and a disestablished gentry; its own university, national library and museum; its own distinct system of higher education; its own legislation and departmental autonomy. Wales by 1914 had achieved recognition as a nation, not as a mere duplicate of Kent or Yorkshire. Ultimately, though, Welsh nationalism was a crusade against indifference, and here, even after the careers of Lloyd George and Aneurin Bevan, this battle is still far from won. Perhaps it never will be. (Morgan 1971: 172)

There was certainly a sense that London was ignorant and indifferent to Welsh affairs during these years (Morgan 1971: 172; Jenkins 2007: 234). A careful reading of Bassett's history of National Museum Wales also reveals an implicit criticism of London's inept handling of national issues (Bassett 1982, 1983, 1984 and 1990).

In 1969, in response to a rise in support for Welsh and Scots nationalism, the British government established a Royal Commission (known as the 'Kilbrandon Commission') to consider the constituent countries of the UK. In 1970, Plaid Cymru contested every seat in Wales and increased its share of the vote to over ten percent, confirming that the issue was a live one. The Commission eventually recommended devolved assemblies for Scotland and Wales. This led in turn to a referendum in Wales in 1979, but devolution was rejected. However, interest in devolution continued, and in 1997, a new Labour government was elected in Britain and ran another referendum, in which Wales voted by a narrow majority in favour of devolution. Following this, the Welsh Office was formally disbanded, and the new National Assembly for Wales, created by the Government of Wales Act (1998) was created, strengthened by a further Act in 2006.

Wales now has a National Assembly for Wales (*Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru*), which is a democratically elected body with legislative powers which holds the Welsh Assembly Government to account, and the Welsh Assembly Government (*Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru*), the executive arm which makes decisions on a range of matters for Wales, develops and implements policies, and proposes laws ('Assembly Measures').

Westminster retains control of areas such as defence and taxation, the police and justice system, while the Welsh Assembly Government (henceforth 'WAG') is responsible for education, health, local government, transport, planning, economic development, social care, culture, environment, agriculture and rural affairs.

National museums and cultural policy in Wales

The nineteenth century

In the early nineteenth century, although there was no formal cultural policy in Wales, the leading members of society shaped the nation's cultural activity by a range of activities, for example by forming learned societies. This activity was typical across Britain.

An early example in Wales was the founding of the 'Cambrian Institution for the Encouragement of Pursuits in Geology, Mineralogy and Natural History' in Swansea in October 1821. Campbell notes that it 'emulated similar societies established in Liverpool, Manchester, Bath, Newcastle and Penzance and aimed to facilitate the diffusion of knowledge amongst the land-owners, agriculturalists and miners as well as the local and visiting philosophers'. The Institution was to include a library and a well-arranged museum illustrating the different branches

of natural history (Campbell 2005: 46-47). It was seen by Swansea as an asset to the town, providing a source of 'rational pleasure' and 'in common with other similar societies' the Cambrian Institution extended its interest to the history, antiquities and literature of the area whilst its primary interest lay with science (Campbell 2005: 47).

Other societies were established in the town, including the Swansea Philosophical and Literary Society (1835), which was renamed as the Royal Institution of South Wales (RISW) when Victoria granted it a royal charter (RISW 2004). It constructed a museum for its collection, opened in 1841, which was seen as 'tangible evidence of Swansea as the leading town in the Principality at this time'.

The formation of these societies was typical of the social elites across Britain. However, there was an element of civic competition in Wales. Cardiff, which was a small town of less than two thousand inhabitants in 1801, began growing rapidly from the 1850s, and there was some competition between Swansea, Cardiff and other South Wales towns.

The twentieth century to devolution

In terms of population, by 1901, five urban centres in South Wales dwarfed the rest of the country: Cardiff with a population of 164,333, Rhondda with 113,735, Swansea with 94,537, Merthyr with 69,228 and Newport with 62,270 inhabitants (Jenkins 2007: 183). There was a strong element of civic competition between these towns throughout the 1800s and into the twentieth century. Several examples of this competition are noted by Campbell (2005: 69, 73, 74, and 78), who quotes the Honorary Curator of Cardiff Museum saying, in 1873:

In a town such as this, then, second to none in Wales for the interest which attaches to its long and varied history, its noble castle, and its ancient neighbourhood cathedral, and superior, as we are often reminded, to any other town in this part of the kingdom in regard to population and commercial enterprise, surely we have some reason to expect that if the rate [*that is, a local tax*] is properly apportioned, we shall obtain a Museum which shall not come behind any other in the Principality. (Winks 1877 cited Campbell 2005: 92)

Likewise, interested parties in Cardiff in the 1880s 'were cognisant of the opinion of the Cambrian Archaeological Association in 1880 that recommended the Powysland Museum [in Welshpool] as the central museum for Welsh antiquities as no other museum in Wales had facilities or the nucleus of a collection to match' (Campbell 2005: 95).

Besides civic pride, nationalism played a part. Morgan's essay (2007) links the story of the foundation of a national museum (and library) for Wales to developments in nationalism in the mid-nineteenth century. The hostility roused by the 'Blue Books' scandal led to demands for national institutions, including a national museum, as a means of social progress (Morgan 2007: 13-14; Bassett, 1983: 155). This might be seen as part of a wider move in Victorian Britain towards self-improvement, but was clearly Welsh in nature.

By the 1880s, Bassett argues, there was a more general movement in favour of national institutions, reflected in the activities of some Welsh MPs who began raising the issue at Westminster from the 1890s, though with disappointing results on some occasions as the ideas was met with derision (Bassett 1983: 157-8). However, the British Museum was regarded as the repository for Welsh (or any other British national heritage) antiquities. The Victoria and Albert Museum (which managed some education activity in the regions) was a source for such technical

and educational instruction as was required. In many respects, Wales was regarded as no different from any English region. The discovery of valuable antiquities in 1899, classified as treasure trove and therefore deposited in the British Museum, caused Cardiff's Curator, John Ward, to enquire from J.M. Maclean MP if such finds could be kept in the Cardiff Museum, but this was rejected as Cardiff was not recognised as the chief town of Wales (Campbell 2005: 118).

Once established, Westminster's attitude to the new national museum seems to have been one of indifference. Bassett notes (1984: 237-9) that the Royal Commission on Museums and Galleries 1927 did not cover the National Museum of Wales (which had been established in 1907); the Miers report of 1929 included the museum in his list of non-national museums; the Markham report in 1938 added it as a footnote to the national museums in London and Edinburgh; and nor was the National Museum of Wales considered by the Standing Commission for Museums and Galleries, until, in 1949, the Treasury allowed the appointment of a Welsh representative to the Standing Commission. However, it is fair to add that the governing body (a 'Court of Governors') was representative of the wider population of Wales and provided a venue for the development of policies and strategy.

In 1973, a Department of Education and Science report on provincial museums and galleries (the 'Wright Report') noted that the National Museum of Wales collaborated with many other Welsh museums to the benefit of all. At the same time, the report noted that there was no museum of any size in North Wales (Department of Education and Science, 1973: 57-8). Perhaps the most significant observation was the recognition that Wales (and Scotland) had particular challenges that would need to be addressed separately. Wales was no longer being treated as another English region by Westminster. A Standing Commission on Museums and Galleries report in 1979 (the 'Drew Report') was intended to progress Wright's recommendations, but did not cover Wales in detail, probably because at the time, it was thought that devolution was imminent (Standing Commission on Museums and Galleries 1979: 2; Bassett 1984: 311). The 'Morris Report' of 1981 took up the issue of Wales, and noted aspects of museum provision that seemed particularly 'Welsh': the role of the National Museum of Wales in supporting museums in the regions; the Museum Schools Service, run by the museum and local authorities; the Affiliation Scheme, by which the museum provided expertise to local museums; the absence of a 'National Gallery' and 'National Portrait Gallery' in Wales; the successful opening of a number of industrial museums; and the significance of the Welsh language (Standing Commission on Museums and Galleries 1981: 38-43).

The timing and subject of these reports suggest a growing awareness of the uniquely 'Welsh' nature of the country's national museum. In addition, there was a Council of Museums in Wales (CMW), where the National Museum was represented, funded by the Welsh Office and subscribing museums and authorities.

Devolution and after

CyMAL (Museums Archives and Libraries Wales) was established in 2004 (replacing CMW in some respects). CyMAL is a division of the WAG and the 'Sponsorship Division' for National Museum Wales. This is therefore different from MLA's role in the UK, since the latter is a 'quango' or non-departmental public body – that is, in England government had devolved power to a quango, whereas CyMal is part of government. Besides providing funding for accredited

museums, CyMAL advises on insurance for the loan of objects of exceptional value. It also acts as the interface between government and museums in Wales, advising the government, and shaping strategy for the sector, besides overseeing National Museum Wales.

In 2000, eighteen months after the establishment of the National Assembly for Wales, the Assembly's Post 16 Education and Training Committee published *A Culture in Common*. They had consulted widely, including with the National Museum Wales. They hoped that by 2010, the country would have a range of cultural attributes including: bilingualism as a 'particular and a growing reality - embracing a celebration of the Welsh language as unique, rich and dynamic with other Welsh dialects [a] valued and respected part of our linguistic inheritance'; multi-culturalism as a fundamental part of Wales'; rich diversity; an equal respect to the 'innovative and the traditional'; strong links between 'grass-roots' and national cultural institutions; cultural development integrated with tackling social exclusion, learning, the economy, and quality of life; 'a co-ordinated cultural strategy delivered by publicly funded sponsored bodies both accountably and efficiently for the people of Wales'; cultural tourism as an important part of the Welsh economy; information communication technology used effectively to increase participation in Welsh culture; and a 'highly participative and democratic' arts scene (Post 16 Education and Training Committee 2000: 4)

The report focussed on the arts as a whole, but also stated that 'museums, galleries and libraries are intrinsic to our cultural identity', along with other institutions (Post 16 Education and Training Committee 2000: 13), and generally called for closer links between museums and between museums and the arts in Wales. There were several references to the need for a 'National Gallery' to show more Welsh art, though representatives of National Museum Wales pointed out that in fact, one third of their exhibits were already from Welsh artists (Post 16 Education and Training Committee 2000: 71). Whilst it supported the 'arms length' principle, the report strongly urged that a Culture Secretary be appointed. Another common theme is the desire for collaboration and cooperation across a wide range of arts, whilst 'avoiding the pitfalls of centralisation' (Post 16 Education and Training Committee 2000: 38-40).

This was developed in early 2002 in the report *Creative Future. A Cultural Strategy for Wales* (WAG) which stressed the role of information technology and 'encouraging activities other than conservation and display' in museums (WAG 2002: 22). It declared support for the Waterfront Maritime and Industrial Museum, which was already planned (WAG 2002: 24). Also in 2002, a new cabinet post of Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language was established, overseeing museums, with Jenny Randerson as the first holder of the post. The Minister for Heritage chairs the CyMAL Advisory Council, which has 12 members. Four members of the Council serve in an ex officio capacity representing Archives and Record Council Wales, the National Library of Wales, the National Museum Wales, and the Welsh Local Government Association. Research by CyMAL carried out in 2006, resulting in *Spotlight on Museums* (WAG 2007a), provided a comprehensive picture of museums in Wales, as at 2006, including the national museums.

The Welsh Assembly in 2007, issued a significant policy document, *One Wales, A progressive agenda for the government of Wales* (WAG 2007b). This presented itself as 'an agreement between the Labour and Plaid Cymru Groups in the National Assembly' and its declared aim was to 'transform Wales into a self-confident, prosperous, healthy nation and society which is fair to all'.

The publication of *One Wales* in 2007 may have been as much about implementing coalition government as strategy, but it did include a clear indication of what the Assembly expected of government assisted cultural activity in Wales, aiming at: 'Supporting the Welsh Language', 'Promoting arts and culture' 'Encouraging sport and physical activity' and 'Placing Wales in the World' (WAG 2007b: 34). In terms of requirements on museums, it notes only that entry will be free (WAG 2007b: 35).

In 2010, following widespread consultation, CyMAL's strategy document for the period 2010-2015 was published, *A Museum Strategy for Wales* (WAG 2010: 4), outlining three 'guiding principles':

Museums for Everyone: Museums will contribute to living communities, promote the values of a fair and just society and provide lifelong learning opportunities for all.

A Collection for the Nation: Museums will hold, care for and continue to develop collections for the nation which represent our rich and diverse culture.

Working Effectively: Museums will manage their sites, operations, collections and people more effectively to continue providing services for citizens that are relevant, robust and sustainable.

With regard to 'a collection for the nation', the strategy states that museums 'are integral to the collective memory of our nation' (WAG 2010: 5). The concept of a distributed national collection is important in a Welsh context, and CyMAL wishes to see it supporting a coordinated approach to collecting (WAG 2010: 5)

As part of their mission, CyMAL emphasises that museums must help provide environments where Welsh language learners have an opportunity to practice Welsh. The National Museum already provides centres for adult learners, at St Fagans, the National History Museum and the National Wool Museum respectively. Here they can use the museums' resources as a basis for learning activities. The Report asks that museums develop a Welsh Language terminology for museums (WAG 2010: 19). At the same time, it asks museums to consider the local demographic profile and provide accessible information in other languages.

Although the Report declares that 'museums have a role to play in raising the profile of Wales in the world' the focus is international and not European: collaborative examples quoted are with a slate museum in New York State, and the Dublin Maritime Museum, and the holding of the ICON (Institute of Conservators) conference in Cardiff. It also draws attention to the affinity with the Welsh communities that settled in the Chubut region of Patagonia in the nineteenth century. The action requested is that Welsh museums develop international links where possible, 'creating a positive impression of Wales' (WAG 2010: 31-2). A very strong theme in the Report is that of collaboration among all museums in Wales. 'The Action Plan 2010-2015', on pages 38-8 of the Report, assigns a 'lead' to specific actions. Here, CyMAL appears to play a very significant role, more so than NMW. Another notable element of policy is its role in affirming and nurturing a Welsh identity.

Case studies in chronological order

National Museum of Wales

National Museum Wales is a chartered body and a registered charity, and as an Assembly Sponsored Public Body (ASGB) it receives its funding not from the UK's DCMS, but from the WAG. It generates other income from its trading company and grant giving bodies such as Heritage Lottery Fund. The National Museum Wales (formerly the National Museums and Galleries of Wales), comprises the following museums

- National Museum, Cardiff
- National History Museum, St Fagans, Cardiff
- Big Pit National Mining Museum of Wales, Blaenafon
- National Woollen Museum, Dre-fach Felindre
- Welsh Slate Museum, Llanberis
- Roman Legionary Museum, Caerleon
- National Waterfront Museum, Swansea

It is important to note the breadth of the collections making up NMW. St Fagans, a folk museum, is one of the most extensive in the British Isles. The Big Pit, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in its own right is, in effect, a complete coal mine, with visitors descending 90 metres below ground for some 'exhibits'. The Slate Museum currently is likely to be exhibiting a touring display on biodiversity at the same time as a working steam engine.

The National Museum, Cardiff, was the first national museum in Wales, with the other branches listed above coming under the National Museum's remit later. For the purpose of this paper, we will focus on two museums, the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, as this was the first national museum (and the founding museum of those collections making up NMW), also St Fagans, a folk museum with a significant relationship to Welsh nationalism.

The Cardiff Museum to 1907

A number of learned societies were founded in Cardiff from as early as 1826, but Campbell observed that they initially lacked focus and continuity (2005: 76). For example the Cardiff Literary and Scientific Institution had been founded in 1835, which had its own library and museum. Whilst the historical records about this early society are not clear, Campbell's research suggests that it had ceased around 1863 due to lack of funds (2005: 81-2).

Meanwhile, the British government had passed the Libraries Act in 1850. This allowed local authorities to use one halfpenny in every pound raised by local taxes to establish libraries, which were to be free to the public. This was found to be insufficient, and the sum was raised to one penny in the pound in 1855. Cardiff's town Council was encouraged to consider this, and to adopt the Institution's collections and books in 1860, but the proposal had failed by one vote. However, the public raised funds and this seems to have persuaded the Council to act. In 1864, the Cardiff Library and Museum was set up in rented rooms. It was a local authority museum in that it was established by the City Council, but the museum could not be opened to the public for lack of funds (Campbell 2005: 81).

In 1867, the Cardiff Naturalists' Society was established. As with most societies, a museum was seen as essential, and from the beginning the Society planned to work with the Council to provide Honorary Curators for the city's museum. Thus whilst it was the possession of the Cardiff Corporation, the Cardiff Naturalists' Society managed the collections and created the displays. This they arranged through a management committee of honorary curators affiliated to the Corporation's Free Library Committee. The museum was finally open to the public, if only for a few hours a week, in 1864 (Campbell 2005: 87).

A larger, permanent home was sought, but the Council initially refused to help, claiming that there was no suitable land available. However, eventually a suitable site was found and in 1882, a new Free Library, Museum and Science and Art Schools were opened. Besides civic pride, it was 'a tangible demonstration of civic status and, therefore, the status of the people involved in the museum, a reinforcement of the power of the middle classes to indulge in recognised middle class activities' (Campbell 2005: 96). The establishment of University College Cardiff in 1883 also assisted the museum, whilst specialist societies also developed in the city. Campbell observed that these remained part of the overarching civic structure (being within the Naturalist Society's establishment), which helped the museum (Campbell 2005: 99)

By the 1860s, Cardiff's population was beginning to outstrip all the other South Wales cities. The museum was popular and over-crowded on holidays when visitors from the mining communities nearby came to town, and in the late 1880s, great efforts were made to find a larger (ground floor) accommodation. Although the city authorities were adamant that funding was not available, supporters of the museum were encouraged when another Westminster edict, the Museums and Gymnasiums Act, 1891 enabled local authorities to raise further funds via the rates. The Council finally gave permission to consider a site near the town centre on land of the Bute Estate, only to approach the Museum Committee in 1897 to ask their views on the possibility of a new building being sited at Cathays Park.

It was during these years that the possibility of a national museum for Wales was being seriously considered, and the Council had sent a Memorial to Parliament in support of a national museum, preferably located in Cardiff. The Cathays Park site offered much more space and more open aspects, allowing for a larger museum. The Committee and the honorary curators prepared some new plans for the floor space required, which were examined by W. E Hoyle, the Director of Manchester Museum, but further work was put on hold as the possibility of a national museum sited at Cardiff became a real possibility (Campbell 2005: 111). Meanwhile, seriously short of space, the museum managed to secure off-site storage nearby to ease the problem.

National status

In the later nineteenth century, the civic leaders of Cardiff were striving for city status (formally it was still a town at this time). The 'achieving of city status could bring with it the recognition of capital status', and when it became clear that the establishment of a national museum could serve to forward this drive for civic advancement, the town's leaders were prepared to back a proposal (Campbell 2005: 116-17). There was support from Welsh MPs who were led by Sir John Herbert Lewis, the Liberal MP for the Flint Boroughs. They were 'acutely conscious of representing a large Nonconformist Welsh constituency and their national interest' (Evans 1989 cited Mason 2007a: 116). Lewis had campaigned for several years to get central government funding, pointing

out that Ireland and Scotland both benefitted from it. Mason goes on to say 'it is difficult to identify in the parliamentary records what motivated these MPs to focus on the cause of the National Museum. One can surmise that the museum provided a useful rallying point around which to mobilize popular support for the greater good of Wales' (Mason 2007a: 116-17). Mason also suggests it might have been useful to these MPs to have something they could all support regardless of party that would show their constituents that they were all working together for the good of Wales.

Campbell (2005: 157) notes that rivalries between different Welsh towns made campaigning difficult. Civic leaders in other towns and cities were also debating the value of additional support for their own museums, in some cases to bolster their status as Wales' leading city. 'The closer the realisation of a government grant, the greater the political activity at both the Parliamentary' and civic levels. Here, the manoeuvres for status and power took centre stage, and 'the final campaign was fought on a number of fronts highlighted by a series of bitter skirmishes' (Campbell 2005: 133, 166). The competitors for the site of Wales' national museum emerged as Cardiff, Swansea, Caernarfon and Aberystwyth. Caernarfon, situated in the north west corner of Wales, was an ancient town and pressed its case on the basis that most national institutions were based in the south, and that for North Wales, London was as good a site as Cardiff for a national museum. Caernarfon's Town Council attempted to rally support:

There exists a very real danger that unless North Wales bestirs itself and its public authorities act with energy and unanimity, these two sister institutions -a Welsh National Library and a Welsh National Museum - may be both located among a people having little in common with the nationality for whose benefit they are intended. (*Western Mail* 3rd March 1905) cited Campbell 2005: 177

The competing communities made written submissions to a Committee of the Privy Council in London. The result was announced on 10 July 1905: Cardiff was successful in its application (though the site of the new National Library, decided at the same time, was to be Aberystwyth, despite Cardiff's protests). A Royal Charter therefore established the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff in 1907. The Charter outlined the management structure of the museum, with a 'Court of Governors' representing all parts of Wales, a Council as the executive body, and a Director. One of the Council's first actions was to establish a bilingual title (in Welsh, the museum was 'Amgueddfa Genedlaethol Cymru').

Campbell argues persuasively that Cardiff 'saw the acquisition of the national museum for Wales towards the end of the nineteenth century as further supporting evidence in their claim for city and capital status, using the proposal for the future presence of the museum as an 'instrument in their drive for civic hegemony' (2005: 6). He goes on to note that:

It took Cardiff twenty two years to complete the National Museum of Wales compared to just eight years to complete the new, larger and more complex, Town Hall and Law Courts which opened in 1906 on the same Cathays Park site. It was 1912 before even the foundation stone was laid for the Museum and it didn't open to the public until 1927. Clearly, the mere nomination for the Museum had been instrument enough in the drive for civic hegemony, its creation would add little further to their aims. (Campbell 2005: 237)

Once established, the museum endured some difficult years as economic depression and war interrupted construction (Bassett 1984: 226-27; Mason, 2007a: 143). The museum could only be opened to the public after the intervention of Sir William Reardon Smith, who donated large sums to the museum (Bassett: 1984: 232), and even then it was not complete. In the second half of the twentieth century, the museum operated in a context where nationalism was muted and with limited political ambition, but 'a symbolic space was carved out for its cultural autonomy' (Mason 2007b: 27). However, once devolved government was established in Wales in the late 1990s, the ultimate source of funding came from the Welsh Assembly, not from Westminster, and from 2000 onwards a series of strategy documents outlined the requirements for a truly Welsh national museum.

The museum opened initially for seven days of the week, with free entrance except on Fridays which was a Student Day, everyone else paying sixpence, and on Sundays, when sixpence was also charged (Bassett 1984: 235)

Expressions of nationalism

The museum was not only for Wales but of Wales as its Charter stated that its purpose was to provide a 'complete illustration' of the natural history of Wales and the 'physical environment, history and achievement of man therein' (cited Williams 1983: 17). When King George V opened the new building in 1927, he was told 'this institution was intended to teach the world about Wales and the Welsh people about their own fatherland' (Anon 1927, cited Williams 1983: 17). Mason (2007b: 27) believes that once the national museum was established, 'much care was taken by its directors to emphasise that Wales was seeking parity rather than full independence'. Bassett (1983: 213) noted that 'the national nature of the museum did not get the consideration that one might have expected', but goes on to describe the functions that were national:

- the nature of the Court of Governors, which was large enough to represent all of the Welsh nation, and the Council, which had executive powers
- the specification of Welsh exhibits for the entrance hall of the new Museum
- a system of 'Museum Correspondents' set up in 1910 in the regions to report to the Museum on finds and specimens that might be of significance to the Museum
- formal engagement with the University of Wales' Board of Celtic Studies in 1920
- the development of 'branch museums', initially the Turner House Gallery in Penarth in 1921
- the close association between the National Museum and regional museums afforded by an Affiliation Scheme established in 1922
- the National Museum's connections with other national museums in the UK and the right of pre-emption on Treasure Trove found in Wales, granted in 1943
- the establishment of a national service to schools in 1948

The fourth part of Bassett's history of the museum claims to be 'a return to the primary task of demonstrating how the Museum authorities set out to create a truly national institution' (Bassett 1990: 193). Bassett is concerned with exploring the curatorial issues around developing collections that are both Welsh and representative of wider contexts, particularly as the National Museum was a relatively new museum and its collections had some gaps. Such 'nationalism' as is here, is in line with the nature of Welsh nationalism as outlined above.

One aspect of interest in this context is that, in the 1920s and 1930s, the museum was one of the leading organisations in Welsh archaeology. As summarised by Bassett (1990: 247), Fox's work on Offa's Dyke (an early medieval boundary earthwork marking a border between England and Wales), his publications (especially *The Personality of Britain*, first published 1932), and his work on Celtic finds, all contributed to a picture of Wales as separate and Celtic rather than Anglo-Saxon.

Mason's view (2007a:144) is that 'the range of branches means that there is no one version of Welsh history, culture or identity on display but many different and competing ones.' She believes therefore that four factors shape the nature of national identity that results, and that is on display: the national context which accompanied a particular museum's creation; the collections of each museum; the type of museum or discipline of the department, collection or museum; contemporary concepts of what constitutes 'the nation' and its national culture or cultures. Mason considers this further in the third, fourth, and fifth chapters of her book.

Mike Houlihan was Director General of National Museums Wales from 2003. In 2010, he resigned, to take up a post at Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (a 'bicultural' and bilingual museum). In a closing speech he made clear his dissatisfaction with WAG's policies around Welsh culture. Besides calling for a more integration of cultural organisations, he was unhappy with a 'brand' built around technological industries (to attract inward investment) and a landscape suitable for outdoor pursuits (to attract climbers and walkers etc.), and added:

Cultural tourism, in its broadest sense, has singularly failed to turn up for Wales, in contrast to, say, Ireland or Catalonia [...] The basic point was being missed – the singular, sometimes unsophisticated, sometimes contemporary but always authentic expression of a small nation's culture can be far more attractive and engaging to the outsider than the marketing messages that make it look indistinguishable from any other western, industrialised complex. (Miller 2010)

The European Union is important for Wales, not least because of the EU assistance it has received. However, like other national British collections, national museums in Wales tend to present themselves in an international, rather than a European context. A history of international trade, involvement in Britain's imperial past, Welsh ex-patriot communities such as that in Patagonia, and, perhaps, significant international investment may have all contributed to this view.

Second World War

With the outbreak of war, staff prepared to move the most valuable items to safety. However, apart from a brief closure in August/September 1939, the museum remained open throughout the conflict, though with limited displays. There were some patriotic temporary exhibitions (such as 'The RAF in Action' in 1942). A Welsh Reconstruction Advisory Council was set up by the government during the war and the Museum submitted a memorandum with a 'shopping list' of improvements, but received very little in return (Bassett 1984: 256-60).

1945 and after

In 1946 the Museum was offered St Fagan's Castle and grounds for use as a folk museum. This was a great opportunity, but the Museum Council was only prepared to accept the gift if central

government help from London would be forthcoming. The Treasury was prepared to offer running costs, but not capital expenditure, so a public appeal for £100,000 was made (Bassett 1984: 263). The guidebook of 1964 explained just how important the new Folk Museum was seen to be to the Welsh and their sense of identity:

A folk museum represents the life and culture of a nation, illustrating the arts and crafts, and in particular the building crafts, of the complete community, and including in its illustration the activities of the mind and spirit, - speech, drama, dance and music – as well as of the hand....This...has been fully achieved on several sites in the Scandinavian countries, where the influence of the folk museum in improving the standard of taste and maintaining the pride of the people in the best traditions of their past has been remarkable. Such a museum, indeed, comes to be a cultural centre of the nation which it serves. (Peate 1964: 5)

In the 1950s, two bequests (the Gwendoline Davies Bequest of fine art and the Tomlin Bequest, a shell collection and library) significantly enhanced the Museum's art and natural history collections. The Margaret S. Davies bequest in the 1960s added a further major art collection to the Museum's holdings. The two Davies requests could be said to have created Wales' national art collection (Bassett 1984: 289).

It was initially planned to have a department for Industry, but Bassett notes that there was no mention of this when staff were appointed in 1914. In 1948, a committee was appointed to examine the possibilities of preserving industrial 'relics). With the removal of the folk life material to St Fagan's, space was available at the Museum and funding was sought from the Treasury to establish a Department of Industry. This was finally granted in 1959. According to the then Minister for Welsh Affairs, it was to be 'a Department of Welsh industries, not a general department of technology, still less a miniature museum of science and industry' (Bassett 1984: 279).

The Museum at Cathays Park was still incomplete, and in the early 1960s the West Wing of the building was completed. The Treasury (i.e. the British government) provided ninety per cent of the cost but it had declined to assist with funding for St Fagan's. Major works at St Fagan's did go ahead, with some central government funding, over a twelve-year programme, completed in 1977.

In 1967, following an exploratory meeting with a wide range of heritage and industrial organisations, it was decided to consider an external site for the short term storage of industrial equipment and the eventual opening of an industrial museum (Bassett 1984: 302). The background to this development was that heavy industry in Wales had relied on physically large plant and machinery (for example, colliery headgear or engine houses and associated machinery), which could never be exhibited inside a building. In 1973, the Welsh Office indicated that funding might be available for this, and the Welsh Industrial and Maritime Museum was established in Cardiff docks. However, it was envisaged that this might move to another site later.

Funding

According to Mason, "The importance of individual donors and the so-called "merchant princes" of Cardiff in the history of the first branch of the National Museum cannot be underestimated" (Mason 2007a: 141). Even in the beginning of the twenty first century, the museum is dominated by individual benefactors and donors. This pattern has been repeated in the other sites and

Mason compares the National Museum Wales with donor museums in America. Mason makes the point that the National Museum in Cardiff is an expression of wealthy and middle class aspirations, politics and ownership of culture whereas the Folk Museum in St Fagan's celebrates the working class origins and contribution to Wales.

As is clear from this case study, the Museum struggled to realise its original plans. In 1912, the Treasury had approved the expenditure of £230,000 for the building and equipping of the first stage (just over one half of the planned building), and agreed to contribute one half of that amount. The Council had £60,000 assigned for the work and thus needed another £85,000. However, the First World War prevented completion of the works so far planned. The work then stalled, until Reardon Smith's donations enabled a major extension to take place in 1932. As Bassett points out (1984: 250), it seems that the National Museum of Wales received a lower than average increase in funding when compared with the UK's overall spending on national museums. In 1937, an attempt was made to raise a further £88,000 to complete the building. Fundraising efforts were focussed on Welsh Americans, with an appeal committee being established in New York, but the outbreak of the Second World War limited its effects.

The imposition of admissions charges by Britain's Conservative government on 1 January 1974 caused attendances to fall by fifty per cent. On the abolition of charges on 1 April that year, following a change of government, attendances returned to normal (Bassett 1984: 301).

In 1960, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury visited the Museum to consider changes in funding. Up to 1960, the Museum had obtained grants directly from the Treasury, in contrast to most other national museums whose budgets were voted through in the Westminster Parliament. From 1965, the Welsh Office took over from the Treasury as the sponsoring body through which funding would be directed (Bassett 1984: 284, 290).

The museum now derives its core funding from Grant in Aid from the Welsh Assembly Government as an Assembly Government Sponsored Body (AGSB). Each year, the Minister for Heritage sets out his vision for the Museum in a Remit Letter that establishes the Museum's priorities, identifies the key deliverables and provides details of the budgetary resources available to deliver the museum's activities. The 'Remit Letters' issued to NMW also stress the need for the National Museum to seek additional funding, beyond that provided by the government.

There was significant investment from Britain's Heritage Lottery fund in the 1990s, in the form of a grant of around £42 million towards the refurbishment of three existing sites, the creation of a new Collections Centre and redevelopment of the National Waterfront Museum at Swansea, practically a new museum.

Management and staff

The early history of the museum in Cardiff is linked to that of the learned societies of the city, but even before it was a national museum, power was shifting from these voluntary associations to the local bureaucracy. For example, around 1879, The Free Library Committee reorganised the Museum Sub-Committee, and from being made up entirely of members of the Cardiff Naturalists' Society, their membership was reduced to six of the nine places.

In terms of early staff, in 1876, John Storrie was appointed on a part time basis and it was reported that 'the condition of the Museum has been during the year very considerably improved. It is now open to the public every evening of the week, and all Wednesday and Saturday; the

work of labelling the objects is progressing rapidly, and members having objects to present may rely now upon their being well cared for' (Campbell 2005: 91, 47). Storrie was born in Muiryett near Glasgow in 1844. Although it is likely he came from a working class family, his ability took him to St David's School in Glasgow where he excelled in botany and geology winning a prize for the best collection of Scottish alpine plants. The geologist and author, Professor Page, took John Storrie under his wing and tutored him in geology. He wrote a number of articles for the Society's Transactions on geology and archaeology. At nine pence an hour, it is probable that his post did not suffice for the upkeep of a family, and as he was only required to keep the Museum open in the evenings, he continued working in the printing section of the Western Mail. The shift of control to the Corporation in the late 1870s led to attempts to save money on the cost of a curator, and the Cardiff Naturalist Society, now with less influence, had to lobby for the retention of the post.

John Ward FSA was appointed Curator of Cardiff Museum in 1893. Ward had met and been impressed by John Storrie. Ward was the first Curator to be appointed who was not originally a member of the Cardiff Naturalists' Society so his loyalties would have leant more naturally to the Corporation rather than to the Society.

Governance after the establishment of the National Museum was based on the founding charter, and based on this and the public statements by officials at the time, Bassett (1983: 188) distinguishes two main objectives. The first was 'to teach the world about Wales and the Welsh people about their fatherland', and the second about scholarly research (and by implication, more general education and inspiration).

Dr W.E Hoyle was appointed as first Director in 1907. He had until then been Curator of the University Museum, Manchester, and had considerable experience of the sector (he had been President of the Museums Association in 1906) as well as being a noted zoologist. He had travelled widely to see how museums were organised elsewhere and was regarded as an authority on the planning and development of museums. One of his initial actions was to visit museums in Frankfurt, Berlin and Stockholm before preparing a brief for the architects of the new national museum (Bassett 1982: 167-8; 1983: 191-3).

Initially the museum had a small staff, though in 1912 they were joined by the Curator and staff of Cardiff's Municipal Museum (along with the municipal collections). In 1914, four departments were established, Art and Archaeology, with qualified Keepers, and Botany and Geology, with Assistant Keepers (who did not have formal specialist qualifications). However, in 1919 Zoology was added, and Keepers henceforth headed all departments. At this point there were a total of twenty-six staff (Bassett 1983: 189).

R.E.M. Wheeler (1890-1976) was appointed as Director on Hoyle's retirement in 1924 from his post as Keeper at the museum. Wheeler was a controversial archaeologist, but and played an important role in completing the building in Cardiff, and establishing close links with regional collections (McIntosh 2004). However, he left in 1926 to become head of the London Museum and C.F. Fox (1882–1967), an English archaeologist, succeeded him, and remained Director until 1948. Fox's time at the museum is remembered for his support for the development of the Welsh Folk Museum at St Fagans (Jope 2004).

In 1927, Iorwerth C. Peate (1901–1982) was appointed Assistant Keeper to the Department of Archaeology, in charge of the 'bygones' collection (what would now be called a folk

collection). This was to prove significant in later years, as Peate was an expert and an advocate of folk collections, and served as first Curator of the Welsh Folk Museum (now St Fagans). A biographer has described him:

He was a man of strong convictions and forthright manner, especially when expressing his views about the fate of the Welsh language: he did not believe that there could be a future for it in a bilingual society, contrasting what he saw as the barbarism of urban, English-speaking Wales with the stability of the culturally rich, monoglot, Welsh-speaking, rural society of his youth [...] In religion he was not only nonconformist but Independent and opposed to ecumenism. (Stephens 2004)

Peate was a conscientious objector to military service and registered as a pacifist in 1941, causing him to be suspended from his employment at the museum, only to be reinstated after some public controversy.

Fox retired in 1948 and Bassett (1984: 269) believes this and other staff changes at this time changed the nature of the museum. Dr. D. Dilwyn John, previously the Deputy Keeper in the Department of Zoology at the British Museum, succeeded Fox. He was the first Welsh person to hold the post of Director.

Buildings

The brief for the new National Museum, when issued, was for works costing £250,000, to house six departments: Antiquities and History; Geology and Mineralogy; Botany; Zoology; Art; and Science/Industrial. The building was to be in harmony with other buildings at Cathays Park, that is the City Hall and the Law Courts. The winning design was by Messrs. Dunbar Smith and C.C. Brewer, a London firm. Although their design was clearly the favourite, it was subject to some review and Hoyle and Smith visited further museums abroad, and benefited from discussing the plans with key staff at the museums they visited. The resulting building is classical in style, with Doric columns and extensive use of Portland stone and marble, and has had several extensions added (Coflein Database 2011).

Work was then put in hand, but with the outbreak of the First World War, was badly interrupted. The British government had agreed to provide a pound for every pound raised by subscription for the first part of the construction, and one third of the cost of the third phase of the building. By 1922 however, the museum was in serious debt, and was only able to continue construction when Sir William Reardon Smith and Lady Reardon Smith cleared the debts with a gift of over £20,000. In total, the Reardon Smiths were to give £50,000 to the museum, and there were, in addition, other significant benefactors (Bassett 1983: 199). Building recommenced after the war, and sections were opened informally from 1922, but it was not until 1932, with financial help from the British government, that it was officially opened by H.R.H Prince George (Bassett 1982: 17).

Displays at Cardiff

Despite slow progress on the building, from 1912 a series of temporary exhibitions were mounted near the City Hall, until enough of the new building was open for permanent displays from 1922. One, in 1912, was of articles representing old Welsh ways and customs, and was associated with moves to form a British Folk Museum. Another, opened in the spring of 1915,

was of paintings by Belgian artists and sculptors. It had previously been on display at the Royal Academy (Bassett 1982: 183-4) and clearly had some propaganda value.

Another exhibition, of work by Welsh artists, was mounted in December 1913. The proposal was regarded as 'at least premature, and perhaps ill-advised: not because such an exhibition was undesirable, but because it was thought to be impossible', that is, there was concern that there might not be enough 'Welsh' artists to provide an exhibition (Bassett 1982: 184-5). The exhibition was successful however.

As to the collections, a significant nucleus was formed by Cardiff's municipal collections, donated to the new national museum in 1912. This included a geological collection together with art, sculpture and ceramics. The establishment of the museum prompted the donation of many other items (Bassett 1982: 176-81).

Refurbishment in 2010 will result in improved Art and Modern Art displays, including one of Europe's best collections of impressionist work. Other permanent exhibitions at present include 'The Evolution of Wales', enabling visitors to 'follow Wales's journey as it travels across the face of the planet from its origins billions of years ago' (NMW 2010 a). This is a large geological exhibition covering the creation of Wales's existing geography. In 'Origins: In Search of Early Wales', the period of earliest human settlement, the Roman conquest, and the medieval period to around the 1530s, is addressed.

National History Museum, St Fagan's, Cardiff

Background and establishment

Mason points out that this museum is 'the nation in miniature' (Mason 2007a: 150). It attempts to see how the people of Wales lived and worked in the last 500 years. It is situated on the edge of Cardiff and its collections were originally held in the National Museum Cardiff until being relocated to St Fagan's in 1946. St Fagan's consists of a 20-acre site with St Fagan's Castle, donated by the Earl of Plymouth in 1946. It was the first of its kind in Britain though folk museums did exist in the Isle of Man and in the Highlands. It aimed to create 'Wales in miniature' (National Museum of Wales, 1946: 6, cited Mason 2007a: 152). It consists of a range of historic buildings, taken from all over Wales and re-erected on the site that has now been set out to resemble a village within an extra forty-five acres. The museum also houses a reconstructed 'Celtic village' and an ecological house for the future, a temporary exhibition space and large permanent galleries of agriculture and costume. The site also hosts the activities of people undertaking traditional crafts. Between 2006 and 2007 it had the largest number of visitors out of all the National Museum sites.

Local enthusiasts (T.H. Thomas, an artist, T.C. Evans, a local historian, and T.W. Proger) had developed a collection of folk items and a small 'Welsh Bygones' gallery was opened at the National Museum in 1926 by Fox. I.C. Peate nurtured this collection, whilst in 1930 Fox and others visited Swedish open-air folk museums. A new Sub-Department of Folk Culture and Industries was created in 1933. In 1934, apparently without any notice, the museum received three visitors: Prof. Séamus Ó Duilearga, Director of the Folklore Commission of Ireland, Dr. Ake Campbell, an ethnologist from the University of Uppsala, and the folklorist Prof. Carl Wilhelm von Sydow of the University of Lund, who convinced Fox of the need for a full Department of Folk Culture and Industries (Bassett 1984: 242). At the same time, the Museum

Council confirmed its intention to create an open-air folk museum when the opportunity arose. (All this took place in a context where interest in folk museums was growing and in London the government had sanctioned some initial investigative work.) Bassett goes on to make the point (1984: 246-7) that in Wales especially, the impact of modern industries, the provision of electricity via a national grid, the rapid growth in the use of cars, the introduction of new, artificial fibres and much else was resulting in great changes in society.

Most sources attribute the creation of the museum and the form it ultimately took to Dr Iorwerth Peate who joined the National Museum of Wales in 1927 and was head of the Welsh Folk Museum, St Fagan's between 1948 and 1971. A member of the Welsh Nationalist Party he was clearly very important in the formation and development of the museum but Mason argues that other factors, often overlooked, were equally important. These include the work of a series of National Museum directors such as Cyril Fox (Mason 2007a: 157). In addition the creation of the St Fagan's Museum was influenced by visits to the open air museums in Scandinavia paid by two members of the museum's council. Other European collections, and especially Skansen, were very influential on the planning for the museum. Peate in particular was aware of the nuances of language, which meant that 'Folk Life' (in English) did not quite capture the meaning of the Swedish term (Bassett 1984: 262). Under its influence, Peate conceived of folk culture as the true character of the nation. At the same time the impact of industrialisation and the loss of public memory of the rural and traditional ways of life added urgency to the need to record, collect and preserve the folk traditions and cultures of the nation.

What is interesting is that this movement to create and develop such a museum was led very much by the intelligentsia, not the folk themselves. When the museum was first established it was far more concerned with rural material than urban. This was seen as more authentically 'Welsh' than the industrial anglicised past. The museum followed the principle of waiting for things to be offered to it (particularly buildings), rather than seeking out material on the grounds that it would rather buildings remain in their original sites than be moved to the museum. Thus it was not until the 1980s that redundant industrial sites under threat entered the museum and changed its former rural remit. However, as Mason points out, during the period of the development of the museum there is very little documentation left to indicate how and why different decisions were made at different times about the nature and purpose of the museum. Bassett (1984: 276-7) noted the development of oral history at the Folk Park in the 1950s, in association with work at University College, Cardiff, and this might be linked to a gradually growing interest in the Welsh language after 1945.

Displays at St Fagan's

Mason states that there is not a great deal of literature written on this museum (2007a: 155). However, she does point to Lord (1992) and his critique of Welsh visual culture in the National Museums. According to Lord the National Museum Wales had marginalized indigenous visual culture in favour of an Anglicized, Europeanised aesthetic canon. He sees St Fagan's as complicit in this process. Dicks (2000) also points out that the collecting policies are driven by a romantic and selective view of Wales. Her book provides a useful summary of the development of this museum and she points out how reluctant the museum is to exhibit conflict or dissent (cited Mason 2007a: 156). Most writers attribute changes, if there are any, in this museum and in other

Welsh museums, to curators. Mason argues that this underestimates the internal reasons for exhibitions and collections to be as they are. She argues that the 'text of the museum is far more organic, open-ended and internally contradictory' than is normally recognised by most writers (Mason 2007a: 157). She argues that this museum operates as a space with competing ideas of Welshness.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the National Museums Wales became more visitor focussed and adopted new marketing strategies. This perhaps marks an increased awareness of the importance of tourism. St Fagans National History Museum now presents itself as one of Europe's leading open-air museums, and is Wales's most popular heritage attraction. It covers the period from Celtic times to the present day, with the new Oriol 1 gallery having significant recent historical material.

The opening of the Oriol 1 gallery in 2007 deliberately addressed nationalism, but acknowledged that nationalism and identity are complex. As documented in its original interpretation strategy:

There is no such thing as one Welsh identity - there are many. The exhibition will explore how our sense of who we are, and where we belong, is shaped by language, beliefs, family ties and a sense of nationhood. It will show that culture and traditions are constantly evolving, and will question what the future holds for a nation like Wales in a global age. (NMW 2005: 1)

Its first exhibition asked 'Welsh people to think about the meaning of belonging' in which visitors from Wales and beyond 'play an active role in investigating their beliefs, their roots, their language and who they are.' It included a 'Wall of Languages', displaying over eighty languages currently spoken in Wales (24 Hour Museum Staff 2007). The online description states that:

National symbols and traditions are at the heart of Oriol 1. Through explaining stereotypes and the origins of traditions we can learn how they fit into society today, and how Wales is constantly re-inventing itself. (NMW n.d.)

National Museum Wales, Management and collections

In terms of management, NMW is notable for its networked structure, since it is effectively seven museums. It also has very close connections with regional museums in Wales, and on the other hand relates directly to the WAG via CyMAL.

CyMAL issues the museum with a Remit Letter every year. This sets out the National Museum of Wales' role in relation to the government's strategic agenda, and details priorities and outputs expected, together with how much funding will be provided (WAG n.d.). It also emphasises NMW's responsibility to adhere to WAG's main strategy document, *One Wales*, which aims to 'transform Wales into a self-confident, prosperous, healthy nation and society which is fair to all' (2007b)

A Board of Trustees is appointed to oversee NMW. At the time of writing the posts of President, vice President and Treasurer are held respectively by an ex-CEO of the Welsh Tourist Board, a barrister, and an accountant who had served as CEO of a major manufacturer of steel products. A Directorate, led by a Director General, reports to the Board. The Directorate covers Operations, Collections and Research, Learning and Programme Development, Finance and Communications.

The most recent appointment is David Anderson (awarded an OBE in 1999 for his services to museums and education). Anderson, born in Belfast, was previously Director of Learning and Visitor Services at the Victoria and Albert Museum. His previous appointments included spells at the Royal Pavilion, Art Gallery and Museums, Brighton, and the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich. He was also responsible for some key strategic publications by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport in the 1990s. As with many other national museums in the UK, NMW has drawn on a British 'pool' of talent for this critical post.

Collecting focus

According to *A Museum Strategy for Wales*, National Museum Wales's object is the advancement of the education of the public:

i) primarily, by the comprehensive representation of science, art, industry, history and culture of, or relevant to, Wales, and

(ii) generally, by the collection, recording, preservation, elucidation and presentation of objects and things and associated knowledge, whether connected or not with Wales, which are calculated to further the enhancement of understanding and the promotion of research. (WAG 2010: 11)

In Wales, Amgueddfa Cymru collects on behalf of the nation, while most local authority museums collect to reflect the culture and history of the geographic area they cover. (WAG 2010: 21)

A case study quotes a regional museum (Gwynedd), which staged an exhibition on Jewish Life in North Wales (WAG 2010: 22) and the Report stresses in several places the need to acknowledge diverse communities in Wales. It also stresses the need for Welsh museums to work together to ensure limited resources, such as space for collections, are managed effectively across the nation.

Conclusion

The development and current management of national museums in Wales is typified by a pride in Wales, its culture and history. As the historical survey shows, Welsh nationalism has generally been less energetic in the pursuit of its aims than that of other nations in the UK. This is not to devalue it. Despite Wales' virtual integration into England by the Tudors, and the adoption by the Welsh elite of English ways and attitudes, a distinctive culture seems to have remained, albeit bereft of leadership. This developed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and was to an extent strengthened by the rise of learned societies with an interest in the country's Celtic past. This interest, wider British trends in support of museums, and civic competition all helped establish museums that would one day gain national status.

Civic status was again important when Cardiff's museum became the basis of the National Museum of Wales. This museum's collaboration with and support for smaller museums in Wales was perhaps a distinctly Welsh feature. The following years saw the addition of further sites, reflecting aspects of Welsh life: as a far-flung outpost of Rome, and as home to woollen textiles and mining and quarrying (coal and slate). Welsh rural life was also significant, recognised at St Fagans, and Wales' industrial is past recognised at Swansea. The connection between Welsh culture (or perhaps cultures) and these museums would seem to be real enough. As part of a

wider devolutionary impetus in the UK in the late nineteenth century, Wales gained its own assembly. This has brought the museum into much closer focus since the Assembly, rather than distant Westminster, now has responsibility for it. As such, the museum is now guided by policy documents that stress the need to present the life and cultures of Wales.

It will be interesting to see how far Welsh identities as distinct from, and superior to, British ones develop as a result of devolution and how, in turn, this affects National Museums in Wales. A survey of peoples' attitudes to their national identities over time, starting in 1979 and ending in 2003, suggested that those prioritising Welsh identity over a British one rose slightly. In 1979, 57% of those surveyed selected Welsh as their first identity with British second, with 33% selecting Britishness over Welshness as their preferred identity (Heath et al 2007: 11). By 2003, 60% prioritised Welsh identity and 27% British identity. Indeed across the UK a preference for British identity over a separate national identity within the UK has shown a decline. How this will affect national museums, if at all, is not clear at this moment but it will be interesting to see how the Welsh national museums position Wales within Britain in any future developments.

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Annex table, Wales

Name	Initiated	Inaugurated	Actor	Ownership	Type	Values	Temporal reach
National Museum Cardiff	1912	Late 19 th c.	Local and national politicians.	British government at arm's-length. Later, Welsh Assembly	Art, Archaeology and Geology	Universal art and national collections	Prehistory to the present.
St Fagans National History museum	1948	1946	Aristocracy and National Museum of Wales	As above	Folk Museum	National	Pre-history to 20 th century
National Waterfront Museum Swansea	2005	2005	National Museum of Wales and city and county of Swansea	As above	Industrial Museum	National	Late 18 th century to present day.
Big Pit National coal museum	2004	2001	Local authority, later National Museum of Wales	As above	Mining	National	18 th century to the 1980s.
National Wool Museum	2004	2004	National Museum of Wales	As above	Textiles	National	19 th and 20 th c.
National Roman Legion Museum Caerleon	1930	1930	National Museum of Wales	As above	Roman Archaeology	National	Roman period in Wales.
National Slate Museum	2005	2005	National Museum of Wales	As above	Industrial Museum	National	2000 years ago to the present.