Archaeology, Heritage and Identity:
the creation and development of a National Museum in Wales

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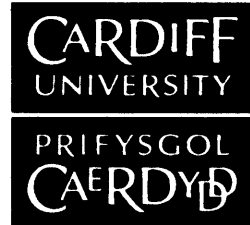
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Summary

This thesis examines selected issues, events, episodes and timeframes in the early life of the National Museum of Wales in order to analyse influential and defining aspects in its complex past. It provides a critical perspective on the cultural processes surrounding the foundation and development of the Museum, as well as the array of identities, archaeologies and representations produced. A further aim is to identify and deconstruct the trajectories of research and thought within the Museum's Archaeological department during the early 20th century. The thesis seeks to demonstrate the complexities of the museum experience and to highlight the nuances and subtleties within the national context. It provides a contextual view of the initial movement to establish a national museum and antiquities collection, and subsequently focuses mainly on critical aspects in the development, research and interpretive practices of the Archaeological department.

While some awareness exists across the archaeological and museum spectrum that figures such as Sir R.E. Mortimer Wheeler and Sir Cyril Fox spent part of their archaeological careers at the National Museum of Wales, there has to date been no focused, critical analysis of their active roles in shaping, and contributing to, archaeological practice within the Museum itself and within the wider contexts of Welsh and British archaeology. Closer examination of the curatorial and personnel structures in the Museum raises important questions regarding research agendas, the ways in which the material culture collections were augmented, interpreted and displayed, and conflicting political ideologies. Additionally, it draws attention to the dynamics of curatorial practice and representation in a national institutional context. Studying the period of time between the initial move to establish a national museum in the 1890s and the development of a national archaeological collection in the 1920s/30s, reveals the shifts and transformations in cultural politics, institutional practices and museological philosophies.

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* Images on frontispiece reproduced from:
http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/rhagor/
ttp://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/culture/sites/aboutwales/pages/culture.shtml

Acknowledgements

Chapter 1: Introduction
Constructing the Past: museums and nations, archaeologies and identities

While museums are established social and cultural institutions, they exist in a changing world (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994: xi). This is certainly true of the National Museum of Wales (or to refer to its new title: Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales) and its history as the institution marks its centenary in 2007. In post-devolution Wales, the National Museum faces continually shifting challenges in representing the multiple histories and diverse identities of a multi-cultural society, its people, and the material heritage of an entire nation.

This thesis examines selected issues and events, episodes and timeframes in the National Museum's early life in order to analyse influential and defining aspects in its complex past. It provides a critical study of the political processes which surrounded and motivated the establishment of the Museum, as well as the socio-cultural value systems embedded within the ethos and practices of the institution as it developed.[1] The thesis provides a contextual view of the initial movement to establish a national antiquities collection and a national museum for Wales, and subsequently focuses mainly on critical aspects and phases in the development, research and interpretive practices of the National Museum's Archaeological department. While a certain level of awareness exists across the archaeological and museum disciplinary spectrum that figures such as Sir R.E. Mortimer Wheeler and Sir Cyril Fox spent part of their archaeological careers at the National Museum of Wales, there has to date been no focused, critical analysis of their active roles in shaping, and contributing to, archaeological practice, research and discourse within the Museum itself and within the wider contexts of Welsh and British archaeologies. This thesis demonstrates that much of their 'formative' archaeological research – which had a significant influence on contemporary and subsequent archaeological thought in Britain – was undertaken within the institutional auspices and framework of the National Museum of Wales. A closer examination of the curatorial and personnel structures of the Archaeological department in the early period of the National Museum raises important questions regarding research agendas, the ways in which the material culture collections were augmented, interpreted and displayed, and conflicting political ideologies. In addition,

it draws attention to the dynamics of curatorial practice and representation in a national institutional context.

There are also complex issues concerning the intrinsically political character of a national museum as an institutional structure and the motivations and mentalities of those working within the organisation. How did the National Museum of Wales construct and define a national past and people? How was material culture collected, interpreted and assimilated into an archaeological narrative of Wales's past? What kinds of archaeologies and identities were produced? It will be argued in this thesis that particular modes of thought, research paradigms and political outlooks were active in determining the focus and interpretation of archaeology in the National Museum over an enduring time span. In identifying and tracing micro-processes within the Archaeological department, this thesis research contributes new perspectives on the wider history, ethos and working practices of the National Museum in the period from its official foundation in 1907 to the period circa 1939. This study represents an additional layer of analysis within existing research on the National Museum of Wales and, it is hoped, will provide a new dimensional perspective to existing macro-scale views and current understandings of the institution's history and development.

Although it can be said that certain elements of the National Museum of Wales – for instance, the movement leading to its eventual foundation and the surrounding cultural and political revival – represented a clear expression of Welsh identity, the idea that the Museum has existed and operated as a *nationalist* institution is questionable. The protracted nature of the Museum's development – founded in 1907 but not officially completed until 1927 – meant that the socio-political ideology of Welsh Liberalism, which underpinned the cultural base of the museum movement in the 1890s, was by then a past phase in political history. The absence of an institutional system of university education and academic research in Wales until the end of the 19th century meant that there was not a ready source of qualified professionals and specialists for the Museum to employ. Many of the managerial and curatorial staff employed by the National Museum were recruited from outside Wales, with some exceptions. Arguably, this enduring institutional structure has shaped and influenced aspects of the role and contents of the Museum, its collecting patterns,

representational processes and research values, to varying degrees over time. There is the additional issue of the internal dynamics and politics produced by an inter-mix of English and Welsh curatorial and management staff, and whether these competing influences and ideologies within the Museum inculcated a 'negotiated' national identity. There is a sense, therefore, that the National Museum's remit to collect and document the natural and human history of Wales was undertaken 'to provide evidence for the remote past of a national region, rather than for a nationalist past' (Champion, 1996: 132). This became at variance with the vision of its founders that the National Museum would be a uniquely 'Welsh not British institution in (its) aim and purpose' (P. Morgan, 2007: 20).

Scope of thesis

To research issues of national identity, nationalism and the creation and development of the National Museum of Wales. To explore the planning, formation and management of the Museum in the 19th and early 20th Century. To establish evidence of ethos and ideology, both at inception and over time, focusing in part on the archaeological collections and how they were defined and valued as 'Welsh', with a view to examining the role and agency of objects in the creation of national identity. The National Museum was established during a time of national revival, vibrant cultural activity and nation-building. Cardiff had become one of the largest exporting ports in the world and a key participant in industry and the British Empire (Morgan, 1981). The consequent competing influences and tensions with regard to status and national identity affected almost every part of the formation and early development of the Museum.

An examination of how archaeological collections were selected, valued and utilised as both evidence and narrators of a particular human past, will provide an important contribution to an understanding of the social and political history of Wales, the complex intersection of culture and politics during the national revival in Wales, notions and symbols of 'Britishness' in a post-colonial context, and the wider historical role of national museums. Assessment focuses in particular on the research practices and political influences of key individuals, notably Sir R.E. Mortimer Wheeler, Sir Cyril Fox and Iorwerth Peate, in shaping the ideology and identity of a national museum for, and of, Wales. Both Wheeler and Fox had a profound influence

in shaping the research ethos of the Archaeology department in the Museum, and later as Directors of the Museum, Wheeler and Fox had significant control over the development of the Museum on a larger scale and the political concerns of representing an entire nation, its history and its people. Wheeler's and Fox's pioneering archaeological research places the National Museum centrally in the wider historical development of British archaeology. In addition, an analysis of the National Museum's links with archaeological studies at the University of Wales, Cardiff will help to document and assess the Museum's involvement in the development of archaeology in Wales and its transformation from an antiquarian pursuit to a professional and academic practice.

Whatever their form, museums begin as collectors and exist to collect (Pearce, 1991: 137). Yet surrounding this core principle a whole range of other roles are present: the museum as communicator and educator; the museum as a place of knowledge, spectacle and leisure; the museum as an instrument of political dominance or symbol of liberation; and, the museum as a representation of the nation and narrator of a particular past. All these aspects and more combine to make up the complex ideological character of the museum.

In critical studies of museums, it is important to recognise that, in general terms, museum collections are seldom formed in the kind of focused, deliberate and active ways retrospective histories might seem to imply. Certainly, the National Museum of Wales mirrors some of these aspects. There are often sporadic and even chaotic aspects underpinning the acquisitions of material culture, which are governed by a range of variable factors: chance donations, unexpected finds, storage concerns, curatorial interests and collecting trends. Succeeding curatorial and management staff are handed the material legacies of earlier incarnations, sometimes amalgamated collections drawn from many sources, or inherited from small museums and private societies which had long since disappeared. Collections may continue to harbour the values and identities assigned by early curators; in turn, subsequent curators may attempt to ascribe new identities and interpretations in keeping with their own political agendas or in line with wider contemporary thought. As a result, all material culture collections held in museums, and indeed each object within, contain their own varied, complex and even hidden histories. Successive curatorial interaction with

collections entails a negotiatory encounter with these ascribed values and encoded meanings, in addition to the inherent material agency of the objects themselves.

The thesis is structured thematically and focuses on certain phases and activities, individuals and practices within the National Museum of Wales in the period from the early 1890s to circa 1939. While the chapters are set against a broadly chronological background for the purposes of clarity, the focus of each chapter is necessarily selective and contextual; they do not follow a rigid timeframe and are stimulated by particular research questions. A thematic approach has been used for several reasons: although the chapters trace the continuing development of the Archaeological department, they also connect with selected events and issues affecting the wider development of the National Museum as a whole, and a thematic structure allows for freer movement between dates and time, shifting values and patterns of change. It is certainly the case that a strictly chronological approach is appropriate in many instances; after all, institutions are built and develop in a calendrical sense, which is to say that the events which shape and influence their ethos and ideology occur as time passes and acquire cumulative effects over time. However, such an approach can inadvertently produce a mnemonic, seemingly static historical record rather than engender active analysis. It is hoped that a thematic approach obviates this methodological difficulty. This thesis does not aim to provide an exhaustive, continuous history of the National Museum of Wales and its Archaeology department, or a detailed analysis of the considerable array of published works written and excavations undertaken by all of the department's curatorial staff. Such an encompassing approach demands specialist critical attention on the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and Medieval periods respectively, and is therefore necessarily beyond the scope of this thesis. Indeed, an analysis of the work and contribution of one member of the Archaeological staff alone could produce multiple theses.

Existing and associated literature on the National Museum of Wales

A detailed chronology of the establishment and historical development of the National Museum of Wales has been written by Douglas Bassett, himself a former Director of the Museum (Bassett, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1990; see also Bassett and Bassett, 1993). Bassett's articles provide a clear, sequential timeline of the defining factors and events in the Museum's history and utilise a range of primary material in their research.

Bassett's articles on the Museum were intended to provide a framework of knowledge and background to a national institution, which, hitherto, had no 'official' history (although see A.H. Lee, 1932, for a brief summary of the foundation of the National Museum in his article on museums in Cardiff). David Jenkins's (2002) historical analysis of the lead up to the establishment of the National Library of Wales provides some interesting cross-comparisons. Although Bassett's articles do not take a critical perspective in any sense, they remain core reading and a reference guide for anyone embarking on academic research on the National Museum of Wales. Representational aspects of collections and displays in the Museum have attracted attention, for instance in Peter Lord's (2000) critique of visual culture in Wales and in Bella Dick's (2000) study of the Museum's treatment of industrial social history in Wales (see also Adamson, 1999). Increasingly, research and publications are emerging which provide a critical engagement with the historical and contemporary social-political processes embedded within the National Museum as a cultural institution in the public domain (Mason, 2004, 2007a, 2007b; Campbell, 2006; Jones, 2007). As part of its centenary in 2007, the National Museum, in collaboration with the Institute of Welsh Affairs, published an edited volume of papers which examine aspects of the past, present and future roles of the institution (Osmond, 2007). Charles Scott-Fox's (2002) biography of Sir Cyril Fox, which focuses on Fox's tenure as Keeper of Archaeology and Director at the National Museum, provides illuminating dimensions not only on Fox's professional impact on the institution, but also the private and personal elements which influenced his work and worldviews. Both Scott-Fox's biography on Cyril Fox and Jacquetta Hawkes's (1982) biography of Mortimer Wheeler draw from personal papers, private correspondence and conversations, which are otherwise beyond the realm of academic research. Similarly, the autobiographical works by Wheeler (1955, also 1954) and Iorwerth Peate (1976), while intrinsically subjective in perspective and content, contribute additional layers to historical readings of the National Museum of Wales. There has, to date, been no scholarly, focused research on the Archaeological department of the National Museum in the period of study in this thesis.

Layout of thesis

This chapter provides an introduction to the wider themes and contexts which inform and frame the research objectives of this thesis. The following sections of this chapter address theoretical analyses of museums in academic research; critiques of national

museums and existing literature on the National Museum of Wales; 19th century public museums as defining models in shaping museological conventions of communication and representation; the formation of national museum collections and intersections between nationalism, archaeological discourse and research.

Research on national museums and the formation of national archaeological collections cannot be contextualised fully without a consideration of the complex, underlying political and cultural movements which brought about their existence. Chapter 2 examines the modern phenomenon of nationalism in depth, and how museums and material culture are utilised to transpose the abstract concepts of nation and nationality into tangible experiences. In a similar perspective, an integrated understanding of the nature of support to establish a national museum for Wales entails a critical engagement with cultural nationalism in 19th century Wales and the structural changes in politics and the socio-economic composition of Welsh society. These issues are explored in Chapter 3. Chapters 2 and 3 also serve a dual function of providing literature reviews of the principal themes and arguments in scholarly research on nationalism and the nationalist movement in Wales. Chapter 4 traces the movement beginning in the 1890s to establish the National Museum of Wales and seeks to offer additional insights into the nature, values, political dimensions and competing ideologies of the museum movement as it developed, thereby illuminating contested senses of place, identity and the nation. Chapter 5 examines the beginnings of archaeological study in Wales within the romantic nationalist tradition prior to the foundation of the National Museum. Chapter 6 studies the considerable professional impact of the newly qualified R.E. Mortimer Wheeler on the ethos, research values and practices of the National Museum's nascent Archaeological department. Across the archaeological disciplinary spectrum and in the public imagination, Wheeler is characterised as a charismatic public figure and methodical practitioner, but also as a humanist archaeologist who argued for greater interpretation of the objects and lives of past peoples. This chapter asks whether such an approach was evident in his early research and writings at the National Museum of Wales.

Chapter 7 examines selected articles written by Cyril Fox in order to analyse his own interpretive approaches to understanding the archaeological material culture of Wales, his role in influencing the nature of the Archaeological department's collections and

the part such selected objects play in narrating histories of past human life in Wales. Chapter 8 deconstructs the professional, political and personal dynamics behind the establishment and growth of a Welsh national folk culture collection within the Archaeology department of the National Museum of Wales. It studies the research motivations and political aspirations of its proponents, Cyril Fox and Iorwerth Peate, and traces the complex, alternately convergent/divergent cultural and political impetuses which underpinned their personal and professional approaches to folk material culture. The Conclusion (Chapter 9) draws together the different arguments and themes explored in the thesis.

Methodology

This thesis has employed an interdisciplinary approach in its research methods and analysis. It combines elements from museological studies, historical research and archaeological theory in an analysis which seeks to situate the National Museum of Wales in a fully contextual and multi-dimensional perspective.

This research for this thesis has drawn on a wide range of primary and secondary sources over the course of study. The majority of research time was spent in the Library at National Museum Wales, which holds original museum reports and associated documentation, as well as a wider selection of literature, journals and publications pertaining to the institution and its history. The Museum's Archaeological department has accessions registers and a small collection of notes from the early years of the department, but records and files relating to departmental affairs, archaeological staff, their research and original correspondence – of which, one expects, there would have been a considerable amount – have not survived, regrettably. General matters and developments were published in the Museum's *Annual Reports* (from 1907 onwards), while departmental and administrative meetings and specific managerial and curatorial matters were recorded in the Museum's in-house reports *Minutes of the Court and Council*. The National Museum at Cardiff does not have an archive or records collections department as such; the Museum Library has performed much of this role, along with its other duties, as the Museum has developed and expanded over time. It is understood that there are plans underway within the directorate division to establish a cross-departmental archival and records management system. Additional research material was sourced from the

Local Studies section of Cardiff Central Library, the Arts and Social Studies Library and its Special Collections department at Cardiff University, the National Library of Wales, the National Archives, Cambridge University Library, the Times Digital Archive and the British Newspaper Library at Colindale, London. A wide range of sources were studied and feature within the thesis, from catalogues and guides published by the National Museum of Wales, articles in Welsh and English newspapers, biographical and autobiographical works, to articles and reports in professional, archaeological and antiquarian journals such as the *Museums Journal*, *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* and *Y Cymmrodor*, *Transactions of the Society of Cardiff Naturalists*, *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, *The Antiquaries Journal*, *The Archaeological Journal*, *Archaeologica* and *Antiquity*, as well as publications by curatorial staff in the National Museum of Wales.

Critiquing Museums

The diverse pedagogic aims of museums continue to elicit debate with regard to their core social roles and cultural values in contemporary society. In her recent work *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (2000), Hooper-Greenhill revisited these perennial museological issues, and asked: 'How and why is it that museums select and arrange artefacts, shape knowledge, and construct a view? What is this view and how does it articulate with wider social perspectives? How do museums produce values? How does this change?' (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000: xi).

The creation and development of museums as socio-cultural institutions is interconnected with the processes of modernity and with the establishment and cultivation of nations and political states (Macdonald, 1996: 7). Museums have played an active part historically in 'the modernist and nationalist quest for order and mapped boundaries' (Macdonald, 1996: 7) and in the objectification of culture (Macdonald, 1996: 7, citing Handler, 1988). As Macdonald argues, museums, 'which literally employ physical objects in their constitution of culture, are unusually capable among institutions of turning culture into an object: of *materializing* it. They have played a role not just in *displaying* the world, but in structuring a modern way of seeing and comprehending the world' (Macdonald, 1996: 7). The interpretation of material collections within museums, as well as the construction of narratives and the representation of history, is embedded within the contemporary socio-political

context. Knowledge is socially produced and reflects and/or perpetuates particular value-systems, cultural mores and political ideologies. In this sense, Tony Bennett contends that 'the past, as it is materially embodied in museums...is inescapably a product of the present which organizes it' (Bennett, 1995: 129).

With a new, critical wave of museological research emerging in the late 20th century, there has been a collective move to actively connect with, and apply, social theory to the museum concept, form and message. Related in various ways to theoretical developments in anthropology, archaeology, sociology, material culture studies, communication studies and cultural theory, attention shifted from an emphasis on curatorial practice to a critical engagement with the historical nature of museums and collecting (Pearce, 1989, 1990a, 1990b, 1990c, 1994, 1995a, 1995b, 1997; Bennett, 1995; Hodge and D'Souza, 1979; Hooper-Greenhill, 1992; 1995; Duncan, 1995; Duncan and Wallach, 1980; Sherman and Rogoff, 1994; Walsh, 1992; Wright, 1996); material culture and agency (Stocking, 1986; Appadurai, 1986; Kopytoff, 1986; Gell, 1998; Clifford, 1988); the politics of presentation and display (Karp and Lavine, 1991; Kavanagh, 1996; Macdonald, 1998; Macdonald and Fyfe, 1996; Lumley, 1988; Vergo, 1994) and a focus on contemporary representational concerns relating to social exclusion, ethnic diversity, the appropriation of material culture for political ends, repatriation, post-colonialism and globalisation (Simpson, 1996; Kaplan, 1996; Prösler, 1996; Baringer and Flynn, 1998; Gathercole and Lowenthal, 1990; Karp et al, 1992).

Defining and deconstructing the museum over time and in different cultural, political and historical contexts has produced a diverse array of readings, theories and thoughts. Museums, Macdonald and Fyfe have commented, 'are symbols and sites for the playing out of social relations of identity and difference, knowledge and power, theory and representation' (Macdonald and Fyfe, 1996: preface). Museums are as much bound up in the politics of place and identity as they are in the processes of globalisation and worldviews (Macdonald, 1996: 1). The concept, meaning and role of museums in the 21st century is under continuous scrutiny and revision: how they interpret and communicate knowledge and why, whether they perpetuate certain cultural models, messages and values, what their political and social functions are, whether they should be neutral spaces or politically vocal, and how they should be

managed and funded. These are just some of the issues which impact upon museums in contemporary society. Macdonald argues that these issues make museums, more than ever, the 'key cultural loci of our times' (Macdonald, 1996: 2).

Museums can symbolise both power (either in politically autonomous or culturally subversive ways) and democracy at the same time: material objects become the collections of particular cultural or ethnic groups, symbols of a political nation, official histories or signifiers of a 'shared' past. In this sense, museums constitute 'spaces in which elites and competing social groups express their ideas and world views. Unlike palaces, churches, temples and noble residences, there is no hereditary or ordained monopoly on access, possession and display of symbols of power. On the contrary, museums accommodate diverse contents and ideas' (Kaplan, 1996: 2). Philip Rhys Adams (1954, cited in Duncan, 2005: 81-82) has encountered museums as sites of performance; as theatre sets in essence, where objects and audiences are made to (en)act according to particular scripts, staging and rituals, behaviours and representations: 'The museum is really an impresario, or more strictly a *régisseur*, neither actor, nor audience, but the controlling intermediary' (Rhys Adams, 1954: 4 cited in Duncan, 2005: 81, italics in original). Fyfe and Ross focus attention on smaller-scale, local museums, which, they contend, act as 'mediators between identity and structure' (Fyfe and Ross, 1996: 127). The idea of museums as ideologically driven, social institutions of 'overpowering cultural authority', which state 'ambitious and encyclopaedic claims to knowledge' (Karp and Kratz, 1991: 23-25 cited in Harrison, 2005: 39) has become a frequent perception (see also Karp and Lavine, 1991). At the same time, however, the notion that individuals and collective audiences consume messages from authoritative sources passively has been rejected as inherently flawed; on the contrary, audiences interpret transmitted knowledge in dynamic ways, and the encounters between audiences and communicators/institutions/spaces is a continually shifting, multi-dimensional process (Hooper-Greenhill, 1991: 50-61). As audiences engage with objects, architecture, concepts, information and messages, complex layers of meaning are created and multiple dialogues are produced as human and material agencies interact. To cite Martin Prösler, 'what is on offer (in the museum) is conjunctions, points of reference, and these are open to quite varied interpretation' (Prösler, 1996: 40).

Within these research parameters, the socio-cultural politics underpinning the construction of knowledge and the museum message is problematised as something inherently complex and dynamic. It has been argued that if culture can be understood as dialogue (Mason, 2007a: 1, after Craig, 1996: 206) – as a continual exchange of ideas, expressions and experiences through and over time – then museums 'can be understood as spaces where public conversations take place about a society's past, present and future' (Mason, 2007a: 1). Museums are particular kinds of cultural, political and architectural spaces, which both transmute and transmit knowledge in a variety of ways. 'Every aspect of a museum...communicates,' Mason observes, 'from the architectural style of the building...to the...arrangement of exhibits and artefacts, the colours of the walls...all these things and more are engaged in a communicative process with the visitor' (Mason, 2005: 200). While objects and collections are used to communicate and instil certain forms of knowledge (Pearce, 1990b), they also exert a material agency over ascribed interpretations and conferred meanings in museum settings. Similarly, there have been calls for explicit recognition among museums practitioners of the intrinsic political undertones within representational mediums and acts of displays:

'Every museum exhibition, whatever its overt subject, inevitably draws on the cultural assumptions and resources of the people who make it. Decisions are made to emphasize one element and downplay others, to assert some truths and to ignore others. The assumptions underpinning these decisions vary according to culture and over time, place, and type of museum or exhibit'.

(Lavine and Karp, 1991: 1)

As museums have come under critical focus, 'the museum' is engaged with, theorised and re-defined in varied and divergent ways: as epistemological, structured spaces in which 'the *world is ordered*,...is realized, understood and mediated' (Prösler, 1996: 22, italics in original); as sites of contestation and sites of remembrance (Zolberg, 1996: 70-76); as places of political misrepresentation and social exclusion; as a traditionalistic 'treasure house, educational instrument and secular temple' (Baxandall, 1991: 33) or as a 'complex, layered text of space things, texts, images and people' (Porter, 1996: 107). Carol Duncan, however, views museums as sites of ritual and performance: 'Museums do not simply resemble temples architecturally; they *work* like temples, shrines, and other such monuments...and like traditional ritual sites, museum space is carefully marked off and culturally designated as special,

reserved for a particular kind of contemplation and learning experience' (Duncan, 1991: 91, italics in original). While Duncan emphasises the monumentality of the museum form and experience, Cannizzo approaches museums as particular kinds of 'cultural texts', which 'may be read to understand the underlying cultural or ideological assumptions that have informed its creation, selection and display' (Cannizzo, 1991: 151, cited in Riegel, 1996: 90). Thus, any attempt to deconstruct the museum must first acknowledge, and seek to interpret, its many encoded values and meanings.

19th Century Museums as Cultural Producers: models of social refinement and civic living

The move to establish a central museum for Wales at the end of the 19th century – which Chapter 4 of this thesis deals with in depth – reflected broader socio-political patterns across the United Kingdom, which saw the creation of public and cultural institutions as well as the allocation of educational provision. In Barbara Black's (2000) view, the 19th century *created* the modern museum:

'Victorian culture was a museum culture brought to fruition by key political events and social and cultural forces: the British involvement in imperialism, exploration, and tourism; advances in science and changing attitudes about knowledge; the nationalist commitment to improved public taste through mass education; the growing hegemony of the middle class and the subsequent insurgence of bourgeois fetishism and commodity culture.'

(Black, 2000: 9)

The Western model of the public museum was established with a remit to 'celebrat(e) and dramatiz(e) the unity of the nation-state and to make visible to its public the prevailing ideals embodied by the concept of national culture' (Evans, 1999: 6). The public museum was not the sole, prevailing cultural form to appear in 19th century society; across the spectrum of high and popular culture, other sites and spaces drew on object-orientated, structured displays in art galleries, exhibitions of science, invention and design (such as the Great Exhibition of 1851), zoos, fairgrounds and freak shows (Evans, 1999: 6). The experiential nature of these spaces and cultural forms, the visual encounters with unfamiliar sights and objects, the exotic and other worlds, introduced more structured, collective ways of visiting and moving through organised spaces, as well as an awareness of new knowledge. As modern nation-states developed networks of standardised education, laws and systems of local authority,

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the whole notion of 'the public' was re-conceptualised (Evans, 1999: 7) and public museums became drawn into a government state ideology to instruct and edify an 'undifferentiated' (Evans, 1999: 7) mass population. As a result, 'the development of the museum form was thus closely associated with a broader set of interacting developments, which, in extending and democratizing the public, also nationalized it' (Evans, 1999: 7-8).

Kevin Walsh (1992) views the emergence of the museum as part of the experience of modernity: the interconnected developments in science and technology, the Industrial Revolution, urbanisation and the resultant changes in the experiences of time, public and private space (Walsh, 1992: 37-38). Walsh argues that the widespread development of museums, libraries and other public institutions in 19th century Victorian society was motivated in part by emerging concerns regarding rapid urbanisation in newly industrialised areas (Walsh, 1992: 25). He highlights the 1850s and 1860s as the period in which expanding towns and cities across Britain became actively involved in efforts to improve public amenities and the architectural environment of their locality. Walsh cites the construction of grand town halls in Birmingham and Manchester as the archetypal expressions of Victorian civic pride (Walsh, 1992: 25). However, the concomitant processes of industrialisation, urbanisation and social reform required a new tier of localised government to take responsibility for managing the urbanised landscape and meeting the needs of the population in everything from adequate sanitation to leisure facilities (Walsh, 1992: 25). The Museums Act of 1845 allowed philosophical and antiquarian societies to transfer their collections to public bodies, and, once management (although often disorganised) of designated areas was devolved to local authorities, museums and libraries began to appear in the larger and expanding towns and cities (Walsh, 1992: 25). The emergence of town-civic pride was entwined with a promotion of the economic and cultural vitality particular to that town and its individual contribution to the success of Britain and the Empire, the political aspirations of influential local figures and the desire to cultivate a sense of local identity. As Best argues:

'Mid-Victorian cities began to take new pride in themselves, not as 'county' capital, local second-bests to London for an old-fashioned social round, not just as places where a lot of money was made, but as growing points of a new world order, where the expansive power of trade could be allied to traditional cultural standards of amenity and style.'

The growth of civic-minded living in the 19th century heralded the re-categorisation of libraries, museums, art galleries and parks as public amenities for all of society rather than as exclusive places for the privileged. It was envisaged that, when combined, these various places would become a network of social reform, providers of educational instruction and integral to the moral improvement of an increasing population. This collective move reflected the value successive liberal governments in the mid to late 19th century placed on high culture as being able to influence the inner worlds of the populace and their everyday choices of lifestyle and behaviour (Bennett, 1995: 20). The contemporary concept of the modern public museum as a 'passionless reformer' (George Brown Goode, 1895: 71, cited in Bennett, 1995: 20) emerged in this transitional phase of social governance, in which it was believed that such civilising institutions would steer people away from indulging in leisure activities involving drinking and gambling. Cultural reformers such as Sir Henry Cole proclaimed that museums were the epitome of moral temperance, centres of reason and culture, aesthetics and learning. Cole elevated their status to a quasi-religious force in society:

'If you wish to vanquish Drunkenness and the Devil, make God's day of rest elevating and refreshing to the working man; don't leave him to find his recreation in bed first, and in the public house afterwards...open all museums of Science and Art after the hours of Divine service...the Museum will certainly lead him to wisdom and gentleness, and to Heaven, whilst the latter will lead him to brutality and perdition.'

(Cole, 1884, vol 2: 368, cited in Bennett, 1995: 21)

Cole envisaged that museums, in conjunction with other institutions, were not only educators 'to the working man' but were implicit in encouraging the ideals of respectable and unified family life. What emerged was a conceptualised model of 'good' and 'proper' living which would predetermine and structure the activities of the one day most working people had free. The health of 'the working man' would benefit from parks for walking and the enjoyment of music and sport. His educational instruction and appreciation of culture would be fostered through afternoon visits to museums, art galleries and free libraries (Cole, 1884, vol 2: 368, cited in Bennett, 1995: 21). Indeed, Thomas Greenwood, writing in the late 19th century, declared that 'a Museum and Free Library are as necessary for the mental and moral health of the

citizens as good sanitary arrangements, water supply and street lighting are for their physical health and comfort' (Greenwood, 1888: 389, cited in Bennett, 1995: 18).

Bennett contends that museums became drawn into what he calls 'the governmentalization of culture' (Bennett, 1995: 24), enlisted to communicate and instil certain ideals, cultural norms and notions of social progress to a wider populace. Within this structured framework, museums would be utilised as contributors to an 'economy of cultural power' (Bennett, 1995: 23). The transformation of the museum concerned its nature both as a concept and a social space, changing the image of the museum from a private, socially exclusive place, to a public space 'in which civilized forms of behaviour might be learnt and thus diffused more widely through the social body' (Bennett, 1995: 24). Representational practices were altered in line with wider scientific thought which emphasised the distinction between nature and culture; objects and collections were separated out and re-arranged according to principles of evolution, linear time and progress. Bennett argues that another element of the transformation of the museum lies in its treatment of visitors, and its need to develop 'as a space of observation and regulation in order that the visitor's body might be taken hold of and be moulded in accordance with the requirements of new norms of public conduct' (Bennett, 1995: 24).

Walsh argues that the dual experience of urbanisation and modernity created the perception of a distancing (or Gidden's (1990) term 'disembedding') from the local in many aspects; from economic processes to the provision of services, a degree of distancing was reflected in the institutionalisation of many of the public services which modern societies came to rely upon (Walsh, 1992: 26). He argues that museums must be viewed as 'disembedding mechanisms', in which knowledge is institutionalised and where a need for 'trust' on the part of the public is imposed: 'Expertise has to be taken for granted, otherwise the public would not use the services provided by the professional. Part of their relationship is an implicit contract between public and expert which ensures that the expert is beyond criticism' (Walsh, 1992: 27). In turn, the concentrated development of museums should be considered as an integral part of the condition of modernity (Walsh, 1992: 30). Fundamental to modern and imperialistic thought was the notion that the world was potentially knowable; from this idea it followed that the world could be controlled and rationally ordered

(Walsh, 1992:30). In the same sense, the representation of the past had to be ordered to make it both meaningful and rational. Museum displays of the 19th (and 20th) century mirrored and reiterated this conceptual view (Walsh, 1992: 30-31). People's developed awareness of time and progress through the structuring of factory time and daily life, continual encounters with different people, and the delineation between public and private spaces, all contributed to the intense experience of urban living. Walsh argues that although museums, in spite of their redefinition as educational tools for all, were never successfully 'sold' to the working classes, their communicative reach was such that 'they allowed an educated middle class to develop an awareness of the wider spatial and historical contexts within which they lived' (Walsh, 1992: 31).

The institutionalisation and 'governmentalisation' of cultural resources such as museums is, of course, interconnected with the developmental political infrastructure of the nation state (see, for instance, Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1990). As nationalist ideologies came to recognise the political value of the past, material culture collections held in museums provided the physical 'evidence' for constructed national histories and were used to articulate a lineage of cultural heritage that stretched far back into antiquity. To build further on Anderson's (1983) theory of 'imagining' the nation, the abstract process of conceptualising the nation was made both tangible and legitimate through compiled histories and archaeological remains, rationalised into a linear, progressive chronology which justified both the past and the political status quo. In turn, the objects held within museums and selected for display became visual signifiers of that past, acting as prompts in encouraging imagined links with people and events in national history. In other words, the imagined nation was enacted in part through an imagined national past. The purposeful establishment of museums (along with other institutions) in centres of concentrated population, industry and administration, ensured their communicative scope was fulfilled, but also reflected the political endeavours of local elite groups to project their town or city as places of culturally enlightened civic living. Collectively, these institutions were mobilised as social tools of the state:

'Museums...stood as embodiments, both material and symbolic, of a power to 'show and tell' which, in being deployed in a newly constituted open and public space, sought rhetorically to incorporate the people within the processes of the state.'

In this sense, Bennett sees the museum as part of a 'narrative machinery' (Bennett, 1995: 178). In an emergent scientific paradigm which applied notions of deep-time to geology, archaeology and palaeontology, 'new objects of knowledge were ushered forth into the sphere of scientific visibility. The museum conferred a public visibility on these objects of knowledge' (Bennett, 1995: 178). Within this context, the museum accords 'a socially coded visibility in the various pasts it organizes. It materially instantiates 'the retrospective prophecies' of the various sciences of history and prehistory, embodying them in linked chains of events – natural and human – which press ever-forward to the present point of civilization which is both their culmination and the point from which these connected sequences are made retrospectively intelligible' (Bennett, 1995: 179-180).

The manner in which structured evolutionary narratives were overlaid onto the spatial forms of displays and arrangement of collections allowed the museum to 'move the visitor forward through an artefactual environment in which the objects displayed and the order of their relations to one another allowed them to serve as props for a performance in which a progressive, civilising relationship to the self might be formed and worked upon' (Bennett, 1995: 186). Structured movement through spaces and the notion of evolutionary progress was not confined to the museum context; in urban environments the development of Victorian shopping arcades incorporated architectural designs which shaped the pathways of customers moving through the spaces. However, while the arcade encouraged the 'distracted gaze of the detached stroller' (Bennett, 1995: 186), who was nevertheless free to change direction or pace, the museum directed the visitor to conform to a prescribed route of 'organized walking', which 'transformed any tendency to gaze into a highly directed and sequentialized practice of looking' (Bennett, 1995: 186-187).

The 19th century museum experience fused the didactic and the visually spectacular; a paradox of rational thought and wonderment. Its role in transmitting particular forms of knowledge, culture and science and its political function in perpetuating dominant social mores, increased, shifted and evolved over time. Museums took on many guises: 'as agencies creating modernity, policing the working class, creating

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legitimacy for the elite; producing national and imperial discourse and developing new forms of professional and subject-based authority' (Hill, 2005:3).

(Re)Making National Histories: studying national museums

Despite their proliferation as the requisite cultural symbols of civilised nation states, critical readings of national museums, and their role in the creation and articulation of national (and other identities), emerged relatively recently in the areas of museology, heritage, critical theory and cultural studies (for instance, articles in Boswell and Evans, 1999; articles in Fladmark, 2000; Kaplan, 1996; 2006; Coombes, 1988; Crooke, 2000; Dean and Rider, 2005; Macdonald, 2003; McLean, 2005; Robertson, 2004; Whitehead, 2005). Historically, institutions such as national museums have been enlisted to render the 'imagined' (Anderson, 1983) political and cultural nation in 'real', three-dimensional form: 'nations have to be imagined in particular and selective style, which...achieves tangible and symbolic form in the traditions, museums, monuments and ceremonies in which it is constructed' (Evans, 1999: 2). In this sense, it is argued that particular social and cultural constructs of 'the nation' are embedded within museum representational and display practices (Evans, 1999: 2). Museums became adept at 'articulating two temporal narratives: one, a distinctive national trajectory and, two, the nation as (the) final triumphant stage of successive progression' (Macdonald, 2003: 3).

National museums are thus located in a complex cultural dialogue in which images, ideas and experiences of the nation are created, negotiated and (re)produced in politically contingent, material forms. As Evans expounds, 'our sense of nationhood and of national identity arises from arrangements of meaning-making, from symbolic practices. What it means to be and *feel* Australian, American, Jamaican or English, for example, is bound up with the ways in which those nations and regions are made tangible through repeated and recognizable symbolic forms, narratives and communicative styles – in short, the sum of cultural representations that go to make up the achievement of a national identity' (Evans, 1999: 2).

Until relatively recently, histories of (national) museums tended to be conventional publications charting the chronological development of major institutions and their

collections (Crooke, 2000: 2). Critical analyses of the socio-political elements of their establishment, role and ethos were not a key concern (e.g. Impey and Macgregor, 1986; Thompson, 1984, 1992; Crook, 1972; Miller, 1973; Lewis, 1984, 1989; Bell, 1981; Bassett, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1990). Flora Kaplan emphasised the need to focus attention on museums as active social institutions and to view them as 'a potent force in forging self-consciousness, within specific historical contexts and as part of a political process of democratization' (Kaplan, 1996: 1).

The development of national museums and their role in the construction and dissemination of national identity is acknowledged in academic discourse on the origins and development of nationalism, but are encompassed in a whole range of socio-cultural institutions established as tools to inculcate the ideologies of the nation-state. However, more recently some edited publications have brought together the interrelated themes of nations and histories, museums and identities through articles from a range of academic disciplines (Boswell and Evans, 1999; Brocklehurst and Phillips, 2004; Kaplan, 1996; Fladmark, 2000; Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983). Elizabeth Crooke (2000), for instance, has studied the relationship between nationalism, archaeology and the establishment of a national museum in 19th century Ireland. She highlights the political appropriation of archaeological objects, sites and landscapes in nationalist-republican claims for political independence from Britain and in nationalist mythologies of a united Irish past and identity. Crooke's research provides some interesting parallels to the situation in Wales, but also highlights the plurality of attitudes to the past and confirms that manifestations of nationalism are unique in nature and form in different contexts, places and periods. Crooke traces the competing political and antiquarian motivations behind the formation of a national antiquities collection, and the wider conflict between political nationalists in Ireland and British government rule. Nationalism, Crooke argues, 'produces a self-legitimising 'national' interpretation of the past, which will have an impact on how archaeology is valued and the character of museums. As a result of this, museums can be seen as the product of a certain political relationship with the past' (Crooke, 2000: 2). Crooke demonstrates that while Irish cultural nationalists campaigned throughout the 19th century for a national museum, the institution eventually established was appropriated by the British government (until the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922), as an instrument for inculcating the ideals of imperialism and the industrial

development of the Empire. Crooke (2000) argues that museums, and particularly museums of, and for, the nation, are inevitably drawn into the political process.

Museums with a national or public remit were also places with certain cultural codes and levels of social accessibility; the British Museum, despite being open to all in theory was, in practice, a socially exclusive space. For much of the 18th and early 19th century, entry to the British Museum was by appointment only and prospective visitors had to give details of their name, address and profession/status before they could gain admission (Hill, 2005: 38). As a result, the so-called universal museum for all of 'mankind' was in reality an institution both of, and for, the privileged social classes. The British Museum 'conformed to the dominant idea of a museum as an elite specialist resource, intended for gentlemen scientists...and was not designed to cater for the layman or hold large numbers of people' (Hill, 2005: 38). Structural changes in society in 19th century Britain and the growth of the middle classes altered the ways in which culture – and specifically high-culture – was accessible (Hill, 2005: 38-39). As increasingly wealthy members of the middle class aspired to emulate aristocratic collecting traditions in fine arts and antiquities, the valuing and collecting of culture – and cultural capital – became transformative social elements in the self-definition of an ascendant social class. As Hill explains: 'Art and science were claimed to have transcendent qualities at the same time as the middle class was drawing them ever more closely into an industrial economy. By...the Victorian period, culture was viewed not just as something which offered transcendent possibilities to all mankind, but as a useful, even essential, attribute of a nation, in terms of morals, education, and patriotism' (Hill, 2005: 39).

In post-revolutionary France, the Louvre, as the prototypical public museum of art, acted as a representation of the newly democratic republic nation, and performed the civic ritual that successive nations would emulate (Duncan, 1999: 304). The revolutionary government in France appropriated the royal art collections as a political tool in order to 'dramatize the creation of the new Republican state' (Duncan, 1999: 305). In nationalising the King's art collections and announcing the Louvre as a public institution, the museum came to symbolise the fall of the Old Regime and the dawn of a new order (Duncan, 1999: 305). The transformation of the once private palace into a democratic public museum communicated the pledge of the newly

formed French nation state to treat its people as equal, free citizens (Duncan, 1999: 306). The Louvre, as a consciously public space, was also a constituent *of* the public, in that 'it could produce it as a visible entity by literally providing it with a defining frame' (Duncan, 1999: 306).

Duncan argues that, although the Museum's symbolic role was recast as being the representative and servant of the public, it exerted considerable representational and communicative powers; as a new kind of public, ceremonial space, it redefined both the political identity of its visitors and ascribed new meanings and values to the collections themselves. The reinterpretation of objects selected for display and presented as public property ushered in the idea of a relationship between the individual as citizen and the state as benefactor and protector (Duncan, 1999: 306). In this sense, the museum was 'a powerful transformer, able to convert signs of luxury, status or splendour into repositories of spiritual treasure – the heritage and pride of the whole nation' (Duncan, 1999: 309). The works of art, organised into national categories and displayed in chronological sequence, were reinterpreted not as the decorative furnishings once owned by the privileged elite, but as the images demonstrating the cultural lineage and "genius" of the French nation (Duncan, 1999: 309). The carefully structured visual experience in the Museum communicated the message that each visitor should regard him/herself as a citizen of the most advanced and civilised nation-state in history (Duncan, 1999: 309).

The establishment of the National Gallery in 1824 was made possible by the middle-class, self-made city financier John Julius Angerstein, who, with his vast private wealth, was able to amass an art collection of outstanding quality, which the state acquired after his death (Duncan, 1999: 321). Displayed in the magnificently furnished rooms of his home in Pall Mall, Angerstein opened his home to allow any interested artists and writers to view the artworks. This act of civic benevolence was in sharp contrast to the behaviour of aristocratic collectors (Duncan, 1999: 321). Although outside the arena of official power, it was through such acts of public benevolence and self-publicity that the reputations of Angerstein and the nascent middle-class bourgeois were promoted as generous, socially responsible, compassionate and dedicated to supporting the nation (Duncan, 1999: 321). Duncan contends that while the establishment of the National Gallery did not alter the

distribution of actual political power, it did remove an element of the 'prestigious symbolism' from the absolute control of the elite in favour of the nation as a whole (Duncan, 1999: 322). In another sense, the art gallery, which was 'a type of ceremonial space deeply associated with social privilege and exclusivity, became national property and was opened to all. The transference of the property as well as the shift in its symbolic meaning came about through the mediation of bourgeois wealth and enterprise and was legitimated by a state that had begun to recognise the advantages of such symbolic space' (Duncan, 1999: 322).

The national museum thus forms the central apparatus in providing 'a visible past, a visible continuum' and 'a visible myth of origin to reassure us as to our ends' (Elias, 1978, cited in Black, 2000: 38). Museums operating within a national context create narratives 'replete with necessary beginnings and much-cherished endings, that enable cultures to continue' (Black, 2000: 38). As such, national narratives are essentially streams of human consciousness, which are socio-culturally specific and are remade and re-presented without end. In the construction and assimilation of past peoples, landscapes and events into a national history and national identity, an array of cultural and political unknowns become the excluded 'other'. As Sharon Macdonald observes, a national identity and a national public was and is 'defined through difference from other nations and ethnic groups', in which the world picture is one of 'discrete, spatially-mapped, bounded difference, something which could prove difficult for those who, according to this picture, were 'out of place'' (Macdonald, 2003: 2). National museums conceptualise and define national culture and identity as 'real', tangible and enduring; objects are given national status, provenance and become naturalised as innate elements of 'the nation' (Macdonald, 2003: 3).

The Political Past: nationalisms and archaeologies

Any research into the establishment of national museums and archaeological collections must acknowledge the political and social milieu from which they emerged, both as cultural practices and as institutions. When does archaeology, administered within a national state or institutional framework, become nationalist? Archaeological research undertaken into the history of 'the nation' *for* 'the nation' becomes necessarily selective; it begins with particular ideologies, worldviews, interests and research questions, focusing on bounded spaces and politically defined

territories. Such archaeologies seek to identify the traces and temporalities of past human activities in order to 'connect' with, and make knowable, the vastness and deep time of antiquity. Material culture becomes referents and evidence in histories of the nation; often objects and sites take on symbolic roles in the creation and 'imagining' of national identities. Throughout the 19th and 20th century, archaeology was enlisted to consolidate and authenticate the modern construct of the political nation-state.

The active relationship between archaeology, nationalist endeavour and the construction of cultural (and other) identities is now widely acknowledged both within the discipline and beyond (Atkinson et al, 1996; Díaz-Andreu and Champion, 1996; Kohl and Fawcett, 1995; Kane, 2003; Dietler, 1994; Meskell, 1998; Crooke, 2000; Härke, 2000; Trigger, 1984, 1989; Gathercole and Lowenthal, 1990; Olsen, 1986; Shennan, 1994; Graves-Brown et al, 1996; Jones, 1997). Indeed, it is supposed by some that such a relationship is 'almost unavoidable' or even 'natural' (Kohl and Fawcett, 1995: 3). Nationalism, Díaz-Andreu and Champion argue, is not a discrete political instrument which is only mobilised intentionally in particular interpretations of the past, but is in fact 'deeply embedded in the very concept of archaeology, in its institutionalisation and development' (Díaz-Andreu and Champion, 1996: 3). Yet, this does not explain why there is still a relative paucity of research into the complex nature of this long established connection (Kohl and Fawcett, 1995: 14).[2]

It is argued that the connections between nationalism and the emergence of archaeology are predicated on the ideological construct of the nation (Díaz-Andreu and Champion, 1996: 3):

'The nation, the idea on which political nationalism is based, is conceived of as the natural unit of a human group, which by its very nature has the right to constitute a political entity. Hence, by definition, the simple existence of nations implies the existence of a past which, for their own good and that of the individuals who belong to them, should be known and propagated. Therefore, the emergence of political nationalism at the end of eighteenth century converted the production of this history into patriotic duty...States organized institutions to create and educate citizens which legitimated state existence on the basis of its identification with a nation....The histories produced by their personnel claimed to chart the origins and development characteristic of each individual nation, and its particular spirit at each stage of its evolution...The nation was at the same time the basis and aim of research.'

Díaz-Andreu (1995) regards the gradual institutionalisation and mobilisation of archaeology as being inextricably bound up with the historical development and political organisation of emerging nation-states. She argues that 'the development of archaeology as a scientific discipline in the nineteenth century can only be understood in the context of the creation of a national history; that is to say a history directed at legitimizing the existence of a nation and, therefore, its right to constitute an independent state' (Díaz-Andreu, 1995: 54). Similarly, Bruce Trigger contends that once nationalism had emerged as a political influence in Western Europe in the mid 19th century, it began to permeate and condition contemporary archaeological research (Trigger, 1995: 268). Industrialisation was altering the existing structures of society, bringing with it conflict between classes and an upsurge in social and political tension. The rise of trade unionism, demands for political suffrage and reform, and the nascent movements of international socialism and communism which purported to unite the mutual interests of the working classes, emphasised emerging divisions between the social strata (Trigger, 1995: 268). Nationalism was viewed by conservative factions as a counteracting force against the potentially subversive powers of socialism and communism, a set of ideals which emphasised the historical and biological unity of the nation and its rightful place in the civilised world (Trigger, 1995: 268). Members of the Western European intelligentsia schooled in the romantic tradition implored people 'to take pride in their nation state and to regard the historical, cultural and biological heritage that its citizens shared as being more important than the class antagonisms that were threatening the social order' (Trigger, 1995: 269). The collective affiliation of citizens through the inclusive union of the nation instituted the idea of the unknown and excluded 'the other'; the causes of various persistent economic and social problems were blamed on the actions of other national groups (Trigger, 1995: 269).

Some have argued that the culture-historical paradigm in European and North American archaeological research in the first half of the 20th century provided a ready source of material for nationalistic historical interpretations (Kohl and Fawcett, 1995: 14). Since the culture-history tradition focused on identifying, and providing 'evidence' for, particular ethnic groups and territories over time (Kohl and Fawcett, 1995: 14), the potential was there for scatterings of material culture and

archaeological sites to be projected onto nationalist narratives and subsumed within political rhetoric. The unreachable, fluid and unknown otherness of the past makes it a receptive surface for myriad interpretations within archaeological discourse and beyond. As Crooke observes: 'Useful for the purposes of nationalism, knowledge is not constant and, equally, how we value the past is not immutable' (Crooke, 2000: 12).

Sites and objects of archaeological importance have been used in the consolidation of identity positions at times of fundamental political and social change; for instance, particular interpretations of the past were fused with the contemporary political situation in 19th century Denmark as the country sought to reconstruct itself at the end of the Napoleonic wars (Stig Sørensen, 1996). Bronze Age barrow sites and archaeological objects became potent symbols in Denmark's past and future; increasingly in 19th century Danish popular culture, historical literature and art, the modern farmer peasant was depicted against a backdrop of archaeological monuments (Stig Sørensen, 1996: 42). The toil of the peasant farmer began to signify the gradual reclamation of Danish land, while references to the rich archaeological past confirmed Denmark's connections with the ancestral land and its rightful claims to a national identity and independent future. The modern farmer and the ancient landscape were assimilated into a timeless continuum: 'The past was used to glorify the nation and, by establishing particular national virtues, it created the basis for a firm national identity. It gave rise to the notion of restoring former national glory by turning attention away from external possessions to the reclamation and intensification of the internal wasteland…and by reclaiming the past' (Stig Sørensen, 1996: 31).

On a contrasting scale, research into the mobilisation of archaeology in Nazi Germany emphasises the symbiotic relationship between archaeological research, political appropriations of material culture and nationalism (Arnold and Hassmann, 1995: 70; see also Quinn, 1996). During the early part of the 20th century prehistoric archaeology was not considered in the same prestigious terms as classical or Near Eastern archaeology; consequently the first chair in prehistory was not established in Germany until 1928 (cited in Sklenar, 1983: 160). The National Socialist Party was instrumental in facilitating the institutionalisation of prehistoric research in Germany, funding the establishment of new university chairs, excavations, museums and

archaeological publications (Arnold and Hassmann, 1995: 76). Ultimately, the Party's patronage of German prehistory contained an underlying agenda: new archaeological research, which drew on the nationalist tones of Gustav Kossinna's theories as well as Darwinian perspectives, was utilised as unequivocal evidence to support territorial expansion and legitimise racial prejudice (Arnold and Hassmann, 1995: 76). However the mutability of the past was equalled by the inconsistencies in the Party's treatment of it as a source for propaganda. Hitler himself drew on prehistoric material culture in his adoption of the swastika as the emblem of the National Socialists (Arnold and Hassmann, 1995: 77). As Arnold and Hassmann observe, the contribution of prehistoric archaeology at this time lay in its symbolic and iconographic value as a potential aid in constructing a nationalist imagery. The visual, graphic impact of the swastika and the SS symbol was readily acknowledged within the propagandist scheme (Arnold and Hassmann, 1995: 78).

Theoretical developments in archaeological research in the late 20th century constituted a major break away from, as well as a highly critical evaluation of, both traditionalist culture-history and positivist methodologies in Western-based archaeologies. Post-processualism, which drew its theoretical perspective from anthropology, philosophy, critical and cultural theory, sought to deconstruct both the practice of archaeology and archaeological interpretation as being inherently political, subjective, and embedded within particular social value systems, cultural paradigms and political processes (Hodder 1982, 1991a, 1991b, 1995; Shanks and Tilley, 1987a, 1987b; Shanks, 1992; Tilley, 1990; Thomas, 1991, 1996; Ucko, 1995). Shanks and Tilley have argued that the ultimate objective and motivation of archaeological research is intrinsically political (Shanks and Tilley, 1987a: 195). Silberman views archaeology, 'the most visual of the historical disciplines' as 'inescapably didactic' (Silberman, 1995: 261). Increasingly, there were calls for explicit recognition of, and critical engagement with, subjectivity and bias in studies of the past: 'we should drop the pretence of absolute objectivity...Rather than condemning those who "pervert" the past to their own political purposes, we should acknowledge that there is *no* neutral, value-free, or non-political past' (Wilks, 1985: 319, cited in Díaz-Andreu and Champion, 1996: 1, italics in original). Archaeology has always been and remains still 'a socially produced form of knowledge' (Tierney, 1996: 20).

Benedict Anderson[3] (1983) has argued that one of the structuring elements in the creation and 'imagining' of the ancient nation lies in the cultural construct of time as linear and progressive; a chronology of human development as it reaches an advanced state of civilisation. Tony Bennett (1995) draws on this idea: 'As ways of imagining, and so organizing, bonds of solidarity and community, nations take the form of never-ending stories which mark out the trajectory of the people-nation whose origins, rarely precisely specified, are anchored in deep time just as its path seems destined endlessly to unfold itself into a boundless future' (Bennett, 1995: 148). Just as nations are projected as appearing to stretch back to the dawn of time, their solidity is equally dependent on the knowledge that they will continue to exist and so 'glide into a limitless future' (Anderson, 1983: 19). Since the 19th century, historians, archaeologists, scientists and museums established an enduring practice whereby the human and natural world was represented and understood, divided and ranked in terms of historical epochs, dynasties and empires, acculturation and adaptation, evolution and natural selection – all plotted along a singular course of continuous and incessant chronological time (Bennett, 1995). This ideological perspective represented a primary influence in shaping emerging archaeological methodologies and nationalist motives.

Silberman has argued that unless scholars and practitioners working in archaeology face up to 'the full complexity of its political and ideological associations, their well-intentioned calls for the eradication of nationalist bias in archaeological interpretation may merely pave the way for the discipline's exploitation by other, even more transcendent ideologies' (Silberman, 1995: 261). Yet the situation is immediately more complex in the case of multi-national political kingdoms such as Britain, where discrete nationalisms (and even regionalist elements) construct distinct, separatist or conflicting histories and identities. It should also be recognised that there can be fundamental differences in the underlying motivations of movements of *cultural* nationalism and *political* nationalism, although arguably they both share an ideological basis. How is patriotism different from nationalism? Is the former 'benign' and the latter a malignant political force? As Kohl and Fawcett ask, 'When…does one deem the use of the remote past as *overly* politicised or *excessively* nationalistic and on what grounds?…Are the constructions of our own past or national identities more acceptable because they are ours?' (Kohl and Fawcett, 1995: 5). In a

post-modern, post-colonial context, the language of nationalism evokes certain meanings and images; from the sinister uses of nationalism by colonisers and political groups in the suppression of indigenous peoples and appropriation of land, its role in 'proving' ethnic superiority and so justifying genocide, to its application in the rewriting of national histories which erase any content that subverts the claims of the nascent nation-state; its associated connotations cause us to think of this 'phenomenon' in certain, prescribed ways.

Writ large, Kohl and Fawcett contend that both the positive and negative attributes of nationalist archaeology are better understood through ongoing, explicit discussion. Working from this self-conscious approach, they argue that, 'when distorted, nationalist archaeology must be confronted, not ignored' (Kohl and Fawcett, 1995: 16). This proactive stance may be more attuned to identifying extreme forms of nationalism, but is it possible to be alert to the deeply entrenched, normative and standardised modes of research within archaeological practice and discourse on a day-to-day basis? Is all archaeological work supported and funded by the state inevitably nationalistic in essence, or are the realities hidden behind the seemingly more democratic and politically inclusive policy of preserving archaeology 'for the nation'?

Additional ideological elements and influences within Western-based archaeologies

Others have argued that nationalism is not the only modern ideological force to have influenced archaeological discourse: Kaiser (1995) has highlighted the dominant role played by Marxist thought in archaeological interpretation across southeast Europe from the mid 1940s until the 1980s. Marxist readings of the Balkan past were applied to archaeologies of the prehistoric period, with an emphasis on historical realism and the socio-economic development of societies (Kaiser, 1995: 110). Marxist archaeologists used this theoretical model to identify and reconstruct 'the social and economic conditions which engendered the different cultures and their transformations' (Condurachi, 1964: 51, cited in Kaiser, 1995: 110). Kaiser argues that Marxist theory was deeply woven into archaeological discourse and interpretations of Balkan prehistory; concepts, language and terminologies synonymous with the writings of Marx and Engels were evident in the writings of archaeologists, which referred to 'primitive communities', 'tribal aristocracies' and

'emerging class divisions' (Kaiser, 1995: 111). The impact of Marxism was also apparent in structuring the periodisation of Balkan history into evolutionary stages of pre-capitalist existence (Kaiser, 1995: 111). Furthermore, Kaiser argues that the Marxist tenet regarding the 'objective' informational value of material culture in effect strengthened typology-orientated practices in Balkan archaeology (Kaiser, 1995: 111).

There is also the active presence of an internationalist element which can emerge alongside the particularistic nationalism of the nation state (Dennell, 1996; Pluciennik, 1996), and most notably in the post-colonial context, as Silberman (1995: 257) has observed. Silberman argues that since, in the contemporary climate, 'the archaeology of every new nation addresses *both* a domestic and an international audience, the comparative antiquity of certain peoples or the speed with which they climbed the evolutionary ladder are as important as the celebration of specific events from their history' (Silberman, 1995: 257). Nationalisms are thus surrounded and informed by the processes of globalisation, and as a result 'each new nation must construct its past with the C14 dates, regional typologies, and anthropological generalisation that attempt to make its historical achievements instantly and universally comprehensible' (Silberman, 1995: 257).

In his critique of the state of Scottish archaeology in the early to mid 20th century, Niall Sharples (1996) identifies an internationalist perspective in the research attitudes of influential university archaeologists. Sharples's paper highlights the impact of external influences upon archaeological research in a national university or museum context. He shows that Stuart Piggott, Abercromby Professor of Archaeology at Edinburgh University, subscribed to the contemporary paradigm of culture-historical thought which placed emphasis on cultural diffusionism, universal origins and wide-scale Indo-European development (Sharples, 1996: 84). Piggott was clearly influenced by the southern England and Wessex orientated archaeological framework and the excavation sites he selected in lowland Scotland reflected this Anglocentric research angle (Sharples, 1996: 85-86). The application of these dominant schools of thought to the Scottish archaeological record had a significant and lasting impact on interpretations of human prehistory in Scotland. Piggott's interpretation of sites were descriptive in essence and 'were concentrated on phenomena which he believed were

introduced from the south...He either ignored features which were better represented in Scotland, or dismissed them as insular adaptations which did not contribute to a clearer understanding of the main themes of prehistory' (Sharples, 1996: 86).

What becomes clear in this thesis is that the impetus in the Archaeological department of the National Museum of Wales was not to construct a nationalistic past, but instead to trace and assemble a discernible archaeological record for Wales in the culture-historical tradition. Figures such as Wheeler and Fox entered the National Museum with their own research interests and worldviews; they were given the autonomy to select, excavate and interpret sites, which in turn, yielded the material culture that would be transformed into 'national' objects upon entering the museum space.

Summary

This chapter has served as an introduction to the interconnecting themes and processes which surround, and impact upon, the research focus and objectives of this thesis. In utilising multi-disciplinary theoretical and historical research, this chapter has provided a contextual view of the complex position of the National Museum of Wales with regard to the museum building process, the museum as a cultural producer and social reformer, the implication of the museum in the construction of nations and national identities, the symbiotic relationships between nationalisms, the development and appropriation of archaeology and the establishment of national collections. The following chapter goes on to provide a detailed analysis of nationalism as a modern social, political and cultural phenomenon.

[1] Value systems are an integral feature of Western society, culture and the economy, as the anthropologist Michael Thompson (1979) has shown in his book *Rubbish Theory: the creation and destruction of value* (Oxford: Clarendon). The dynamic nature and active influence of socio-cultural, political and intellectual value systems within museums, archaeology and heritage specifically is widely acknowledged, and in this sense I borrow these terms from Elizabeth Crooke (2000), from the theoretical concepts in John Carman's (1996) *Valuing Ancient Things: archaeology and the law* (London: Leicester University Press) and more generally from W.D. Lipe's (1984) article on the impact of value systems in shaping attitudes to the past and cultural resource management in H. Cleere (ed.) *Approaches to Archaeological Heritage: new directions in archaeology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
[2] In some respects this state of affairs is mirrored within wider research into nationalism as a modernist social phenomenon; see Chapter 2 of this thesis.
[3] An analysis of Anderson's theory of nationalism is provided in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2
Understanding Nationalism

Introduction

'To teach the world about Wales and the Welsh people about their Fatherland.'

(National Museum of Wales, Laying of the Foundation Stone, 1912: 8)

Lord Pontypridd, the first President of the National Museum of Wales, made this declaration as part of his speech at the laying of the Foundation Stone in 1912. Given before a large public crowd, in the presence of George V, Lord Pontypridd's speech can be interpreted as benign, celebratory patriotism during a period of national revival and optimism for the future of Wales.

However, in the context of this study, Lord Pontypridd's words are illuminating for several reasons. His speech came at an opportune moment, at a time when Wales was at the forefront of a burgeoning international trade and export industry, and was expressing an increased desire to assert its social and political presence as a nation within Britain and as a participant in the British Empire. This extract of Lord Pontypridd's speech also highlights the importance placed on a national museum as a cultural institution imbued with the qualities needed not merely to facilitate learning and self-improvement, but also to represent a nation and its past, and through this foster and preserve its national identity. The national museum, Sklenár argues, is employed to promote the political interests of the nation itself: '…it is a psychological weapon, a centre for the committed historicism and often the centre of the intellectual and cultural life of the nation' (Sklenár, 1983:80, cited in Crooke, 2000: 9). In addition, the national museum may also play a significant role in a political quest for recognition within a multi-national state, such as Britain.

It is revealing to note that the current mission statement of the National Museum of Wales speaks of "Teaching the world about Wales and Wales about the world", which as Paul Loveluck (2003) remarks, avoids a terminology which might engender a political dimension or connections with other political movements such as nationalism, particularly in the light of 20th century European history.

The irony inherent within contemporary ideals of political and social inclusiveness, which cultural institutions such as museums now strive to achieve, denies not only the intrinsically political nature of these notions, but also the socio-political past environments in which museums, and particularly national museums, came into being. Museums, as institutions given the task of selecting, valuing and disseminating components of the past, with the intention of assimilating them into an 'official' history and heritage of a community, region or nation, are inextricably caught up in, and shaped by, the cultural politics of society.

Museums do not emerge naturally and independently within society (Crooke, 2000:1); they are conceptualised, created and developed by interest groups, whether through state intervention, antiquarian societies or private individuals. It seems inevitable that, to varying degrees over time, museums become imbued with political and ideological elements. National museums, as Kaplan (1996) notes, have a particular added dimension, as they are the ascribed institution to present and represent the heritage of a political nation. Therefore, rather than conceiving the museum as existing in natural isolation, it is important to consider national museums in the social contexts in which they emerged: periods of national revival, nation building and cultural and political nationalism.

The National Museum of Wales provides an interesting and under-researched opportunity to explore the creation and development of the Museum in the context of nation building and nationalism in Wales in the 19th and 20th century. Placing the National Museum within this wider social milieu is essential for informed research, but it also opens up the debate to wider comparisons and the potential for tracing and examining the influence of nationalism in the shaping of the Museum; in turn, this research can shed light not only on contemporary histories and understandings of the nationalist movement in Wales, but also the complex social and political relationship between Wales and England. In order to place this research in a contextual framework, it is important to examine the phenomenon of nationalism itself.

Deconstructing Nationalism

Nationalism as a word, concept and ideology remains a familiar and evocative aspect of the post-modern world, and is used liberally in the media and in politics. As Stuart Woolf writes, 'Nationalism has become so integral a part of life in Europe today that it is virtually impossible not to identify oneself with a nation-state...the passport has now become an obligatory document of legal existence, symbol of this dependence of the individual on the nation state, so inconceivable is the concept of 'statelessness'' (Woolf, 1996: 1). Nationalism, as an ideological movement and political doctrine is characterised by its innate contradictions and opposites: 'Nationalism, so convenient a label and justification for many developments...can mean emancipation, and it can mean oppression...a repository of dangers as well as opportunities' (Alter, 1994: 2). It acquired increasingly negative connotations throughout the 20th century as a result of extreme manifestations and abuse; the aggressive nationalist policies mobilised by the Nazis to justify ethnic-cleansing has ensured that, for many, nationalism has become synonymous with the sinister and the inhumane in the world.

Given that nationalism is evidently such a pervasive force, both historically and contemporarily, it is surprising to discover it lacks clear definitions. Indeed, as Alter observes, the range and complexity of the term nationalism merely highlights its ambiguity as a concept (Alter, 1994: 1). Nationalism as a subject of study in its own right, suffered largely until the 1960s from a paucity of focused academic research and critique. This historical impasse is somewhat incongruous, particularly as it is generally accepted that 'no single political doctrine has played a more prominent role in shaping the face of the modern world' (Ozkirimli, 2000: 1). For many intellectuals nationalism, throughout its rise and proliferation in 19th and 20th century Europe, was consistently dismissed as a passing phase, and therefore 'intellectually unproblematic' (Halliday, 1997a: 12, cited in Ozkirimli, 2000: 1). Ozkirimli has identified some possible explanations for the late development of concentrated academic research into nationalism: he argues that the social sciences were largely closed to the importance of nationalism as an ideological force in society. This, coupled with a tendency either to associate nationalism with the unknown 'other' in society – the aggressive manifestations of nationalism in extreme political separatist groups – or to perceive it

as a more overt form of harmless patriotism, ensured that nationalism as a valid and discrete subject of investigation was pushed to the margins (Ozkirimli, 2000: 3).

Nationalism also presented a theoretical dilemma for the Marxist philosophy. Though Tierney (1996) is correct in stating that Marxism has been concerned with the 'national question', nationalism was largely viewed as an ephemeral phenomenon that would decline with the establishment of a communist society and peaceful world order (Halliday, 1997b, cited in Ozkirimli, 2000: 13). Roger Brubaker has attacked this notion of the communist ideology, arguing that such societies were far from anti-national in reality; although nationalism was outwardly suppressed, the nature of the regime produced an institutionalisation of territorial nationhood and ethnic nationality as elemental social categories (Brubaker, 1998: 286, cited in Ozkirimli, 2000: 4).

The sudden interest in research and literature on nationalism in the latter half of the 20th century highlights the dynamic and diverse nature of the phenomenon. However, the resurgence in academic interest can have misleading implications: 'the claim that nationalism is returning implies that it has been away' (Billig, 1995: 47, cited in Ozkirimli, 2000: 4). Clearly, a detailed and comprehensive study of the history and origins of nationalism itself and the theories put forward by academics across the disciplines is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, in order to contextualise the emergence and role of national museums in society, and to gain an understanding of the complex interface and interdependence between nationalism and the use of history and the past, a selection of key works on nationalism will be outlined: the theories of A.D. Smith (1971, 1991), Eric Hobsbawm (1990), Ernest Gellner (1983) and finally Benedict Anderson (1983, 1991).

Beginnings: theories and concepts

Nationalism, as a recognisable political and cultural phenomenon, is generally accepted as having emerged in 18th century Europe; the earliest record of the use of the term nationalism can be found in the writings of Johann Gottfried Herder, a German philosopher, in 1774, although it did not come into common usage until the middle of the 19th century (Alter, 1994: 3). Some argue the phenomenon should be set against a historical backdrop of the development of sovereign states since the middle ages, and a gradual awareness among ruling elites of the potential utility of patriotism

as a binding social tie, between the 15th and 18th centuries (Woolf, 1996: 8). In addition, notions of modern nationalism are often dated to the French Revolution, 'because of the revolutionaries' immediate and unequivocal equation of nation, state, territory and language' (Woolf, 1996: 10).

Therefore, a concrete and agreed definition of nationalism remains elusive in modern academia, partly as a result of the proliferation of publications, interpretations, critiques and theories of nationalism in a contemporary climate of post-colonialism and post-modernity. Indeed, Hugh Seton-Watson has observed, 'I am driven to the conclusion that no "scientific definition" of the nation can be devised; yet the phenomenon has existed and exists' (Seton-Watson, 1977: 5). A theoretical divide opens up between those intellectuals who stress the cultural dimensions of nationalism and those who favour nationalism as an explicitly political movement (Hutchinson and Smith, 1994); for others this polarisation simplifies the interrelated nature of such processes (see Hutchinson, 1994; Smith, 1971).

Pitched within a sociological approach, Eugen Lemberg defines nationalism as a 'system of ideas, values and norms, an image of the world and society which makes a large social group aware of where it belongs and invests this sense of belonging with a particular value' (Lemburg, 1964: 16, cited in Alter, 1994). For Breuilly, nationalism is essentially about politics, based on the equation that politics equals power (Breuilly, 1993: 1), but can also be seen as referring to 'ideas, sentiments and to actions' (Breuilly, 1993: 404, cited in Ozkirimli, 2000: 58). Nationalism is essentially a 'form of behaviour' for Kellas (1991: 3, cited in Ozkirimli, 2000: 59), a 'doctrine' in Kedourie's analysis, conceptualised and created by disaffected intellectuals during the German Romantic period (Kedourie, 1960), and in Anthony Gidden's view, 'a phenomenon that is primarily psychological' (Giddens, 1985: 116, cited in Billig, 1995: 44). For Alter, there is no nationalism per se, but rather a multitude of manifestations of *nationalisms* in a plural sense (Alter, 1994: 2).

The study of nationalism in contemporary academia, which has attracted interpretation and research within disciplines across the humanities and social sciences spectrum, is generally broken down into three broad categories of approaches: primordialism, modernism and ethno-symbolism. (It should, however, be

pointed out that the theorists may not accept, or choose to affiliate with, the theoretical approach in which they have been couched, see Ozkirimli, 2000).

The primordialist approach to nationalism is somewhat self-explanatory: it views nations and nationalities as inherently organic, an innate part of human 'instinct' like the physical senses (Ozkirimli, 2000: 64). This approach constitutes the earliest paradigm of nationalism and is used as an encompassing term to denote academics who subscribe to this view (Ozkirimli, 2000: 64). Edward Shils (1957) ultilised this approach in his sociological research on family and kinship (Eller and Coughlan, 1993, cited in Ozkirimli, 2000: 65). Not surprisingly, this view of nationalism sits well with nationalist ideologies, where a promotion of the natural state of the nation, and the perennial human need to belong is invoked to imply continuity and authenticity. Increasingly, primordialist approaches to explaining nationalism have become increasingly difficult to sustain in comparison with studies which dispute the supposed 'organic' nature of nations and nationalist movements (see Ozkirimli, 2000).

Nationalism, Identity and the Pre-Modern World: living traditions, myths and memories

A.D. Smith (1971, 1991) defines nationalism as 'an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential "nation"' (Smith, 1991: 73), and approaches nationalism from an ethnic-symbolic approach. Smith rejects the primordial theories of nationalism, and seeks to challenge the modernist approach taken by Gellner (1983), Hobsbawm (1990) and Anderson (1983, 1991), that nations are 'invented', or can be explained as wholly modern constructs (see also Hutchinson, 1994). Smith emphasises nationalism as more than an ideology or generic form of politics, and argues that it exists as a cultural phenomenon principally: 'Nationalism, the ideology and the movement, must be closely related to national identity, a multidimensional concept, and extended to include specific language, sentiments and symbolism' (Smith, 1991: vii).

Smith (1991) highlights what he sees as the meaningful role of pre-existing ethnic ties and sentiments in the formation of modern nations. Smith argues that the modernist

interpretation of the rise of the nation state and nationalism, mobilised by industrialisation and capitalism, negates the significant role pre-modern cultural norms and values, social organisation, symbols, myths and memories played in constructing and sustaining particular senses of identity. According to Smith, nationalism and the rise of the nation state relies on centuries of cultural processes that pave the way for future political transformations on a grand scale. Smith argues that nationalist ideology politically mobilises and promotes the myth of the nation as an ancient legacy, eternal but lying dormant and forgotten. Reacting to the modernist theory of the nation as artificially created, he highlights the potential power in acknowledging 'the living presence of traditions embodying memories, symbols, myths and values from much earlier epochs in the life of a population, community or area' (Smith, 1991: 20). In order to understand the emergence of nationalism and the modern nation, Smith goes on to stress that it is crucial to attempt an understanding of its pre-modern ethnic roots, and the *ethnie*, primarily because: 'Usually there has been some ethnic basis for the construction of modern nations, be it only some dim memories and elements of culture and alleged ancestry, which is hoped to revive' (Smith, 1986: 17).

Smith's approach to pre-modern ethnic groups, or the *ethnie*, the term he favours, challenges the assumption of the necessary presence of a state or marked territory in determining and shaping ethnic groups and identity. In his view, it is meanings, associations, attachments and symbols that are essential elements for ethnic identification, and physical factors such as territory, or an affiliation with a particular space, are not fundamental (Smith, 1991: 21-23). Rather, this sense of ethnic identity is produced and reproduced through cultural exchange and cognitive connections. Thus, according to Smith, an *ethnie* may continue to exist irrespective of whether it becomes divorced from its 'homeland', through a meaningful and intense spiritual attachment and through the communication of traditions and heritage. He cites diaspora communities such as the Jews and the Armenians as examples of this (Smith, 1991: 23).

According to Smith (1991: 37-38), the continual reproduction of mechanisms of cultural borrowing, organised religion, popular participation and the exchange of skills can facilitate the survival of certain ethnic communities through time and space,

despite changes in their social composition and culture. Thus, gradually, a cultural repository of customs, rites, artefacts and associations with particular events, ancestors and landscapes is constructed to be drawn upon, selectively, by subsequent generations (Smith, 1991: 38). Presumably, these repositories form a cultural store from which future groups may utilise selected components in the construction of a nation, and in nationalist interpretations, in the modern sense.

Having posed the question of how these traditions and cultural repositories are passed on and influence successive generations, Smith argues that in pre-modern communities, it is the priests, scribes and bards, who, as the only literate strata in society, take on the roles of communicators in the reproduction and re-enactment of traditions (Smith, 1991: 38). Through these ideological roles, particularly in their positions as intermediaries with divine forces, they exact considerable force and influence in the community. Moreover, the construction and physical presence of churches, temples and monasteries forms a network of socialisation, not only effective in the major towns, but also across the surrounding area (Smith, 1991: 38). Smith argues that the involvement of religious infrastructures was viewed as indispensable by emerging governments in many ancient and medieval empires. He uses Armstrong's (1982) research on Jewish and Armenian identity, where a 'highly involved network of religious officials and institutions was able to ensure the subjective unity and survival of its historical and religious survival' (Smith, 1991: 38). Smith maintains that it is through these unifying and encompassing mechanisms that 'ethnic cores' emerge, around which future nation states often converge (Smith, 1991: 38).

Addressing the question of nationalism as an ideology, Smith (1991: 74) proposes a 'core doctrine of nationalism':

1) The world is divided into nations, each with its individuality, history and destiny.

2) The nation is the source of all political and social power, and loyalty to the nation overrides all other allegiances.

3) Human beings must identify with a nation if they want to be free and realize themselves.

4) Nations must be free and secure if peace and justice are to prevail in the world.

Smith consciously omits any references to the state in the doctrine, since he argues that 'nationalism is an ideology of the nation, not the state. It places the nation at the centre of its concerns, and its description of the world and its prescriptions for collective action are concerned only with the nation and its members' (Smith, 1991: 74). Smith challenges what he views as the often undisputed concept that nations can only experience true freedom if they exist as a sovereign state. He cites early nationalist writers and cultural nationalists, such as Rousseau and Herder, as not being concerned principally with the attainment of a nation state; Smith also argues that Catalan, Scots and Flemish nationalist movements have historically been concerned more with cultural equality and political autonomy within a pre-existing state than with complete independence (Smith, 1991: 74).

Smith argues that modernists have been reticent in conceding a possible continuity between pre-modern ethnic cores and ethnocentrism and modern nations and nationalism. In attempting to illustrate the mechanisms through which modern nations can emerge, Smith proposes two types of pre-modern ethnic communities which may be seen as antecedents in determining and shaping future nation states and nationalist movements: lateral and vertical *ethnies*.

Lateral ethnic communities generally comprise aristocrats and the high clergy, although they may also incorporate high-ranking military and government officials as well as influential, wealthy members from the business and mercantile sector (Smith, 1991: 53). Smith defines such *ethnies* as lateral since they are immediately composed of, and confined to, the upper strata, while also being spread out geographically in order to form close links with the comparative strata of neighbouring lateral communities (Smith, 1991: 53). Through this, 'its borders were typically "ragged", but it lacked social depth, and its often marked sense of identity was bound up with its *espirit de corps* as a high status stratum and ruling class' (Smith, 1991: 53).

These aristocratic, lateral communities have a 'self-perpetuating' capacity, in that they can effectively incorporate and absorb other layers of the population into their cultural sphere; often such communities made few efforts to disseminate their particular

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culture down the social scale. Smith cites the Hittites and Assyrians as ruling successfully over alien and disparate groups (Smith, 1991: 54). However, often these communities were destroyed by the 'alien' populations, and those which did survive preserved themselves through the adaptation of new religions, customs and even languages. Smith cites England after the Norman Conquest as an example of such a transformation and shift. The 12th and 13th centuries were characterised by cultural exchange and cultural borrowing in language, intermarriage and mobility between the Norman colonisers and the upper class Saxons, set within a context of increasing state centralisation and the foundations of Catholicism in England (Smith, 1991: 55-56).

Therefore, for Smith, 'the bureaucratic incorporation of subordinate ethnic populations entailed social intercourse and cultural fusion between Anglo-Saxon, Danish and Norman elements. By the 14th century linguistic fusion had crystallized into Chaucerian English, and a common myth of 'British descent', propounded...by Geoffrey of Monmouth, had received wide social and political recognition' (Smith, 1991: 56).

Smith concedes that this does not represent an English nation, but that through a fusion of the existing ethnic elements of myths, historical memories and traditions with new cultural developments, some of the social processes which help to form future nations had become recognisable.

In contrast, vertical *ethnies* are by definition more compressed, and in these communities, culture tended to be diffused downward through the social strata. In such *ethnies*, a distinct, singular historical culture was utilised to connect disparate social classes around a shared common heritage and to provide protection from external forces (Smith, 1991: 53). The bonds created were often powerful, insular and exclusive, making admission for outsiders particularly difficult (Smith, 1991: 53).

In vertical ethnic communities, the process of forming nations on the basis of so-called demotic *ethnies* is influenced by the bureaucratic state indirectly (Smith, 1991: 61). In Smith's view, such communities were mainly 'subject communities' (Smith, 1991: 62), in which organised religion was the all-encompassing and powerful bond that united membership (Smith, 1991: 62). In such communities, religion shapes daily

life, and it is through the teachings of the clergy and sacred texts that heritage and traditions are preserved (Smith, 1991: 62).

Where such *ethnies* reach a pivotal moment is when the community may be transformed into a nation. In vertical *ethnies*, the coercive apparatus of a bureaucratic state necessary to enact such a political transformation is absent. Smith highlights the case of the Arab 'nation' as an example, where geographical divisions, colonial intervention and socio-political and economic disparity across various regions rendered it almost impossible to imagine a unified, common Arab nation (Smith, 1991: 62): 'There is...little sign of a common educational approach, let alone anything resembling a single public, mass education system for all Arabs. As for a common civic culture, the massive influence of Islam constitutes a source of weakness as well as strength' (Smith, 1991: 63). It is therefore not surprising that the Arab intellectuals found the issue of Arab identity impossible to consolidate, since the Arab ethnic culture converged with wider aspects of Islamic culture. How could a diverse ethnic culture be transformed into a truly national and civic mass culture? In order to achieve this, the emergent secular intelligentsia set out to change the fundamental relationship between religion and ethnicity (Smith, 1991: 63): 'Under the impact of a rationalizing 'scientific state'...the relationship between religious traditions and their demotic ethnic 'bearers' is eroded...and westernization and the market economy throw up new social classes led by professional and intellectual strata who are drawn to various Western ideologies and discourses, including nationalist ones, by the pressure of the scientific state on traditional religious images and theodicies' (Smith, 1991: 63).

The intelligentsia take on the role of uniting a hitherto unreceptive community into forming a nation around a history and culture that has supposedly been 'rediscovered' (Smith, 1991: 64). In returning to a 'living past' (Smith, 1991: 65), which could be drawn from the actions and traditions of the people, the intelligentsia constructed maps of the community, its history, future and place among other nations (Smith, 1991: 65). This was characterised by a return to 'nature' and its 'poetic' spaces (Smith, 1991: 65). These physical and imagined spaces are important in defining the 'homeland' of the community. Natural features take on new meanings and significance through this association and even physical monuments become

'naturalised': 'Castles, temples...and dolmens are integrated into the landscape and treated as part of its special nature. In the 18th and 19th centuries Stonehenge became a natural symbol of British antiquity, as part of the romantic revival of history. Indeed, so much part of the 'British' landscape did it become, that it became difficult to imagine that it was not natural and inherent in the British ethnic character' (Smith, 1991: 66). Therefore, this prehistoric site, of a particular time and context, had effectively become naturalised into a national narrative. Smith argues that through these active processes, a sense of community and identity is created and defined, laying a smooth foundation for future entry into 'the world of nations' (Smith, 1991: 68).

In conclusion, Smith concedes that nationalism does assist in the creation of nations, many of them apparently 'new'. He stresses the modernity of nationalism as an ideology and as a language since its emergence in the political arena in 18th century Europe. However, he rejects the 'invented' notion of nations and nationalism, just as he would reject the invented state of other cultural processes: 'if nationalism is part of the spirit of the age, it is equally dependent on earlier motifs, visions and ideals' (Smith, 1991: 71).

Smith's approach has attracted a variety of criticisms, not least from the modernist school of thought. Much of the argument centres on the ethno-symbolic theoretical approach to the role of pre-existing ethnic ties and sentiments in the formation of modern nations. For some, the earnest endeavour to find meaningful links with the past produces a perception of persistent and durable ethnic communities which are exaggerated or misinterpreted. O'Leary (1996) argues that it is not surprising that one can identify the antecedents of nationalism in pre-modern societies given the ambiguous definition of nationalism: 'most of those who discuss "nations" before nationalism are in fact establishing the existence of cultural precedents, and ethnic and other materials which are subsequently shaped and re-shaped by nationalists in pursuit of nation-building' (O'Leary, 1996: 90, cited in Ozkirimli, 2000: 183).

Symmons-Symonolewicz (1985) argues that the problematic definition of the nation in so-called pre-modern societies clouds the debate. He makes the point that a nation is not merely a large ethnic group, and in turn not every large group is a nation (cited

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in Ozkirimli, 2000: 183-184). In the transition to nation-hood, ethnic groups must go through a multitude of changes in their transformation, both structurally and imaginatively (Symmons-Symonolewicz, 1985: 220, cited in Ozkirimli, 2000: 184). In addition, nations are not fixed and impenetrable entities, and as such, they absorb influences and alien elements from other cultures and societies over time and space (Symmons-Symonolewicz, 1985: 220, cited in Ozkirimli, 2000: 183-184). He also criticises Smith's supposition that *ethnies* are characterised by a developed group consciousness and sense of history (Symmons-Symonolewicz, 1985: 219, cited in Ozkirimli, 2000: 184). How do we know this? Even in the instances where a consciousness may exist, Symmons-Symonolewicz argues that this would have been restricted, in the main, to the intellectual elite, as there were neither the apparatus nor the social mechanisms in place to communicate and diffuse ethnic 'sentiments' across all of society (Symmons-Symonolewicz, 1981: 152, cited in Ozkirimli, 2000: 184). Indeed, how can we know what meaning such sentiments had?

Hall (1993: 3) argues that the establishment and growth of most nations is largely dependent on the products of the modernisation: effective communication networks, increases in literacy and transport links. Finally, Calhoun (1997) asserts that Smith, in demonstrating continuity, underestimates the fluidity of ethnic communities and identities, and paints them as 'fixed'. For him, the act of tracing a supposed continuity in ethnic traditions does not explain why certain traditions last, or which traditions may become the basis for nations or nationalist ideologies (Calhoun, 1997: 49). Calhoun also makes the important point that traditions, like any social processes, are not simply inherited, and passed on naturally in pristine form. They need to be reproduced: 'stories have to be told over and again, parts of the traditions have to be adapted to new circumstances to keep them meaningful...to say too simply that nationalism is grounded in ethnic traditions...obscures from our view important differences in scale and mode of reproduction' (Calhoun, 1997: 50). It should also be pointed out that the mode of repetition itself does not ensure perfection and preservation; it is often through this process that traditions may take on new layers and meanings within different groups.

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The Invented Nation: nationalism and modernity

In stark contrast and opposition to the ethno-symbolist views expressed by Smith is Eric Hobsbawm's (1990) approach to nations and nationalism. Working within a modernist paradigm, naturally Hobsbawm's approach equates nationalism with wider modernity. The modernist school of thought emerged in the late 20th century in collectively challenging the notion and basic assumptions of the perennial nature of the nation state naturalised by the nationalist legacy (Ozkirimli, 2000: 85). In this view, nations and nationalist ideologies become a sociological necessity only in the modern world; there was no place for this phenomenon in the pre-modern era (Ozkirimli, 2000: 86). Modernist approaches to nationalism have, in the main, become the dominant orthodoxy (e.g. Anderson, 1983; Brass, 1991; Brueilly, 1993; Gellner, 1983; Hechter, 1975; Nairn, 1981, although that is not to say that their existence under one umbrella term denotes cohesion in their theories).

Hobsbawm views the terms nation and nationalism as eternally difficult to define: 'Attempts to establish objective criteria for nationhood, or to explain why certain groups have become 'nations' – and others not – have often been made on single criteria such as language or ethnicity or a combination of criteria such as language, common territory, common history, cultural traits or whatever else…are themselves fuzzy, shifting and ambiguous' (Hobsbawm, 1990: 6). It is therefore not possible to reduce 'nationality' and definitions of nationalism to a single dimension, whether cultural, political or otherwise.

For Hobsbawm, the basic characteristic of the modern nation, and all that is connected with it, is its modernity (Hobsbawm, 1990: 14). However, he argues that centuries of nationalist rhetoric have ensured that national identity is often assumed to be so inherent, natural and permanent that it precedes history (Hobsbawm, 1990: 14). He cites an excerpt from the dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy, where before 1884, the word nación simply meant 'the aggregate of the inhabitants of a province, a country or a kingdom and also a foreigner' (Hobsbawm, 1990: 14), and compares it with a later definition: 'a state or political body which recognises a supreme centre of common government' and also 'the territory constituted by that state and its individual inhabitants, considered as a whole' (Hobsbawm, 1990: 15).

Whatever the 'proper' or 'original' definition of the nation, Hobsbawm uses this example to illustrate the inherent differences between the pre-modern ideas of the nation, and the definition it carries in the modern world. For Hobsbawm the political and cultural conceptualisation and transformation of the nation was only able to evolve in duality with the modern world of mass politics, industrialisation and capitalism in the late 19th century. In other words, the nation and nationalism are wholly modern constructs and emerged through a process of 'social engineering'.

Hobsbawm (1990: 9) uses the term nationalism in the sense defined by Gellner: 'primarily a principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent' (Gellner, 1983: 1). Hobsbawm argues that he does not consider the nation to be a perennial, immutable social entity:

'It belongs to a particular, and historically recent, period. It is a social entity only insofar as it relates to a certain kind of modern territorial state, the 'nation-state', and it is pointless to discuss nation and nationalism except insofar as both relate to it. Moreover, I would stress the element of artefact, invention and social engineering which enters into the making of nations...in short for the purposes of analysis nationalism comes before nations. Nations do not make states and nationalisms but the other way round.'

(Hobsbawm, 1990: 9-10)

Hobsbawm states that the 'national question' and the idea of nations is situated at a dynamic intersection of politics, technology and social transformation: 'Nations exist not only as functions of a particular kind of territorial state or the aspiration to establish one...but also in the context of a particular stage of technological and economic development...standard national languages, spoken or written, cannot emerge as such before printing, mass literacy and hence, mass schooling' (Hobsbawm, 1990: 10).

Hobsbawm perceives these phenomena as essentially constructed, controlled and diffused from above, through the state and the dominant upper strata of society (Hobsbawm, 1990: 10). However, an understanding of nationalism needs to be qualified with analysis of the view from below, 'that is, in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longing and interests of ordinary people, which are not necessarily national and still less nationalist' (Hobsbawm, 1990: 10). Hobsbawm believes that

social and labour history has a key role in balancing out conventional historical narratives of nations, rulers and elites. He refers to the distorted and often unreliable nature of official ideologies of states, which are 'not guides to what is in the minds of the most loyal citizens or supporters...more specifically, we cannot assume that for most people national identification...excludes or is always or ever superior to, the remainder of the set of identifications which constitute the social being' (Hobsbawm, 1990: 11). In addition, Hobsbawm argues that national identification, and its diverse meanings and implications, can shift and alter over time and space.

Hobsbawm asserts that a crucial and socially influential characteristic of the modern construct of nations and nationalist movements from the late 18th century onwards, was 'the invention of traditions' (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983). Hobsbawm defines such a concept as a 'set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past' (Hobsbawm, 1983: 1) and also as a 'response to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations' (Hobsbawm, 1983: 2).

As such, nations epitomise the most pervasive of the invented traditions. Irrespective of their historical novelty, the invented nation establishes continuity with a selective past and employs history as 'a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion' (Hobsbawm, 1983: 12). Hobsbawm views this continuity as largely fictitious. Invented traditions, as political tools for promoting social cohesion, were utilised during periods of crisis, or rapid social change such as industrialisation, which transformed but also fragmented existing communities and divisions of labour.

In Hobsbawm's view, the period of 1870 to 1914 in Britain, a period characterised by mass politics, coincides with the proliferation of invented traditions. The process of increasing democracy across the social strata politically mobilised hitherto voiceless and coerced sections of society (although it should be pointed out that many groups remained excluded or discriminated against) (Hobsbawm, 1983: 264-265). The need for a political and cultural 'national community' to unite often disparate sections of the population, hitherto reigned over as subjects and now recognised as citizens under a nation-state ideology, was seen as imperative by the ruling elite. Hence, the invented

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traditions phenomenon took on many guises in its utilisation as a socio-political strategy; Hobsbawm identifies three significant innovations of the period: the introduction of primary education, the invention of public ceremonies, and the mass production of public monuments (Hobsbawm, 1983: 265-271).

Combined together, these cultural institutions and practices meant that nationalism became 'a substitute for social cohesion through a national church, a royal family or other cohesive traditions, or collective group self-presentations, a new secular religion' (Hobsbawm, 1983: 303, cited in Ozkirimli, 2000: 117).

Hobsbawm (1990) expounds on the socially cohesive force inherent in invented traditions, with his concept of 'proto-national bonds' in nations. As he asks: 'why and how could a concept so remote from the real experience of most human beings as 'national patriotism' become such a powerful political force so quickly? It is plainly not enough to appeal to the universal experience of human beings who belong to groups recognizing one another as members of collectivities or communities, and therefore recognizing others as strangers' (Hobsbawm, 1990: 46). Proto-national bonds are mobilised and employed to create a sense of identity which is inextricably bound up with the emerging modern nation; characteristics such as religion, language and ethnicity are reinterpreted and transmitted as aids in the construction of a national identity and to encourage a sense of commitment to the nation.

Hobsbawm contends that a national language represents one of the most important proto-national bonds within nationalist movements, not only for its political value as a way of distinguishing between cultural communities, but also its potential to be reinvented. Again, the crucial link between the potential for a national language as a bond, particularly in a society where only a small minority are literate, comes only with the industrial age, with print technology and the gradual introduction of state education (Hobsbawm, 1990: 53). Primary education therefore plays an important part in the institution and diffusion of 'standard' written and spoken languages. The dominant language diffused is generally the language spoken by the ruling elites, but it is also necessary to incorporate or exclude an array of informal spoken idioms and dialects, to create a suitable and tangible link with its past roots.

Therefore, national languages 'are almost always semi-artificial constructs, and occasionally, like modern Hebrew, virtually invented...they are the opposite of what nationalist mythology supposes them to be, namely the primordial foundations of national culture and the matrices of the national mind' (Hobsbawm, 1990: 54). A national language achieved a new 'fixity' through the mechanisms of print, and the power of the written word evoked the visual illusion of its permanent and 'eternal' nature (Hobsbawm, 1990: 61). Thus, in Hobsbawm's theory, these are developments characteristic of, and essential to, modern nations, and simply could not have occurred in, or affected, pre-nationalist and pre-literate societies: 'language multiplies with states; not the other way round' (Hobsbawm, 1990: 63).

Modern nation states utilised the social mechanisms of primary education, traditions and ceremonies, and literacy through a common language, to inculcate an awareness and naturalisation of national identity, and to present an uninterrupted link with the past and the 'historic' nature of the nation. Combined together, these mechanisms produce powerful proto-national bonds: 'The strongest bond is undoubtedly...the consciousness of belonging or having belonged to a lasting political entity...Naturally states would use the increasingly powerful machinery of communicating with inhabitants...to spread the image and heritage of the 'nation' and to inculcate attachment to it and attach all to country and flag, often 'inventing traditions' or even nations, for this purpose' (Hobsbawm, 1990: 91-92). In Hobsbawm's view, the authenticity of ethnic ties and historical links are unimportant in the nationalist ideology. For the nation, the past is a vehicle for constructing the present and paving the way for the future, justifying its political presence through selected representations and distortions of history.

Undoubtedly, it is clear that Hobsbawm's approach to nationalism and modernity is greatly influenced by the theories of Ernest Gellner (1964, 1983, 1987). Gellner's approach to nationalism represents a wide-ranging theoretical sweep of the phenomenon (Ozkirimli, 2000: 128), but sees the nation and nationalist ideologies as essentially modern constructs. As mentioned earlier, for Gellner 'nationalism is primarily a principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent' (Gellner, 1983: 1). He argues that nations and nationalism can only emerge in the modern world as, historically, most societies and political units were

not conceptualised or organised along the lines of nationalist ideologies and principles: 'Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents them where they do not exist' (Gellner, 1964: 169).

In Gellner's view, the crucial distinction is between 'traditional' and 'modern' societies, namely the particular characteristics of three stages in human history and development: hunter gatherer-societies, agro-literate societies and, finally, industrial societies. Again, in contrast to Smith, Gellner argues that nations and nationalism could not exist in pre-modern cultures, since there were no recognisable states in place. Agro-literate societies, in comparison, are composed of more complex socio-political systems, where two crucial forms of the division of labour, the centralisation of power and culture, have profound implications for the social structure of such polities (Gellner, 1983: 8-9). However, they lack an implemented system of cultural homogeneity, on which nations depend. In such societies, cultural differentiation between a dominant or ruling strata of priests, warriors, clerics and administrators and the majority of agricultural producers and peasants is stressed, rather than cultural homogeneity (Gellner, 1983: 10). Culture is the means by which these two strata differentiate themselves from each other, and there is no inducement for a ruling elite to take on the large task of imposing and inculcating cultural homogeneity over its subjects, who are geographically spread out and exist in localised worlds. Power and culture, two dual factors crucial in nation-building and nationalist rhetoric, are not implemented in these societies (Gellner, 1983: 11).

It is in industrial societies, however, that power and culture are mobilised and transformed, and a different relationship emerges: 'a high culture pervades the whole of society, defines it, and needs to be sustained by the polity. *That* is the secret of nationalism' (Gellner, 1983: 18). This high culture is composed of 'a school-mediated, academy supervised idiom, codified for the requirements of reasonably precise bureaucratic and technological communication' (Gellner, 1983: 57). Industrialisation transforms much of society irreversibly; technological advancements alter modes of production, skills, landscapes and communication. It transforms (or in some cases extinguishes) traditional working practices and the division of labour, and through these processes, a greater degree of social mobility emerges. There is a much greater need for effective, impersonal communication, and a standardisation of

language and culture, to alleviate the problems of 'local dialectical idiosyncrasy' (Gellner, 1964: 155). Culture becomes crucial in fuelling the industrial process and creating the nation. However, the uneven geographical spread of modernisation and industrialisation produces cultural cleavages, and the potential for disaffection and conflict. Therefore, the nationalist invention of the nation is necessary to present modern society as predestined.

A broad but standardised educational structure is required to train workers, introduce generic work practices and, moreover, teach basic literacy, numeracy and social skills. Such an enormous infrastructure cannot be sustained without the support and intervention of the state. The institutionalisation of the education system through the state adds an ideological dimension. A mass education system provides the gel that binds state and culture together in the modern nation. Official histories are written and taught, national museums are established, and scientific organisations are set up to 'subtend the propagation of 'official' knowledge, so that specific bodies of knowledge, values and norms are ingested by all educated citizens' (Edensor, 2002: 3). In Gellner's view, 'exo-education becomes the universal norm...a man's education is by far his most precious investment, and in effect confers identity on him. Modern man is not loyal to a monarch or a land or faith, whatever he may say, but to a culture' (Gellner, 1983: 35-36). A national education infrastructure, supported and shaped by the state, and a promoter of nation loyalty and commitment to the state, takes on the role in the production of homogenised national citizens.

Therefore, if nationalism is a product of industrial social organisation (Ozkirimli, 2000: 132), 'nations can be defined only in terms of the age of nationalism' (Gellner, 1983: 55). According to Gellner, the nation is primarily an invention, brought about by a nationalist ideology. Its pre-modern characteristics are not crucial, and as Hobsbawm (1990) argues, a particular, politically selective relationship with the past is evoked: 'It is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round. Admittedly, nationalism uses the pre-existing, historically inherited proliferation of cultures or cultural wealth, though it uses them selectively, and it most often transforms them radically. Dead languages can be revived, traditions invented, quite fictitious pristine purities restored' (Gellner, 1983: 55-56).

Alternative Perspectives

It should be pointed out here that, although Hobsbawm's and Gellner's approaches share a common theme, there is still scope for criticism. Hobsbawm has criticised Gellner's approach for concentrating on the pervasive nature of 'high cultures' and for neglecting to consider 'the view from below', although Koelble makes the valid point that Hobsbawm 'does not himself provide much of an analysis of the effects of modernization on the lower classes' (Koelble, 1995: 78, cited in Ozkirimli, 2000: 123). Hobsbawm's approach has also attracted a lot of criticism from A.D. Smith (1995). He objects fundamentally to the concept of 'invented traditions', arguing that they are in fact synonymous with the rediscovery and revival of ethnic traditions from the past. He also criticises what he sees as an inherent characteristic of modernist theory in viewing the nationalist phenomenon from 'the top down. They concentrate, for the most part, on elite manipulation of the 'masses' rather than on the dynamics of mass mobilisation *per se*' (Smith, 1995: 40, cited in Ozkirimli, 2000: 122). Finally, Smith contests Hobsbawm's declaration that globalisation has replaced nationalism in the contemporary world, and the idea that the historical study of nationalism attests to its diminishing power. Smith uses the examples of the United States, France and Canada, where he argues that nationalism, in a variety of forms, still exists (Smith, 1995: 213).

Gellner's theories on the emergence of nations and nationalism, though hugely influential, have also been increasingly criticised. This is partly due to the functionalist paradigm from which he approaches nationalism (Ozkirimli, 2000: 137). As a result, he has been accused of developing a macro-theory of nationalism, ignoring the existence of micro processes in emerging nation states (see Ozkirimli, 2000; O'Leary, 1996; Breuilly, 1993). Gellner has been criticised further for misreading the interdependent relationship between nationalism and industrialisation (Ozkirimli, 2000). Minogue (1996) questions this interdependence, arguing that Britain went through the industrial age without a nationalist movement, disputing Gellner's assumption that nationalism is a prerequisite of industrial nation states (Minogue, 1996: 121). Kedourie asserts that nationalism, as a political doctrine, emerged in German speaking lands, in which there was little industrialisation (Kedourie, 1994: 143, cited in Ozkirimli: 139).

The three theories outlined above, and their criticisms, serve to illustrate the diversity of approaches to nationalism as a social and political phenomenon. Interesting for the purposes of this study, Crooke (2000) has noted that to each of the theorists, the past *is* important for nationalism, albeit in different ways: 'Smith considers the past as essential to nationalism. The past is used to form the character of the nation, to define and legitimise the political ideology. According to Gellner the nation is presented as a representation of the culture and heritage of the people: it is a *product of nationalism*' (Crooke, 2000: 19, italics in original). Therefore, 'Gellner presents the national past as *created* by politics and Smith presents it as *used* by politics' (Crooke, 2000: 21, italics in original).

Crooke (2000) makes the valid point that although Smith's theory highlights the unique characteristics of pre-modern communities and regions, expressed through traditions, religion and language, the mere combination of these cultural factors is not enough to create a nation: 'There must be an awareness of an idea of the national unit that is greater than the regional unit. Similarly, there must be a sense of the national identity that is greater than the sum of individual identities; in other words, there is no modern nation without national consciousness' (Crooke, 2000: 21). Equally, she argues that while particular places or communities may have their own historic languages and traditions, the idea that this is shared across a political space is invented. She cites the case of Ireland, where it has been shown that nationalism distorted and transformed regional music, dancing traditions and language to create a national style, and concludes: 'Nations and 'national traditions' are therefore a product of the past, but only when it is channelled through the political process. It is important to remember that nationalism moulds the characteristics of the nation to create a popular and simplified ideology that better complements the political process' (Crooke, 2000: 21).

Undoubtedly, the powerful role of the intelligentsia, acknowledged by Smith, Hobsbawm and Gellner, in creating 'national' histories and reviving traditions, and their contribution to the construction and projection of national identity should not be underestimated. For example, Adamson (1999) has traced an important link between intellectuals and historiography in the development of Welsh national identity. Adamson argues that in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, intellectuals played a key

role in the development of Welsh nationalism through their influence as producers of 'knowledge' across the arts. However, their contribution alone is not enough to engender a sense of national identity and national memory across all sections of society. Crucially, the contribution of intellectuals is largely intended for, and therefore restricted to, the social strata in which they operate. Therefore, their writings will not reach the majority of society, nor would they necessarily be of interest, due to the esoteric nature of academia. In any event, it is simplistic to assume that ideas expressed by intellectuals will be accepted unquestioningly by the wider populace. For example, during the first half of the 20th century, when the Welsh language was noticeably in decline, the Welsh intelligentsia lamented the tragedy of this threatened cultural heritage. Yet, Welsh continued to decline as a spoken language, particularly in south Wales and amongst the industrial working classes, which often saw the language as a cultural relic of the past, and as an obstacle in preventing Wales from achieving economic stability and political parity within Britain (see Adamson, 1999).

Similar links may be found in Hobsbawm's and Gellner's assertion of the role of the education system in instilling and promoting a sense of national identity and, through the teaching of history, a naturalised idea of the nation as a primordial entity. It can be assumed that museums – and particularly national museums – are integrated into this model, as didactic institutions responsible for the dissemination of a national past to a public audience. Undoubtedly, the rise of the nation-state and the institutionalisation of the education system drew museums into the political ideology of the day, transforming them from private 'cabinets of curiosities' to social institutions ascribed the role of edifying the public. National museums, conceived and subsumed under the state, are inevitably drawn into the political scene. Again, however, it could be argued that museums only reach certain demographics of society, so their role and presence is not of an omnipotent nature; rather they are a particular kind of social tool. Merriman (1991), through his research into public attitudes to the past and museums, produced revealing findings about the complex nature of the relationship between museums and society. The view of the museum as an agent employed by the ruling elite in industrial societies to impose the dominant ideology over the working classes was originally made by Marx, although more recently the dominant ideology thesis features in Shank's and Tilley's (1987a) analysis of museum presentations. Merriman has contested the accuracy of this theory, since his (and other) findings show that

museums are more likely to be visited by those who are of above average intelligence and affluence. Therefore, those who would be considered to be 'the dominated', the unemployed, housewives, certain sections of the elderly, and those on low incomes, tend not to visit museums. As Merriman points out, 'the effectiveness of the dominant ideology in effecting social reproduction depends on its message being received and assimilated by all sections of the population. If the very group who are supposed to be kept in place by the dominant ideology do not go to museums, then their effectiveness must be questioned' (Merriman, 1991: 17). Where the dominant ideology is restricted to the dominant in society, the effectiveness of other cultural institutions utilised by nationalism must be questioned. Furthermore, Merriman's studies revealed that regular museum visitors placed considerable importance on knowledge of national history, a national past and world history, while non-visitors, the majority of whom were in the low-income bracket, placed more importance on local history and a personal sense of the past.

Clearly, Merriman's research reflects a small section of the public in late 20th century British society. As such, it reflects the views of selected people at a particular point in time, and does not represent the views of society as a whole. Absence of evidence precludes us from viewing the demographic make-up of the visitors to museums in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Nevertheless, Merriman's findings represent an original contribution to our understanding of the way in which museums and the past in general are approached and valued across the social classes. Applied to national museums as tools of the nation state and nationalist ideology, Merriman's thesis can be used to challenge Gellner's and Hobsbawm's notion that the nationalist education system is inherently pervasive and consumed passively in society.

Education is undoubtedly a persuasive socialising tool in the nationalist ideology both historically and contemporarily; in the educational system in America, history officially 'began' in 1492, the year of European discovery and conquest, neglecting thousands of years of the history of the Native American Indian population (Kehoe, 1994). History as a discourse is politically mobilised in nationalism and historians are given the task of moulding the past to present the uniform, rightful evolution of the nation. As Peter Gathercole notes, 'History is written by the winners...This is frequently the case; those in power often write accounts of the past to justify the status

quo. What has actually taken place, a ragbag of happenings and attitudes, becomes in the eyes of its interpreters the logical and smoothed out antecedent of things as they are' (Gathercole, 1994: 1). Histories written in the nationalist sphere have the potential to echo down through the ages; the infamous remark, made by Marie Antoinette, "Let them eat cake" when faced with her impoverished subjects, is constantly cited and credited as one of the chief incentives for a revolution in France. Recently, the historian Antonia Fraser has argued persuasively that it was in fact the wife of Louis XIV who made this aside years before, and that Marie Antoinette would have been acutely aware of the dangerous consequences of making such statements in the searing political climate (Fraser, 2002). This amplifies the unique role of history and historians when they are drawn into the political rhetoric.

However, in industrial societies the education system would still have reached only a small segment of the population. Again, human agency should not be underestimated; it cannot be assumed that the production and communication of knowledge is accepted and absorbed unquestioningly and submissively. Individuals and groups approach and assume knowledge in diverse and unique ways; layers of meaning and interpretation are inevitably added to any transmitted knowledge.

The conflicting arguments and counter-arguments put forward by the principal theoreticians, Smith, Hobsbawm and Gellner, however illuminating, tend to create an impasse in the attempt to reach a definitive understanding of nationalism. Individually and collectively, Smith, Hobsbawm and Gellner variously suggest that the rise of nations and nationalism on a large scale is explained by the presence of durable ethnic ties within pre-modern communities, or the need to establish national continuity and solidarity as a direct result of the sudden and uneven transition from agrarian society to modern industrial society. Undoubtedly, a nationalist ideology, whether or not conceptualised and implemented during a time of social crisis, needs effective social mechanisms and networks through which to communicate its messages, like any political movement. Therefore, a standardised education system, as well as language and communication systems facilitated by the industrial age will assist the phenomenon in its dissemination. However, nationalism can also be seen as a cultural movement, which needs to appeal to the inner-worlds of disparate communities and individuals if it is to succeed in its attempt to create a united nation,

or at least the superficial appearance of one. These theories, though essentially illuminating in their approach to nationalism as a cultural and political phenomenon, can only ever represent a bird's eye view. Tim Edensor has recently added a new dimension to the nationalism debate by arguing that 'the nation' has been subject to very little critical analysis in terms of how it is represented and experienced through popular culture and in everyday life (Edensor, 2002: 1). Edensor argues that the account of nations and nationalism offered by Smith, Hobsbawm and Gellner are flawed through their reductive cultural perspectives, and offer a distorted consideration of so-called 'high', 'official' and 'traditional' cultures, excluding popular and everyday cultural expression. Essentially, he views their conception of culture as un-dynamic (Edensor, 2002: 2).

In other words, the theories of Smith, Hobsbawm and Gellner neglect the essentially dynamic relationship between the nation state and it citizens, and the various dialogues that exist between them. How is national identity construed? What makes individuals, as social beings, feel they have a national identity and an affiliation to 'the nation'? What multiple meanings does this stimulate? As Benedict Anderson asks (1983, 1991), what makes citizens lay down their lives for their nation?

Imagining the Nation

It may be that Benedict Anderson's theory offers a way forward. His approach views nations, 'nation-ness' and nationalism as 'cultural artefacts' in essence. He argues that the plethora of theory relating to nationalism has, historically, tended to classify nationalism with a capital N, and perceive it solely as an ideology (Anderson, 1991: 5). Anderson takes an anthropological view of nationalism, linking it with kinship and religion, rather than with liberalism and fascism. Thus, Anderson's definition of the nation is 'an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign' (Anderson, 1991: 6). Primarily, it is 'imagined' since 'the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion' (Anderson, 1991: 6). He disagrees with Gellner's treatment of nationalism as an ideology which conceives and invents nations where they have never existed: 'Gellner is so anxious to show that nationalism masquerades under false pretences that he assimilates 'invention' to 'fabrication' and 'falsity', rather than to 'imagining' and

'creation'. In this way he implies that 'true' communities exist which can be advantageously juxtaposed to nations. In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these are) imagined' (Anderson, 1991: 6). Therefore, communities should be distinguished, not by their falsity or genuineness, but in the style in which they are imagined.

In Anderson's theory, the nation is 'limited' in the sense that nations inevitably include people who are regarded as belonging, while others are excluded as outsiders: 'even the largest nation...encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind. The most messianic nationalists do not dream of a day when all the members of human race will join their nation in a way that was possible, in certain epochs, for Christians to dream of a wholly Christian planet' (Anderson, 1991: 7).

The nation is 'sovereign' because nationalism seeks or celebrates independence and self-government for a group of people: 'the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm. Coming to maturity at a stage of human history when even the most devout adherents of any universal religion were inescapably confronted with the living pluralism of such religions...nations dream of being free and...the gauge and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state' (Anderson, 1991: 7). Finally, it is imagined as a community because, 'regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship' (Anderson, 1991: 7). The sense of imagined fellowship instilled through national identity explains why, particularly in the last two centuries, millions of people have been prepared to die for 'their' nation (Anderson, 1991: 7).

In Anderson's view, it was the decline and the demise of hitherto important cultural systems, the religious community and the dynastic realm in 17th century Europe, which provided the physical and historical space necessary for the rise of nations. The discovery and exploration of the non-European world brought back visions of how other people lived in different lands and cultures. The Enlightenment movement was beginning to challenge the religious order; where, for centuries, everything connected

with life and death could be explained through the teachings of the Church, there was now a 'disintegration of paradise: nothing makes fatality more arbitrary' (Anderson, 1991: 11). However, as no comparative cultural system existed with the same powerful role as religion, 'what...was required was a secular transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning' (Anderson, 1991: 11). Anderson does not argue that emerging nations simply took the place of religion and the dynastic realm; rather he argues that the ways in which humans interpreted the world, and the meanings they attached to it, were changing. The medieval concept of time was based on a particular idea of simultaneity, where events are situated simultaneously in the past, present and future: 'the medieval Christian mind had no conception of history as an endless chain of cause and effect or of radical separations between past and present' (Anderson, 1991: 23). Gradually, this concept of time had begun to alter: 'What has come to take the place of the medieval conception of simultaneity-along-time is...an idea of 'homogenous, empty time', in which simultaneity is, as it were, transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfilment, but by temporal coincidence and measured by clock and calendar' (Anderson, 1991: 24).

This transformation is epitomised by the two forms of 'imagining' that emerged in the 18th century: the novel and the newspaper. 'For these forms provided the technological means for 're-presenting' the kind of imagined community that is the nation' (Anderson, 1991: 25). The novel is a device for introducing the idea and presentation of simultaneity in 'homogenous, empty time'. Anderson uses a fairly typical and simple plot of a popular novel, in which a man (A) has a wife (B) and a mistress (C), who herself has a lover (D). The novel is mapped out on a time-chart where the notion of simultaneity is implied: A telephones C, while B shops and D plays pool, and so on. A and D might never meet, and may not even be aware of each other's existence if C is careful (Anderson, 1991: 25). Anderson then poses the question, what links these two men? There are two connections: 'First, they are imbedded in 'societies' (Wessex, Lübeck, Los Angeles). These societies are sociological entities of such firm and stable reality that their members (A and D) can even be described as passing the street, without ever becoming acquainted, and still be connected. Second that A and D are embedded in the minds of the omniscient readers' (Anderson, 1991: 26). Only the reader, like a sort of omnipresent God, can observe all

these events in lives of the characters at the same time (Anderson, 1991: 26). The fact that these acts are performed at the same clocked, calendrical time, but by characters who may go about their business unaware of one another, reflects the novelty of this imagined world conjured up by the author in the reader's minds.

Therefore for Anderson, 'the idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogenous, empty time is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation, which also is conceived as a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history' (Anderson, 1991: 26). Anderson cites the USA as a useful analogy, a vast nation state where the average citizen will only ever meet a tiny proportion of the millions of his/her fellow Americans. Yet this does not present a dilemma, because although 'he has no idea of what they are up to at any one time...he has complete confidence in their steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity' (Anderson, 1991: 26).

Anderson argues that the same concept of simultaneity and imagining is evoked through the newspaper. For him, the newspaper is a cultural product with novelistic format. The front page will have headlines that report disparate stories on a local, national and international level, all happening at different times and independently of each other, and differing in significance (Anderson, 1991: 32-33). What links these events? What connects them all? Anderson argues that 'the arbitrariness of their inclusion and juxtaposition...shows that the linkage between them is imagined' and that this 'link is derived from two obliquely related sources. The first is simply calendrical coincidence. The date at the top of the newspaper, the single most important emblem on it, provides the essential connection – the steady onward clocking of homogenous, empty time' (Anderson, 1991: 33).

The second source of the 'imagined' linkage is found in the relationship between newspapers, which Anderson sees essentially as novels, and the printing and publication market. The newspaper is an 'extreme form' of a book, which is produced and marketed on a massive scale, but has an ephemeral popularity (Anderson, 1991: 34). It is intended for individual, private consumption, but for every one person settling down to read it, countless others, everywhere, are also reading the exact copy. This is, in a unique way, a kind of mass ceremony, but it is performed in quiet privacy, although 'each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is

being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of those whose identity he has not the slightest notion' (Anderson, 1991: 35). Through these processes, the imagined community is thus rooted in everyday life: 'fiction seeps quietly and continuously into reality, creating that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations' (Anderson, 1991: 36). Therefore, the mass printing of the industrial age facilitated the basis for a national consciousness, allowing a growing population and nation to think of themselves in new ways through 'unified fields of exchange and communication' (Anderson, 1991: 44). Print-capitalism also gave a new 'fixity' to language, which aided the construction of an image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of the nation (Anderson, 1991: 44).

Clearly, Anderson's theories are not above criticism; for example, his reading of nationalism as an alternative cultural phenomenon has been criticised by Kellas, who cites the examples of Poland, Israel, Iran and Ireland, where religious institutions have underpinned nationalist ideologies (Kellas, 1991: 48, cited in Ozkirimli, 2000: 153). Sometimes, religion and nationalism can exist together: religious Nonconformity formed a visible aspect of the nationalist movement in 19th century Wales. The influence of Nonconformity extended beyond the chapel into cultural and political affairs; the Nonconformist Liberal contingent sought disestablishment from the Church of England and was successful in securing the 1881 Welsh Sunday Closing Act (Davies, 2007). As R. Merfyn Jones has observed, during the late 19th century, 'the middle-class nonconformist elite, through the agencies of chapel and press, re-defined the idea of Wales in its own image...the myth of the *gwerin*, of a classless...Welsh democracy, was its main ideological achievement' (Merfyn Jones, 1981: 55, cited in Day and Suggett, 1985: 100, italics in original).

However, Anderson's theories represent an original attempt to understand how national identity and national consciousness is construed, and how an imagining of the nation in the feelings of its citizens is realised. His theory also inspires thought as to how such national identities and national consciousness are imagined in the contemporary world, particularly where a prolific, 24 hour multi-media culture pervades.

Building on Anderson's thesis of the importance of the imagination, it could be argued that in contemporary society, national identity or a national consciousness is achieved through a 'suspension of disbelief', which is consciously employed by individuals at particular times. An example would be a cultural event, for instance a rugby match between Wales and England. For one afternoon, thousands of Welsh people come together, to one place, to support 'their' nation. The idiosyncrasies between the north Welsh, west Welsh and south Welsh, which are used to engender social and cultural distinctiveness, are muted for the national event. They also unite together as one nation to distinguish themselves from 'the other' – in this case the opposing national team. Rather like the process of watching a film, the individual consciously suspends belief for the duration of that film, and for a time after at his or her choosing. The multi-media of the 21st century is more sophisticated than ever, and demands high levels of this creative, cognitive, *imaginative* process. Individuals and groups can see themselves as part of a collective nation with a national consciousness through the dynamic process of 'imagining'. Of course, nationalism and the construction of a national consciousness rely also on the individual's receptivity to rhetoric disseminated through 'official' channels: the state, the education system and museums (although this does not prevent the individual's potential to consume this knowledge creatively). It also relies on the unconscious reproduction of national identity on a day-to-day basis, and through the medium of everyday popular culture, as Edensor (2002) would argue. In essence, a nationalist movement needs to combine all these facets in a continual reproduction of a national identity.

Additionally, there are elements which bring a materiality to the visual and imagined representation of the nation. Michael Billig (1995) offers an interesting perspective in his theoretical concept of 'banal' nationalism. He argues that nationalism entails a daily reproduction of the nation, which means that 'nationhood is near the surface of contemporary life' (Billig, 1995: 93). In this sense, 'national identity...is remembered because it is embedded in routines of life, which constantly remind or 'flag' nationhood' (Billig, 1995: 38). Banal nationalism operates 'within prosaic, routine words, which take notions for granted, and in so doing, inhabit them. Small words, rather than grand memorable phrases, offer constant, but barely conscious, reminders of the homeland, making 'our' national identity unforgettable' (Billig, 1995: 93). Billig highlights the function of material culture and the construction of signs and

symbols in sustaining a sense of national consciousness. Drawing on the work of the anthropologist Raymond Firth's (1973) research on the role of symbols in private and public environments, Billig interprets the national flag as a means of communicating messages in a variety of contexts (Billig, 1995: 39). Over time, there becomes 'an accepted notion of the national flag as a metonym: in citing the flag, one is flagging nationhood' (Billig, 1995: 41). He argues that the nation and nationhood is actively embedded in a range of material culture which may, paradoxically, operate beneath levels of consciousness; he cites the example of bank notes and coins, which frequently bear national emblems and icons, and which are exchanged unnoticed in daily financial transactions (Billig, 1995: 41).

National institutions, like national museums, comprise the conscious and subliminal representation of the nation; they communicate, as physical architecture, cultural markers and political statements (cf Mason, 2005). Their physicality places them at the forefront as tangible symbols, while at the same time their static presence situates them as peripheral, subconscious entities in the minds and daily lives of national citizens. Monumentality and material culture is bound up in the continuous process of visualising and experiencing, maintaining and replicating the political and cultural nation.

What do people, individually and collectively, 'see' when they think of the nation and what it means to have nationality? The process of imagining the nation is essentially dynamic and assumes myriad forms: experiential, fragmentary, imaginary and referential. As a representation, it is never complete and distinct: images, objects, landscapes, places, myths and memories are alternately sharp and clear, blurred and forgotten. A sense of the nation, and by extension a sense of national identity, is realised in a deeply layered tapestry of the imagined, the experienced and the constructed.

Although it can be argued that nationalism, in all its complex cultural and political forms, has identifiable signifiers, each instance or movement is itself unique, contextual and situational. The following chapter will explore the emergence of a nationalist dimension in 19th century Welsh society and how particular movements in

the cultural and political scene provided the backdrop to, and the impetus for, the creation of a national museum in Wales.

Chapter 3
Nations and Nationalisms in Context:
the national movement in 19th and early 20th century Wales

'Wales is something more than a landscape...it is a world.'

(Edmund Vale, 1935: p. ix, cited in Gruffudd, 1999: 153)

'The people who speak this language, who read this literature, who own this history, who inherit these traditions, who venerate these names, who created and sustain these marvellous religious organisations, the people forming three fourths of the people of Wales, have they not the right to say...we are the Welsh people and not you. This country is ours and not yours and therefore we claim to have our principles and sentiments and feelings represented in the Commons' House of Parliament.'

(*Aberdare Times* 14th Nov. 1868, cited in Morgan, 1980: v)

The impassioned declaration made in 1868 by Henry Richard, as the newly elected MP for Merthyr Tydfil, epitomised the potency of the rising national consciousness which permeated Welsh politics and society in the latter half of the 19th century. The growing importance placed on the establishment and preservation of a national heritage, and the subsequent founding of a national museum for Wales, represented the culmination of a campaign by Welsh politicians at Westminster, the influential London-Welsh elite, and town and civic leaders during a period of national revival and increased political and cultural activity in 19th century Wales. Although not founded until 1907, the establishment of the National Museum of Wales followed a century of social and economic change in Wales, brought about in part by the industrial revolution with its direct and indirect impact throughout the country. The rise of religious Nonconformism, its close ideological links with the Welsh language and with the social and political ideals of Liberalism, combined to produce a nationalist movement in Wales.

Therefore, elements of the campaign for, and the development of, the National Museum of Wales reflected a wider ideological movement, in which a Welsh national elite sought to construct its own national identity, as well as achieve a greater degree of cultural and political parity for Wales within the United Kingdom. The creation of the Museum, as well as other civic buildings in Cathays Park in Cardiff, would provide a material representation of the comparatively abstract idea of the Welsh

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nation; an impressive, physical representation of Wales that would allow its citizens to 'see' as well as 'imagine'.

In order to place the creation of the National Museum of Wales in its social and historical context, it is important to examine the history of Welsh nationalism in the 19th and early part of the 20th century and the various interpretations of this movement. A knowledge and analysis of the national movement in Wales frames our understanding of the broader range of cultural and political processes which occurred in the period leading up to the establishment of the National Museum of Wales; to what extent was the National Museum integrated into, aligned with or reflective of, political and cultural nationalism in Wales? This chapter provides a contextual view of the socio-political and cultural activities which surrounded, or were instrumental in, national efforts to secure museum and library provision for Wales.

Welsh nationalism in focus

The new academic discipline of modern Welsh history emerged in the late 1960s (Evans, 2004b). Scholarly analysis placed the 19th and early 20th century Welsh national movement within a wider context of social and political change (e.g. Berrisford, 1968; Davies, 1993; Evans, 1989; Howell, 1977; Jones, 1992; Morgan, 1963, 1981; Smith, 1984, 1999; Wade Evans, 1950; Williams, 1950 (ed), 1983). The re-emergence of Welsh nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s prompted research within the social sciences into the nature of the movement. The publication of Nairn's (1977) thesis on the 'break-up of Britain' and Hechter's (1975) theory of Wales as a purposely underdeveloped 'internal colony' of England, constituted an attempt to link and address specific Welsh issues with wider sociological and political perspectives (Adamson, 1991: 2). Academic research into the resurgence of Welsh nationalism and questions of Welsh identity in the latter half of the 20th century (e.g. Adamson, 1991; Aull Davies, 1989; Butt Philip, 1975; Osmond (ed), 1985), as well as sociological research on issues of class, politics and society in contemporary Wales prompted, as Adamson (1991) has observed, a renewed interest in and a necessary re-evaluation of nationalism in 19th century Wales (see Adamson, 1984; Day, 1981, 2002; Day and Rees, 1991; Day and Suggett, 1983; Williams, 1981). More recently, a new wave of critical, post-modernist research has re-examined historical and contemporary notions

of Welsh nationalism, with particular reference to multiculturalism and postcolonialism (Aaron and Williams, 2005; Fevre and Thompson, 1999; Gramich, 1997; Williams, 2002, 2006, 2007; Williams et al, 2003).

Since this thesis is concerned primarily with the development of the National Museum of Wales and the establishment of a national archaeology collection within the context of a national movement in 19th and early 20th century Wales, a detailed analysis of Welsh nationalism in the latter half of the 20th century is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, an understanding of the complex social, cultural and political climate within which the National Museum was established is important not only for informed, contextual research, but also to illuminate the ways in which national museums are conceived and shaped to represent a desired image of the nation (Crooke, 2000).

Kenneth Morgan (1981, 1991, 1995) has traced the key social and political events of 19th and early 20th century in Wales which, when combined, motivated certain groups to assert Wales's right to a national status and a national identity, separate from England. Wales in the 19th century experienced fluctuating degrees of social, economic, political and cultural change following the onset of the industrial revolution. From a contemporary perspective, it is difficult to envisage the degree of change industrialisation had on large areas of Wales in terms of the impact on the physical geography, as well as the social world of its inhabitants. Many parts of Wales were transformed by the exploitation of the land for resources needed for the growing export market, to fuel the developing transport networks, factories and warehouses, and for domestic purposes throughout Wales, England and the Empire. By 1881, the census recorded 1,577,000 people living in Wales, which showed a steep increase of over 150,000 since the previous census in 1871 (Morgan, 1981: 5). The coalfields and urban areas of south Wales experienced dramatic increases in population: in 1881, Cardiff recorded a population of 106,164 and Swansea, 93,001 (Morgan, 1981: 5). The exportation of coal from Cardiff rose from 16 million tons in the 1870s to 30 million in 1891 and, at its peak in 1913, 56.8million tons (Morgan, 1981: 60). Although industrialisation occurred intensively in south Wales during the 19th century, it was not restricted to this area; apart from the smaller coalfields of north east Wales in Wrexham and Rhos, and iron and steel production in Deeside, the slate

industries in north and eastern Caernarvonshire exported 5,000 tons annually and employed some 16,000 men at its peak (Morgan, 1981: 65). The scene in most parts of rural Wales was very different, as Morgan states: 'The prosperity of the industrial coalfield was achieved to some degree by siphoning off the male youth and some of the material resources of an already depressed and impoverished countryside. For many years after 1880...rural Wales – virtually the whole of the land north of the Brecon Beacons and west of the vale of Clwyd – was more disastrously than ever cast into desperate poverty' (Morgan, 1981: 81).

The economic opportunities and social mobility made possible by concentrated industrialisation in south Wales and parts of north Wales gave rise to a new middle class, which sought to consolidate its emergent position in a changing social landscape:

'In its early twentieth-century direction and aspirations, that Welsh nation was middle-class. The late nineteenth-century had seen in Britain as a whole an enormous increase in white collar professions and in the distinguishing characteristics of a middle-class – villas, servants, amateur sports, spa holidays. In Wales, whose economy and society were undergoing sea-changes that threatened the 'traditional' way of life, these middle-class groups required both a justification of their own privileged position and a vision of the past that would promise a connected future.'

(Smith, 1984: 51-52)

In business interests, political outlooks and social affairs, the aspirant and flourishing middle classes of Wales cultivated links with groups experiencing parallel levels of economic prosperity in England. The buoyant state of Welsh trade and industry in the latter half of the 19th century, and its structural importance in the wider British economy, enabled a unique situation to emerge in the mentalities of the new middle classes whereby they could define themselves as Welsh and British in equal measure: 'Alliances were made with comparable social groups in England. Wales was, unlike Ireland, benefiting from attachment to England's economy. Welsh politicians, generally did exercise control after the 1870s. Wales was seen, by the Welsh, as an integral part of the Empire of Nations. The Welsh could be, then, Welsh by origins, language, territory and religion *and* British in politics, social aspirations and links' (Smith, 1984: 45, italics in original).

Kenneth Morgan highlights the important forces which would permeate Welsh society and create the basis of a national movement. The development of industry transformed the counties of Monmouth, Glamorgan and Carmarthenshire, elevating places such as Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Merthyr Tydfil to major town status. This created a critical 'safety valve' (Morgan, 1995: 199) in Wales, whereby the agricultural population in impoverished rural Wales could seek employment in their own country (Morgan, 1995: 199). Industrial Wales was now in 'the hands of a flourishing, expanding class of manufacturers, shippers, exporters, merchants and brokers who linked together the various strands of economic life. Cardiff, Swansea and Newport became almost regional capitals, their mercantile elite the new conquerors of the second, more lasting phase of the industrial development of south Wales' (Morgan, 1981: 68). The growth of industry brought with it the expansion of towns, the emergence of an indigenous bourgeoisie, the proliferation of Nonconformist chapels, the revival of the Welsh-language press and the Eisteddfod, all of which created a basis for a Welsh nationalist movement. The emergent middle class at this time 'served as the apex of a vast industrial population, still predominantly Welsh in origin, but with a character and bilingual, bicultural tradition of its own' (Morgan, 1981: 68). Nonconformity in Wales also experienced a huge following in the 19th century, seeming to influence many aspects of Welsh private life. Morgan argues that it gave 'a new unity to Wales' (Morgan, 1995: 200), at a time of population displacement and change:

'Through the new vitality and artistic quality of the *eisteddfod*, the cultural nationalism had solidity and depth, as well as transient emotion. The sense of national pride welled up all the more strongly. The chapel and the *eisteddfodau* operated to a large extent at the popular level. They were folk gatherings in which literary and artistic standards were often seen as incidental. But, at a more profound level too, the cultural life of the nation, its language and literature were making impressive advances. More than almost anywhere else in Europe, Wales was undergoing a massive revival in cultural expression.'

(Morgan, 1981:98, italics in original)

The parliamentary report commissioned by the government to investigate the state of Welsh education in 1847 had created deeper rifts between Nonconformity and the English-orientated state and Anglican Church (Morgan, 1995: 200). The report did not limit its criticisms to Welsh schools, but made attacks on the religious, social and moral lifestyles of the Welsh (Morgan, 1995: 201). The Nonconformist population

reacted with indignation, and as a result, Welsh nationalism and Welsh Nonconformity became fused in a 'crusade for national self-respect' (Morgan, 1995: 201). The national movement acquired a political dimension, as the Anglican State Church became increasingly disconnected from the Nonconformist population in Wales. Increased political power gave the Welsh national movement momentum and the franchise reforms of 1867 and 1884 allowed the Welsh-speaking Nonconformist majority to become active participants in the political world, rather than mere observers (Morgan, 1995: 201). The election of 1880 saw the Liberals gain nine seats, which gave them a majority of twenty nine of the thirty three seats in Wales (Morgan, 1981: 13). This new generation of Welsh politicians were not members of the landed elite, but were from industrial and commercial backgrounds (Morgan, 1981: 13). Similarly, the issues which came to dominate Welsh politics were new: 'Temperance, education, tithes, land reform, devolution, above all, the transcendent issue of the disestablishment of the Church – these were the stuff of Welsh politics in these decades, at a time when Welsh politics...became dominated by purely local issues and national concerns (Morgan, 1981: 36).

While its ultimate goal was disestablishment of the church, an important aspect of the national movement in Wales was the campaign for higher education (Morgan, 1995: 204). The Nonconformist Liberals successfully lobbied for the passing of the Welsh Intermediate Act of 1889, and created a network of county schools, which effectively enabled a greater degree of social mobility in Wales (Morgan, 1995: 204). The founding of a National University of Wales in 1893 represented an expression of heightened national consciousness in 19th century Wales (Morgan, 1995: 204). Morgan stresses that the national movement which emerged in 19th century Wales, whether it may be termed nationalism or Welsh Liberalism, was underpinned by ideological values which opposed political Anglocentrism and social exclusivity. In an explicitly political – and by extension, a social – sense, state recognition of Welsh centrality in the structure of the United Kingdom, not separatism, was sought:

'...the supreme objective was equality not exclusion – equality within the framework of the United Kingdom and the empire, recognition of the distinct social and cultural needs of Wales without disturbing the overall governmental system...Most of the Welsh were content with their dual identity, which stressed their Britishness as well as their Welshness, which encouraged their growing influence and importance within an expanding empire and a thriving system of manufacture, trade, and enterprise, rather

than put it all at risk by severing Wales from England and letting it sink or swim on its own.'

<div align="right">(Morgan, 1981: 120)</div>

Although Morgan perceives identifiable shifts in the attitudes of the government towards an acknowledgement of Welsh issues (Morgan, 1981: 36-37), some contest this. Emyr W. Williams (1989) argues that the institution of legislation specific to Wales – for example, the Welsh Sunday Closing Act of 1881 – did not signify government recognition of the existence of Welsh nationalism, but rather, 'constituted a pragmatic attempt to accommodate new radical aspirations' (Williams, 1989: 50). Moreover, he states that 'there is much to suggest that up to 1886 the ruling class did not even recognise the existence of a distinct Welsh nation, and that it was the Irish crisis of 1885-86 which led Gladstone to re-examine his assumptions...his recognition of Welsh nationality in 1886 created an explicit framework whereby concessions could be made to Liberal nonconformity in Wales by the Anglican ruling class' (Williams, 1989: 50). This perspective is challenged by Chris Williams (2005), who argues that the Welsh Sunday Closing Act in 1881 represented official acknowledgement by the government of the unique situation in Wales with regard to social and religious practice. Williams points out that the institution of the Act was 'the first modern piece of legislation to treat Wales differently from England, was a recognition of the legitimacy of Welsh cultural and religious identities, in an era which saw the creation of key Welsh civic institutions such as a university, national library and national museum. This was followed by educational provision targeted at specific Welsh needs' (Williams, 2005: 6). Williams concurs with Neil Evans (1991: 253), in arguing that any early signs of separatism in late 19th century Wales were effectively 'killed by kindness' (Williams, 2005: 6).

Morgan concludes that the period up until the beginning of the First World War was the defining era for Welsh Liberal politics and social reform; new institutions like the University and the National Museum and Library of Wales had been established, while the disconnected Anglican Church 'had been rejuvenated to harmonize with the new mood in Welsh life' (Morgan, 1995: 205). However, Morgan qualifies the character of the Welsh nationalist movement as being fundamentally different from that of, say, separatist nationalism in Ireland. Rather, he argues that 'a Nonconformist campaign for social equality, directed at quite narrow and specific objectives, tended

to merge with a far broader movement. The imaginative and periodical literature of the decades down to 1914 does show a new concern with the roots of national culture' (Morgan, 1995: 205).

Journals like *Young Wales*, *Wales* and the *Welsh Outlook* celebrated the achievements of the Welsh in all aspects of the cultural and social world, from successful businessmen to musicians and rugby players, often drawing on romanticised imagery of the indefatigable, fearless Celt (Morgan, 1995: 205). However, the cultural messages did not transfer so successfully to the political world; Morgan argues that the Welsh national movement before 1914 was nationalist only to limited degree, since 'its philosophy was static rather than dynamic' (Morgan, 1995: 206). Catherine Aull Davies (1989) concurs with Morgan on this point. She interprets the nationalist movement which emerged in 19th century Wales as an essentially transient phase, and argues that it was 'in many respects...a blind alley rather than a genuine predecessor to the twentieth-century movement...it left no political organization on which a new nationalist movement could be based' (Aull Davies, 1989: 10).

Politically, individuals like Lloyd George were motivated by British Liberalism principally rather than nationalism, and while he had been temporarily aligned with the quest for Home Rule in the 1890s, Lloyd George later campaigned for political and social equality within the United Kingdom and the expanding Empire, rather than severance from it (Aull Davies, 1989: 10; Morgan, 1995: 206). As a result, demands for Welsh Home Rule faded, and became only a minor feature of politics in Wales in the period up until 1918. Indeed, as many of the objectives of the national movement had been achieved, Morgan regards it as inevitable that the movement began to lose its drive; the influence of the chapel was diminishing, particularly in the coalfields, which, coupled with the relative decline of the Welsh language and de-population in the rural areas, had an impact on established patterns of religious and social life in Wales (Morgan, 1995: 208).

In Morgan's view, the rise of the Labour movement constituted the more real threat to the Liberal ascendancy. While the industrial working classes had historically supported the national policies of the Liberal Party (in particular the benefits of higher education for all), the conflict which emerged during the coal stoppage of 1898, when

100,000 Welsh miners were out of work, produced a growing division between capital, class and labour (Morgan, 1995: 209). The increasing support for the Independent Labour Party and socialist ideals fractured relationships between employers and employees (Morgan, 1995: 209).

The Labour movement made the tactical move of utilising many of the national-based policies of the Liberal Party; Keir Hardie, the Labour MP from 1900 to his death in 1915, was an open supporter of Welsh Home Rule and national identity (Morgan, 1995: 209). Nevertheless, the objective of the Labour movement was to expose the campaigns of Welsh disestablishment, educational, land and temperance reform as irrelevant to the daily life of the working individual whose main concerns lay with the necessity of a living wage (Morgan, 1995: 209). The outbreak of the First World War signalled the demise of the national movement in Wales and dispersed Welsh nationalism to the political fringes (Morgan, 1995: 209). This period witnessed the fall of the Liberal party and the breakdown of the power of Nonconformism, which had provided the party with a firm social basis; disestablishment of the church was achieved in 1920, but in a climate of tangible indifference (Morgan, 1995: 210).

Cultural activity and intellectual circles within the national movement

Within the romantic and aesthetic phase of the cultural revival in early and mid 19th century Wales, invented traditions of Welsh life (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983; P. Morgan, 1983) became prevalent among sections of middle-class and genteel society. Augusta Waddington, who was married to the wealthy landowner and government minister Benjamin Hall, became a leading figure in the movement under the title of Lady Llanover (P. Morgan, 1983: 80). On her estate in Monmouthshire she endeavoured to cultivate a sort of Welsh 'cultural utopia' (Williams, 2006) in lifestyle, language and literary practice. She designed a form of national dress based around the various peasant styles still worn by Welsh women which she believed would create an aesthetic appeal to the increasing number of tourists and artists visiting Wales (P. Morgan, 1983: 80): 'It was to be worn on 'national occasions' on Saint David's Day, at concerts of native music, especially by female singers and harpists, or at the processions which opened and closed Lady Llanover's colourful eisteddfodau at Abergavenny' (P. Morgan, 1983: 80). In a portrait she was depicted in Welsh national costume, with a jewelled leek in her tall hat and holding mistletoe to

signify her connection with the ancient Druids (P. Morgan, 1983: 81). The figure of Dame Wales became an enduring symbol in expressions of Welsh cultural life (P. Morgan, 1983: 81).

David Adamson (1999) emphasises the role of the intelligentsia in 19th and early 20th century Wales in constructing histories and representations of the Welsh nation and national identity. Intellectuals involved in a variety of artistic, literary and philosophical circles, as well as those operating within the sphere of politics, were uniquely placed to influence and participate in the creation of national culture and identity (Adamson, 1999: 49). Adamson sees the intellectual tier of society as active in the socio-cultural process of 'imagining' (Anderson, 1983) community and nation. He argues that it is the intelligentsia which provides 'much of the raw material of the national imagination as well as the leadership of national movements' (Adamson, 1999: 49). For Adamson, intellectual influence is identifiable in a range of social practices and communication, from the work of academic historians and literary authors who seek to revive forgotten or 'imagined' folk tales and traditions, to politicians who 'weave national heritage into contemporary political realities' (Adamson, 1999: 49). This perspective is supported by Woolf (1996), who writes that 'from the earliest expressions of modern nationalism, historians, antiquarians and savants have played a significant role in articulating a sense of national identity...History, language, territory, culture or religion could all be used to demonstrate the past traditions of a nation, symbolic evidence of its historic continuity and hence its authenticity' (Woolf, 1996: 2, cited in Adamson, 1999: 49).

Day and Suggett (1985) underline the advantages and influence of the intelligentsia in 19th and early 20th century Wales in cultivating particular interpretations of national histories and 'traditions' for the public imagination (Day and Suggett, 1985: 112). They argue that the intelligentsia assume an essential communicative function in disseminating nationalist rhetoric: 'The populist basis of nationalism depends crucially on access to the means of communication. Here intellectuals are vitally important both in having such access and as 'remembrancers' who may build up alternative selective traditions. It is particularly important to nationalist strategy to control the means of cultural reproduction and those institutions with the capacity for reproducing forms of resistance' (Day and Suggett, 1985: 112-113).

Adamson cites the Welsh intellectual community based in London as a key participant in the creative formation of Welsh national identity (Adamson, 1999: 56). The London cultural and social scene of the arts, poetry and literature converged more frequently with the political scene. The revival in Welsh literature and the Welsh language press (Butt Philip, 1975), and awareness among intellectuals of nationalism in Europe and the writings of Mazzini and Garibaldi, created an environment in which issues of Welsh nationhood and national identity became prominent concerns (Adamson, 1999: 57). Meanwhile in the political context, influential and ambitious figures such as T.E. Ellis, D.A. Thomas and David Lloyd George were active in campaigning for Home Rule, Disestablishment and a range of legislation specific to Wales (Adamson, 1999: 56). Although the life span of the Cymru Fydd movement was short, Adamson argues that its broader influence continued:

'Almost every aspect of Welsh social, political and cultural life was imbued with the sentiment of a clamouring nationhood. The political intellectuals of Cymru Fydd were joined by poets, writers, journalists and Nonconformist clerics all advancing a sense of Welsh nationhood and themselves drawing inspiration from the intellectual climate which they were themselves contributing to.'

(Adamson, 1999: 58)

As links and shared interests were forged between the intelligentsia and an emergent group of Welsh politicians, Adamson argues that an 'idealized interpretation of past and present permeated Welsh politics, culture, art and literature' (Adamson, 1999: 59). Education had become an issue of central importance in the Welsh cultural and political arena, and the pursuit of a national university, museum and library constituted the structural basis of nation building and the material means by which to realise the abstract Welsh nation. The creation of the University of Wales in 1893 and the National Museum and Library of Wales in 1907 contributed considerably, in Adamson's view, to the further development of an intelligentsia rooted in the Welsh language and in Nonconformism: 'Its intellectual heart could be found in rural Wales, its language was Welsh and it celebrated Cymric culture and heritage. It developed and embellished a sense of continuity and antiquity, an unbroken lineage which stretched back to the Welsh princes' (Adamson, 1999: 57). Aull Davies (1989) takes a similar perspective with regard to the Welsh cultural scene operating in London: '...Welsh elites struggled with the negative stereotype of Welshness generated by the relationships inherent under a cultural division of labor (sic). The solution of the

London Welsh in the nineteenth century was to ignore industrial Wales and encourage depictions of the Welsh as a pastoral people occupying a semi-magical land of Celtic romance' (Aull Davies, 1989: 16).

Historiography provided a seamless and glorious Welsh past, for example, the historian and educationalist Owen M. Edwards linked the age of the Welsh princes and the contemporary scene in Welsh politics and society together as representing the two great ages of Welsh history (Evans, 1989: 65). As Neil Evans points out, it took considerable creative licence to marry the two, with Edwards utilising the Tudor dynasty in Wales as the unifying connection (Evans, 1989: 65). In this spirit, David Lloyd George chose to emphasise the Welsh heritage of Elizabeth I, who he proclaimed as the original founder of the British Empire. Similarly Tom Ellis, the prime mover in the political organisation Cymru Fydd, frequently celebrated the success of the Welsh within the development of Empire (Evans, 1989: 65). Such selective extracts and interpretations of the past were utilised in the public domain and in popular culture to demonstrate that Welsh history was 'a triumphal progress' (Evans, 1989: 65): 'In Wales the harmonious development of its history was stressed; there may have been conflicts in the past, but the present was one of beneficent harmony' (Evans, 1989: 65). Some sections of the national elite, particularly the London-Welsh, were English-orientated in interest and outlook, and sought to present Wales's historic contribution to Britain and the Empire in favourable terms to an English audience: 'To this end, they nourished a highly romanticized view of Welsh history whose culmination was the assumption of the English crown by the Welshman Henry Tudor (Henry VII) in 1485' (Aull Davies, 1989: 15).

Day and Suggett (1985) also highlight the active presence of the London-Welsh, who, along with influential Welsh figures residing in Liverpool and Manchester, were able to communicate issues relating to political, cultural and educational provision in Wales to wider circles. The desire for educational provision in Wales was sought with two principal aims in mind: to secure elementary education for the poor and to consolidate middle-class aspirations for social reform (Day and Suggett, 1985: 107). They argue that the pursuit of educational reform reflected a drive for greater social stability (Day and Suggett, 1985: 107). The ambition for a system of higher education

in Wales depended on state recognition of Welsh nationality (Day and Suggett, 1985: 107):

'These were men who had won considerable social advancement, usually through the professions. For them education was a means of social mobility, and of reproducing and strengthening a social class...They worked through an outer circle of respectable Welshmen, and their mode of operation involved frequent, planned use of the press, direct access to influential positions, and the formation of local groups and committees. Their themes were enunciated with monotonous regularity: Wales was a settled and peaceful country, loyal to Britain, whose middle-class deserved support...at least equal to that given to Ireland and Scotland.'

(Day and Suggett, 1985: 108)

There were parallels between the education movement and subsequent calls for museum and library provision in Wales. Both were concerned with attaining a particular cultural status within the political structure of the United Kingdom: 'Welshness, as conceived by the education movement, was completely compatible with Britishness. The aspiration was that Wales should have an educational system as good as any in the Empire, whereby Welshmen would take their place in the administration and development of Imperial power' (Day and Suggett, 1985: 110).

Beyond the fringe: Wales on the periphery?

In clear contrast to Kenneth Morgan's (1963) historical mapping of the national movement in Wales is Michael Hechter's (1975) influential, neo-Marxist theory of internal colonialism. Published during heightened political awareness of the post-colonial world, it offered an alternative explanation of national development in the British Isles. Hechter's premise is that the 'Celtic' countries of Wales, Scotland and Ireland were (and are) essentially peripheral, internal colonies of the dominant core, England, rather in the same model as foreign colonies were subsumed under the control of the British Empire. In Hechter's view, the cases of Ireland and Scotland are comparatively different from Wales, ranging from the obstacles facing England in ruling a nation separated by the sea, to the fact that Scotland had enjoyed varying degrees of political, economic and social autonomy through its own established Church, legal system and indigenous bourgeoisie before the Union of 1707.

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From a theoretical standpoint, Hechter rejects as idealistic the traditionally accepted models of the core-periphery relationship, in which the core and periphery, once geographically and culturally isolated and disconnected, are increasingly linked through the emergence of industrialisation (Hechter, 1975: 7-9). While the diffusion of the dominant core and its culturally and politically progressive ways may lead to a greater feeling of cultural distinctiveness and isolation amongst the peripheral group, inevitably the periphery will become 'updated' through consistent contact with the modernising core and the inherent social and economic benefits it brings in terms of general welfare and financial stability. These mutual benefits achieved through the amalgamation of the core and periphery ultimately produces an integrated, culturally homogenous society, in which all ethnic and socio-political differences and conflict are alleviated.

Hechter argues that the development of core-periphery relations is in reality inherently complex and as a result produces a relationship that is fundamentally contrary to the ameliorating model presented above (Hechter, 1975: 9). In Hechter's view, the dominant core assumes an exploitative presence over the periphery, utilising the available natural and industrial resources and siphoning the capital towards the direction of the core metropolis. Thus, internal colonialism and the industrialisation process does not prompt national development per se; rather the uneven diffusion of industrialisation across the geographical and social landscape effectively produces two (advanced and less advanced) groups in society (Hechter, 1975: 9). The fruits of industrialisation are largely absorbed by the advanced group, and inequalities emerge in the general distribution of power, wealth and resources. The advanced group is motivated to utilise its power and seek a formalisation of the emergent stratification system in order to secure and sustain its interests (Hechter, 1975: 9). The peripheral economy is thus designed and structured to be wholly complementary to the core in terms of internal production and export, which intensifies the fragility of the periphery and its subsequent susceptibility to fluctuations in the domestic and international markets (Hechter, 1975: 9). Positions and roles in society which accrue a high status are effectively retained for the advanced group, becoming inaccessible to the remaining population. As a direct result, a cultural division of labour appears in the stratification system, which adds to the development of distinctive ethnic identification in the two social groups:

'Actors come to categorize themselves and others according to the range of roles each may be expected to play. They are aided in this categorization by the presence of visible signs, or cultural markers, which are seen to characterize both groups.'

(Hechter, 1975: 9)

Since the social stratification in the periphery is defined by visible cultural differences, Hechter argues that it is more likely that the disadvantaged group will, in reaction, begin to define and assert its own culture as at least equal, or even superior to, the comparatively advantaged core. This can contribute to a consciousness on the part of the disadvantaged group of a separate identity and 'nation', and eventually motivate it to seek independence from the dominating core (Hechter, 1975: 10). Therefore, unlike the diffusionist model of national development, which holds that regional cultural and economic differences and inequalities will be alleviated by the shared benefits of modernisation, Hechter's theory maintains that these differences and inequalities will persist between the core and periphery (Hechter, 1975: 10). As the peripheral population becomes conscious of the exploitative nature of the relationship, it asserts its separate identity through cultural practices, which in time will be reflected in political differences, thereby inhibiting acculturation and national development (Hechter, 1975: 10).

Hechter traces the political motives on the part of England for the incorporation of Wales right back to the Union of 1536. Ostensibly, the Union was a tactical move during a time of erratic law and order to eradicate the possibility of Welsh challenges to the Crown and to ensure the security of England (Hechter, 1975: 70). Historically, practices endorsed by the government were designed to reinforce its culturally superior status, since the continuation of indigenous culture in the periphery represented a fundamental threat to the success of the colonial presence. For example, in the border areas between Wales and England, the Welsh were prohibited from acquiring land, and in Wales itself could only acquire land within set boroughs (Hechter, 1975: 74). They were further prohibited from holding municipal offices, and under the Act of Union, Welsh speakers were forbidden from holding office, since the alien language was viewed as an obstacle to efficient communication and a subversive threat to English rule (Hechter, 1975: 74). The Act also imposed the Anglican religion and English laws on Wales, undermining as well as altering indigenous cultural and religious practices (Hechter, 1975: 74). From the 17th century onwards, England

continued to increase its dominance over trade and commerce in Wales, retaining strict controls over finances and investment. Inter-regional trade produced a highly specialised export economy in the periphery, geared for the consumption of the core (Hechter, 1975: 81). However, whilst it can be said that the political incorporation of Wales generated investment into Wales, financial capital was channelled only to investments which would specifically complement existing English industries; for example, the last Welsh bank closed in 1823, unable to compete with the financial strength and power of English banks. Thereafter, English banks monopolised the Welsh economy, with no competition (Hechter, 1975: 88-89). In Hechter's view, these examples illustrate the dominance of English colonial power.

Coupled with the growing economic dependence of peripheral Wales on the English core, English socio-cultural practices assumed an increasingly superior status in the view of the indigenous elite classes in Wales. Traditionally, the landed classes in Wales had affiliated themselves with an Anglicised lifestyle and religion, anticipating the opportunities it would afford them. However, the assimilated elite represented only a small minority, and the remainder of the population in the periphery retained non-English cultural practices (Hechter, 1975: 109). The social cleavage between the cultural and political ethos of the core and the subordinated periphery became increasingly pronounced. Hechter argues that since a continued indigenous culture undermines and threatens the cohesiveness of the colonial hegemony, the English state attempted, through local authorities and the cooperation of the indigenous elite, to 'preclude the possibility of regional threats to its hegemony' (Hechter, 1975: 109) by promoting the benefits of English values, religion and language to the Welsh population. Overall, 'its policies were coercive and did not meet with much success...due to the spirit with which anglicization proceeded, which forced the individual Celt to admit his cultural inferiority and adopt a more civilized culture' (Hechter, 1975: 109-110).

The rich natural resources found in the Welsh landscape ensured that Wales became a key feature of British industry and the economy in the 19th century. However, Hechter argues that rather than modernising Wales, industrialisation effectively wrought Wales into complete economic dependence on England (Hechter, 1975: 143). While industrialisation was diffused on a more even basis throughout England, industrial

development in Wales was confined to certain counties, which in Hechter's view, created internal social and economic divisions (Hechter, 1975: 143). It did not eradicate the relative economic disadvantages experienced in the periphery, and ultimately suspended Wales in a deliberate state of cultural and social underdevelopment (Hechter, 1975: 130). The influx of working class industrial workers from England during the period amplified social divisions. Although many of these migrant workers may have found 'the social milieu relatively familiar...the enclave was initially culturally Welsh...Given this fundamentally alien social environment the early English migrants to Wales identified with anglophile elements...in this course of this identification, the English migrants found their own identities undergoing change' (Hechter, 1975: 189). A high proportion of these migrant workers had been middle and working-class Nonconformists in England, but in Wales they began to identify with more traditional Anglicised religious and social practices (Hechter, 1975: 189): 'Upon coming to Wales, they apparently felt an elevation in status relative to the general population. For here they were, by virtue of their English culture, suddenly transformed into an elite...To be English-speaking in nineteenth-century industrial Wales was to be culturally privileged' (Hechter, 1975: 189). Englishmen in Wales were 'in this sense akin to a colonial elite' (Hechter, 1975: 190). Hechter states that, in keeping with the colonial model, cultural convergence between England (the core) and Wales (the periphery) was unlikely to happen, as the model dictates that the existence of a cultural – as well as economic – division of labour prevents it (Hechter, 1975: 166).

Thus, Hechter argues that Nonconformity in Wales, its complete way of life and community links, flourished among the diffused Welsh population in industrial Wales primarily as it offered support and security during a time of great social disruption and poor public welfare (Hechter, 1975: 176). However, as Welsh Nonconformism propagated particular social values, morals and traditions, in time it translated as a national expression of the separate cultural identity of Wales. Hechter argues that social and political concerns underpinning Welsh nationalism were expressed through conflict between 'Celtic' and English cultural institutions; the period of 1885 to 1924 was characterised by persistent Welsh demands for its own Church and education system, as well as a greater degree of political autonomy (Hechter, 1975: 260).

Hechter concludes that 'the internal colonial model of development suggests that peripheral ethnic identity will persist following differentiation (industrialization), given the institutionalization of a cultural division of labour' (Hechter, 1975: 342). The peripheral separatist culture can ultimately become a tool in anti-colonial dissent, as an 'effective bargaining stance *vis-à-vis* the central government' (Hechter, 1975: 344).

Hechter's thesis was well received initially by contemporary Welsh nationalists (see Nairn, 1977: 200). Certainly, Hechter's thesis is in stark contrast to the picture of Wales presented by Kenneth Morgan (1963, 1981, 1991, 1995) as a developing, increasingly autonomous nation and a central part of the economic success of the Empire. According to Wilson (1996), Wales had become famous around the globe for its level of industrial production and expansion; the architecturally impressive and commercially vibrant Cardiff was often referred to as the 'Chicago of Wales'.

Within academic circles, Hechter's theory received mixed reviews. A substantial amount of research provided examples of the emergence of nationalist movements in areas that were not internal colonies (Aull Davies, 1989; see also Clark, 1980; Douglass & Da Silva, 1971; Pi-Sunyer, 1980). Hechter's model has been criticised for its reductionism in explaining cultural divisions and ethnic sentiments by purely economic and spatial characteristics (Ozkirimli, 2000). A.D. Smith argues that attributing the emergence of nationalism to one single factor – internal colonialism – ignores the dynamic and multi-faceted nature of the phenomenon (A.D.Smith, 1983: xvi). Furthermore, the internal colonial model cannot explain instances of national revival in areas which have not experienced industrialisation or capitalism to any great degree, or explain the absence of a nationalist movement in heavily industrialised but economically deprived areas like the north of England (A.D. Smith, 1983: xvi).

Neil Evans's (1991) critique is centred on the generalist scope of the internal colonial model, which 'is made to cover the history of three countries over 400 years with scant regard for the changes within them, and their changing political and economic relationships to the core' (Evans, 1991: 238). Addressing the Welsh context specifically, he refers to other historians (R.M. Jones, 1980; G.A. Williams, 1982)

who have argued that, during the period of industrialisation, Wales was in fact situated in the economic core rather than on the periphery (Evans, 1991: 250). Evans questions the applicability of internal colonialism as a comparable model for deconstructing the range of complexities in the histories and development of 'Celtic' Wales, Ireland and Scotland (Evans, 1991: 256-257). For example, 'Ireland differed from Wales to a large extent because its formative historical relations with Britain were created in a very different period and pattern from those of Wales...(Hechter) would have learned far more if he had explored more fully the diversity of experiences and the different paths of development' (Evans, 1991: 257-258).

Furthermore, Evans argues that Hechter overemphasises the extent and influence of the state in historical processes, reasoning that even in a contemporary context, 'the limited impact of regional policy as a countervailing force to the trends of capitalist development has been demonstrated repeatedly. This was emphatically more so in the past' (Evans, 1991: 257). Evans goes onto argue:

'What survives after integration into the British state (and...existed beforehand) is a structure of values in which the culture of the core has a much higher prestige than any peripheral culture...This was fixed in its modern form during the process of industrialization. Hechter's concept of 'internal colonialism' amounts to little more than this in practice, since he cannot show that systematic cultural discrimination impoverishes the Celtic periphery.'

(Evans, 1991: 257)

Rather, Evans prefers the term 'cultural imperialism', where 'the sense of analogy is much more open, and where there is less risk of confusion with the real varieties of colonial relationship that there have been in these islands' (Evans, 1991: 257).

Chris Williams (2005) argues that the flourishing political and social scene in mid to late 19th century Wales is at variance with the model of Wales as a nation captured under colonial domination. He points out that the Welsh 'have been the active agents as well as the passive subjects of imperial expansion' (Williams, 2005: 7), partaking in the developing British Empire as administrators, soldiers, missionary workers and even colonists (Williams, 2005: 7). In the context of British politics, Williams highlights Welsh MPs such as David Lloyd George and Aneurin Bevan, among others, who attained highly influential positions in central government (Williams, 2005: 7). Williams acknowledges that the relationship between Wales and England

has fundamental inequalities both in a historical and contemporary sense, but he does not subscribe to the idea of Wales as an internal colony of England (Williams, 2005: 8). He interprets the Acts of Union of 1536 and 1543 as constitutional processes which encompassed Wales as 'part of an expanded England or Greater Britain' (Williams, 2005: 5). Viewed from this perspective, Wales ceased to be a colony and in effect became a junior partner in the British state (Williams, 2005: 5).

R. Williams observes that while it can be argued that Wales and its people have been subjugated by English state rule for seven centuries, equally 'it can...also be said that the English people have been oppressed by the English state for even longer. In any such general statements all the real complications of history are temporarily overridden' (R. Williams, 1985: 18, cited in Williams, 2005: 10).

However, Catherine Aull Davies (1989) concurs with some elements of the internal colony concept. In her view, the particular form of economic exploitation endured by internal colonies has a significant impact on the character of nationalist movements when they arise; she argues that 'the economic history of Wales provides a classic example of an internal colony, and the effects of internal colonialism on the Welsh nationalist movement were profound' (Aull Davies, 1989: 60). Aull Davies's theoretical position supports the general nature of Hechter's thesis, in that she argues Welsh nationalists were mobilised initially to defend the suppression of 'indigenous' culture under the internal colonial regime (Aull Davies, 1989: 60).

In contrast, John Lovering (1978) has questioned the validity of Hechter's application of the internal colony theory to Wales. He identifies what he sees as theoretical flaws in the internal colony model, as well as problematic issues undermining the practical application of the theory. Lovering questions the nature of the term 'exploitation', which occupies a central role in the theory of internal colonialism (1978: 90). He argues that 'exploitation' has an ambiguous definition, and while its popular usage implies connotations of the unfair, the term has different technical definitions in economic theory (Lovering, 1978: 91). Lovering rejects the application of the Marxist model of exploitation to Wales, which refers to a relationship between classes, since 'it only makes sense to use the term to describe relations between countries if the national boundaries coincide with class divisions...Unless the colonised nation is

homogenous and exclusively proletarian while all the capitalists live in the imperial core it is totally illegitimate to employ the Marxist term exploitation' (Lovering, 1978: 91). He maintains that the theory adds little to our understanding of the development of Wales by stating that it has been economically exploited by England; instead, Lovering advocates an approach which analyses the historical processes of uneven development in Wales.

David Adamson (1991) states that Hechter's model of Wales as an internal colony, and as a conceptual framework for explaining the emergence of Welsh nationalism, is flawed when compared with the findings of his own study of Welsh nationalism in the 19th and 20th centuries (Adamson, 1991: 182). He argues that his own analysis of Wales in the 19th century is difficult to assimilate with Hechter's theories; the extent of industrial growth and transformation in Wales during the 19th century indicates its fundamental position within the British economic structure. Adamson cites Williams's (1985) study, which highlights the function of Welsh production in the British Atlantic economy, and views Wales as a key component in the British economic infrastructure rather than being on the periphery (Adamson, 1991: 182). Therefore, while Hechter's thesis suggests a process whereby capital is directed out of Wales, through a system which is managed by a commercial and political elite located at the core, Adamson argues that the circumstances of capitalist development in Wales during the 19th century were different:

'Whilst the English origins of capital in the initial stage of industrial development were noted it was also recognised that there was increasing indigenous entrepreneurial activity during the second phase of industrialisation in the coal fields...indeed, it has been suggested that it is the emergence of a local bourgeoisie which is central to the emergence of nationalism at this time.'

(Adamson, 1991: 183)

Adamson argues that the expansion of the Welsh economy during the 19th century had a significant effect on the pattern of capital growth in Wales, which is at variance with the internal colonial model of a capital flow towards the English economy (Adamson, 1991: 183). He highlights the development of coastal areas and transport and shipping networks as directly related to the key position of the Welsh steel and coal industry in the global economy. Thus, 'rather than Wales being maintained as 'backward' by this development of her economy, it created clear advances in the economic social and

political structure of the region' (Adamson, 1991: 183), which allowed Welsh entrepreneurs and industrialists to amass large amounts of capital. This surge in the Welsh economy was reflected in other areas: the expansion of towns on the coastal strip, the investment in property, the railways and shipping networks (Adamson, 1991: 183).

Adamson argues that Wales during this period was a scene of economic, social and cultural vibrancy (cf Morgan, 1963, 1981), in which the benefits of industrial development were not limited to the indigenous bourgeoisie but promoted the growth of a local middle class (Adamson, 1991: 183). The Welsh workforce received higher wages at this time, which in effect created a 'labour aristocracy' in the British context (Morgan, 1981, cited in Adamson, 1991: 183). As a result, 'Wales in the latter half of the nineteenth century was characterized by significant class divisions and cannot be envisaged as a homogenous, culturally defined region, permanently held in a state of under-development and 'backwardness'' (Adamson, 1991: 183).

Adamson criticises Hechter's focus on the economic basis of the internal colony theory, in which the dominating core effectively suspends the periphery in economic dependence, and which leads ultimately to a cultural division of labour (Adamson, 1991: 184). He questions the basis of this theory, arguing that the emergence of local entrepreneurs and an indigenous middle class suggests that there were few obstacles preventing Welsh people from achieving roles which Hechter defines as having a high status (Adamson, 1991: 184). Adamson rejects Hechter's explanation of nationalism as a response to the economic and cultural exploitation of an ethnic group. He argues that such relations of explicit exploitation are impossible to identify in 19th century Wales (Adamson, 1991: 184) In Adamson's view:

'The social group which mobilized an ethnic identity and formulated a political nationalism were a dominant class in the Welsh social formation: they had not been denied the benefits of industrialization but had reaped them in full. Wales cannot be seen as populated by a culturally homogenous Celtic people held in subjection by an alien English elite. It was an internally class-divided society, the conditions of which promoted the development of nationalism as a hegemonizing ideology. It is the internal conditions of the Welsh social formation which promoted the development of nationalism, rather than the existence of an exploitative relationship with the English state.'

(Adamson, 1991: 184)

Adamson draws on Marxist socio-economics in his concept of nationalism as 'free-floating ideological element', which cannot be ascribed to a particular social class (Adamson, 1991: 50). He applies this theory in his interpretation of nationalism in 19th century Wales, focusing on historical developments in both the rural and industrial areas. In his analysis, 19th century Welsh society experienced a variety of structural changes, culminating in the resolution of tensions between feudalism and capitalist modes of production (Adamson, 1991: 75). Adamson argues that the national movement which emerged arose as a result of transformations in Welsh society, where the social structure experienced shifting degrees of change associated with industrialisation and capitalism. However, while Adamson seeks to deconstruct the social and economic complexities inherent in the nationalist ideology, he does not incorporate the role of cultural nationalism in the construction of identity into his analysis of the Welsh context. In line with Marxist interpretations of religion as an ideology of 'false consciousness', Adamson presents Nonconformity in 19th century Wales as a hegemonising instrument for social control. Adamson tends to focus on both Nonconformity and nationalism as ideological constructs which are either mobilised or rejected according to particular class alliances and social formations. Ultimately, such a view ignores the dynamics of human agency and the ability of individuals and groups to subvert messages from dominant authorities. There are often much subtler layers of meaning within religious and social practice which operate outside systems of power.

Conclusion

A deconstruction of nationalism and national identity in Wales reveals not only its multi-dimensionality as a political ideology, cultural construct and imaginative experience, but also its complexities in shape and form. The vision and scope of a national museum for Wales became imbued with multiple social and political meanings. While the campaign for a National Museum was played out in the late 19th century and ensured the founding of the Museum in 1907, the construction of the Museum was severely delayed by the First World War and it did not open until 1927. Therefore, although the Museum was conceived and established in a period of cultural and political nationalism, its maturation in the 1920s and subsequent decades occurred during a different phase in nationalist expression. This is meaningful in the context of this study, since if it is accepted that museums frequently mirror the socio-political

climate of the day (Wallace, 2000: v), this adds an interesting dimension to an analysis of the formation of the archaeological collections in the National Museum of Wales. Did the Museum reflect these historic tensions between a Welsh nation striving to gain political autonomy and the English-orientated government?

Undoubtedly, if a national identity is in essence 'imagined' (Anderson, 1983), then a national museum is given the task of defining and collecting objects of 'the nation' in order to create material representations of a constructed national identity. This is in itself a dynamic process, managed by curators who invariably bring their own interpretations and value judgements to collections and research, policies and exhibitions. The additional dynamics inherent in the intermix of English and Welsh curators and management working within the National Museum of Wales as it developed may reveal scenes and representations of negotiated identities. However, in any negotiation, power may shift from one party to another. This thesis will examine the various ways in which these value systems and dynamics are played out.

It is apparent that national identity in Wales, as in other instances, does not exist as a complete, encapsulated entity with clearly identifiable, sharply delineated features. Dai Smith sees national identity as existing in multiple, constantly evolving forms, which are shaped by a range of influences and processes: 'Wales is a singular noun, but a plural experience' (Smith, 1984: 1). In a similar perspective, Prys Morgan has written that 'the grouping of people known as "Wales" is a palimpsest of ideas, layer on layer' (P. Morgan, 1986a: 38). To build on aspects of Gwyn Alf William's reading of Welsh identity, 'Wales is a process...a process of continuous and dialectical historical development...the Welsh make and remake Wales day by day and year after year. If they want to' (Williams, 1982: 200, cited in Gruffudd, 1999: 149). Prys Gruffudd advocates an approach which views Wales and Welshness as an idea rather than a material thing (Gruffudd, 1999: 149).

Taken together, these interpretations confirm the fluidity of national (and other) identities as layered social constructions, and which, as imagined and lived experiences, are simultaneously plural, situational, fragmentary and dynamic. Day and Suggett emphasise the importance of viewing (Welsh) nationalism as 'an evolving matrix of shifting definitions and competing constructions' (Day and Suggett, 1985:

97). To reiterate Day and Suggett on this issue, whose comments are as relevant in analyses of 19th century experiences of Welsh identity as in the 21st century:

'...the question we ought to address is not that of the real 'nation' or national identity which lies behind concepts employed in political life, but that of the formation, articulation, and propagation of the concepts themselves. Nationalist ideas, myths and definitions have to be deconstructed. This means that we need to treat 'Wales' as it has figured in successive, and rival, discourses, and consider the question 'How many Wales?' or 'How many ways of being Welsh?'

(Day and Suggett, 1985: 96)

Emmett (1982) points out that while ideas and images of Welsh identity occupy a consuming aspect of national consciousness in many parts of Wales, there are always competing definitions of what Wales and Welshness means, how they are construed and understood (Emmett, 1982, cited in Day and Suggett, 1985: 92).

Kenneth Morgan has argued that, by the early 1880s, a sense of Welsh nationality and an awareness of Wales's distinct identity within the United Kingdom had emerged more strongly than ever before: 'It was not merely the academic concern of remote scholars and antiquarians. It was a living element in the daily experience of the Welsh people' (Morgan, 1982: 90-91). Certainly representations and expressions of Welsh national identity were similarly cultivated, articulated and reinterpreted in an array of cultural, religious and educational circles across Wales, but these constructed images of Wales, its past and its people were created and disseminated by a particular strata of Welsh society. Although we may surmise the extent to which expressions of the national revival permeated the social and spiritual lives of Welsh people, whether it be through the teachings of the Nonconformist chapels, the performances at the Eisteddfod, or through the writings of O.M. Edwards and the popular press, we cannot access their private worlds to know how they assimilated the idea of the Welsh nation. How did individuals and communities alike imagine and experience a sense of shared Welsh national identity? How were imagined visions of the nation reconciled with daily life and local worlds? As Dai Smith has observed, although 'the nation' is imagined, 'people do not all necessarily 'imagine' the same community. 'Public' definitions may collide with 'private' realities' (Smith, 1999: 37); and yet it was the idea and the process of creative and collective imagining which motivated the campaign for a national museum and library, centred on the image of a united Welsh nation.

What the next chapter of this thesis will reveal is that an understanding of the climate in which the national museum and library were founded has been subsumed into a macro-scale historical discourse which has tended to refer retrospectively to discrete and specific cultural movements in a collective sense as a unified national movement. While many aspects of the national museum movement in late 19th century Wales have clear links with the broader cultural practices and dominant politics of the period, such as eisteddfodau, Nonconformity, Liberalism, renewed interest in Welsh history, literature, music and language, closer analysis reveals the true range of differing elements at work. The diversity of the ideologies and interests which underpinned the national museum movement in Wales as it emerged in the last decade of the 19th century, and the contested ideas which surrounded senses of history, nation and place, highlight both the fluidity of Welsh national identity and the plurality of the past.

Chapter 4
Politics and Place: the beginnings of a national museum for Wales

'In Cardiff, never has the word *museum* been more before the public than at present. In the Council Chamber, in the press, in educational circles – everywhere it is heard.'

(John Ward, *Our Museum*, 1905: 3, italics in original)

Introduction

The journey towards the establishment of a national museum for Wales is framed within a period of national revival, vibrant cultural activity and nation building in 19th and early 20th century Wales. As the previous chapter highlighted, socio-economic change within the structure of Welsh society gave rise to a new middle class, which utilised its substantial influence in an array of cultural, social and political circles. Dominant members of the Welsh national elite, active within Wales and England, endeavoured to construct a particular representation of the Welsh nation in an attempt to consolidate Wales's status within the political structure of the United Kingdom and the British Empire. In the process of nation-building, visual signifiers and material representations were employed to allow its citizens to experience their 'imagined' nation. In the case of Wales, as a 'stateless' nation within a wider political unit, the founding of national institutions carried an added dimension: the desire to communicate a distinct social and cultural identity coupled with the pursuit of greater political parity.

The establishment of a national museum and library for Wales is largely attributed to the work of the active Welsh Liberal political presence in Westminster (e.g. Aull Davies, 1989; Davies, 1993; Morgan, 1981, 1991, 1995), which played an influential role in the revival and articulation of Welsh national identity in the late 19th century. In existing accounts, both the campaign for, and the foundation of, the National Museum of Wales have been subsumed within a wider discourse which assumes the existence of a cohesive national movement. The aim of this chapter is not to dispute the presence and role of the Welsh national revival as a backdrop to the national museum movement, but rather to question the idea that the pursuit of a national

museum for Wales had a unified political and national base. Closer analysis of both the primary evidence and secondary literature reveals various layers to this seemingly collective movement, in which a range of interest groups were motivated by their own specific ideologies, political agendas, regionalist outlooks as well as civic aspirations and museological concerns. In turn, each discrete group assimilated the idea of a national museum into its own vision of Wales and Welsh identity. The museum and library movement in Wales exposed the full range of disparate values embedded within regionalism and nationalism, in the experiences of the local, rural and urban, and in the political ideologies of Liberalism and Conservatism.

An historical outline and chronological account of the establishment and development of the National Museum of Wales has been provided in depth by Douglas Bassett (1982, 1983, 1984, 1990; also A.H.Lee, 1932; Jenkins, 2002) as well as by more recent analyses which focus on specific themes, aspects and moments in the history of the institution (Campbell, 2006; Mason, 2007a, 2007b; Osmond (ed), 2007, P.Morgan, 2007). The aim of this chapter, therefore, is not simply to recount current material on the establishment and early years of the National Museum but to augment existing discourse on the Museum with alternative perspectives and additional insights. This chapter begins by placing the campaign for the National Museum of Wales, as well as the formative stages in its development, in its historical context and outlines the key issues and factors. Primary evidence and secondary material are combined to highlight and illuminate further particular interconnecting processes, issues and events which were integral to the establishment of a national museum for Wales.

Beginnings: initial steps towards a Welsh national museum

As early as 1846, a member of the Cambrian Archaeological Association had written to the Society's journal to press the growing need for a 'central museum' of Welsh archaeology and natural history:

'Wales in particular, though rich in antiquities, is particularly defective in her organization for their study and preservation;...there is hardly any antiquarian body to be found in the Principality possessing features of vitality and activity...for the want

of a place of deposit, how many valuable objects have been lost to the locality where they have been discovered, or have been destroyed by falling into improper hands!'

In his address to members in 1869, the President of the Cambrian Archaeological Association referred to the museum collections of Dublin, Edinburgh and the British Museum, and argued that steps should be taken in Wales to establish 'a museum of national antiquities' (*Archaeologia Cambrensis* 15, 1869: 428). The absence of a national repository in Wales became a recurring subject in the Society's transactions (*Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 1871: 281, 1870: 366, 1879: 74, 1879: 153-154, 1880: 329, 1890: 243-244, 1890: 335-336). Towards the end of the 19th century, the Society voiced increasing concerns that Welsh archaeology was falling 'into the hands of private collectors, or...sent up to the British Museum. In either case they are lost sight of by the local archaeologists' (*Archaeologia Cambrensis* 6, 1889: 259).

Throughout the latter half of the 19th century, the desire for such a national institution was disseminated in newspapers and in meetings and transactions of scientific and antiquarian societies across Wales (Bassett, 1982: 155-157). Early calls for some form of central museum became an increasing feature of the society activities of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion (Bassett, 1982: 155). The Society, founded in 1751, served as a social gathering for Welsh people living in London and enabled them to maintain or re-establish cultural links with their original homeland (Jones and Powell, 2002; see also Jones, 2001). The National Eisteddfod was a public forum where the issue could be debated; at the Caernarfon Eisteddfod of 1894, an essay competition was opened, inviting essays on the subject of a national museum in Wales and its potential configuration (*Transactions of the National Eisteddfod of Wales, Caernarvon*, 1894: 135-176; see also *Transactions of the National Eisteddfod of Wales, Pontypridd*, 1893).

Chapter 3 demonstrated that the movement towards the establishment of national laws, a national education system and a disestablished church in the late 19th century were part of an ideology which sought a greater degree of autonomy and political equality for Wales (Davies, 1993; Morgan, 1982). The establishment of a national

museum and library were perceived as important structural elements in the process of nation building.

As the debate intensified in the 1890s, it began to attract the attention of number of prominent Welsh Liberal MPs, who had become increasingly influential in Westminster. The desire for a national museum for Wales acquired a more explicitly political dimension and in some ways, became a metaphor for the broader, complex structural relations between Wales and the government in the late 19th and early 20th century. Welsh politicians such as J. Herbert Lewis (Flint Boroughs), Alfred Thomas (East Glamorgan)[1], William Jones (Arfon) and Tom Ellis (Merioneth) were key figures in the campaign for a national museum and library. The parliamentary debates have been referred to in detail by Bassett (1982) and more recently by Mason (2007a, 2007b) and Campbell (2006), so the intention here is to highlight the key points. From 1894 onwards, the MPs Herbert Lewis and Alfred Thomas in particular made repeated requests for Wales to receive her due share of the Museums Grant in comparison with the amounts awarded to England, Scotland and Ireland (*Hansard* 29, 1894: 92; also *Hansard* 37, 1896: 836).[2] Lewis also spoke of the increasing diffusion of Welsh antiquities and historical collections in the absence of a national museum (*Hansard* 29, 1894: 94; *Hansard* 37, 1896: 840).

The government's responses evaded either a clear endorsement or rejection by arguing that Wales did not possess an established city or museum like Dublin or Edinburgh and so was unable to apply the same system until the situation changed (*Hansard* 29, 1894: 216-217; *Hansard* 36, 1895: 1048); that Wales was fully entitled to the loan of museum collections (*Hansard* 36, 1895: 1048) and, in any case, should regard the British Museum (and London) as being committed to serving the interests of both England and Wales, since both countries were 'intimately associated' (*Hansard* 37, 1896: 849-850). Herbert Lewis rejected the idea that the British Museum served the interests of Wales. In his view, the institution 'paid so little regard to Wales that it was absurd to regard the British Museum as an effective substitute for a National Museum for Wales' (*Hansard* 37, 1896: 839). He further attacked the British Museum for failing to secure for the Welsh nation valuable collections of books and manuscripts, only for them to be 'dispersed under the auctioneer's hammer' (*Hansard* 37, 1896: 840). Prys Morgan's reading that 'both the

(Welsh) Library and Museum were founded as an act of criticism' of the government and the British Museum (P. Morgan, 2007: 20) is relevant here. Morgan goes on to argue that both the Museum and the Library were 'set up in the teeth of hostility and disdain of the British Museum and London' (P. Morgan, 2007: 20). In many respects this was indeed the case for the Welsh political contingent, especially when one considers the government's consistently dismissive, non-committal stance, as demonstrated above. Viewed from this perspective, Morgan is correct to say that the two institutions were established as 'anti-British institutions' (P. Morgan, 2007: 20), in the sense that they were founded 'out of bitter protest at British neglect of all things Welsh' (P.Morgan, 2007: 20). However, it is important to reiterate that the campaign by Welsh politicians was essentially cultural in character rather than politically or ideologically driven.

The debates continued in this way throughout the latter half of the 1890s. In 1898, Sir John Gorst, Vice-President of the Committee of the Council on Education, declared that funds would be better allocated to improving and developing the 'excellent' Cardiff Museum rather than establishing a rival museum (*Hansard* 54, 1898: 1057). Clearly, Cardiff Museum's reputation as an expanding institution with a proto-national collection had reached certain layers of government at an opportune time in light of Cardiff's future bid for the Welsh national museum (explored later in this chapter, see pages 108-111).

A retrospective view of the relevant parliamentary debates prompts some questions: what were the interests of the Welsh politicians in arguing for a national museum for Wales, what factors motivated their campaign, and, indeed, what was their actual vision of a national museum (and library). The House of Commons was (and remains still) a theatre for relations of power and display, and in many respects the speeches given by the above mentioned Welsh MPs were as much about personal political performances as they were about content. The issue of cultural institutions for Wales fell within wider concerns regarding the arts and educational reform in Britain. In this sense, calls for museum and library provision for Wales were matters of social and moral principle which were not highly contentious and did not challenge the political status quo in a radical sense. It was a national cause to which Welsh MPs could attach their names and one which, if successful, would benefit both their reputations in

Wales and their political profiles in Westminster. Rhiannon Mason has made the point that museum provision 'was not a party-political issue and so provided a focal point which could unite Welsh MPs across party line' (Mason, 2007a: 117). Furthermore, that it 'may have been a useful way for those MPs to demonstrate their commitment to the nation...In the past, as today, 'culture' carries valuable political currency. This is particularly so when the culture in question is 'national'' (Mason, 2007a: 117).

In late Victorian society, museums, as well as libraries and art galleries, were viewed as important didactic, civilising mechanisms for inculcating particular social mores to do with educational and cultural enlightenment, self-improvement and moral living. The extent to which public museums were ever intended for all classes of society is questionable. In essence, the pedagogic intentions of such institutions were internally contradictory; they communicated particular forms of knowledge, which, in a subliminal sense, were designed to enlighten but also to control. In an age of modernity, interpretations of history and representations of other worlds were produced to instil in certain sections of the populace greater awareness of human progress and time, but not to empower them to question the existing order to society. As Kevin Walsh (1992) argues:

'The museum can be considered either as an ideological tool which reinforced the held conceptions of order, time and progress or as tools of emancipation...which opened people's eyes to a world other than their own, and thus helped them maintain a sense of place, and make connections with those processes which had influenced their current position in the order of things.'

(Walsh, 1992: 38)

The political configuration of the United Kingdom made the potential role and practice of a Welsh national museum (and library) inherently complex: whether the institutions would communicate Welsh history within the context of British progress and the development of the Empire or, conversely, whether the institutions would construct a set of historical narratives which might influence the Welsh people to 'imagine' their national identity in ways at variance with prevailing ideas of Anglo-Britishness.

Underlying dynamics and determining factors

In a shifting political climate, the campaign finally appeared to move forward: in 1903 the Treasury announced that it would be willing to consider a submitted report, which would have to clarify the nature of the institution proposed and demonstrate that such collections existed to merit it, together with a draft estimation of the costs involved (Bassett, 1982: 159). In February 1905, the government appointed a special committee of the Privy Council to decide the location(s) of the two institutions and to determine their administrative and governing structures (Bassett, 1982: 161).

This section considers the factors which influenced the government to change its position. One potentially key determinant – although overlooked in existing studies – in the Conservative government's decision in 1905 to award funds for the establishment of a national museum and library, was the political outcry in Wales following the institution of the 1902 Education Act. The Act, instituted under Balfour's tenure, disbanded School Boards and established Local Education Authorities in its place. Education Committees were set up in each county council to administer funds to elementary and intermediate schools. An underlying intention of the Conservative government's Act was to ensure the future of Church schools, which historically had received no funding from the rates. The Act reignited Welsh political nationalism among the Liberal contingent within Wales and at Westminster, and exposed the deep rooted tensions between the Church of England and religious Nonconformity in Wales (Morgan, 1995; Jones and Roderick, 2003). Nonconformists denounced the move by the government as 'a concession to clericalism which would put 'Rome on the rates'' (Morgan, 1995: 163). The implicit message from the established Church in Wales was that it was possible to have an Anglican based Welsh identity, while Nonconformist opinion saw such a vision as part of an attempt to bolster the Anglican establishment in Wales. Nonconformists protested against this new pledge of dedicated financial support, arguing that in many areas of Wales there would be no alternative schools for children of Nonconformist families to attend other than Anglican schools. This was interpreted by particular groups as further evidence that central government and the establishment chose not to acknowledge the presence of Nonconformity in Wales. The very public response to the Act from members of the

Welsh quarter had a broader effect: 'Wales and Welsh bellicosity attracted British attention to things Welsh' (P. Morgan, 2007: 17).

Jones and Roderick (2003) have observed: 'Wales, in the throes of a national cultural revival, and having experienced attempts to foster political independence through Cymru Fydd, was the perfect ground for opposition to be translated into direct action. Majority Nonconformist affiliation had, for the moment, become the touchstone of nationality' (Jones and Roderick, 2003: 110). The situation escalated when, in the summer of 1903, a national convention was held in Cardiff which urged all local education authorities in Wales to refuse to administer the Act (Jones and Roderick, 2003: 110). At the end of the year only two Welsh counties, Radnorshire and Breconshire were following the new system according to the law, while other counties displayed varying degrees of non-cooperation in defiance of central government (Jones and Roderick, 2003: 110). The government sought to counter this action through the passing of the Education (Local Authority Default) Act in 1904 which permitted the Board of Education to effectively bypass local education authorities and deal directly with the non-provided schools (Jones and Roderick, 2003: 110). Unsurprisingly, this move intensified existing political divisions and the new Act was referred to as the 'Coercion of Wales Act' (Jones and Roderick, 2003: 110). An alliance of local authorities and Non-conformists made the collective decision in 1904 to refuse to administer any elementary education when the Default Act came in to effect (Jones and Roderick, 2003: 110).

Ultimately, the power of central government and the Board of Education overrode the dissenting Welsh local authorities, causing resentment among the Non-conformist faction (Jones and Roderick, 2003: 110). There was serious conflict between local government in Wales and central government at Westminster (Jones and Roderick, 2003: 110). While the infrastructure of central government was able to systematically weaken the position of Welsh local authorities through the deferment of funds for schools, it was not able to exercise such control over the intensifying national movement in Wales, nor the growing political apathy to the government which these confrontations merely accentuated. David Lloyd George, by then President of the Welsh National Council as well as chairman of the Welsh national convention of education, claimed that Wales was poised on the edge of 'a national revolution'

(Morgan, 1980: 194). With some notable exceptions,[3] Liberal and Non-conformist interests were combined in what appeared to be 'the most organised national rebellion since the days of Glyn-dŵr' (Morgan, 1980: 196).

It is therefore conceivable that this drawn-out episode in the political relationship between England and Wales played a significant and related role in the government's decision in 1905 to allocate funds for a Welsh national museum and library. It is plausible that the Conservative government, by this stage 'toppling to its fall' (Morgan, 1991: 195) and acutely aware of the controversy and political fall-out caused by the Act(s), began to consider the Welsh appeal for a national museum and library anew in this shifting climate. Although the granting of such institutions would entail a considerable financial commitment, from the point of view of government advisors conscious of the upcoming elections and alert to fractured relations between the influential Welsh Liberal presence and the State, it would no doubt have been rationalised as a small political price to pay if it assuaged rising opposition to Conservative policy and rule. Prys Morgan has speculated that the government may have endeavoured 'to draw opposition fire by stealing some of their ideas, in order to weaken them' (P. Morgan, 2007: 17). Although consent for the establishment of Wales's own national museum and library would appear to undercut the Conservative government's promotion of an Anglo-British nation (Ellis, 1998), other elements were also at work here. Kenneth Morgan (1982) argues that the vision of the Welsh nation cultivated by cultural nationalists in the late 19th century was not fundamentally a political challenge to Conservative ideology: 'Perhaps even Unionists understood...that Welsh nationality was deeply, instinctively traditional, backward looking and conservative, reaching back to the organic religious community of the middle ages long before factories and chapels divided the land' (Morgan, 1982: 57).

Conflicting identities and political power: competing agendas for the location of Wales's national museum

In 1905, a committee of the Privy Council was formed to adjudicate on the establishment of a national museum and a national library for Wales. The committee dictated that written statements should be submitted by each competing town in Wales, detailing their case and their bid (Bassett, 1982: 161). It seems an inevitable

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irony that the competition for the location of a national museum of Wales – an ideological institution intended to represent Welsh history and culture – should encourage local and regional identities to surface and compete. The idea of Wales as a unified nation was exposed as a political construction; while industrialisation had permanently altered the social and cultural patterns of many parts of Wales through internal population shifts and migration, other parts of Wales remained unaffected during this period. Economic, social and cultural divisions widened, and identities in Wales concurrently shifted and evolved as communities remade and redefined themselves. Regionalist politics and local identities came to the fore as each town claimed to be the most authentically Welsh. The fluid and fragmentary nature of national identity is highlighted in the range of interpretations put forward by the bidding towns with regard to history and language, local culture and future development.

Cardiff made full use of its municipal, urban profile and offered a prestigious site of four acres for a combined national museum and library, surrounded by the neo-classical civic buildings of the University College, City Hall and Law Court. In its memorial, it stated that the extensive collections of natural history, antiquities and art of the Cardiff Museum, established in 1863 (and which by then had been renamed the Welsh Museum of Natural History, Arts and Antiquities) was active in 'representing the past life of the country' and would form the nucleus for the national museum (*Memorial of the Corporation of Cardiff...*, 1905: 19).[4]

Caernarfon and Swansea bid for the national museum (see *Memorial of the County Borough of Swansea*, 1905 and *Memorial of the Borough of Caernarfon*, 1905; see also Bassett, 1982), while Aberystwyth, whose University library collections were gaining prominence and who clearly viewed themselves as the natural protectors of Welsh literature, bid only for the national library[5]. Aberystwyth and Cardiff were in direct competition for the national library. The Aberystwyth bid made its claim on the basis of its established University (founded in 1872) and existing library collection, its largely Welsh speaking population and its 'central' geographical position in Wales (*Statement in favour of Aberystwyth as the place for the establishment of the National Library of Wales*, 1905: 7). From the beginning, the Aberystwyth bid confidently declared itself as already in possession of the true national library of Wales and

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presented its development as closely entwined with the University College and an established tradition of scholarly research into Welsh literature and language (*Statement in favour of Aberystwyth as the place for the establishment of the National Library of Wales*, 1905: 2-3).

In a climate where the assertion of 'true' Welsh identity had become an integral part of the political rhetoric, Aberystwyth stated its position against Cardiff, which it viewed as 'indifferent to the distinctively national elements in Welsh life and history' (*Statement in favour of Aberystwyth as the place for the establishment of the National Library of Wales*, 1905: 13). Significantly, Caernarfon and Swansea both emphasised identity and regionalism above anything else in their claim for the national museum. Swansea saw itself as the true 'Cymric element' in the competition, arguing that 'Swansea is most distinctively Welsh' (*Memorial of the County Borough of Swansea*, 1905: 1-2). It is clear that the authenticating signifier of Welshness was measured through an ability to speak the Welsh language; Swansea was keen to stress that 70% of its inhabitants were Welsh speaking (*Memorial of the County Borough of Swansea*, 1905: 3). Caernarfon championed itself as the recognised 'centre of National life' (*Memorial of the Borough of Caernarfon*, 1905: 2) and argued that awarding Caernarfon the national museum would be 'simply perpetuating the traditional usage of the past. From the earliest times the district of which Caernarfon is the natural centre has been the recognised home and stronghold of Welsh Nationalism' (*Memorial of the Borough of Caernarfon*, 1905: 2-3). An awareness of the industrial and commercial trade in the town was noticeably absent from the Caernarfon bid, presumably because such activity did not complement the carefully constructed image of a town still somehow captured in a glorious Welsh past and untainted by modern development, politics and change. Significantly, when the Investiture ceremony of the Prince of Wales in 1911 was being prepared, much energy was spent on concealing the un-aesthetic industrial slate docks from view in order to preserve the idea of Caernarfon as the natural, unspoilt setting for the landmark national occasion (Ellis, 1998: 409).

The comments made by *The Cambrian News* demonstrated increasing antipathy towards Cardiff's socio-economic centrism: 'Cardiff is willing to sacrifice the whole of Wales for its own selfish ends. It is to be hoped that every public body in North and

Mid Wales will protest against the attempted monopolisation by Cardiff of things intended for the whole Principality' (17th March, 1905). In a similar vein, the amalgamated *Welsh Gazette: Aberystwyth Chronicle and West Wales Advertiser* declared that 'to place a National Institution of this character in a town so determined by English ideas, so bound up with commercial enterprise, so alien to all that is valuable in Welsh ideals, would be nothing short of a calamity' (30th March, 1905).

Opposition to Cardiff's bid often centred on the economic advantages enjoyed by a primarily industrial town perceived to be unfamiliar, overtly anglicised and on the periphery of Welshness; some vocal members of the Welsh intelligentsia spoke of Cardiff as having a 'mongrel' population and viewed it as the antithesis of Welsh national identity and the rural *gwerin*[6] (Evans, 1985: 373). Other critics questioned the assumption that Cardiff should be the revered choice, arguing in the *Cardiff Times* that the town 'is too new to command our obedience and veneration' (Evans, 1985: 373). Cardiff's response extolled the virtues of modern cosmopolitanism and claimed that as a forward-thinking town it was best placed to lead the Welsh nation: 'It has become a common practice to scoff at the anti-Welsh or want of Welsh feeling in Cardiff, even though Cardiff has provided the finest Welsh library in the country, and does many things in the interests of Wales and Welshmen.' (*Cardiff Times*, 17th June 1905, cited in Evans, 1985: 370).

The Cardiff faction and local newspaper press interpreted resistance to the town's pursuit of the national museum and library as the insular attitudes of the provincial Welsh to change and progress: 'There is a Metropolitan ring about its large ideas which makes all other Welsh towns seem parochial in comparison' (*Cardiff Times*, 1st April 1905, cited in Evans, 1985: 370). Cardiff propaganda alternated between emphasising its modern, progressive ethos and the town's roots in antiquity. Evans observes that newspapers made frequent reference to the Roman origins of the town and the preserved medieval castle, as well as archaeological excavations in the locality (Evans, 1985: 373). Increasingly aware of its outward perception as an Anglocentric, industrial hub, the campaign sought to promote a consolidated (and politically idealised) image of Welsh Cardiff which encompassed all identities into its inclusive civic community: '(Cardiff) is both ancient and modern, Celtic and

cosmopolitan, progressive, wealthy, enterprising and a centre of learning' (*Cardiff Times*, 1ˢᵗ April 1905, cited in Evans, 1985: 370).

Swansea had displayed similar aspirations for civic development as Cardiff: 'In its desire to gain status as an urban centre... (Swansea) exhibited the same brand of civic ambition aroused in towns the length and breadth of Britain in this period. The central role of an urban institution in this quest was typical of its time' (Miskell, 2003: 52). The established image of Swansea as a characteristically Welsh town was an element the town's leaders capitalised on in its bid for the national museum. By the turn of the 20ᵗʰ century, Swansea had become 'a fitting arena in which to place the Welsh nation on display...It was much more Welsh in speech than was Cardiff and it was enjoying it own civic renaissance in the Edwardian high noon' (Evans, 2004a: 219). Swansea was, however, unable to compete with the concentrated industrial wealth of Cardiff; while leisure and tourism in the town had expanded greatly, wider structural forces in world industry and competition from Cardiff had limited its commercial potential (Miskell, 2003).

As Jones (2007: 27) has commented, the Privy Council committee's final decision in June 1905 on the location(s) of the national museum and library was reduced to the succinct headline: 'Cardiff gets the Museum, Aberystwyth the Library' (*South Wales Weekly News*, 17ᵗʰ June 1905; see also Bassett, 1982: 164-165). Caernarfon publicly denounced the decision to award Cardiff the National Museum. The former mayor of the town claimed the outcome confirmed a political bias towards south Wales and 'the present Government's intense hostility to Welsh sentiment' (*Estates Gazette*, 1ˢᵗ July 1905). The 'prominent' Conservative leader Barry Lloyd Carter criticised the way in which the appointed committee of the Privy Council was able to the make the decision without a public hearing of all the evidence and called upon Welsh politicians to raise the matter in Parliament and so 'prove their nationality' (*Estates Gazette*, 1ˢᵗ July 1905). One London publication remarked that the Treasury had steered a tactical path in the whole affair, claiming impartiality and opening a nation-wide competition through which to establish the Welsh town with the greatest offer and support (*The Academy*, 4ᵗʰ March 1905). In practice, the writer argued, 'that amounts to putting the privilege up to auction, and instantly Carnarvon, Cardiff,

Swansea and Aberystwyth are bidding against each other...while the Privy Council sits waiting to see who makes the highest bid' (*The Academy*, 4th March 1905).

However, original correspondence of the Privy Council between ministers and government officials during this period provides insights into the actual state of affairs regarding the future location of the national museum and library. Once private files, and now publicly accessible documents (File 93,931 in PC8/608, National Archives), they disclose the opinions and attitudes of high-ranking government figures on the matter, and would seem to indicate that the eventual outcome of the national competition for the institutions was predetermined from the beginning. Private letters reveal that there were two main issues as far as the appointed government committee was concerned: where the institution(s) should be sited and how funds should be allocated (File 93,931 in PC8/608, National Archives).

Various letters, notes and memos reveal that Sir William R Anson, President of the Board of Education, had made trips to Cardiff and Aberystwyth (as well as a visit to the Museum at South Kensington) in September 1904. In Anson's letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Austen Chamberlain, he set out Cardiff as the site for the museum and Aberystwyth as the location for the library on the grounds of 'practical reasons as well as Welsh sentiment' (File 93,931 in PC8/608, National Archives). In Anson's view, 'Cardiff is clearly marked out as the place for the Museum. It is most readily accessible to the largest number of Welsh people; it already possesses a museum formed on the model of South Kensington, and containing fine specimens of Welsh porcelain, a natural history collection, and drawings, paintings and engravings by Welsh artists of Welsh scenery' (File 93,931 in PC8/608, National Archives). With regard to the site of the national library, Anson believed that it 'might well be placed at Aberystwyth for several reasons. Aberystwyth is in the heart of Wales...there is a strong feeling indicated by resolutions passed in seven County Councils that this should be the recognised home of the Library' (File 93,931 in PC8/608, National Archives). Anson noted that Aberystwyth had already purchased a site of some 14 acres in anticipation and that the University College library was in possession of a large and varied collection of Welsh manuscripts and early printed books. He argued that 'even if funds for National Library were allocated to Cardiff, the collection at Aberystwyth could not be rivalled

by any collection which could be made elsewhere' (File 93,931 in PC8/608, National Archives).

Anson's letter makes it clear that a key consideration in the matter of a Welsh national museum and library was 'the allocation of funds which the Treasury may be able to place at the disposal of the persons or body responsible for these two institutions' (File 93,931 in PC8/608, National Archives). It is reasonable to suppose that the Treasury was alert to the considerable expenditure involved in assembling museum and library collections quite apart from the cost of building institutions in which to house such material culture. Anson wrote that the national museum, if 'situated at Cardiff amidst the wealth and business of the Principality, is the more likely of the two institutions to receive gifts of money, or of collections, and I would suggest the reconsideration of the proposed allocation to the two institutions in view of the places assigned to them' (File 93,931 in PC8/608, National Archives). In reality, it seems unlikely that the government would ever have allocated funds to towns which did not already possess existing museum or library collections, private funds and suitable land. John Ward, as Curator of Cardiff Museum, was aware, evidently, of the primary value of an established museum collection in efforts to secure a national museum. Ward had argued that:

'What will count most in the final decision will be a suitable nucleus for a national collection. It is incredible that a national grant will ever be made to found a collection. A museum collection does not suddenly spring into existence by a grant of money or a stroke of the pen. Suppose a spacious building provided and an annual grant made, it would be years before a collection sufficiently large could be accumulated to warrant its opening as a museum...Whether the Cardiff collection would be deemed an eligible nucleus I am not prepared to say, but it is far and away the best in Wales, and it is situated in the largest and most accessible town, and a town which has a marked metropolitan character.'

(Ward, 1902: 2)

With this in mind, it would seem that Cardiff and Aberystwyth were a foregone conclusion as the locations for the National Museum and Library of Wales.

Austen Chamberlain's response to Anson in early December, 1904 contains several interesting aspects. It is clear that, irrespective of the open competition for the location of the museum and library, Cardiff and Aberystwyth were regarded as the inevitable

choice in internal government circles: 'I agree pretty much with what you say as to the choice of sites, viz that the Museum should be at Cardiff and the Library at Aberystwyth' (File 93,931 in PC8/608, National Archives). Significantly, Chamberlain appeared to be aware of the wider political implications if central government was perceived to have made the decision for Wales: '…it is not desirable that the odium of choice should fall on the Government or on a Government Department. Nor it is clear that their decision would be accepted by the places interested, or command the universal assent which is already promised to a decision of a Committee of the Privy Council' (File 93,931 in PC8/608, National Archives). It seems that Chamberlain was conscious to establish an impression of distance and impartiality between the decision process and particular figures of authority in senior government. He went on to conclude, 'I therefore think that it would be better to have the authority of the Privy Council for the decision instead of making it merely an agreement arrived at between the Board of Education and myself' (File 93,931 in PC8/608, National Archives). Chamberlain was surely alert to the possibility that the government's links with the active Conservative faction in Cardiff could be construed by critics as political favouritism. His comments may have related more generally to the political climate of the time, in which the government was experiencing continuing opposition to implementation of the 1902 Education Act throughout Wales. The letters contained in the Privy Council files, and the private views expressed within, would indicate that there was increasing acknowledgment from figures in central government not only of Wales as a distinct entity within the British context, but of the need to recognise publicly Wales as a nation. This tacit acceptance of Welsh cultural distinctiveness is highlighted by Balfour's comments in relation to the city movement in Cardiff (see pages 115-116 of this chapter). His approval of the proposal to award Cardiff city status may have been bound up with party politics, but it also demonstrates that he regarded the case of Cardiff as unique in cultural and national terms. Moreover, his language would suggest he felt that the exceptional grounds of 'Welsh sentiment' on which to grant Cardiff city status would provide sufficient defence to claims from other English towns, which he envisaged would seek city status as a direct result. The ideology of Conservatism may have been at odds with the image of a separate Welsh identity, but there is a sense that the issue of Welsh nationality was rationalised by a government which judged the national movement to be cultural in essence rather than politically separatist.

The 'Cardiff Factor':[7] centrism and political sway

The development of Cardiff Municipal Museum[8] (renamed as the Welsh Museum of Natural History, Arts and Antiquities in 1901) is interlinked fundamentally with the establishment of the National Museum of Wales, but has not been the subject of focused research until very recently (see Jones, 2007). The increasingly Welsh-orientated, as opposed to local, nature of Cardiff Museum's collections was a key aspect in securing the National Museum of Wales. Cardiff Museum's collections would constitute the nucleus of the new national institution (Bassett, 1982; Jones, 2007). Bill Jones points out that 'the translation from municipal to national has possibly erased Cardiff Museum from public memory and potential academic scrutiny' (Jones, 2007: 28). Jones charts the formative development of the original Cardiff Museum and demonstrates that its management and curatorial staff sought increasingly, from the 1890s onwards, to shape its collecting practices and promote itself as a proto-national museum.

Figure 4.1: Cardiff Museum during the 19th century (after Jones, 2007 in *Llafur* 9 (4).
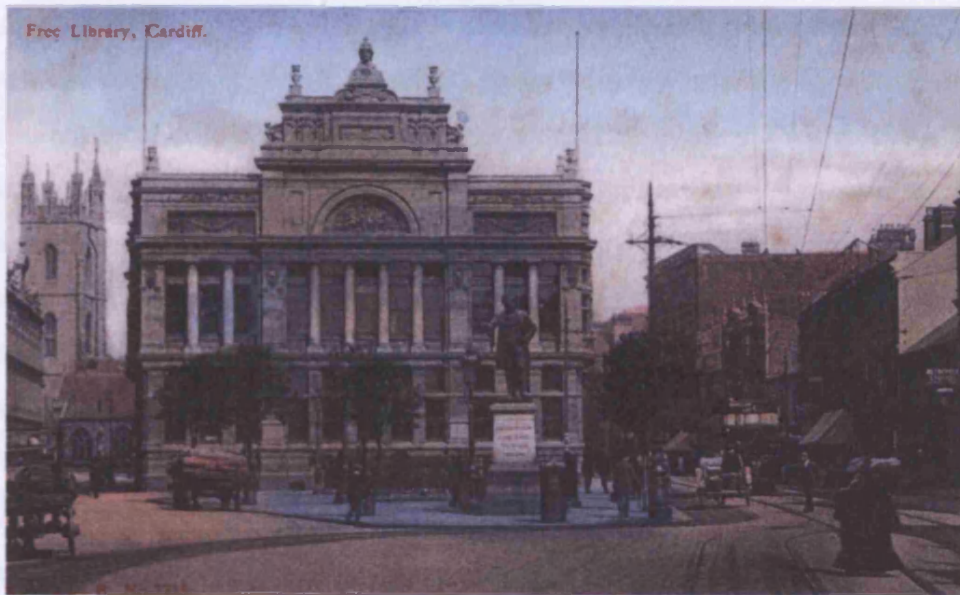
Figure 4.2: Cardiff Free Library; Cardiff Museum was located on the top floor (after Jones, 2007 in Llafur 9 (4).

Once the Corporation of Cardiff had adopted the *Museums and Gymnasiums Act, 1891* in the autumn of 1892, the Museum experienced administrative and curatorial independence from Cardiff Free Library for the first time (Jones, 2007: 35-37). During this period, the Cardiff Museum faction became particularly active in campaigning for national museum provision, but predictably, their interests were bound up with their own political agendas for the expansion of the town's Municipal Museum as a national collection. Individuals in the museum scene and in civic affairs such as Charles T. Vachell,[9] the Museum's curator, John Ward[10] and the Town Clerk, Joseph Wheatley, as well as prominent Welsh-speaking figures in the Cardiff branch of the Cymmrodorion Society, such as Thomas Henry Thomas ('Arlunydd Penygarn') and Edward Thomas ('Cochfarf'), actively led the movement (Jones, 2007: 28). The Museum's Annual Report for the year 1886-1887 had documented the increasing desire to expand and develop the Museum 'in a way commensurate with the commercial and social importance of the town' (cited in Jones, 2007: 35). Significantly, by the early 1890s, the Museum's ethos and ambitions were clearly defined: 'the first great aim of a provincial Museum should be to form a collection illustrating the natural history, archaeology, arts and manufacturers of the immediate district; also that Cardiff being the metropolis of Wales, the interests of the Museum should be co-extensive with the Principality' (*Cardiff Museum Annual Report*, 1892-1893: 7).

The adoption of the *Museums and Gymnasiums Act* made it possible for the Museum to expand its collections. While previous efforts were towards 'the formation of strong and efficient local collections of natural history and antiquities' (Ward, 1905: 19), the revenue provided by the Act meant that 'the range was widened to include representative collections more or less contributory to the former; and *local* was expanded into *Welsh*. In doing this, the authorities have not merely aimed at a *municipal* museum on modern lines, but have sought to build up a suitable *nucleus* for a possible National Museum, and so to promote the realization of such an institution for Wales' (Ward, 1905: 19-20, italics in original). Ward made the politically charged claim that, even 'if no grant from the Treasury comes to Wales for a National Museum, *one museum at least, shall be working on national lines as far as its means allow*' (Ward, 1905: 20, italics in original). Ward presented the Cardiff civic and museum movement as having far higher ambitions than the cultural and educational endeavours of Glasgow, Bristol and Bath: 'these towns have only aspirations on a municipal plane, whereas Cardiff is looking for its recognition as the capital of a nation, and for its museum and art gallery to become a national institution! Will Cardiff sit down contented with a second-rate *municipal* museum?' (Ward, 1902: 24, italics in original).

The Museum displays were reorganised and the collections revised; an old collection of stuffed birds, among other things were dispensed with to make room for new accessions (Ward, 1920: 117). From the mid 1880s onwards, the onus shifted from collecting natural history to the arts; the Museum received some donated art works from wealthy Cardiff individuals, such as William Menelaus's private collection of oil paintings, which included pieces by Alma Tadema, Constable, Corot, Tissot and other fine art from the French and Belgium Schools, said to be worth over £10,000 (Jones, 2007: 35). The collecting period between 1897 and 1903 was the most active. The Museum acquired a collection of Swansea and Nantgarw fine porcelain (Jones, 2007: 41) and sculptures by Sir William Goscombe John (Bassett, 1982: 179). One of the Museum's new projects was a representative collection of casts of Pre-Norman sculptured and inscribed stones in Wales; in addition, the Museum's prehistoric collections were enhanced in 1905 by the acquisition of 'a hoard of Late-Celtic bronzes from Seven Sisters, near Neath', which, Ward claimed, was 'the most important Welsh find of the kind' (Ward, 1920: 117-118). In another article, Ward

wrote of other archaeological finds acquired by the Museum: 'a Roman bronze patella and strainer of excellent workmanship, found at Kyngadle, near Laugharne' and 'an exquisite example of ivory carving of the best period – the 13th century – found at Llandaff' (Ward, 1907: 283). Also on display in the Antiquities Room of the Museum was a collection of Welsh 'bygones', which 'tell of old-fashioned Welsh domestic life, customs and industries before cheap transit and elaborate machinery' (Ward, 1912: 299).

Jones has observed that, 'in effect Cardiff Museum and the Council generally appear to have taken on a 'national' role in order to strengthen the campaign for a National Museum but in doing so it was considerably enhancing its own chances of being the nucleus of the new national institution' (Jones, 2007: 44). In 1901, the Museum Committee made the tactical move of renaming the Museum as 'The Welsh Museum of Natural History, Arts and Antiquities', claiming that the new title expressed better 'the growing national character of its collections' (Ward, 1920: 118).

The Metropolis of Wales: city building, political divisions and aspirations for a national museum

As the above section has shown, the Cardiff Museum community had actively sought to develop the collections, and promote the reputation of the institution, as the *de facto* national museum for Wales from the late 1880s (Jones, 2007). By the close of the century, however, ambitions on a municipal scale had been superseded by much larger plans to establish a national museum and library within Cardiff's new civic centre (Jones, 2007). Closer examination of the contemporary scene reveals that plans to expand and re-develop completely Cardiff Museum within the town's museum community (Jones, 2007) were seized upon by Cardiff's social and political elite as important elements in strengthening the campaign for city status. It was envisaged that the addition of a national museum and library to Cardiff's civic profile would shore up future ambitions of being designated the capital of Wales. Cardiff would also have been aware of the government's caveat that it would be unwilling to fund the establishment of national institutions when Wales did not possess a city (see page 95 of this chapter). Neil Evans (1985) has demonstrated how Cardiff's influential leaders made the strategic decision to concentrate on remodelling the town as the epitome of

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civic living: a progressive, cosmopolitan centre of industry and commerce, and thereby the natural claimant to be the national capital of Wales and the location of national institutions.

Cardiff's self-image had been boosted by reports of its unrivalled urban expansion, its metropolitan outlook and its reputed status as the biggest coal exporter in the world. The town's increasing preoccupation with image and the attainment of civic status and national recognition required the appearance of a cohesive, collective movement if it were to be successful in achieving a national museum and library. As Daunton (1977), Davies (1981) and Evans (1982, 1985, 2003) have demonstrated, the expansion of Cardiff from a small market town in the early 19th century to a major city and port by the beginning of the 20th century, occurred on a rapid scale. Cardiff experienced a thirty-fold increase in its population in the period between 1801 and 1914 and became 'one of the most densely settled areas of the country' (Daunton, 1977: 6). Daunton explains that Cardiff underwent huge change in terms of economic development, wealth distribution and social configuration during this defining period (Daunton, 1977: 11). Cardiff came to dominate the coal trade in South Wales, and in turn, 'by the 1880s, South Wales dominated the British coal export industry. Cardiff was then indeed the 'coal metropolis of the world'' (Daunton, 1977: 7). According to Wilson (1996), the development of a civic centre at Cathays Park was seen to be 'the very cynosure of civic pride, the most immediate visible expression of the town's economic power, municipal progress, and cultural advancement' (Wilson, 1996: 16).

Evidently, the Conservative government of the time had begun to recognise the potential political benefits attached to appearing publicly supportive of Cardiff's drive to become the capital of Wales. The Conservative faction exploited the city's soaring civic pride as a vote-catching tactic: 'This was the motivation behind Balfour's decision to make Cardiff a city in 1905, and the Conservative mayor, Robert Hughes, was a leading supporter of the movement to secure the national museum and library for Cardiff' (Daunton, 1977: 174; see also Wilson, 1996: 24). In fact, this underlying party-political dimension was recognised by the *Manchester Guardian*, as the general election approached: 'Conservative candidates for Welsh constituencies will...make much use of the fact that Wales will owe the establishment and endowment of its National Library and Museum to a Tory Government' (28th February 1905).

Cardiff's elite wished to carve out a carefully constructed image of modernity and progress, but were at lengths to minimise the notion of Cardiff as a newly created industrial town devoid of historic and cultural roots. Comparisons with heavily industrialised cities in the 'new world' of North America were interpreted as unfavourable slights on an established and widely recognised area of Wales (Evans, 1985: 368, also Wilson, 1996). The sense of identity sought by Cardiff's civic leaders was bound up with establishing recognition of the town's status within Wales: 'the emergent theme was that of Cardiff as 'the Metropolis of Wales'. If Cardiff was the city of the middle classes' adoption, Wales was becoming, in a curious way, the country of its adoption' (Evans, 1985: 369). Accordingly, 'earlier references to Cardiff as a part of England fell away and Cardiff's elite now sought to dominate Wales' (Evans, 1985: 369).

Cardiff's higher commercial and social stratum comprised a mix of local businessmen, shipping traders and coal exporters, politicians, government officials, town councillors, administrators and bankers who formed a new middle-class which encompassed established social members and up-and-coming figures into its rank. Political alignment and business interests were frequently bound together: the Cardiff middle-class was seen to be divided generally into those who supported traditionalist Conservative politics and were in general alliance with the Bute estate, and those who comprised the emergent Liberal, and comparatively more radical, faction of the middle-class (Wilson, 1996: 21, see also Davies, 1981, 1982). Conservative supporters were often referred to as the 'castle party' because of their perceived allegiance to the Marquis above the interests of Cardiff; the Marquis of Bute's lavish restoration of Cardiff Castle was interpreted by his critics in the town as 'a potent symbol of the Marquess's positively feudal conduct towards the town' (Wilson, 1996: 21). Conversely, agents of the Bute estate often regarded the ascendant mercantile class of Cardiff's expanding bourgeoisie in dismissive terms as 'wharf gentry' (Evans, 1985: 358).

This political configuration permeated the town's press, where newspapers were aligned with Conservative or Liberal causes respectively (Wilson, 1996; also Evans, 1985 and Jones, 1993). To this end, David Duncan, editor of the Liberal newspaper *Cardiff Times*, launched a public attack on what he regarded as the Marquess's

neglect of his philanthropic duties in funding the municipal improvement of the town: 'The Marquis...has shown the most utter disregard for the social and moral well-being of the town from which he derives his wealth...No commanding municipal structure, no literary or philosophical institutes, no public libraries, no art or science galleries or museums owe their origin to this wealthy peer. Cardiff is utterly and shamefully destitute of all such appliances for art, culture and learning' (cited in Wilson, 1996: 21).

The successes of the Liberals at an election level in the 1880s and 90s, and the gradual loosening of the economic ties between the town's Conservative business interests and the Bute estate (Evans, 1985: 358), had caused shifts in the distribution of political power in the town and in the surrounding civic structure. Evans argues that the Liberal ideology envisaged a symbolic role for the aristocracy which maintained elements of their historic presence but diffused their legacy of political domination:

'A useful role was seen for an aristocrat who identified with the social, intellectual, moral and religious development of the town...Liberals were prepared to accept peers in such a role, so long as they did not expect any undue influence or power. Cardiff Liberals in fact seemed to regard the position of the Bute estate as being that of a *primus inter pares*. Total antagonism would have threatened the common interests of property owners.'

(Evans, 1985: 361)

Within this political re-negotiation, the third Marquis of Bute could be the paternal figurehead of a newly recast Cardiff; in line with Liberal political rhetoric and the town's civic culture, the Marquis could become Mayor for a time and use his status to add weight to the campaign for city status and national institutions (Evans, 1985: 364). The Marquis was transformed from autocrat into a 'popular nobleman', as the *Cardiff Times* called him (Evans, 1985: 364). Significantly, the fourth Marquis would later be a key presence in welcoming the King and Queen at the foundation ceremony of the National Museum of Wales in 1912.

Intrinsic differences between the two dominant parties in Cardiff, in political outlook, in attitudes to social reform, religion and economic policy, remained intact, but the ambitious movement to secure city status and flagship national institutions necessitated a collaborative approach unified in civic aspirations if not in political values.

Cardiff's initial campaign for city status had an underlying causal element, carrying the belief that 'constitution as a city, the only city in Wales, would obviously carry with it, it was felt, at least implicit recognition as capital' (Edwards, 1965: 81). It is clear that Cardiff's long-term ambitions extended well beyond achieving city status: while the corporation was preparing to submit its claim to the Prime Minister in 1897, the borough archivist was compiling a memorandum outlining the case of Cardiff as the natural contender to be the capital of Wales (Edwards, 1965: 81).

Cardiff ultimately failed in its 1897 bid to be recognised as a city. Similarly, in 1902 the Prime Minister Lord Salisbury rejected again the corporation's re-submitted petition, partly on grounds of Cardiff's incomparable size in terms of population and scale with larger towns in England which were not ranked as cities, and partly, Edwards argues, due to an awareness of wider political implications in view of entrenched regionalism in Wales (Edwards, 1965: 82). By 1905 the movement saw renewed efforts, motivated by the public competition between Cardiff, Aberystwyth and Swansea as the prime contenders for the location of the new national museum and library. The announcement made by the Privy Council Committee in June 1905 that the library would be awarded to Aberystwyth, was a public disappointment to the Cardiff faction, who envisaged winning both institutions and securing civic pre-eminence in the process. This outcome prompted Cardiff's elite to redress the situation, particularly as many would have recalled with irony the government's response to calls made by Welsh MPs for a national museum and library, that they must first 'find their capital' (Edwards, 1965: 82).

It was the Conservative political network which ultimately provided the entrée into the inner ranks of government, aiding the pursuit of Cardiff's civic scheme. Joseph Lawrence, Sir Edward Reed and Lord Edmund Talbot (the Unionist and Conservative MPs for Cardiff and Chichester respectively), the Marquess of Bute and Government whips, among others, became actively involved, meeting with the Home Secretary individually and collectively to discuss the matter (Edwards, 1965: 84). Later that summer, Balfour's private secretary, J.S. Sanders, sent a memo to remind him of the issue in hand, in which he emphasised Cardiff's 'exceptional position and importance...in Wales' over its relatively small size and relayed the Home Office's approval of the proposal (Edwards, 1965: 84).

In his reply, Balfour attached a proviso to the scheme, arguing that 'the only possible justification for giving this honour to Cardiff is that it must be regarded as the capital of Wales. On its merits, as a *British* town it has no claim, and if we are to have a Lord Mayor of Cardiff except upon the *Welsh* ground, we should lay ourselves open to claims from every town of large population which desired to possess a Lord mayor at the head of its Council' (cited in Edwards, 1965: 84-85, italics in original). A retrospective reading of Balfour's comments suggests he was reconciled, politically, to acquiescence on this matter, but expressed his remaining concerns over the potential ramifications in advancing national divisions: 'If we take, as we must, the Welsh ground, do we not do something to emphasise yet further the distinction between England and Wales? And is there not besides all this, a certain absurdity in assuming that Cardiff is to be regarded as the capital of Wales without any ground, so far as I know, based upon history, or upon general sentiment among the Welsh people?' (cited in Edwards, 1965: 85). Balfour eventually assented: 'Still, I do not wish to be obstructive…if the sentiment in favour of the proposed policy is so strong' (cited in Edwards, 1965: 85). The political value for the Conservative government in conferring city status to Cardiff should also be acknowledged: in a note to Balfour, Chamberlain thought it worth pointing out that the Mayor Robert Hughes 'is a very important supporter of the Unionist Party in Cardiff and has the confidence of large numbers of the working men' (cited in Edwards, 1965: 85). With this in mind, Chamberlain urged the Prime Minister to 'comply with the wishes of our friends in Cardiff' (cited in Edwards, 1965: 85).

When the public announcement of Cardiff's new status was finally made, the *Western Mail* interpreted the move rather as confirmation of Wales as a nation and Cardiff as its rightful capital, proclaiming: 'By the King's act the capital has been definitely fixed. Not only does Cardiff take her place in the front rank with the chief cities and boroughs of the United Kingdom, she is raised to be the appointed leader of the Welsh nation, the treasury of our national institutions, the vitalising centre of national life' (cited in Edwards, 1965: 86). The newspaper lamented the delayed timing of Cardiff's city status, arguing that it was responsible ultimately for the dispersal of national institutions across Wales (Edwards, 1965: 86).

As Edwards observes, the elevation of Cardiff to city status could be reconciled only in the specific context of Welsh nationality, in part a symbolic gesture from the government (Edwards, 1965: 86). Yet, Edwards points out, this implies a cohesive national movement in Wales, which, as has been demonstrated, did not exist. The city movement in Cardiff – and by extension the ambition of attaining a national museum – was to a large degree shaped and led by a consortium of local, influential figures in the Conservative-Unionist ranks (Edwards, 1965: 86-87).

The Dragon Performs:
enacting Welsh national identity through ceremony and invented tradition

As King George V laid the foundation stone of the National Museum of Wales in a lavish public ceremony in Cardiff on the 26th June 1912 (see figure 4.3), the *South Wales Daily News* interpreted the event as the highlight of a journey in which 'the Welsh nation has awakened to its possibilities' (27th June 1912). The King and Queen were escorted through Cardiff, passing 'gaily-decorated streets lined with huge, cheering multitudes', to the scene of the ceremony, which was 'a feast of dazzling colour' (*Daily Chronicle*, 27th June 1912). The ceremony blended invented traditions (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983), created symbols and nationalist rhetoric in a choreographed performance of Welsh national identity. Key figures in the ceremony, which included the new Director of the National Museum, Dr Evans Hoyle, wore the ceremonial robes of the mythical Gorsedd of the Bards, an invented form of dress associated with the National Eisteddfod (P. Morgan, 1983). Newspapers consumed the drama and visual spectacle of seemingly ancient Welsh rituals willingly: 'Bards and Druids in their ancient habiliments gave an old-time quaintness to the ensemble' (*Daily Chronicle*, 27th June 1912). 'Upon this fine picture,' the *South Wales Daily News* proclaimed, 'the sunlight streamed, illuminating everything with its golden glory' (27th June 1912).

The *Museums Journal* described the event as a magnificent royal occasion:

'For the ceremony a raised dais had been erected around the foundation stone, and on two sides of this, stands for the accommodation of some 2,500 guests were provided. The decorations for the stands and the dais took the form of a pleasing colour scheme in green and white, the Welsh national colours. A distinguished company of guests assembled for the ceremony, many of them wearing official uniforms, bardic

costumes and University robes, and thereby added a brilliant dash of colour to the scene.'

Figure 4.3: official ceremony to lay the foundation stone of the National Museum of Wales in 1912 (after *Wales in Miniature, Amgueddfa* 16, 1993). © National Museum of Wales.

The Welsh sculptor Sir William Goscombe John had designed the ceremonial objects for the ceremonies at the National Museum of Wales in 1912 and 1927, as well as the regalia for the Investiture of the Prince of Wales in Caernarfon in 1911 (see Pearson, 1979). Most were essentially aesthetic stage props, which combined ritual and display with convenience and practicality; the trowel, mallet and level with which the King would 'lay' the foundation stone of the National Museum in 1912 were made of silver and featured Welsh dragons interlaced with daffodils. The idea of the daffodil as a national symbol of Wales had in fact been introduced very recently: 'The rather feminine delicacy of the daffodil appealed to Lloyd George, who used it in preference to the leek in the immense stage-managed Investiture ceremonial in Caernarfon in 1911, and on such things as government literature of the period' (P. Morgan, 1983: 90). The mallet used by King George V to open officially the doors of the National Museum in 1927 incorporated the Museum's Seal which showed a Grecian female holding a plaque portraying a Welsh dragon (see Pearson, 1979: 45-48).

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The ceremony to lay the foundation stone of the National Museum of Wales (and in 1927 to open the completed building), drew on the Victorian institutionalisation of state and official occasions which utilised an array of invented traditions to give the illusion of antiquity, historical continuity and authenticity (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983). Practices, conventions and rituals which appear to be old established traditions – grand royal and state occasions, the traditions and protocols followed in ancient universities, or May Day celebrations – are often recent, entirely deliberate inventions enacted during periods of social and political change (Hobsbawm, 1983: 1; see also Cannadine, 1983). Hobsbawm defines invented traditions as 'a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature', which seek to 'inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with a suitable historic past' (Hobsbawm, 1983: 1). Invariably, this definition includes those 'traditions' which are wholly new constructs and those which have some roots in the past and thus display a less traceable history; all can become highly formalised institutions, and nearly all will seek to establish continuity with a suitable historic past (Hobsbawm, 1983:1).

The Edwardian period in Wales marked a transitional phase in politics, nationalist expression and nation-building, particularly with regard to performances of national identity and interpretations of Welsh history, folklore and mythology in the arts: 'These years witnessed a flowering of new awareness of national identity and culture in Wales. In 1909 a grand pageant had been staged in Cardiff, acting out various episodes of Welsh history. Among the participants were the wife of the fourth Marquess of Bute, who played Dame Wales and Viscount Tredegar, kitted out in chain mail as Owen Glendower' (Pearson, 1979: 14). Kenneth Morgan has described the period from 1905 to the eve of the First World War in 1914 as:

'Wales's Antonine Age, a period when the economic prosperity, national awareness and political creativity of the Welsh people were most effectively deployed for the benefit of themselves and their neighbours...Periodical articles on 'Wales and the World' painted a picture of growing worldwide recognition of the political importance and cultural significance of the Welsh.'

(Morgan, 1982: 123)

The foundation ceremony of the National Museum of Wales represented a particular moment in a wider restructuring of Welsh national identity within a Liberal political framework.

John S. Ellis (1998, see also 1996, 2006) has interpreted the Investiture of the Prince of Wales at Caernarfon in 1911 (figure 4.4) as a public performance which attempted to unite Welsh and English identity under the imagined solidarity of the British Empire. Ellis's analysis provides an illuminating perspective on the forms of ritual and display which would be adopted for the foundation ceremony at the National Museum of Wales in 1912. The investiture of the Prince, although 'wrapped in a shroud of medievalism' (Ellis, 1998: 395), was in fact a very modern invention, envisioned by a diverse mix of Welsh nationalists, Liberal politicians and government figures, journalists, court officials, aristocrats and clergymen (Ellis, 1998: 395). The new Liberal government took an opportunistic view of proposals for the investiture ceremony to be held in Wales and sought to mould it for its own interests; responsibility for arrangements was placed with Lloyd George, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, who headed a 'national' committee (Ellis, 1998: 396).

Figure 4.4: the Investiture of the Prince of Wales at Caernarfon in 1911. Note the figures in the background wearing Welsh national dress (after www.tlysau.org.uk, accessed 15th June 2007). © CADW photographic archive.

Ellis argues that the investiture in 1911 specifically addressed the contemporary relationship between the British nation state and the 'Celtic' peoples of the United

Kingdom. The coronation of King George V took place in the same year while political developments threatened to undermine the constitutional basis of the British state as well as the legitimacy of a united British national identity (Ellis, 1998: 393). The Liberal government was in direct conflict with the Conservative House of Lords following their veto of the People's Budget in 1909. The Liberals determined to establish the legislative supremacy of the House of Commons through its Parliament Bill, which would limit the vetoing powers of the Lords. This legislation would eventually enable the Liberal government to grant Ireland a large degree of self-governance, and to Wales, disestablishment from the state-supported Church of England (Ellis, 1998: 393). These constitutional moves represented an official recognition of the existence of distinct nationalities within the United Kingdom. The death of King Edward VII had marked a period of change, transformation and uncertainty in British politics and society; above all, the events of the summer of 1911 'called for the cohesive and stabilizing effects of invented traditions' (Ellis, 1998: 393).

In this sense, the investiture formed part of the Liberal attempt to rebuild British national identity anew:

'Through the ritual, symbolism, and commentary of the ceremony, the British state formally recognized the cultural distinctiveness and national sentiment of the Welsh nation. Using the monarchy as a vehicle, the Liberal government expressed a sense of Britishness reconciling ethnic diversity within a multinational state. The investiture defined the United Kingdom and the British Empire as a "unity in diversity", a family of distinct nations each contributing its essential talents and characteristics to the organic whole'.

(Ellis, 1998: 393)

Ellis argues that the form and content of the royal ceremony reflected, in essence, the Liberal position regarding the future of British national identity and Empire (Ellis, 1998: 398). The new Liberal government sought to distinguish itself from the Anglocentric view taken of Britain by the Conservatives (Ellis, 1998: 398). The Conservatives regarded the United Kingdom to be the English nation-state, founded on the historical tradition of institutions of government and law supposedly instituted by the Anglo-Saxons (Ellis, 1998: 398). The Conservative worldview of the British Empire saw it as essentially an extension of the English nation-state, as 'a world community united through the vital bonds of nationality and race' (Ellis, 1998: 398).

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They believed that national recognition of the 'Celtic' Irish and Welsh regions of Britain, or of colonies like South Africa, would disrupt the core integrity of the English nation-state and Imperial Britain (Ellis, 1998: 398). Conservative thinking centred on the belief that 'unity at home and abroad could be achieved through greater uniformity, assimilation and centralization' (Ellis, 1998: 399).

Liberal ideology explicitly recognised the existence of (certain) other ethnic and national identities within Britain, and once in power in 1906, the Liberal government sought to use the resources of the state to redefine the nature of British identity to fit its vision of the United Kingdom and the Empire as a 'unity in diversity' (Ellis, 1998: 399). Ellis argues that, through its ritual and content, the 1911 Investiture 'expressed this Liberal attempt to reconstruct the meaning of Britishness and to express the transformation that the Liberals maintained had taken place in the relationship between the British state and the small nations of the British Empire' (Ellis, 1998: 399). The official ceremony of the National Museum of Wales in 1912 borrowed from the form and precedent set by the 1911 Investiture, drawing on similar elements of style and symbolism.

The Investiture ceremony presented Wales as a 'Celtic' nation – the terms 'Welsh' and 'Celtic' were used interchangeably – with a rich cultural heritage. The Welsh were romanticised as 'the singy, dreamy Celts characterised by the power of their imaginations, emotions and spirituality' (Ellis, 1998: 407). A range of symbolic representations and imagery were woven into both the ceremony itself and in commentaries of the occasion. Elements of the ceremony portrayed the Celtic land in feminine terms and were couched within a domestic ideology, while other aspects presented the Welsh nation in a masculine sense 'as a young and dutiful son of empire' (Ellis, 1998: 394). However, 'both feminine and masculine images of the Welsh...were ultimately subordinate to the mature masculinity of the fatherly English and served to celebrate ethnic distinctiveness within an ethnic hierarchy of power' (Ellis, 1998: 394).

Peter Lord has argued that, by the beginning of the 20th century, the 'soul' of the nation, whether thought of as Welsh or Celtic, had been variously described as romantic, imaginative and emotional rather than intellectual and rational (Lord, 1992:

19). The national soul of Wales was perceived as less inclined to the material and concerned more with the spiritual (Lord, 1992: 19). The art critic Thomas Matthews wrote in 1911 that the romantic soul of the Welsh nation, decimated through centuries of dominant rule, had at last found a peaceful resting place in the material body of the pragmatic English (cited in Lord, 1992: 20). This fusion of the body and the soul constituted the British personality as a victorious, united entity (Lord, 1992: 20).

The Investiture was clearly designed as a public display and celebration of Welsh culture and nationality: iconographic symbols of Welsh identity (some of them fairly recently constructs) abounded in decorative form, as the castle and regalia were adorned with dragons, leeks and daffodils (Ellis, 1998: 396). 'Authenticity' was clearly of vital importance in this public showcase of national artistry and craftsmanship: much was made of the fact that the decorations were created by a Welsh artist from Welsh gold extracted by Welsh miners (Ellis, 1998: 396). Apart from the Royal presence, the participants in the occasion and the invited guests were mostly of Welsh origin; as the Prince was presented to the people of Wales at the culmination of the ceremony, a conductor instructed the spectators to begin singing the Welsh national anthem (Ellis, 1998: 397). Throughout the investiture, the Welsh language, music, art and poetry were presented as the true characteristics of cultured Wales: the Gorsedd of the Bards, representing the National Eisteddfod, led the procession of the Prince in newly designed silk robes, while in an open celebration of the central place of Nonconformity in Welsh life, representatives of the Methodist and Baptist Church were placed next to the King, and alongside Anglican bishops (Ellis, 1998: 398). The religious service of the ceremony was conducted by both Anglican bishops and Nonconformist ministers, although the closing hymn of the investiture, 'Teyrnasoedd Y Ddaer', known as the anthem of the Nonconformist religious revival of 1904, communicated an unambiguous public message (Ellis, 1998: 398).

The choreographed display of Welsh national identity enacted at the investiture of the Prince of Wales was in many ways the original model which shaped the tone, nature and ritual form of future official ceremonies in post-Edwardian Wales.[11] The ceremony in 1912 to lay the foundation stone of the National Museum of Wales observed these 'invented traditions' in a public presentation which also encapsulated the Liberal ideal of 'unity in diversity'. Welsh identity was presented as a distinct

nation in specifically *cultural* terms, but united politically to England in the unification of the Kingdom and through the bonds of the British Empire. The presence of the Monarch, by then perceived in a symbolic rather than political sense as the head of State (see Cannadine, 1983), provided the ties of union, tradition and continuity; the attendance of the King and Queen served as a public acknowledgement of the existence of Wales as a nation within an equal union of nations. Newspaper reports covering the official event focused on the imagery of a familial relationship between the King as patriarch and the Welsh nation as representing his devoted brood. They wrote of the 'gracious' Queen, 'loyal acclamations to King and Queen', the 'pageant in the streets' of Cardiff and the 'rousing' and 'enthusiastic cheers again and again' from the crowds of spectators (*Cardiff Times and South Wales Weekly News*, 29th June, 1912, pp 6-10). Significantly, the welcome address of the city, given by the Lord Mayor upon the arrival of the Royal party, touched on the idea of a close bond between the King and the Welsh people and made specific reference to the Investiture of the Prince of Wales in 1911:

'We appreciate to the full the warm concern which your Majesties have shown in the progress and well-being of the people of Wales, and are proud of the close association between the Royal family and our ancient and loyal city...As inhabitants of the Principality shall ever cherish the recollection of the keen sympathy so readily displayed by your Majesties with the aspirations and national sentiments of the Welsh people when...his Royal highness our beloved Prince was, in the presence of vast numbers of the people assembled from all parts of our country, presented by your Majesties to the Welsh nation and proclaimed Prince of Wales. The memory of that solemn Investiture, linking together the remote past and the present life of our race, will never fade from the minds of your Majesties' Welsh subjects. Its effect has been to instil into the minds of the inhabitants of...Wales a fuller sense of their love to the Throne and persons of your Majesties and their much-beloved Prince.'

(cited in *Cardiff Times and South Wales Weekly News*, 29th June, 1912, p 6)

To put the ceremony in its wider social and political context, and to draw on the interpretation provided by Ellis (1998), the occasion also represented a formalising enactment of Liberal ideological efforts to reconfigure British national identity through the explicit recognition of other, distinct identities in an imagined 'family' of nations.

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In his address to the King as President of the National Museum, Lord Pontypridd took the opportunity 'to offer to Your Majesty the expression of our loyal devotion and heartfelt gratitude' (*National Museum of Wales, The Laying of the Foundation Stone*, 1912: 7). In remembering George V's 'illustrious' father, Edward VII, Pontypridd acknowledged his 'deep interest in the progress – intellectual, scientific and aesthetic – of *his* people' (*National Museum of Wales, The Laying of the Foundation Stone*, 1912: 8, my italics), and declared that the memory of King George's attendance would be 'a constant source of strength and encouragement of those to whom have been entrusted the privilege and responsibility of watching over and directing the progress of this National Home of Science and Art' (*National Museum of Wales, The Laying of the Foundation Stone*, 1912: 8). In his closing remarks, he wished the King many years of health and happiness so that he might continue 'to guide the destinies of your loving and faithful subjects' (*National Museum of Wales, The Laying of the Foundation Stone*, 1912: 9). The arrangement and content of the 1912 ceremony, in particular, revealed a contemporary scene of political negotiation with regard to this new sense of Welsh identity within a British union of nations. Although the band and choir performed the National Anthem as the King and Queen arrived, the overall tone of the ceremony focused on, and celebrated, Welsh religious Nonconformity, music and language. The Calvinist-Methodist minister Rev. John Williams of Brynsiencin delivered the reading, followed by the Rev. Charles Davies who led the Lord's Prayer in Welsh; once the King had declared the foundation stone laid, the conductor led all present in the popular Nonconformist hymn 'Marchog, Iesu' (*National Museum of Wales, The Laying of the Foundation Stone*, 1912: 9-11). Towards the end of the official proceedings, the Bishop of Llandaff pronounced the Benediction, according to the *Cardiff Times*, with 'hands uplifted and in a clear and sonorous voice' (29th June, 1912, p 10). The ceremony concluded with the Welsh National Anthem, and the newspaper proclaimed that it brought to a close 'one of the most remarkable and splendid ceremonies in the history of modern Wales' (*Cardiff Times and South Wales Weekly News*, 29th June, 1912, p 10).

The highly orchestrated royal ceremonies performed at the National Museum of Wales and the Investiture followed an established pattern of stately protocol which had its roots in the deliberate reinvention and revitalisation of the monarchy in the 19th century. David Cannadine (1983) has traced the transformation of state occasions and

royal duties in Queen Victoria's reign into highly formalised, ritualised public performances in a conscious attempt to address the increasing apathy towards the reclusive widow Queen. It was the gradual withdrawal of the monarchy from an active role in British politics which enabled the reinvention of the royal family's public image. Cannadine argues that 'as the real power of the monarchy waned, the way was open for it to become the centre of grand ceremonial once more. In other countries, such as Germany, Austria and Russia, ritualistic aggrandizement was employed, as of old, to exalt royal *influence*. In Britain, by contrast, similar ritual was made possible because of growing royal *weakness*. In England...it was not so much the re-opening of the theatre of power as the première of the cavalcade of impotence' (Cannadine, 1983: 121, italics in original).

The nature and ethos of the National Museum, as well as the messages and symbolism expressed at the formal ceremony in 1912 (and in 1927), communicated a particular construction of Welsh national identity which encompassed Welsh nationality in equal union with the Establishment and with the idea of a United Kingdom. The style, tone and content of the official ceremonies articulated a display of national identity which connected a sense of Welsh-Britishness under the symbolic figurehead of the Monarchy. Significantly, the King's presence and role as the patriarchal mentor of the United Kingdom and the British Empire provided a mutual focus and drew attention away from state, party and national politics. Aspects of this process are demonstrated in contemporary newspaper reports regarding the foundation of the National Museum of Wales in 1912. In anticipation of the ceremony, one such article stated: 'Both by the Investiture of the Prince of Wales last year and the visit to Cardiff...this year, the King makes an appeal to national sentiment and confers distinction on the Principality which show his desire to link all forms of patriotism to the cause of the Crown...A National Museum forms an indispensable part of any attempt to indicate the progress of the nation, or of a city, from early stages of civilization to the present conditions. It is fit therefore that the new museum should be founded by the Sovereign' (*Western Morning Press*, 25th June, 1912). The *Daily Mail's* correspondent in Cardiff reported of preparations for the royal ceremony in similarly florid tones: 'The people have set themselves the task of proving that their loyalty to the Sovereign is not surpassed anywhere in the kingdom...the loyalty of the Principality is unquestionably sincere' (24th June, 1912).

Such representations of the King as a kind of benevolent protector were evident in earlier newspaper reports concerning the establishment of the National Museum. For example, an editorial in the London newspaper *Graphic* wrote in romantic, patriotic tones in relation to the idea of a loyal union between the King and the Welsh nation. It implied a scene in which the interest and involvement of the King had played a part in securing national institutions for Wales; the emphasis was on the image of the King as a quasi paternal figure in upholding equality with regard to the cultural needs of his nations. Any references to social and party politics were consciously omitted in a romanticised interpretation:

'King Edward is determined to show, it seems clear, that no division of his ancestral dominions can charge him with overlooking its claims for sympathetic consideration. When he came to the Throne...Wales complained, not perhaps without cause, that the warming sun of Royalty rarely shone on their divisions, although none are more beautiful, and none more innately loyal to the person as distinguished from the attributes of the Sovereign...It has now come to the turn of picturesque Wales...By prevailing on the Treasury to supply funds for establishing and maintaining a national museum and national library in the Principality, the King displays living interest in that portion of his dominions from which his title, when heir Apparent, was derived.'

(*Graphic*, 18th February, 1905)

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to demonstrate and deconstruct the range of complexities inherent in the establishment and early development of the National Museum of Wales. It has examined selected issues and events in the National Museum's establishment and linked them with broader cultural and political patterns in late Victorian and Edwardian Welsh society.

Closer analysis of the national museum movement in Wales, with its many strands and dimensions, reveals the presence of various interests, agencies and values which were alternately coterminous, divergent and opposing over time. The idea that the national museum movement in Wales was a clear representation of a divided and opposing relationship between Wales and the British government creates a polarised scene which blurs other dynamics and subtleties from view. It cannot be assumed that the views expounded so publicly by Welsh politicians were in common alignment

with, for instance, the museological concerns of the Cardiff Museum curators, the cultural and scientific interests of the Cymmrodorion Society and Cardiff Naturalists' Society, the aspirations of the Library Committee in Aberystwyth or the civic ambitions of Cardiff town council. The notion that groups are motivated by different interests and ideologies, or that politicians do not speak for all viewpoints and for all strata of society, are obvious statements to make, but arguably these points remain valid, particularly when attempting to deconstruct the layered complexities of the national museum movement within Wales.

In light of the fact that participant groups in the national museum movement were operating from variously Liberal, Conservative, cultural, local, regionalist, museological and civic perspectives, and given that each was motivated by its own socio-political interests and cultural ethos, the supposition that the campaign was based on shared core values is contestable. The inherent political diversity of the museum movement in Wales, as shown in this chapter, would suggest a complex contemporary scene. An alternative reading of the national museum movement, which situates the campaign in the context of contemporary cultural and social politics, reveals a more varied, fluid scene of negotiated identities, shifting ideologies, competing interests and political dynamics.

[1] In 1892, Alfred Thomas (together with the MP for Swansea, L.W.Dillwyn, and with the support of nine other Welsh MPs), put forward to the House the (failed) National Institutions (Wales) Bill (Bassett, 1982: 158). The Bill's objective was 'to establish a national museum for Wales...and to apply to Parliament for an Act to enable the Trustees of the British Museum to give such museum for Wales any books, manuscripts, works, objects or specimens which, in the opinion of the said Trustee, especially concerned Wales or the Cymric race' (cited in Bassett, 1982: 158).

[2] Herbert Lewis pointed out that, following a recent vote in parliament, the Dublin Museum of Science and Art was due to receive £20,385, £6,908 for the Dublin Royal College of Science and £12,606 for the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art, making a total of £40,199 for Ireland and Scotland respectively (Hansard 29, 1894: 92-93). He also made specific reference to the estimated £150,000 given by the government to fund the National Museum and Library of Ireland (Hansard 29, 1894: 93).

[3] To give the impression of a wholly united opposition to the 1902 Education Act would be inaccurate; as within any political situation there were competing interests, ideologies and agendas. For example, the prominent Liberal MP William Jones, as a Catholic, did not partake in Welsh opposition to the Act and welcomed increased funding for Church schools. Kenneth Morgan argues that the perceived unity between the Liberal and Non-conformist forces was to a large degree superficial, and the level of public interest exaggerated; he sees Lloyd George as the main driving force in the 'Revolt' rather than it being a cohesive Party campaign (K. O. Morgan, 1980: 197).

[4] In addition, a library of 81,766 volumes and manuscripts, prints, drawings and photographs constituting the Cardiff Municipal Library, as well as the Salesbury Collection of the University College (comprising 16,000 volumes, engravings and prints), would form the foundation of a national library (Memorial of the Corporation of Cardiff...1905: 19-30). The Cardiff Free Libraries Committee spent £3,491 in 1896 purchasing 440 volumes of manuscripts and printed works, which included an original copy of the thirteenth century work, the Book of Aneirin (Jenkins, 2002: 5). The purchase totalled more than five times the Committee's yearly budget, and was made possible by donations from Cardiff's industrial and social elite, including the Marquess of Bute and John Cory, among others (Jenkins, 2002: 5).

[5] The campaign for a national library of Wales and a full analysis of Aberystwyth's pursuit of the institution are vast topics in themselves, and are beyond the scope of this chapter and the research parameters of this thesis. There is recent, detailed research on the establishment and development of the National Library of Wales by David Jenkins (2002) and the interconnected issues surrounding the 'Battle of the Sites' competition for the location of the Museum and Library by Bruce Campbell (2006).

[6] There is a complex history behind the political use, cultural meaning and evolution of the word gwerin in Welsh (P.Morgan, 1986a). However, from the late 19th century it came to refer to the rural, Nonconformist folk people of Wales in an idealised sense (P.Morgan, 1986a: 134-137).

[7] This term is borrowed from page 28 of the article 'Rooms at the Top: Cardiff's Municipal Museum 1862-1912' by Bill Jones (2007) in LLafur 9 (4): 26-46.

[8] The Museum was situated in Trinity Street, Cardiff, in what is now the old municipal library.

[9] For biographical information on Charles Tanfield Vachell's (1848-1914) life and activities in the Cardiff museum movement, see Thomas, P.H. (1967) 'Medical men of Glamorgan: (4) the Vachells of Cardiff' in Williams, S. (ed) Glamorgan Historian, 4 and Paterson, D.R. (1914) 'Charles Tanfield Vachell M.D.' in Transactions of Cardiff Naturalists' Society, 47 (cited in Jones, 2007: 28).

[10] John Ward was curator at Cardiff Museum from 1893-1912; subsequently he became the first Keeper of Archaeology at the National Museum of Wales (see Chapter 5 of this thesis).

[11] In addition to the official ceremonies of the National Museum of Wales in 1912 and 1927, I am thinking particularly of the formal ceremonies of the National Library of Wales in 1911 and 1937 (see Jenkins, 2002), and the investiture of the Prince of Wales in 1969. Regarding invented traditions and symbolic re-enactments of Welsh history, the National Pageant of Wales, held in Cardiff in 1909, is an interesting case (see Mason, 2007a; also P. Morgan, 1983).

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Chapter 5
Antiquarianism in Wales: the interpretation of archaeology in the romantic tradition

The previous chapter explored the cultural politics which surrounded the movement to establish a Welsh national museum. In effect, the development of the National Museum in the early 20th century ensured the development and subsequent institutionalisation of archaeology in Wales. However, in other ways the new Museum and its national archaeological collections were shaped considerably by the material and cultural legacy left by Welsh antiquarianism. This chapter places the beginnings of archaeological study and practice within the context of mid to late 19th century cultural activity. The aim of this chapter is twofold: to provide an overview of the antiquarian scene in Wales and to highlight the interpretation of the past within a romantic nationalist agenda.

Determining factors in the historical development of Welsh archaeology

The protracted nature of the construction and development of the National Museum, due in part to financial difficulties and the socio-economic impact of the First World War, had a significant impact on acquisitions and collecting practices (Bassett, 1982, 1983). This was felt particularly within the Archaeology department. Although the drive to establish the National Museum of Wales embodied many elements of the Victorian museum movement, the 20th century institution which emerged existed outside the great collecting age and traditions of the 19th century. The Archaeology department inherited as its nucleus collection the archaeological material accumulated by the Welsh Museum of Natural History, Arts and Antiquities (formerly Cardiff Municipal Museum) in 1912 (see Chapter 4; also Jones, 2007; Bassett, 1990). Although Cardiff Museum had widened its collecting scope in the 1880s/1890s as part of an attempt to form a proto-national museum collection, its archaeological collecting policies were predicated to a large extent by antiquarian trends, private donations and storage constraints (see Jones, 2007). John Ward, the Curator of Cardiff Municipal Museum until the transfer of the collections to the National Museum in 1912, and Keeper of Archaeology in the new institution until his retirement in 1920, admitted that the absence of a national repository had resulted in the loss and dispersal of Welsh antiquities (Ward, 1907). This state of affairs had a direct impact on the

representative scope and scale of the archaeology collections: '...nothing illustrates better than these, how much Wales has lost through not having a National Museum. Most of the important "finds" of the Principality have gravitated to English museums and are now beyond recall; while the whereabouts of many others are unknown' (Ward, 1907: 283). Despite this, Ward reiterated that the nucleus collections of Cardiff Museum had been judged as 'eminently suitable for a national institution' (Ward, 1907: 280) and stressed that the future expansion of the existing collections would determine its worth and status: 'All who have experience in museum work know well that a *living* museum has a growth of its own...which in the long run will determine its character' (Ward, 1907: 280, italics in original).

The archaeological scene in Wales at the end of the 19th and early 20th century was underdeveloped and was in many ways determined by a mixture of internal and external socio-economic factors (Champion, 1996). Until the establishment of a Welsh university system in the late 19th century, Wales lacked a linked network for academic research and exchange (Champion, 1996: 123). The Cambrian Archaeological Association, founded in 1846, and its journal publication *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, reported on and promoted archaeological excavation and study in Wales, but its ethos and membership reflected outmoded antiquarian traditions in England (Champion, 1996: 129). The localised nature of small museums and antiquarian societies across Wales, the reality of underdeveloped communication links, the lack of disposable wealth and the absence of a national institution for the preservation and study of archaeology, meant that Welsh archaeology was 'languishing backwardly' at the turn of the 20th century (Champion, 1996: 129). Scotland had established a much earlier national archaeological tradition with the formation of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1780, systematic fieldwork, archaeological collections and study (Champion, 1996: 126). By the mid-19th century, Scottish archaeologists were aware of new developments in Scandinavian archaeology with regard to the Three Age system and archaeological typologies (Champion, 1996: 127). Daniel Wilson, secretary of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, forged links with the Danish archaeologists Thomsen and Worsaae and utilised elements of their practices in the reorganisation of the Society's museum collections (Champion, 1996: 127).

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In England, London-based societies such as the Society of Antiquaries, the British Archaeological Association and the Royal Archaeological Institute, were the dominant influences due to their prominent social and cultural base (Champion, 1996: 122). The societies declared a patriotic objective to record, study and preserve sites and monuments of national interest, but the values and concerns of its members were fundamentally class-based in social and political outlook: 'The aim was not just conservation, but conservation with a strong political message of support for the traditional institutions of Church, aristocracy and state' (Champion, 1996: 123). In comparison with the quality of archaeological practice elsewhere in Britain and Ireland, Welsh archaeological fieldwork and discourse was being produced 'in an increasingly archaic romantic and antiquarian vein' (Champion, 1996: 129; Daniel, 1965). Frequently, 19th century interpretations of prehistoric burial chambers by members of the Cambrian Archaeological Association portrayed them in romantic terms as the ceremonial altars of bards and druidic priests (Ward, 1915: 266-268). At a meeting of the Cambrians in Cardiff in 1849, which included a visit to the site of a 'cromlech' and 'our aboriginal and Druidical remains' (Ward, 1915: 266), the Irish scholar and professor of Hebrew at Dublin University, Dr. J. Hawthorn Todd, argued that the sites were burial chambers, and that Welsh antiquarians should determine how historical interpretations of such sites as the ceremonial platforms of ancient bards came to be accepted as fact (Ward, 1915: 267-268). The revelation apparently caused 'amazement' among the Cambrians (Ward, 1915: 268) and prompted the Archdeacon and author of *Gomer*, John Williams, to declare that Welsh antiquaries had 'sufficient evidence to induce...our antiquarian friends in Ireland to reconsider their theory' (cited in Ward, 1915: 269). Williams maintained that the array of stone monuments found across Wales were 'the works of a homogenous race': the Celts (Ward, 1915: 270).

John Ward made pointed reference to his Cardiff Museum colleague, John Storrie, who argued in a letter to the *Western Mail* in 1898 that 'cromlechs' found in the countryside near Cardiff must have been constructed around 500 or 600 AD (Ward, 1915: 276). Storrie reasoned this on the basis that 'If they had been standing in the time of the Roman occupation, it is incredible that some trace of Roman adaptation would not be found on one or other of them...or some reference to them might occur in the Roman literature relating to these parts' (Storrie, cited in Ward, 1915: 276). In

an interview with the *South Wales Evening Echo* (22nd September, 1899) Ward explicitly rejected such interpretations: 'I expressed my conviction that these structures were burial chambers, and that far from being Druid's altars, they were raised long before Druids were thought of' (Ward, 1915: 276).

Although a university system and practice of scholarly research was being developed across the country, 'scientific' archaeological research would not be undertaken in Wales until the arrangement between the National Museum and the University College at Cardiff was instituted in 1920 (see next chapter). In the early 20th century, the human geographer Professor H.J. Fleure initiated research at Aberystwyth University into the pattern and distribution of human settlement in Wales over time, but his approach was located more in late 19th century concepts of physical anthropology and evolutionary determinism rather than being explicitly archaeologically and material culture orientated (see for example Fleure and James, 1916; Fleure, 1922, 1923, 1926). The Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire, established in 1908, continued to use outmoded antiquarian methods and displayed a lack of technical knowledge and chronological accuracy in its recording and description of sites (Daniel, 1982: 12-13). Mortimer Wheeler would later write a scathing critique of the Commission's published volume on Pembrokeshire (see review by 'O.E.' in *Antiquity* 1927 1 (2): 245-247). A developed knowledge and contextual understanding of prehistory in 19th and early 20th century Wales lagged behind thinking in the rest of Britain, Ireland and Europe, as has already been shown. This is not surprising in view of the socio-economic orientation towards London among the upper classes and the absence of a linked network in Wales for scholarly research. The situation in Wales is explained further by the values placed on certain time periods and geographical areas in established cultural institutions: 'The trustees of the British Museum...long maintained a disdainful attitude to ancient British material as barbarous and unworthy of scholars' attention. It was not until 1848 that some Romano-British monuments were put on display, and not until two years later that the (rather reluctant) acquisition of the Iron Age bronzes from Stanwick prompted a display on Smaller British Antiquities' (Pearce, 1990: 15). Glyn Daniel has observed:

'Wales lagged horribly behind. It might have been thought that *Archaeologia Cambrensis* and the Cambrian Archaeological Association, which grew out of it, would have brought the antiquarian and geological revolutions of thought into a new Welsh archaeology. Not at all...the history of Welsh archaeology from 1846 to 1907 when (the National) Museum was founded is to a large extent the history of the Cambrian Archaeological Association...it was a very long time...before the technological model of the past was part of the normal *Arch Camb* language. For long the talk was still of Celts and Druids and Cromlech-builders; the lessons of the new geology do not seem to...have been learnt in Wales until the last quarter of the nineteenth century.'

(Daniel, 1982: 20-21)

Historians writing about the pre-history of Wales were invariably located in their own paradigmatic worldviews and conventions of discourse. Little value was placed on the material remains of the past as revealing reliable 'evidence' in illuminating the myriad ways in which past peoples lived: 'The voice of written history was paramount' (Daniel, 1982: 18). The various histories of Wales published during the late Victorian and Edwardian era tended to be grand narratives charting the antiquity and steady progression of the Welsh nation (e.g. Rhŷs, 1884; Rhŷs and Brynmor Jones, 1900; Lloyd, 1911). The educationalist and fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, Owen M. Edward's book *Wales* in *The Story of the Nations* series (1903) was a benign nationalistic work which had populist appeal. The importance Edwards placed on the geography of Wales was derived partly from idealised representations of the landscape, as Neil Evans argues: '(Edwards) drew on the romantic tradition of writing about Wales and its landscape to proclaim as his theme: 'Wales is a land of mountains'. This was held to explain the history of the country...But geography was more important than race to him. The mountains were stronger than the people and left a more lasting impression' (Evans, 2004b: 21)

Elsewhere, there was a strong emphasis on differentiating the racial 'types' of ancient Celts and Britons. In *The Welsh People* (1900) John Rhŷs, Professor of Celtic at Oxford, and the MP David Brynmor Jones charted the diffusion of so-called Goidelic and Brythonic peoples among the 'aboriginal' Britons between the 5th and 2nd century BC and referred to the skeletal remains of 'long-skulled' and 'short-skulled' people (Rhŷs and Brynmor Jones, 1900: 1-2). Rhŷs and Brynmor Jones argued that 'archaeologists who have studied the contents of the ancient barrows or burial mounds of this country find that the human remains which they detect in them belong to more than one race' (Rhŷs and Brynmor Jones, 1900: 1) and that 'the study of

skulls...proves that it was inhabited by more than one race at the time when the Romans came here to conquer' (Rhŷs and Brynmor Jones, 1900: 34). John Edward Lloyd (1911) drew on the writings of Tacitus in his account of pre-Roman Wales and presented the Celts as a steadfast warrior people living beyond the civilising reaches of the Roman Empire: 'the Druids...were men of grim and forbidding aspect, skilful in the use of the terrors of religion...The gods to whom they appealed with uplifted hands were fierce powers whose wrath could...only be appeased by the shedding of human blood' (Lloyd, 1911: 45). Lloyd argued that the 'Druidic system' (1911: 43) of religion practised in Wales became 'deeply impressed...upon the imagination of the Roman world...its ruthless intimidation of human victims startled a society which was learning to be humane' (Lloyd, 1911: 44).

The vast stretch of prehistory presented a whole range of unanswerable questions for the traditionalist historian; the temporalities of past human life in prehistoric Wales were condensed into a largely homogenous Celtic people, whose characterisation was drawn through comparisons with the perceived watershed of Roman colonisation. Glyn Daniel argues that Welsh historians such as John Rhŷs perceived physical anthropology, linguistics and ethnology to be more valuable in furthering understanding of Wales's past than the study of material remains (Daniel, 1954: 156). In light of this, archaeological knowledge and analysis of prehistoric and Roman Wales remained underdeveloped by the time of R.E. Mortimer Wheeler's appointment to the National Museum in 1920 (explored in depth in Chapter 6). Conversely, the publication of Francis Haverfield's *The Romanization of Roman Britain* in 1905, the excavations of large-scale Roman sites in Silchester and Caerwent by the Society of Antiquaries and by J. P. Bushe-Fox in Wroxeter and Richborough, signified the formalisation of Romano-British archaeology within wider historical studies of the Roman Empire (Cunliffe, 1984: 175). Haverfield's (1910) *Military Aspects of Roman Wales* focused archaeological attention specifically towards the Welsh context, but amounted to little more than a gazetteer of known sites awaiting further excavation and study.

The antiquarian legacy: John Ward at the National Museum of Wales and the shift towards modern archaeology

As the National Museum's first Keeper of Archaeology, John Ward (see figure 5.1) represented an important link between 19th century antiquarian thought and the gradual emergence of professional archaeology in Wales. Ward had been Curator of Cardiff Municipal Museum from 1893 onwards, and had overseen the official transfer in 1912 of the 'Cardiff Collections' to the National Museum of Wales as its nucleus collection (see Ward, 1912). Ward had also been an instrumental figure in the Cardiff campaign for the establishment of a national museum for Wales from the 1890s (as has already been mentioned in Chapter 4). Cardiff Municipal Museum had been known for its natural history collections, but in a move indicative of a conscious desire to assert itself as a future contender for elevation to national museum status, it began to collect more widely in the arts (Bassett, 1990: 237). One significant move was the expansion of its archaeological collections under the curatorship of Ward; some of the acquisitions included an Iron Age hoard from Seven Sisters, near Neath, Roman finds from the excavations at Gellygaer and Caerwent and 120 casts of Early Christian monuments (Ward, 1912: 302-305; Bassett, 1990: 237-238). Along with the official transfer of the Cardiff Collections to the National Museum, important acquisitions were the Caergwrle bowl, dating from the Middle Bronze Age, the Llyn Fawr hoard and the 13th century silver gilt chalice and paten discovered near Dolgellau and donated by King George V (Bassett, 1990: 238-240).

Ward was also a keen excavator, and combined field research with his curatorial duties. The scope and standard of excavation set by John Ward in the late 19th and early 20th century was certainly unusual within Welsh archaeology. The consistent quality of Ward's field practice and site interpretation would have placed him more in line with standards already established in Scottish and Irish archaeology. Although Ward's professional training was as a chemist, it was his life-long interest in antiquities and museum collections which led him to a change in career as Curator of Cardiff Museum from 1893 until 1912 (Rodger, 1922: 2). Ward's principal interest was Romano-British archaeology; he excavated the Roman fort at Gelligaer with the Cardiff Naturalists' Society (Ward, 1903, 1909, 1911a) and Roman remains at Cardiff castle (Ward, 1901, 1908, 1913, 1914), as well as producing two book publications:

Romano-British Buildings and Earthworks (1911b) and *The Roman Era in Britain* (1911c).
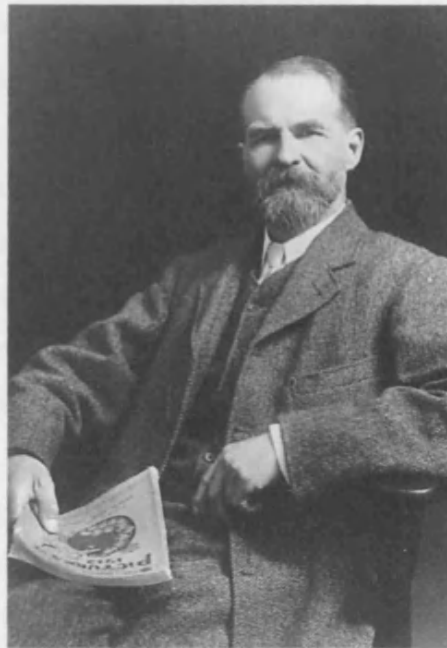
Figure 5.1: John Ward (after http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/852/?article_id=91) [accessed 15th May 2008].

The value Ward placed on field excavation was apparently not shared by other members of the Cardiff Museum committee (see Boon, 1989: 19). Ward became a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries (Rodger, 1922: 4) and submitted an application for the Directorship of the National Museum of Wales, although he later withdrew it (Boon, 1989; Jones, 2007).[1] George Boon (1989) has argued that Ward's understanding of stratigraphy and his accurate excavation techniques at the Roman site at Caerwent at the beginning of the 20th century (see Ashby, 1902) placed him at the forefront of contemporary Romano-British archaeology. Boon maintains that Ward's section work on one of the towers exceeded the standards achieved in the 1920s by Victor Erle Nash Williams, himself a Romanist and latterly Keeper of Archaeology at the National Museum of Wales (Boon, 1989: 14-15).

Ward's excavation and interpretation of the Neolithic burial chamber at St. Nicholas (Tinkinswood) in the Vale of Glamorgan in 1914 (Ward, 1915, 1916), undertaken while he was Keeper of Archaeology at the National Museum, shows a comparatively high level of consistency in terms of methodology and practice. Ward's report (1915)

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stated the aims of the excavation: to establish an understanding of the construction methods, materials and stratigraphy of the site, to determine the original means of access and to identify any skeletal and material remains and, finally, to stabilise signs of movement and stress on the structure. Ward provided information on the physical dimensions and condition of the site (Ward, 1915: 257-262) and sought an analysis of the stones by F.J.North, Keeper of Geology at the National Museum (Ward, 1915: 254-256). Ward went on to review existing knowledge of the site, including the folklore and myths surrounding its history (Ward, 1915: 263-286). In the remainder of the article, Ward described the process and findings of the excavation itself. Ward's subsequent article in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* (1916) presented analysis of the human and animal remains by the anatomist Dr Arthur Keith.

Through his findings, Ward was able to show that Tinkinswood was constructed sometime during the Neolithic and was used repeatedly over time for the interment of the dead. Ward rejected enduring interpretations of the site as post-Roman, or as a ritual altar for druidic ceremonies. It is clear that Ward had a developed understanding of the importance of St. Nicholas as a particular site for the treatment and placing of human remains:

'What we may reasonably infer is that in raising these great mausoleums for their dead they were actuated by religious motives...It would seem, then, that this ancient practice was strongly coloured with ancestor worship, if indeed that was not its fundamental principle. We know that the custom of offering to the dead things useful in life, was a widespread one, and may we not infer that theses flint implements were the surviving parts of such offerings? It would seem that at Harborough Rocks the dead were approached with gifts, which were "killed" by being burnt or broken, in order that the spirits of the things might be set free to join the ancestral spirits...It may have been that the motive of the prehistoric offerings was simply the kindly one of providing departed friends with commodities; but it is more consistent with what we know of primitive faiths that the motive was the purchase of their good offices. Should this be the explanation, we must regard the chambered tumuli, not as tombs only, but as shrines.'

(Ward, 1915: 280-281)

Ward criticised the theory put forward by the astronomer Sir Norman Lockyer in a lecture to Swansea University in 1907 that chambered tombs were the sacred houses of bards and priests (Ward, 1915: 277): 'His analogy of burials in a church is scarcely a parallel one, for these burials do not interfere with the carrying out of public

worship; whereas the introduction of the dead into the dolmen would render it untenable as a habitation for the living...why should the priests have vacated their abodes? Are we to understand that the burials took place in a subsequent age when these structures were derelicts of a forgotten religious system? His theory to be consistent should be of general application' (Ward, 1915: 279). Ward argued that continued archaeological excavation in the future would be crucial in invalidating such unsubstantiated interpretations (Ward, 1915: 279).

John Ward typified the antiquarian archaeologist of the late 19th century in many ways: his academic training was in another subject, he had no professional museum qualifications and there is some evidence that his conceptual understanding of chronology in an excavation context was limited (Boon, 1989: 25, citing in particular Ward's (1911b) *Romano-British Buildings and Earthworks*). However, other aspects of Ward's subsequent work (as shown above), demonstrate an approach to fieldwork and interpretation which was far more advanced than the standards achieved in Wales by the Cambrian Archaeological Association or the Cymmrodorion Society. Delays in the building of the new National Museum meant that Ward did not leave a strong imprint on the curatorial, research and representational practices of the Archaeology department. Ward is not featured particularly in accounts of the early history of the Museum, apart from specific examples such as Bassett (1983), Boon (1989) and Brewer (2004). Much more emphasis is placed on Mortimer Wheeler and Cyril Fox as the central figures in developing Welsh archaeology in the National Museum context; Wheeler and Fox are cited as being representative of 'a new breed of professional specialist' (Champion, 1996: 132).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a contextual view on the overall nature and status of Welsh antiquarian archaeology in the late 19th and early 20th century. The underdeveloped character of archaeological study created various issues for the new National Museum of Wales in its treatment and interpretation of (pre)history and material culture. The portrayal of Celts, Druids and early Christians as the ancient ancestors of the Welsh nation was reflective of a romantic cultural nationalism which fused mythology, archaeological evidence and the contemporary imagination into a fictionalised

national story. The motivation of patriotic endeavour ensured that the focus and purpose in the 19th century revolved around the glorification of Wales and its antiquity. However, with the increased institutionalisation of the National Museum and Welsh archaeology, together with changes in the management structure, the romantic agenda was, over time, supplanted by new ideologies, evolving politics and the impact of external influences. The following chapter examines this ideological shift with the arrival of R.E. Mortimer Wheeler and the imprints left by his own particular interpretations of the Welsh past.

[1] Dr William Evans Hoyle, a zoologist and formerly Director of Manchester Museum, was appointed Director of the National Museum in 1909 until his resignation in 1924 (Bassett, 1983: 191).

Chapter 6
The Transformation from Antiquarianism to Archaeology: R.E. Mortimer Wheeler at the National Museum of Wales

Introduction

The appointment in 1920 of the young archaeologist Robert Eric Mortimer Wheeler to the Keepership of the Archaeological Collections signalled a defining era both for the newly established National Museum of Wales and for the wider development of Welsh archaeology. The beginning of the 1920s represented an important stage in the formative development of the National Museum. Following the official ceremony to lay the foundation stone of the new institution in 1912, and the transfer of the contents of Cardiff Municipal Museum as the nucleus collection of the National Museum in the same year, wider social and political events had a major impact on the progress of the new institution. The outbreak of the First World War, economic uncertainty and the displacement of government funding severely constrained the construction, development and collecting capabilities of the Museum (Bassett, 1982: 175-176, 1983: 199-202).

Invariably, these external socio-political factors affected core aspects of the epistemological nature and philosophy of the institution itself. As a result, the National Museum which emerged at its official opening in 1927 was, necessarily and inevitably, a different institution from the mindset of its Edwardian origins. The creation of a combined post of Curator of Archaeology and Lecturer at the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire (located in Cardiff) represented a transformative phase in the study and gradual professionalisation of archaeology within a national museum and university context. In his joint role as Curator and Lecturer in Archaeology at the University College, Cardiff from 1920 to 1924, and in the prominent position as Director until 1926, Mortimer Wheeler brought his own particular vision of archaeology to the National Museum. In keeping with the broader premise of this thesis, which draws attention to the power of curatorial influence over collecting practices and the representation of material culture, this chapter draws attention to Wheeler's direct impact in shaping the National Museum's research directions in Welsh archaeology. Moreover, Wheeler's particular specialism in Romano-British archaeology ultimately produced an enduring material culture and

research legacy in the National Museum of Wales. Arguably, the strong values placed on the research and excavation of the Roman period in Wales set the pattern and parameters for successive curatorial interest and archaeological research in the Museum.[1]

This chapter provides a critical view on aspects of Wheeler's time at the Museum and his impact on the Archaeological department; it explores his perspectives and influence on the museological ethos and research activities of an emergent National Museum intended to represent the Welsh nation. It traces the defining factors and values which shaped a developing national archaeological collection, and provides a historical perspective on the early years of the Museum's Archaeological department. This chapter seeks also to highlight the dynamic role of curators in both managing the valuation, selection and interpretation of objects brought into the museum space, and in shaping the wider ideology and identity of the museum as a whole.

Mortimer Wheeler is portrayed, to a large extent in professional archaeology and in popular culture, as an enthusiastic, charismatic figure (Bahn, 1996: 199) and an 'adventurer in archaeology' (Hawkes, 1982); a pragmatist who developed high standards of excavation practice but who also invested the unknown archaeological past with a humanistic quality and championed the need for greater interpretation of past peoples.

This chapter goes on to ask whether Wheeler's declaration of interpretive practice was reflected in his methodological approach to the archaeological record, or was evident in his treatment of sites and material culture. This section of the chapter examines selected publications by Wheeler during his tenure at the National Museum of Wales and draws comparisons and connections with Wheeler's subsequent writings and work in order to assess his claims further. It will be argued here that although Wheeler sought to identify patterns of human settlement and development in the past, he did not engage on an empathetic level with the *dynamics* of past peoples and their lives. His methodological approach was motivated by much broader, structural concerns, such as establishing linear chronologies, archaeological periodic transitions and the life spans of sites and dwellings. Within this constructed, essentially culture-historical, framework, Wheeler's research objectives centred on compiling absolute, descriptive

chronologies of sites and establishing stratigraphic and material culture sequences. The aim of this section is not to detract from the pioneering levels of archaeological practice clearly evident in Wheeler's work, but to qualify the implicit sense that Wheeler's maxim of humanistic interpretation was applied actively in his own research. A corollary of Wheeler's non-reflexive methodological practice was its inhibiting effect on the potential for meaningful engagement with archaeology and with the embedded, entangled connections between material culture and people.

Defining the Past: instituting archaeological practice and constructing an archaeological record for Wales

The National Museum's Archaeology department was handed the amalgamated collections of a 19th century municipal institution as the basis for a national archaeological record. It seems likely that the Museum management would have been aware of the need to allocate resources, curatorial and exhibition space in order to build up an archaeological collection worthy of national status. The creation of a joint curatorial and lectureship post by the National Museum and the University of South Wales and Monmouthshire signified increased academic interest in particular aspects of Wales's past which had remained largely unstudied and out of view. The institutional structures of a national museum and university provided the beginnings of an academic, professional framework in which to facilitate Welsh archaeological excavation and analysis. In this sense, the recruitment of a joint Keeper and Lecturer of Archaeology encompassed the much wider objective of tracing a discernable archaeological record and chronology as a *starting point* in understanding the human (pre)history of Wales. Mortimer Wheeler, as both Keeper and Lecturer, was given almost complete autonomy with regard to the particular research focus of archaeological periods and in the selection of sites for excavation. On a broader time-scale, the research preferences of curatorial staff inevitably have an enduring impact on the production, tone and character of museum representations and narratives. In turn, the material culture acquired by the Museum through excavation, and the objects selected for display, become influential agents and referents in particular histories and interpretations of the past 'as it was'.

In analysing the impact of Wheeler's relatively short period at the National Museum, in which he was elevated to the Directorship after only four years as Keeper of

Archaeology, the most important – and surprising – issue concerns the level of his professional inexperience. When Wheeler was appointed Keeper and Lecturer by the Museum, he was without doubt under qualified, by his own admission (Wheeler, 1955: 68). Prior to coming to the National Museum, Wheeler was a junior investigator with the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments in London. It was through the Royal Commission that Wheeler was first introduced to the process of excavation and the recording of historical sites; he supervised excavations at Colchester and subsequently went on to publish his report in the transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society (see Wheeler, 1955: 63-67). Wheeler had arrived at the Commission in 1913 with a BA and MA degree in Classics from University College, London (Wheeler, 1955: 34).

Wheeler's research preference towards Roman archaeology was already established, though his field experience remained limited. However, Wheeler was of the view that Romano-British studies could not advance any further as an integrated discipline without archaeological research: 'Haverfield had carried synthesis pretty nearly as far as it could be carried on existing evidence…it was clear to me that the next advance in our knowledge of human achievement lay outside the historical field and was dependent on fresh and methodical discovery, and that fresh discovery in great measure meant fresh digging' (Wheeler, 1955: 66).

Wheeler's expressed research interests in archaeology coincided with those of the new National Museum; during his tenure he was able to concentrate excavations on Roman military and villa settlements in Cardiff (Wheeler, 1921a, 1922a), Caernarfon (Segontium fort), (1921b, 1922b, 1923) Brecon Gaer (1926) and Caerleon (Wheeler and Wheeler, 1928). Wheeler's influence on archaeological practice in Wales was substantial. His professional interests and values were reflected in his choice of excavation sites across Wales, where his own model of excavation and interpretation was put into practice. In effect, the archaeological landscape of Wales came to represent the experimental space for Wheeler's deterministic, culture-historical approach to the past.

The newly created post at the National Museum, which was designed to combine the management of a national archaeological collection with the teaching and training of

undergraduates at the University College, Cardiff was prompted principally by the retirement in June 1920 of John Ward. However, within a wider context it signalled an emerging recognition of archaeology as a potential academic discipline in its own right, and the beginnings of archaeology as a subject and practice within the Welsh university system.

The *National Museum Minutes of the Court and Council* (*NMMCC*) for the year 1920 recorded that negotiations had been in place between the National Museum and the University College with regard to the creation of a joint curatorial and teaching position. A conference was held on the 4th February 1920, with representatives from both the National Museum and the University, where it was resolved that the Museum and College would enter into an agreement to appoint a joint Keeper of Archaeology and Lecturer in Archaeology at the University for a period of three years. The agreement also stipulated the nature of the post in more detail, and, in particular, specified that the successful candidate should possess the following qualifications:

a) Knowledge of Classical (especially Roman) and Celtic Archaeology.
b) Ability to give instruction to a University standard and on University lines.
c) Practical acquaintance with Archaeological excavations and surveys, and the care of specimens.

(NMMCC, 1919-1920: 39)

The required archaeological knowledge stipulated by the Museum and University related specifically to the Roman and Celtic periods, reflecting a wider value judgement on the historical periods considered to be of importance to Welsh history and the material collections of the Museum and University. Interest in the classical world and in Roman and Greek archaeology had long been established in British and western European high culture; the grand tours of the 18th and early 19th century were testament to the enduring appeal of the lost civilizations of the Roman and Greek empires, while the British Museum, itself of neo-classical design, collected the art and archaeological remains of the classical world. The National Museum of Wales's expressed interest in Roman archaeology during the first few decades of the 20th century was probably twofold. The Roman presence in Wales over four centuries, and its impact on the Welsh language and on aspects of culture and religion, was

acknowledged in the field of Welsh history (i.e. Edwards, 1903; Lloyd, 1911; Rhŷs, 1900).

The publication of Francis Haverfield's (1910) *Military aspects of Roman Wales* by the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion in London confirmed a certain degree of contemporary interest in the archaeology of Roman Wales, as well as the potential for further research. Given the established cultural interest in the classics and in the history of Roman Britain (e.g. Haverfield, 1905, 1924; Bryce, 1913; Codrington, 1903; Collingwood, 1923; Stobart, 1912) it was to be expected that the new National Museum and the University College at Cardiff would follow convention in foregrounding Wales's Roman past. A wider influence on the development of Romano-British archaeology during this period in Britain was the still dominant Victorian-Edwardian imperial world view (Hingley, 1996). Hingley argues that many intellectuals writing at this time interpreted parallels between ancient Rome and the British Empire, and the perceived idea that both empires introduced the benefits of modern civilisation and culture to its colonies (Hingley, 1996: 135). In some areas of Edwardian thought there was a sense that the historical legacy of Roman civilisation in Britain had contributed to the future greatness of the British Empire (Hingley, 1996: 136-137). In this sense, the elucidation of the Roman period in Welsh history would reflect Wales's rich national past and demonstrate aspects of its shared cultural history with England in British antiquity.

The significance placed on modern Celtic archaeology was derived in part from romantic and antiquarian traditions surrounding ancient druidic peoples and cultures. Interest in the history of the Celts, both within Britain and across Western Europe, occurred alongside continuing studies of classical archaeology (Bahn, 1996: 54). Arcane prehistoric barrows, megaliths and sites were interpreted within 18th and 19th century knowledge as the material remnants of an ancient world of bards and druids. The potential for mythologisation was great: 'Savage Celtic warriors and priests described in classical sources became transformed into national heroes and symbols of an idealized past' (Bahn, 1996: 53). In nationalist histories, the pre-Roman peoples of Europe came to symbolise the fearless, defiant Celtic ancestor (Bahn, 1996: 53-54). In Wales, heavily romanticised Celtic mythology was incorporated into the traditions and rites of the National Eisteddfod (see P. Morgan, 1983). The academic value of the

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study of 'Celtic' literature, mythology and art was established by the end of the 19th century, after Oxford University appointed the Welshman Professor John Rhŷs to the Chair of Celtic literature in 1877 (Morgan, 1981: 100). The romantic imagery of the Celtic Welsh was still evident in late Edwardian popular culture, as Chapter 4 has shown (see pages 117-127). Arguably, by the 1920s, the National Museum's interest in expanding knowledge of Celtic archaeology in Wales would have been motivated principally by developments in wider scholarly research rather than by any nationalistic intentions to authenticate or idealise Wales's pre-Roman identity. Celtic archaeology in the National Museum and University context would by this stage have come to refer largely to the archaeologies of Iron Age and Romano-British Wales.

It was clearly not the intention of the National Museum at its inception to produce material evidence to corroborate histories of Wales as a politically independent ancient state. It is also clear that in its early days there was no evident political bias towards the employment of an exclusively Welsh staff. By the mid to late 20th century the Welsh university system would, in fact, produce a new generation of Welsh scholars seeking to construct alternative histories of early Welsh people living before the advent of the Romans (Aull Davies, 1989) and who would present different interpretations of Wales during the Roman occupation. These later scholars formed a group of nationalist political intellectuals, whose social and political ideologies were fundamentally different from the national movement which dominated the Edwardian Welsh cultural and political scene.

Mortimer Wheeler's newly created post thus reflected the beginnings of a transitional phase, with the gradual institutionalisation of archaeology in Britain. By the 1920s, 'archaeology was once again in a process of transformation. The growth of a professional discipline and the increasing involvement of the state represented a significant landmark in the evolution of the amateur antiquarianism of the early nineteenth century into a recognizably modern archaeology' (Champion, 1996: 126).

The details of the agreement between the University and the Museum communicate two clear points: firstly, that the main objective was to foster a milieu of archaeological research which would further knowledge of the human history of Wales and enhance the academic reputation of both institutions, and, secondly, that

this intention reflected an agenda which, although rooted in a conscious ideology of national cultural history, was not driven by political separatism. In practice, the values the Museum placed on the study and collecting of particular archaeological periods in Wales reflected a broader movement towards Romano-British archaeology and followed the western European revival in the linguistic and ethnographic study of Celtic cultures.

New directions in Welsh archaeology

Elements of a transformative stage in Welsh academia were emerging in the years following the end of the First World War. An Archaeological Congress, organised by the newly established Welsh University Board of Celtic Studies, summoned representatives from all public and private bodies directly concerned with Welsh antiquities to a conference at Swansea in August 1920. Further details of the conference, which might provide qualitative information about the delegates in attendance and the precise nature of their discussions, have either not survived or were not recorded. However, by the close of the conference, three recommendations were endorsed:

a) That the closest possible co-operation should exist between persons and bodies interested in Archaeological work in Wales, and that Societies and Archaeologists should be asked not to countenance work, which has been undertaken without the cognizance of the Board of Celtic Studies.

b) That this representative meeting desires to express the opinion that any finds resulting from work conducted by or under the auspices of any associated bodies should be deposited only in Museums for whose control and maintenance effective provision has been made; and that it is desirable that as far as possible local museums should be affiliated with the National Museum.

c) That efforts should be made at the earliest opportunity to organize a course of training in Field Archaeology in connection with a University course.

(*National Museum of Wales Annual Report* 1919-20: 12)

The resolutions made at the conference demonstrate some important developments regarding the overall structure and nature of archaeological practice in Wales. The recognition that contact and co-operation was central to establishing a national archaeological network and the protection of archaeological remains, in effect produced a code of professional practice and conduct.

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Wheeler was vocal in communicating his own views on the development of the Museum's Archaeological department and his proposed strategies for its future expansion. Wheeler's main criticism concerned the inadequate space allotted to the Department, and the consequent effect on the display of the archaeological collections:

'Apart from a few wall frames, the present accommodation is limited to six cases in one room and four cases in another. It is thus quite impossible to present any continuous collections, or indeed even to say that the Department is publicly represented. I fully realise that the ultimate removal of the Art Collection to the new building (whenever ready) will enable Archaeology to expand considerably in the old building. But the possession now of even one complete room here would rescue the Department from almost complete obscurity.'

(*NMMCC*, 1919-1920: 110)

Wheeler also advised that the interim policy of the Archaeological department should be to limit its purchases of artefacts in view of the limited storage and exhibition space available, and instead to allocate the majority of its income to necessary administration and equipment. Wheeler wrote that 'at the present moment the Department is little more than a dead weight; it includes a considerable mass of valuable material, but requires space and machinery for its development' (*NMMCC*, 1919-1920: 111). Arguably, constraints on storage space and Wheeler's recommendation to scale down the department's acquisitions would have had a significant effect on the scope and diversity of the material culture collections. The original charter of 1907 stated clearly that the object of the National Museum 'shall be mainly and primarily the complete illustration of the geology, mineralogy, zoology, botany, ethnography, archaeology, art history and special industries of Wales and the collection, preservation and maintenance of all objects and things of usefulness or interest connected therewith' (cited in *National Museum of Wales, the Charter of Incorporation*, 1930: 2). It is questionable whether such an objective could have been achieved while the Museum remained underdeveloped and behind schedule for almost twenty years. There are no surviving records in the Archaeological department of what objects or collections the Museum were unable to accept or purchase as a direct consequence of storage and financial limitations. It is more likely that only accessions were recorded as a standard practice, and therefore there is no way of quantifying whether archaeological objects continued to be to acquired by private collectors, other

museums or disappeared from circulation. Nevertheless, this demonstrates, in a very real sense, how external and structural factors impact upon the process of museum acquisitions and the representative character of material culture collections.

Establishing a practice, chronology and discourse

Wheeler's conceptual approach to the Welsh archaeological record was predetermined largely by his formal training and expressed interest in Classical and Romano-British archaeologies: '...with a classical bias, I continued for some time to exploit Roman Britain as my most accessible field' (Wheeler, 1955: 95). As a trainee at the Royal Commission he was, by his own definition, 'an ardent young classic in search of Roman Britain' (Wheeler, 1955: 64). Wheeler stated in his autobiography:

·In 1920 my *venue* had been moved from Essex to Wales but my purpose remained unchanged: namely, to integrate a given portion of Roman Britain by selective excavation, and at the same time to evolve an adequate technique with Cranborne Chase, not Corbridge or Wroxeter, as my pattern.'

(Wheeler, 1955: 71, italics in original)

The study of Roman Wales provided Wheeler with the opportunity to crystallise his rationale of an integrated historical and archaeological disciplinary approach; he viewed archaeology 'as a new instrument for the reconstruction and writing of history' (cited in Hawkes, 1982: 81). Wheeler's impetus for excavating the extensive military fort settlements at Caernarfon (Segontium) (Wheeler, 1921b, 1922b, 1923), Brecon Gaer (1926) and Caerleon (Wheeler and Wheeler, 1928) was to bring new material evidence to existing historical knowledge of the Roman occupation in Wales. Archaeological excavation was seen as providing pragmatic, material assistance to conventional historical methods – Wheeler viewed the archaeologist as 'primarily a fact-finder, but his facts are the material records of human achievement' (Wheeler, 1954: 228). In many ways, Wheeler's synthesis conformed to the culture-historical paradigm: archaeological excavation was "controlled discovery' with historical objectives clearly in view' (Hawkes, 1982: 81). There is a clear sense that Wheeler was free to direct the course of archaeological study within the National Museum, and his conscious decision to focus attention on Roman archaeology (Hawkes, 1982: 84) structured the scope of departmental study and influenced the values ascribed to the material collections.

The contemporary picture of Welsh archaeology, as summarised in Chapter 5, presented a range of intellectual and methodological challenges for the National Museum's Archaeology department. The lack of formalised archaeological study in Wales, however, ensured a relatively clear way for the contemporary interpretation of Welsh archaeology. The introduction of a curator and lecturer from outside Wales and with a particular research specialism left a structural imprint on the representational character of the National Museum. The decision to focus excavation towards military sites produced particular perceptions of Roman presence in Wales and the nature of interaction between *romanitas* and 'native' cultures.

Wheeler's approach to the Welsh archaeological past was embedded within the culture-historical tradition. The culture history paradigm supported the use of archaeological 'data' to 'build general time lines of major events and cultural changes for the prehistoric societies of a region' (Michaels, 1996: 162). Culture history borrowed from 19th century western European concepts of the socio-cultural progression of 'Mankind' throughout history: 'the notion of unilineal social evolution progressing along a series of more or less fixed stages formed the core theoretical position of archaeologists building culture histories. Their goal was to determine what stages were reached and when, for the various cultures studied in different parts of the world using archaeological remains as their guide' (Michaels, 1996: 162). The culture-historical worldview interpreted change in past societies from a macro perspective, with an emphasis on chronological and material culture sequences, wide-scale migration and the process of cultural diffusionism.

In *Some Problems of Prehistoric Chronology* (1921c), Wheeler described what he perceived to be the fundamental difficulties inherent in applying accepted notions of chronology to the Welsh archaeological record. He stated that no area 'is more obscure in respect of prehistoric chronology than Wales, and nowhere is the rigid application of English or Continental data more fraught with possible error' (Wheeler, 1921c: 2). Wheeler's premise was that archaeological evidence suggested past societies were continuing to use specific materials in daily life which would not support a universal application of the Three Age system. Wheeler measured levels of cultural complexity against perceptions of society in classical Europe and prehistoric southern Britain. Wheeler judged prehistoric Wales to be socially and culturally

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underdeveloped: 'Wales was a region which received new ideas spasmodically and partially, and consequently clung to old traditions with an unequal persistency that is often baffling' (Wheeler, 1921c: 2).

Wheeler subscribed to the dominant view of cultural diffusionism, whereby new cultures and beliefs, variation in material culture and superior technologies were transmitted by migration, contact and exchange across European prehistory over time and space. Material culture typologies and sequences could be 'read' in order to trace the social development of past societies against the chronological gauge of the Three Age system. Within this interpretive framework, the archaeological evidence was seen to confirm Wales's supposedly 'backward' state. The continued use of materials over time and the life cycle of object technologies indicated that Wales had not made the periodic transitions associated with other parts of Britain and Europe; by Wheeler's definition, 'the Bronze Age in Wales endured with little modification, until the eve of the Roman invasion' (Wheeler, 1921c: 16).

Wheeler's explanation for this centred on the supposed geographical remoteness of Wales during prehistory:

'Wales appears to have been condemned by geography to a position of comparative isolation amongst the main European movements. There is some reason to suppose that that the lower traverse ridges and the flanks of the arterial valleys may have carried minor trade-routes to and from Ireland, but the normal paths of Irish and Scandinavian commerce appear to have traversed north Britain and the Cornish Peninsula, and to have avoided the longer land journeys of the middle course.'

(Wheeler, 1921c: 2)

The focused distribution of gold work on the north and eastern side of the Welsh landscape were confirmation enough for Wheeler that Wales was a relatively unknown and seldom travelled frontier during the Bronze Age: 'The solitary gold lunula of Carnavonshire, the five gold torques, and the three carved spirals – two in Merionethshire and one perhaps in Anglesey – are merely sufficient to indicate where Irish and Continental *grazed the Principality on its way elsewither*' (Wheeler, 1921c: 2, my italics). Wheeler chose not to address the question of why such seemingly high status objects were present and in circulation in Wales itself, as well as what possible meanings such objects had in terms of social interaction.

The recurrent use of stone and flint during the Bronze Age in Wales, and preferences towards bronze work at the beginning of the Iron Age were interpreted as conclusive proof that Wales lacked contact with new social and technological practices. Wheeler cited various examples, including the recording of worked flints and an arrowhead 'of accepted Neolithic type' (Wheeler, 1921c: 4) contemporaneous with 2nd century pottery on an excavated Romano-British settlement in Ely, Cardiff; flint flakes and 4th century Roman coins found in the same depositional layer at a 'native' hill-fort settlement in Dinorben, Denbighshire; and a flint scraper amongst objects of Roman date at a late 1st or 2nd century Roman fort on the banks of the river Llugwy in north Wales (Wheeler, 1921c: 4-6).

Wheeler interpreted the depositional objects found in the lake at Llyn Fawr, near Rhigos in mid-Glamorgan, as evidence of a community living in the transition of the Iron Age, but which continued to adhere to Bronze Age socio-technological practices. In Wheeler's view, the archaeology at Llyn Fawr represented 'a unique link between the Bronze and Iron Ages' (Wheeler, 1921c: 8). The hoard featured a sickle which was an iron replica of its bronze equivalent, but showed traces that it had been coated with bronze to give the appearance of an identical form. Wheeler argued that its unique interest was that it 'represents a fully developed bronze culture in the act of adopting a new material without any attempt to introduce a correspondingly new tradition. It...occupies an important position in that ill-defined gap in Welsh archaeology between the latest stage of the Bronze Age and the earliest appearance of a distinctive Iron Age culture' (Wheeler, 1921c: 8).

Wheeler concluded that geography and cultural divisions in prehistoric Wales legislated against consistent transmission of new metal technologies and social practices, and that as a result societies continued to utilise familiar materials. Wheeler argued that the archaeological evidence 'supports the conclusion that the Early Iron Age culture arrived late and partially' in Wales and that Bronze Age culture continued largely uninterrupted until the Roman invasion (Wheeler, 1921c: 16). Failure to assimilate new practices, or the fusion of new technologies with existing stylistic traditions was interpreted as confirmation that people living in prehistoric Wales lacked innovation:

'The latter stages of this long-drawn-out age are marked by occasional experiments in the use of iron along the lines of the old tradition, in preparation for the more complete adoption of the new; or, if an earlier "British Hallstatt" period be demanded for the Llynfawr sickle...these experiments must be regarded either as stray importations into Wales or as isolated and ephemeral innovations on the part of enterprising craftsmen who had too far outstripped their local contemporaries and so had failed to lead them.'

(Wheeler, 1921c: 16)

This supposed inability to embrace change was viewed as an indicator of collective passiveness rather than a demonstration of human agency. The social progression of prehistoric people was mapped against wide-scale periodic transitions, with material culture providing verification of the level of advancement. The process of adapting new metal technologies to established practices was interpreted more as a sign of a traditionalistic community clinging to known traditions, rather than as a creative act of free will or a reflection of extensive experience in metalwork. In keeping with the culture-historical perspective on diffusionism across western Europe, Wheeler noted that the Llyn Fawr hoard did not show any noticeable La Tène influences, but that one of the axes had 'Irish affinities' and it was possible therefore that the hoard 'is wholly or partly of Irish origin' (Wheeler, 1921c: 8). While Wheeler was the first to highlight the problems inherent in a comprehensive application of the Three Age system to the Welsh archaeological record, he viewed it largely as a methodological difficulty rather than an issue requiring a contextual approach.

Contact and cultural assimilation: perceptions of Roman and 'native' in Wales

Despite Wheeler's professed standpoint that the archaeologist's mission should be to illuminate humanity in the archaeological record (Wheeler, 1955, 1966), there is little evidence that Wheeler considered the human perspective in his excavations of Roman fort settlements in Wales. Unquestionably, the practical objectives in excavating the extensive archaeology at Segontium, Brecon Gaer and Caerleon took precedence, partly through the need to establish the stages of construction and patterns of occupation in order to provide a more detailed chronological framework for the study of Roman Wales. In some respects Wheeler's predisposition for monumental, structural Roman military sites converged with his militaristic, Pitt-Rivers inspired attitude towards the process of archaeological excavation. As Chadha (2002) has argued: 'He was driven by the need to turn the archaeological excavation into a

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professional practice that would produce scientific knowledge with rigour and precision. The militaristic orientation worked as a metaphor, aspiring to be comprehensive and scientific, with the primary aim to discipline the archaeological practice and the process' (Chadha, 2002: 382).

There is a sense that Wheeler equated the militaristic mindset with the objective and rational, and it was this worldview which influenced his method as a field practitioner: 'Wheeler collapsed the ideas of scientific thought and military strategy into a single discourse that emerges as a constant subtext to all his archaeological approaches to the past' (Chadha, 2002: 383).

For instance, in his excavation reports Wheeler provides a great deal of information on the construction methods of Segontium (Wheeler, 1923: 17-110) and Brecon Gaer (Wheeler, 1926: 6-85) – the layout and potential uses of buildings, road networks, the patterns of abandonment and reoccupation through the stratigraphic deposits of coins, pottery and other artefacts – but he does not address the human and phenomenological aspects of dwelling, movement and daily life for the thousands of soldiers who lived in, experienced, worked on and passed through the sites and surrounding landscape. Wheeler's approach was not unusual and conformed to the standardised conventions of archaeological discourse. Robin Boast has argued that Wheeler's vision for archaeology was not, in fact, to transform archaeological practice: '...Wheeler's interest was not in revolutionizing the approach to archaeology, but in regimenting it. His goals were those of his predecessors, a universally dated sequence on which a humanist history could be built' (Boast, 2002: 169). Wheeler's lack of applied interpretation is striking only because of his declared support for human-orientated archaeologies.

Wheeler ascribed an imperial perspective to interpretations of the Roman occupation of Wales, based on the idea that people living in Wales became acculturated over time to the social mores of their more 'civilised' coloniser. In a paper entitled *Roman and Native Wales: an Imperial Frontier Problem* (Wheeler, 1922c), Wheeler took a largely colonial view of post-conquest Wales: 'Rome had little or nothing to fear at the hands of the native Welsh...perhaps the greatest factor in the case lay in the mixed

and backward character of the native population' (Wheeler, 1922c: 43). He imagined the people of Wales to be socially simplistic, isolated and solitary hunters:

'If we...approach the social mentality of the Welsh native of the first and second centuries A.D., we must in the present state of knowledge approach largely along the paths of analogy. It is well-known that in primitive stages of civilisation man cannot be truthfully called a social animal. As a hunter he naturally chooses the lone trail, where game is plentiful and mouths are few...and...although neighbouring pastoral groups may share a fortified refuge in time of need, it cannot be said of them that they normally achieve anything like civic life or organisation.'

(Wheeler, 1922c: 72)

Wheeler rejected the perception that there was continued resistance within Wales to Roman rule after invasion: 'The old idea that the Roman occupation of Britain consisted of a sort of drawn-out campaign, in which native and Roman continuously frowned upon each other from rival encampments, has long been exploded. It would...be ludicrous to suppose that distant outposts such as Segontium were able to survive until the fourth century as islets in a stormy sea of actual or imminent rebellion' (Wheeler, 1922c: 71). Instead, Wheeler was of the view that 'after the arrival of first wave of instinctive hostility and suspicion, Wales appears to have settled down to something approaching voluntary quiescence' (Wheeler, 1922c: 42). Wheeler presented a scene of implicit political negotiation between the Roman military and native communities, whereby the latter began to see the benefits of Roman colonial administration:

'At first, native and Roman held aloof, for none of the earliest Roman coins, appear to have reached the native settlements in the hills. Gradually, however, after the end of the first century the natives began to resort with increasing confidence to forts in the valleys, and to barter on a small scale with the soldiery and camp-followers; pieces of the brightly-glazed Gaulish pottery and well-made urns and dishes of grey and buff ware found their way back to the rough stone huts on the mountain. The native began to look upon the intruder perhaps with rather less suspicion than he was accustomed to bestow upon his own neighbours of the next hill-top. The Roman was, after all, a valley-dweller, and interfered but little with the native who still clung to the uplands: the Roman, moreover, had something to give...'

(Wheeler, 1922c: 41)

Given the supposed state of tolerance between 'native' communities in Wales and the occupying Roman force, the archaeological evidence for the refortification of indigenous stronghold sites during the 2nd, 3rd and 4th centuries AD becomes difficult to explain. Wheeler questioned why hill-fort settlements such as Tre'r Ceiri in

Caernarfonshire, Penmaenmawr, Dinorben, and Moel Fenlli would be (re)constructed by native communities in areas where a Roman military presence was established and at a period when there appeared to be no indication of high social tension between the Roman military and existing settlers. Wheeler observed that this complex anomaly in the archaeological record had caused Welsh antiquarians to deny the evidence before them:

'That the Roman should turn his back upon an arming host, that isolated outposts like Segontium should survive for a century or more in the very midst of this native revival, is at first so incredible that antiquaries have tended to shrink from the problem and have instinctively sought to explain away the evidence...'

(Wheeler, 1922c: 45)

At Dinorben, Wheeler argued that the archaeological evidence supports 'an intensive occupation co-incident with a re-construction of the defences' (1922c: 64); furthermore that, 'during the Roman occupation of Segontium, this great native hill-fortress was re-built and occupied for a considerable time in the immediate neighbourhood of the line of communications with the Roman base at Chester' (Wheeler, 1922c: 65).

Wheeler's explanation for this state of affairs is linked to the redeployment of military troops based in Wales: 'The frontier battles of Rome were being fought further north. To wage these northern battles, Hadrian and the Antonines drained the Welsh garrisons to the limits of safety, if not beyond them' (Wheeler, 1922c: 42). Wheeler's theory was that the Roman imperial system employed a 'native militia' in Wales to provide a level of security while large numbers of soldiers were deployed elsewhere and garrisons lay unprotected. Such practices were 'a well-known feature of Roman frontier defence, especially in the first three quarters of the first century A.D. when the auxiliary system had not yet been completely developed' (Wheeler, 1922c: 84). The emergence of fortified village communities in Anglesey, in close proximity to the large fort at Segontium, was explained as a political policy on the part of the Romans to allow a degree of freedom and continuity for the native populace (Wheeler, 1922c: 67). The abundance of Romano-British finds from these sites was seen to indicate:

'a comparatively settled countryside in which the native to the best of his opportunity was beginning to share the fruits of the Roman Peace...in the proximity of occupied

Roman forts and of vital Roman roads, the Welsh native was allowed to build or rebuild fortifications on an enormous scale and, at least in some cases, to betake himself and his household more or less permanently behind them.'

(Wheeler, 1922c: 71)

The Romans had already encountered such practices in Gaul and were generally tolerant if they posed little threat to governance (Wheeler, 1922c: 79). Wheeler suggested that the emergence of native civic communities had spread across western Europe to southern Britain and eventually to Wales (Wheeler, 1922c: 79). In view of the predominantly military nature of the Roman occupation in Wales, the need to enforce the Roman cultural and political system was not paramount and the imperial policy of using native militia served a functional political need 'without denationalising them' (Wheeler, 1922c: 81). The pressured Roman army thus benefited from 'a network of native fortified hill-cities like an enormous wire entanglement in the path of the raider' (Wheeler, 1922c: 83).

In Wheeler's representation, the access to and the (pre-supposed) benefits of Romanisation, coupled with the 'backward' and politically unorganised nature of the indigenous populace, militated against any effective resistance to Roman rule in Wales. The people living in pre-conquest Wales were homogenised into a uniform mass of uncultured natives. Moreover, the process of Romanisation had become interchangeable with modern constructs of linear social progress and civilised, moral living. As Hingley argues, 'the concept of Romanisation became closely linked with that of acculturation...Under all these systems of interpretation, change from native to Roman culture was viewed as a logical and positive trend towards a better social condition' (Hingley, 1996: 139). Wheeler concluded that:

'The scheme was, in degree if not in kind, a novel one in the annals of frontier defence. It was a bold adaptation of the peculiar local conditions to Imperial needs. The poverty of the country; the racial and geographical cleavages which prevented the inhabitants from uniting in any permanent opposition to the Roman invader; the courage and hardiness of the individual mountain-bred native; and the lack of any serious conflict between his interests and the valley-dwelling conquerors, all combined to justify the experiment.'

(Wheeler, 1922c: 83-84)

Wheeler's predominantly positive view of the Roman world reflected wider contemporary thought, and this perspective remained in Romano-British studies well

into the second half of the 20th century (see Hingley, 1996). George Welch, writing in 1965, declared: 'With Roman order had come at first a kind of liberation, an increase in individual freedom and security of person, both deriving from the inhibitions visited on tribal anarchy and petty tyranny by the law and legions of Rome...With this imposed order...had come...a sense of pride in being part of the broad stream of civilization' (Welch, 1965: 260-61, cited in Hingley, 1996: 139).

Wheeler offered no interpretation of the complex nature of encounter and contact between the 'native' peoples of Wales and the Roman military, or why a native militia would assist in defending the Roman frontier. Were they volunteers or conscripts? What would motivate them to support an occupying force and alien culture? Wheeler did not attempt to address such underlying social and political questions. Wheeler's assumption that hill-fort settlements were principally defensive structures reflected dominant views which have since been subject to alternative interpretation and critique (e.g. Hill, 1995a; Hill and Cumberpatch, 1995b; Hill, 1995c; Hingley, 1984).

Wheeler rejected the theory of protracted native resistance and approached the issue from an ideologically imperial perspective, subscribing to the view of a settled resolution between the existing communities and the Roman colonisers. However, he presented Romans and natives as two polarised, distinct entities when the reality would have been a much more complex intersection of politics, agency and power. Wheeler did not recognise the potential for subversion on the part of the native communities since he viewed them as socially inferior beings, but there are also much subtler layers of action and negotiation within any definably colonial context. He perceived pre-Roman Wales to have been so isolated that its inhabitants would have had few meaningful encounters with other peoples and cultures, but he failed to engage with the more liminal, blurred nature of contact between the incoming Romans and native people. In this particular context, there are a whole range of complexities to do with the unknown 'other', the collision of different cultures, materiality and knowledge, and feelings of ownership over landscape and place.

Wheeler imagined that the superior culture of Rome supplanted the primitive culture of native Wales and that in this way the Romans were the civilisers rather than the oppressors. He did not envisage the emergence of 'hybrid cultures' as conquest,

assimilation and romanisation converged over time (Burnham, 1995: 121). Burnham (1995) has argued that, just as the definition of the term 'Celt' has been critically deconstructed, archaeologists should not consider Roman culture to be an encapsulated, absolute thing: 'terms like 'Celts' and 'Romans' carry the notion of identifiable cultural entities, a notion which may hinder rather than help the analysis of change. 'Roman culture' was not itself a 'pure' entity, rather a progressive synthesis of many different strands' (Burnham, 1995: 121). In many ways Wheeler's reading corresponds with prevailing early 20th century worldviews of the British Empire as a civilising and culturally enlightened force for the un-westernised reaches of the world: 'Rome was fundamental in the dissemination of classical civilisation over a wide area of present-day Europe and parts of North Africa and, in parallel, the British considered that they were carrying the most evolved form of European civilisation to an ever-expanding empire' (Hingley, 1996: 137).

The dynamics of museums, objects and display

In histories of British archaeology, Mortimer Wheeler is thought of principally as a field practitioner. Many contemporary readings of Wheeler merge events in his life and conflate images of him as an archaeological explorer, militarist and storyteller. Less attention is paid to Wheeler as a museum practitioner, both at the National Museum of Wales and subsequently at the Museum of London.[2] While he was Director of the National Museum, Wheeler wrote of 'my conviction that museums have an important part to play in the educational system of the country' (cited in Hawkes, 1982: 92).

An address given by Wheeler to the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society sometime between 1921 and 1922 offers some critical insights into Wheeler's early perceptions of the socio-cultural values of museums and collections. In *The Use and Abuse of Museums* (Wheeler, 1921-1922), Wheeler took as his opening theme the political manifesto of the Bolshevist-Socialist Revolution in early 20th century Europe, which denounced bourgeois preoccupation with state histories and antiquities and equated museums with propagating a sinister rationalisation of the past (Wheeler, 1921-22: 62-63). Wheeler began with this extreme example to pose the question of what museums mean culturally and what their explicit uses are in modern society: '...what

is the essence of their appeal, and what is their significance to us in our everyday life?' (Wheeler, 1921-22: 64).

'When we ask that question we are sometimes condemned as sordid utilitarians, with no thought beyond our own (or other people's) pockets. We are told that standards of mere practical utility should not be applied to the higher activities of the human brain, and that art or science or research into the past can justifiably be pursued "for their own sake," and for no utilitarian end. Believe me, such well-meaning reassurances are wrong.'

(Wheeler, 1921-22: 63)

Wheeler argued that museums should discard 19th century, institutionalised modes of museum interpretation and display in favour of historical realism: 'We can no longer...pretend that all stone axes, or bronze swords, which are now the treasures of museum-cases, were in the reality the "weapons of heroes" and made history in the hands of legendary kings' (Wheeler, 1921-22: 63). In Wheeler's view, 'modern scientific archaeology has swept aside this historical fairyland with a merciless philistinism' (Wheeler, 1921-22: 63) and in this sense, 'museums should cease to be mere storehouses of ancient crocks and curios' (Wheeler, 1921-22: 66).

In order for archaeology to develop into an integrated academic practice, he reasoned that inter-disciplinary dialogue was vital and called for collaboration between historical research and field practice: 'History and archaeology are commonly spoken of as two distinct departments of study...surely archaeology is merely the enlargement and extension of history into all human works and all human time' (Wheeler, 1921-22: 64). Wheeler appeared also to emphasise the importance of cross-comparative research: 'Historical study on a small scale is liable to prove as meaningless as a single note struck on a piano' (Wheeler, 1921-22: 65). His statements reflected his professional bias towards the classics and to the synthesis of ancient history and archaeological excavation. In many aspects Wheeler's viewpoint reflected the contemporary culture-historical approach to archaeology, as Susan Pearce argues: 'archaeologists...tended to work as historians who lacked documents and who had, therefore, to use material culture as a kind of non-literary historical evidence which could provide information about technological and material goods' (Pearce, 1990: 32).

Although Wheeler criticised antiquarian conventions of museum display, he argued conversely that the visual, associative and experiential qualities of artefacts should be emphasised in exhibition contexts. Museums 'should be made to offer something of the dramatic appeal which draws people to our theatres and picture-shows. The drama should be simple and easy to understand, although its appeal should be not emotional but intellectual' (Wheeler, 1921-22: 66). Wheeler's declared mind-set contrasted strongly with that of his predecessor at the National Museum. John Ward stressed the informational, rather than humanistic, characteristics of objects and was adamant that 'the essential character of the teaching a museum should provide is *static*, not *dynamic* – self explanatory exhibits' (Ward, 1905: 9, italics in original). Ward favoured modes of artefactual display in accordance with general scientific laws or principles (Ward, 1905: 9), while Wheeler was emphatic in his claim that he approached the past as 'a living and immediate thing' (Wheeler, 1921-22: 66). Conversely, earlier initiatives expressed the National Museum's intention of using reconstructive methods alongside material culture in the archaeological displays: '…it is intended to have a mounted group showing the prehistoric man at the entrance of his cave chipping stone implements. Another, illustrating the Roman period, might contain a reconstruction of the gateway of a Roman camp, with the sentry standing on duty, and natives of the country buying and selling produce' (*National Museum of Wales, Laying of the Foundation Stone*, 1912: 16). In fact, the use of reconstructive display would be used to powerful visual effect in the representation of Welsh folk culture in the National Museum (see Chapter 8), but such practices were not employed within an archaeological context.

The lack of detailed information on the exhibitions created in the Museum in the early 1920s makes it difficult to evaluate whether Wheeler's theoretical position regarding meaningful engagement with material culture was reflected in his curatorial practice. The departmental reports submitted to the National Museum of Wales (i.e. *National Museum Minutes of the Court and Council*, 1907 onwards) give a general impression of where archaeological exhibitions were located, when they were opened to the public and visitor numbers, but do not provide specific, detailed information on the thinking behind exhibitions, curatorial input, the selection and interpretation of objects or the representational modes of display. There are a whole range of questions relating to how objects were chosen, how they were grouped and interpreted, and

what kinds of narratives were created about Wales's human past. The formation of museum collections 'embody the narratives of their day and contribute their mite to intellectual and so to social change' (Pearce, 1990: 33). Interest in, as well as the study of, archaeology is rooted in social and political negotiation (Pearce, 1990: 33), and in this way it follows that 'archaeology in museums constantly negotiates, or structures and restructures, the past' (Pearce, 1990: 33). The values ascribed to material culture collections in museums are multi-layered and reflect curatorial ideologies as well as wider political, intellectual and epistemological concerns. Such museological values form part of a wider socio-cultural milieu, which is itself changeable over time.

Photographs of the Archaeological gallery in the National Museum (dated circa 1922 - 1928; see figures 6.1 and 6.2) offer some perspectives on the representational processes employed. The exhibition followed the established convention of displaying objects in the chronological, linear progression of the Three Age system. The audience would be ushered along a constructed journey of human cultural evolution, a kind of 'organized walking' (Bennett, 1995: 186-187) through time and along Wales's past. The rationale for outwardly objective, scientific display would have precluded interpretation much beyond the functional descriptions of objects; their approximate date, where they were found and possible explanations of their use. The chronological approach in museum exhibitions, though itself a social construct in structuring time and space, provided a contextual and temporal framework for the display of material culture.

By the 1920s, the established practice among large archaeological and national museums had started to move beyond separating objects according to geography or supposed evolutionary style (as Pitt Rivers did) into material culture sequences based on chronology, context and stratigraphy (Pearce, 1990: 27-32). Although chronological display was an established convention in professional institutions, such curatorial practices were slow to filter down to smaller, provincial museums. In Wheeler's view, many museums were continuing to exhibit archaeological objects as isolated items without narrative or context:

'We must learn to realise that a prehistoric urn or a bronze sword may represent phases or events only less important to modern Britain than the Battle of Hastings or

the invention of the steam engine. But the importance of these relics of ancient times requires illustration and interpretation. Too often do we go into a museum nowadays and see perhaps a stone implement, a Roman pot and a silk hat almost cheek by jowl. We wonder at the roughness of the stone implement, or the curious shape of the pottery, or the grotesqueness of the silk hat, but fail to realise the great historical movements which they symbolise.'

(Wheeler, 1921-22: 66)

Figure 6. 1: Archaeological gallery, National Museum
(*The Museum and its Contents: a Short Guide*, 1928: 54).

Figure 6:2: Display in Archaeological gallery showing Roman finds of the
20th legion at Holt, Denbighshire (*National Museum Annual Report*, 1924-1925).

The diachronic perspective rationalised chronological museum displays into visual trajectories of social evolution. This conceptual view of linear human progression was evident in Wheeler's approach to the deep time of prehistoric Wales: 'Whither does this long procession of men and nations trend? We began with a cave and ended with an Empire, and witnessed something of the gradual widening of human life in the intervening epochs' (Wheeler, 1921-22: 66). Wheeler thought in terms of 'absolute chronologies', believing that 'absolute chronology is essential alike to the appreciation of the varying *tempo* of human achievement, and, above all, to the establishment of cultural interrelationships which help to rationalize human 'progress'' (Wheeler, 1954: 40, italics in original). The spatial categorisation of museum archaeological displays into distinct time periods provided material verification of prevailing worldviews. As Walsh (1992) argues, the placing of archaeological artefacts into 'ordered contexts often implied a unilinear development of progress. Such representations implied a control over the past through an emphasis on the linear, didactic narrative, supported by the use of the object, which had been appropriated and placed in an artificial context of the curator's choosing. This type of display is closed, and cannot be questioned' (Walsh, 1992: 31).

The photographs of the archaeological exhibits (figures 6.1 and 6.2) show a clear use of chronological order and typological object display. They appear to replicate Wheeler's original exhibition, 'Prehistoric and Roman Wales', which was displayed in the National Museum's allocated space at the City Hall from December 1920 to January 1921 and which featured 'representative' artefacts of his choosing to illustrate the material past of Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman Wales (*National Museum of Wales, Exhibition of Specimens Illustrating Pre-historic and Roman Wales*, 1920).[3] In the National Museum context, the artefacts seem to have been placed according to similar form and type. The museological convention of the time tended not to favour detailed textual interpretation – objects were laid out in sequences and were expected, quite literally, to speak for themselves. The exhibition style employed was very different from 19th century modes of eclectic display and reflected Wheeler's emphasis on the use of periodically structured, object-centred displays. However, this particular mode of rational, linear-time display would have left little capacity for highlighting the 'dramatic appeal' (Wheeler, 1921-22: 66) of archaeological artefacts. The museum objects (see figures 6.1 and 6.2), grouped

closely together, retain a sense of distance and separation from their intrinsically human connections. There appears to be no evidence of the creative and humanistic interpretation Wheeler spoke of in his earlier address. There is an emphasis on objects, functionalities and time periods, but not on people, daily life and sociality. In some respects, Wheeler's first major book publication *Prehistoric and Roman Wales* (1925) presents some parallels. Designed to give 'a general picture of the values of Welsh archaeology as a whole' (Wheeler, 1955: 69), the book is more akin to a general guide cum museum catalogue for his University students. The book provides a sweeping, macro historical survey of past human life in Wales. Wheeler traced the trajectory of Wales's social evolution in chapters entitled 'Cave-Man', 'The New Stone Age', 'Megaliths', 'The Beaker Folk', 'The Bronze Age', 'The Iron Age' and 'The Roman Occupation'. Wheeler was the first to compile a chronological account of prehistoric Wales based on the archaeological evidence itself, which recognised climatic and environmental change in the late Palaeolithic and Mesolithic: 'The story of human life begins with the final emergence of the land-surface from the melting ice-fields of the last great glaciation' (Wheeler, 1925: 17). He went on to state: 'It is not improbable that the mountains of Wales retained their glaciers for some time after the beginning of the retreat from northern Germany, but, as a provisional-landmark, it would not be unduly rash to place the beginning of human life in Wales between 15,0000 and 10,000 B.C.' (Wheeler, 1925: 40).

However, the temporal pathways of human life in Wales were approached from a largely deterministic perspective, which emphasised the controls of geographical environment, climate and cultural diffusion above human agency:

'...recent writers have shown abundantly how closely the distribution of human life was...guided in early times by that of chalk and clay, of heath, forest, and fen...In Wales where a comparatively uniform covering of boulder-clay is broken only by outcrops of rock denuded partly by glacial action and partly by more recent weathering, the problem may be translated into terms of altitude. The shoreward cliffs, swept by Atlantic gales, must always have been fairly open and accessible; but in the interior, during a considerable part of the prehistoric era, formidable barriers of forest growth...must have tended to isolate the higher uplands and so to restrict the penetration and diffusion of sparse, ill-equipped and poorly organized populations.'

(Wheeler, 1925: 275)

In a similar form to the chronological museum presentation, the progression of 'Man' in Wales is plotted and verified in the book through archaeological material culture. The patterns and level of social advancement are explained by, and judged against, other European cultures; thus, new metalwork, cultural and religious practices are brought into Bronze Age Wales by the Beaker-folk circa 2000 B.C. (Wheeler, 1925: 123). In Wheeler's view, 'the problems of the Bronze Age are primarily and largely those of the geographical distribution of imperfectly assimilated foreign cultures' (Wheeler, 1925: 283). It is only by the time of the Roman occupation that Wales eventually 'emerges into the grey dawn of history' (Wheeler, 1925: 217).

The linear, episodic timeline of both the archaeological exhibitions and *Prehistoric and Roman Wales* correlated with Wheeler's schema and overall aim for the Museum's Archaeological department: to establish a verifiable archaeological chronology of Wales's past through excavation and the use of comparative and stratigraphic dating systems. This objective corresponded broadly with the Museum's own constitutional remit to collect and document Welsh (pre)history. It becomes evident that the practical concerns within the Museum department and Wheeler's own theoretical approach did not leave space for active interpretation, either in an archaeological or museological sense.

Humanising the archaeological record: persona and practice

Mortimer Wheeler is not singled out in contemporary archaeological thought as a central force in initiating humanistic interpretation, but there remains an implicit sense that he was an influential voice in highlighting the evocative appeal of the past. For instance, Dark (1995) argues: '(Wheeler's) contribution to archaeological theory has often been overlooked. He considered that emphasis should be placed on identifying the individuals and societies responsible for producing the archaeological record, stressing the human and cognitive dimensions of archaeological evidence and the importance of incorporating these into reconstruction and explanation. Wheeler...denounced mere description in favour of interpretation and explanation' (Dark, 1995: 6-7). In Jacquetta Hawkes's view, Wheeler 'came to have a vision of human history that enabled him to see each discovery of its traces, however small, in its widest significance. He had the imaginative power to put life into the past and

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convey this vitality with a mastery of the spoken and the written word few in his field could equal' (Hawkes, 1982: 4). Wheeler himself declared that 'the spirit of archaeology...is the spirit of active adventure' (Wheeler, 1966: 97). In the foreword of *Archaeology from the Earth* (1954) Wheeler stated emphatically:

'If there be a connecting theme in the following pages, it is this: an insistence that the archaeologist is digging up, not *things*, but *people*. Unless the bits and pieces with which he deals be alive to him, unless he have himself the common touch, he had better seek out other disciplines for his exercise.'

(Wheeler, 1954: v, italics in original)

On the surface, Wheeler was highly articulate in conveying the sentient humanism of archaeology: 'In a simple direct sense, archaeology is a science that must be lived, must be 'seasoned with humanity'. Dead archaeology is the driest dust that blows' (Wheeler, 1954: v).

The emphatic statements made by Wheeler contained powerful, persuasive commentaries on the enduring value and interpretive role of archaeology. Wheeler called for meaningful engagement with the past and with the unknown people 'behind' archaeological objects. In short, Wheeler argued that archaeologists must have a sense of *empathy* for the people of the past:

'Archaeology...must be extended into the living and must indeed itself be lived if it is to partake of a proper vitality. Let me for a moment amplify this matter. I have said that we cannot properly understand the past unless we have a living sympathy with the human stuff which its relics represent. We cannot understand, for example, the structural mechanism of an ancient burial-mound unless we can bring to bear upon its details a rational imagination capable of comprehending and vitalizing them. If we fail to do that, we are not humanists but mere collectors of disjected minutiae, signifying almost nothing.'

(Wheeler, 1954: 3)

Yet there is very little evidence that this openly declared, attuned sensibility was reflected in Wheeler's own writings and research. In his early work at the National Museum and, arguably, throughout his archaeological career, the interpretive perspective that Wheeler declared so essential was almost completely absent. Despite the resonance of his words, and his supposed engagement with the past, there is a sense that Wheeler was unable to imagine – in any meaningful way – material culture and human remains as living, tangible and complex entities.

It is suggested here that Wheeler's first encounter with interpretation and, more specifically, with the active process of imagined reconstruction, may have occurred while he was Director of the National Museum of Wales. When Wheeler was promoted in 1924 to the Directorship, Cyril Fox was appointed as Keeper of Archaeology. Between 1924 and 1926, Fox carried out an excavation of Ysceifiog Circle and Barrow, a Bronze Age cremation site in Flintshire (Fox, 1926b). Unusually for the period, Fox included in his report a striking, imaginative reconstruction of the burial scene, which is examined in depth in Chapter 7. Wheeler was clearly struck by the originality of Fox's interpretation as well as his ability to visualise a scene from the past in such realised, dimensional form. In *Archaeology from the Earth*, published decades later in 1954, Wheeler recalled:

'Many years ago, Fox and I were trudging across a desolate Welsh moorland and came upon a small barrow set within an earthen circle. Offa's Dyke came steadfastly up to the lip of the circle and then on the other side started off again with equal determination on a new alignment. The whole scene stirred Fox's ready enthusiasm, and a week or two later he had dug himself well into the landscape. The mound had by now vanished, and Fox stood, in the spirit, amongst its makers. He was almost physically present at the living ritual, the actual procedure of burial.'

(Wheeler, 1954: 3)

Wheeler argued that the level of objectivity employed in imaginative interpretation was not of particular importance; rather, that accurate field data provided the sound base for the continual interpretations of sites: 'The great thing is that those facts are infused with a rational intelligence; they emerge from Fox's brain as three-dimensional entities. Contrast the ordinary excavation-report. Year after year, individual after individual, learned society after learned society, we are prosaically revealing and cataloguing our discoveries. Too often we dig up mere things, unrepentantly forgetful that our proper aim is to dig up people' (Wheeler, 1954: 4). Thus, in Wheeler's view:

'What matters to us in all this is not of course the particular episode but the creative act of imagination that has gone to the making or remaking of it...It is *they* that matter, not their penknives and their trouser-buttons. We justify our dehumanization of the past by attaching an almost fanatical virtue to what we call our *objectivity*. As so often we are thereby merely elevating our shortcomings into a principle. The only thing that really matters in our work is the *re-creation* of the past.'

(Wheeler, 1966: 111-112, italics in original)

Yet, despite Wheeler's absolute declaration of meaningful engagement with the past, he seems to contradict himself in almost the same sentence. His claim that Fox has done much to 'vivify' (Wheeler, 1954: 3) the 'mumbo-jumbo of miserable Bronze Age barrow-burials on the ultimate fringes of the ancient world' (Wheeler, 1954: 203) is doubly revealing, implying that beneath the perceptive language lies Wheeler's interior attitude towards the unknown – and perhaps in his view, *unknowable* – people of prehistory. Moreover, Wheeler draws an absolute dichotomy between the 'civilised' modern archaeologist and the inhuman 'savages' of distant antiquity; he credits Fox for 'pouring his soul into revivification of the squalid memorials of creatures who had left civilization as far behind them as the Atlantic would (at that time) allow: creatures subsisting on the ultimate foothold of barbarism. They scarcely deserve so much flattery' (Wheeler, 1966: 110). Far from connecting with past people as complex, corporeal entities, Wheeler sees them in purely evolutionist terms, actively dehumanising them as unfamiliar, remote beings.

Wheeler's choice of words in other contexts, either consciously or unconsciously, suggests a similar stance and an underlying absence of empathy. When appearing alongside Glyn Daniel in the television programme *Buried Treasure*, broadcasted during the 1950s, Wheeler was asked to comment on a selection of prehistoric objects placed before him.[4] He spoke of the objects he held in his hands as 'haunting relics', a vivid, contradictory statement which venerated them as mysterious and other worldly but rendered them lifeless and archaic in the same breath. Wheeler was aware, evidently, of the evocative power of language. There is a sense that his statement formed part of an affected performance for an expectant public audience. In a similarly paradoxical statement, Wheeler referred to Maiden Castle in Dorset, a site inscribed in popular imagination and of key importance in his professional career, as a 'monstrous artifact' (cited in Hawkes, 1982: 163). Wheeler's recollection of his time spent in Dorset was of 'digging into the first foothold of wretched Iron Age immigrants on the English south coast and classifying their incompetent dog-biscuit potsherds' (Wheeler, 1954: 203).

Wheeler's interpretation of the 'war cemetery' uncovered during the excavation of Maiden Castle (Wheeler, 1943) is particularly relevant here. The discovery of over 50 human burials near the eastern entrance, some of whom had suffered violent deaths,

prompted Wheeler to interpret the 'cemetery' as the pivotal scene of the initial Roman attack. He created a vivid reconstruction from the 'evidence' as he viewed it:

'...the infantry advanced up the slope, cutting its way from rampart to rampart, tower to tower. In the innermost bay of the entrance...a number of huts...were now set alight and under the rising clouds of smoke the gates were stormed and the position carried...For a space, confusion and massacre dominated the scene. Men and women, young and old, were savagely cut down...and the work of systematic destruction began...That night, when the fires of the legion shone out...the survivors crept forth...and in the darkness buried their dead...a series of graves had been roughly cut...and into them had been thrown...thirty-eight skeletons of men and women, young and old.'

(Wheeler, 1943: 63)

It is possible, potentially, that Wheeler drew on his recollection of Fox's attempts at imaginative interpretation while at the National Museum of Wales, and that he sought to emulate this process in his reconstruction of Maiden Castle. Certainly the interpretive perspective displayed in aspects of Fox's work had a lasting resonance for Wheeler; although *Archaeology from the Earth* (1954) was published some 30 years after Fox's (1926b) excavation of Ysceifiog Circle and Barrow, Wheeler makes specific reference to it, as well as to Fox's archaeological methodology, in the book. Wheeler's personality and energy made him well versed and adept at articulating the humanist ideals of archaeology, but his declarations were not translated into meaningful discourse, or reflected in his field practice. Despite Hawkes's claim that Wheeler was conscious always that he was 'digging up people', she herself acknowledges that Wheeler 'was hardly an original thinker or one much concerned with ideas beyond his own work' (Hawkes, 1982: 4). Her judgment of Wheeler as an innovative figure in archaeology who possessed 'the dramatic gifts to enable him to spread his own enthusiasm among multitudes' (Hawkes, 1982: 4), provides a more balanced reading. It can be argued that in his fictional reconstruction of a violent invasion of Maiden Castle, Wheeler aspired to capture the sense of vitality he identified in Fox's steps towards imaginative interpretation.

Like Fox, Wheeler endeavoured to locate himself firmly in the imagined scene: 'The whole war cemetery as it lay exposed before us was eloquent of mingled piety and distraction; of weariness, of dread, of darkness, but yet not of complete forgetfulness' (Wheeler, 1943: 63). The extract cited above conveys the essence of Wheeler's narrative style; Wheeler's compelling reconstruction (see Wheeler, 1943: 61-64) leads

the reader towards the powerful climax and poignant aftermath: from life to death, from violence to stillness. Its dramatic, accessible style had instant popular appeal and it becomes clear that creative licence overrode the material evidence. Wheeler's accidental blunder in the text of referring to the bodies as skeletons (cf Hawkes, 1982: 172) is highly ironic and implies a subconscious inability to transform human remains into living emotional beings.

Wheeler's interpretation of the so-called war cemetery has since been heavily criticised; skeletal evidence showed that the number of violent deaths among the buried was proportionally small, supposedly fatal war wounds were found to be old and partially healed injuries, and the contextual nature of the rich variety of grave goods deposited confirmed the cemetery's established history and importance (Sharples, 1991: 101-102; see also Grimes, 1945 for an earlier critique of the excavation process). Wheeler's reading of the burials as being of 'slovenly character, betokening haste and anxiety' (Wheeler, 1943: 119) is exposed as 'a subjective impression which conveniently suited the historical interpretation applied to the evidence' (Sharples, 1991: 102). The point being stressed here is that Wheeler compelled the archaeological evidence to act in – and enact – his particular narrative and his version of events. Instead of allowing the material culture *in situ*, the site and the landscape to evoke and ignite his 'archaeological imagination' (as Cyril Fox attempted to do, see Chapter 7), it seems that Wheeler imposed his own preconceived chronology of events onto what must have been a much more blurred, relativistic experience. The reliance on drama inadvertently produced a one-dimensional metanarrative of a military invasion: the attacker and the attacked.

It remains difficult to disentangle and discern Wheeler's interior persona, beliefs and thoughts from the much more impenetrable public exterior he presented. It is questionable whether Wheeler was able to make meaningful connections with ideas beyond the structural and schematic world views of the past. Was he able to engage with material culture as the nexus between people and their social worlds, or was he, in fact, a fluent performer in affected sensibility? There is a sense that Wheeler's persuasive, seemingly empathetic prose and his engaging public personality have been collapsed into a partly nostalgic, partly constructed image of Wheeler as the humanist-

archaeologist. This characterisation of Wheeler has retained an enduring quality in historiographies of 20th century British archaeology.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a critical perspective on Mortimer Wheeler's impact on archaeology in the National Museum of Wales and offers a historical insight into the formative experiences which shaped his philosophical and professional approach as an archaeological practitioner. In a wider context, this chapter demonstrates the extent of curatorial control in influencing research directions and collecting practices. The underlying value systems in museum departments have a significant and sometimes indelible effect on interpretive and representational processes.

Wheeler became an influential force in the practice and developmental structure of archaeology by the mid 20th century and he retains a central position in historiographies of British archaeology. While many retrospective readings of Wheeler's methodological practices and contributions to archaeology remain positive (e.g. Cunliffe, 1984: 175; Clark, 1979; Bahn 1996; Bhan, 1997; Daniel, 1950, 1975; Dark, 1995; Drewitt, 1999; Lucas, 2001; Moore, 1976: 193; Renfrew and Bahn, 1991), particularly with regard to his achievements in furthering knowledge of Roman archaeology in Wales and England, more recent academic publications have provided critiques on specific aspects of Wheeler's ideological and interpretive approach (Boast, 2002; Chadha, 2002; Paddayya, 1995). As stated at the outset of this thesis, there has to date been no detailed, critical examination of Wheeler's tenure at the National Museum of Wales or his lasting impact on research values and intellectual worldviews in the context of Welsh archaeology. This chapter has sought to illuminate and critically analyse selected aspects in the small window of time Wheeler spent at the Museum from 1920 to 1926 and to demonstrate his professional and ideological imprint on the Archaeology department. It aims to provide an additional layer in current critical histories of the National Museum and a new contextual perspective on existing understandings of Wheeler's mindset, philosophy and practice, both within Welsh archaeology and beyond.

[1] Victor Erle Nash Williams, a Roman specialist and originally a student of Wheeler's at University College, Cardiff, was Keeper of Archaeology from 1926 until 1957. (Nash Williams was promoted after Sir Cyril Fox was made Director of the Museum in 1926). A strong research tradition in Roman archaeology has continued in the National Museum through the work of curators such George C. Boon, Keeper of Archaeology from 1976-1987 and Richard Brewer, currently Keeper of Archaeology at the National Museum since 1996.

[2] Wheeler became Keeper of the Museum of London after leaving the Directorship of the National Museum of Wales in 1926 (see Hawkes, 1982: 99-100).

[3] During the seven week period the exhibition was open to the public, it was visited by 10,500 people (National Museum Court & Council Minutes, 1924-1925: 73).

[4] This is cited from the BBC4 documentary Archaeology – Digging the Past, broadcasted on 21st October 2007. See also Glyn Daniels's (1954) article Archaeology and Television in Antiquity 28 (112): 201-205.

Chapter 7
Cyril Fox and the Search for Humanity in the Archaeological Record

'For it is the acts of living men and women that we archaeologists write up: the choosing of the site, the toil in a circular trench, the access to the centre across this, the digging of the pit: thereafter, the ground well trodden in the dance, the clouds of charcoal-dust enveloping the performers, who may have been the whole community of full age, the pottery and tools dedicated by the living to the use of the dead, wherever they may be – and so on: Life and Death, with the accent on the former.'

(Fox, 1959: 185)

Introduction

The previous chapter highlighted the changes in the ideological outlook and research interests in the National Museum's Archaeological department under Mortimer Wheeler. These institutional changes occurred within the wider context of British archaeology in the early 20th century as it developed towards a more professionalised academic practice. Chapters 5 and 6 identified the shift from romantic nationalist histories of the Welsh past in the late 19th century to the culture-historical, imperially situated archaeology of the 1920s at the Museum during Wheeler's tenure. The rationale within the Archaeological department continued to be the further study and elucidation of Wales's past in the context of British and European archaeology. The remit of compiling a national archaeological collection necessitated more excavations, surveys and acquisition of material culture. The work undertaken by Cyril Fox, Wheeler's successor as Keeper of Archaeology from 1924 and Director from 1926, ranged from an archaeological survey of Offa's Dyke (Fox, 1926a, 1927, 1928a, 1929, 1930, 1931), an archaeo-geographical study of the environment of prehistoric Britain (Fox, 1932), to excavations of Bronze Age burial sites in south Wales (e.g., Fox, 1926b, 1938, 1941a, 1941b, 1943). Thereafter other Museum archaeological staff continued to work on large-scale projects: V.E. Nash Williams's excavations of the Roman legionary fortress at Caerleon (1929, 1930) and W.F. Grimes's publications *The Megalithic Monuments of Wales* (1936) and *Guide to the Collection Illustrating the Prehistory of Wales* (1939).

The structural framework and research ethos of the Museum, the Archaeological department and its curatorial staff continued to steer Welsh archaeology along this

trajectory. The archaeology of Wales was situated within a macro-worldview, which compared and contrasted sites, material culture and social practices against other archaeological cultures, object typologies and chronological transitions. The Archaeology department, and by extension, the National Museum, continued to document the archaeological record of Wales within a national, rather than nationalistic, remit (Champion, 1996: 132).

However, in striking contrast to the contemporary conventions of culture-historical discourse adhered to by Mortimer Wheeler, Nash Williams and Grimes, was the emergence of an interpretive, humanistic dimension in Cyril Fox's work (referred to in Chapter 6, see pages 170-172). This creative thread ran throughout Fox's publications during the 1920s and 1930s, alternately emerging, disappearing and resurfacing. Fox's unique approach was significant not only within the broader archaeological scene at this time, but also within the Welsh context, at a time when a new national institution and discipline was developing in an academic, representational and public sense.

This chapter examines selected archaeological publications written by Fox in order to explore aspects of an interpretive approach emergent in his work and in his active engagement with what Julian Thomas has called our archaeological imagination, through our being 'attuned to the world' (Thomas, 1996: 63).

Thomas argues that throughout daily life, humans 'grasp elements of the material world, and constitute them as evidence for past human practice' (Thomas, 1996: 63). He refers to the traces humans leave which signify both their presence and their past actions; wet footprints in a hallway, crumbs left on a kitchen table after plates have been cleared away, or a window left open (Thomas, 1996: 3). These trails of human activity may lie undisturbed, or may be discovered by others, who infer a range of meanings from these trace elements – whose footprints they were, where they were going and at what time, or why the window had been opened in the first place (Thomas, 1996: 3). Thomas's point is that such ephemeral or partial imprints ignite the imagination in an everyday context as people engage with the material world around them.

Drawing on theories from other disciplines within the social sciences, notably Gregory's *Geographical Imaginations* (1994) and Wright Mills's *Sociological Imagination* (1959), Michael Shanks (2004) has written that an archaeological imagination exists within us all because it frames our experiences and interactions with the world. In Shanks's view, it articulates the reality that archaeology is not a discrete and esoteric producer of knowledge but is 'a range of aspirations, desires, dreams, attitudes, stories that share an archaeological character...locating senses of identity in remains of the past' (Shanks, 2004: 1, see also Shanks, 1992).

It may also be argued here that elements of Fox's style and writing represent an early precursor to transformative theoretical developments in post-processual archaeology with regard to ideas of personhood (Hamilakis et al, 2002; Fowler, 2004); 'Being-in-the-world' (Heidegger, 1962; Thomas, 1996); and explicitly interpretive archaeologies (i.e. Hodder, 1982, 1986, 1992; Shanks, 1992; Shanks and Tilley, 1987a, 1987b, 1994; Tilley, 1991, 1993, 1994; Thomas, 1991, 1996).

Experiencing the past

Cyril Fox was one of the few archaeologists of his generation to articulate his own experience – and enjoyment – of excavation and discovery: 'In...fieldwork I took great pleasure. I like measuring and plotting complex structures as their pattern develops: I like the isolation of a thinly populated countryside to which such work usually takes the archaeologist, and the friendly contact with countrymen' (Fox, 1959: xiii).

Fox's recollection (1955) of the Offa's Dyke excavation and survey (see Fox, 1926a, 1927, 1928a, 1929, 1930, 1931) fused the uniquely personal as well as professional aspects of fieldwork:

'...it provided the finest possible introduction to Wales and the Welsh and largely accounts for the affection I have for both. Many a good friend, many a remembered acquaintance, did I make in manor houses and farms, in the fields and on the moors...I, a lowlander born and bred, learnt in this undertaking the profound physical and cultural significance of a Border where highland and lowland meet, visually, and by talking to men and women who had always lived in the 'debatable land.'

(Fox, 1955: xxiv)

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Fox wrote warmly of his assistant, the archaeology graduate Dudley W. Phillips: 'His fiddle always accompanied him on these expeditions, and his talk, interlarded with appropriate music (either invented or drawn from memory) will be remembered, I am sure, in many an inn parlour on the Welsh border till our generation passes away' (Fox, 1955: xxv). It was during the survey of Offa's Dyke in Flintshire that Fox discovered and was able to excavate the Bronze Age burial at Ysceifiog circle and barrow (Fox, 1926b). The excavation of the site was a revelation for him, both in terms of the things and layers it revealed but also the redolent power of the archaeology itself in evoking images of the past: '(It) revealed a possibility that I at least had failed to envisage in this connection; the recovery of the living ritual, the actual procedure of burial...Here, as it seemed to me, I had attained a glimpse of the thought and action of our Early Bronze Age forbears' (Fox, 1950: 54). Fox's reminiscences, which contain a nostalgic quality, express the experiential, human dimensions of archaeological practice which become obscured beneath the conventional modes of discourse.

Imagined Worlds, Forgotten People: excavating the Ysceifiog Circle and Barrow, Flintshire

The article written by Fox (1926b) in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* summarising his excavation of an early Bronze Age[1] barrow burial situated in the village of Ysceifiog, north Wales might, at a cursory glance, appear to resemble any other excavation report found in the Welsh antiquarian journal during the early 20th century. The prominent archaeological discourse produced a convention of broadly descriptive accounts with an emphasis on the end in sight: the material finds, and put simply, how and where they were found. Fox's article is selected for examination here, not because it represents something wholly unique (it does, after all, adhere to the recognisable style and conventions of the period), but because it breaks the mould in its inclusion of an actively interpretive approach in offering an understanding of the meaning of the site, its associated material culture and an imagined vision of the people who built it.

Drawing on the idea of earthworks as protective enclosures for 'sacred areas' from examples at Stonehenge, Avebury, Arbor Low and Stennis in Orkney, Fox imagined that the Ysceifiog circle was constructed 'to define and delimit an area sacred to the

memory of the individual buried in the barrow, who was doubtless a person of special importance' (Fox, 1926b: 49).

To put the article into its full context, it is important to outline the excavation process itself, as described by Fox. The discovery of the Ysceifiog circle and barrow and the subsequent decision to excavate was made during a survey of Offa's Dyke, undertaken by Fox as a research project of the Museum Archaeology department beginning in the summer of 1925 (Fox, 1926a, 1927, 1928a, 1929, 1930, 1931; also Fox, 1955). Fox had chosen to begin his survey of the Dyke from its northern tip in Flintshire (Fox, 1955: xxiv). Fox and his team followed its path to the parish of Ysceifiog, where the Dyke's course was interrupted by a large, circular mound and embankment. At first Fox thought the barrow might be contemporary with the Dyke but it proved to be a much earlier monument (Fox, 1926a: 10). Writing some years later, Fox wondered whether the site had assumed a 'sinister reputation' among local people as 'an abode of spirits', who were therefore unwilling to disturb it (Fox, 1959: 10).

Little was known of the provenance of the Ysceifiog monument; the site was referenced in W. J. Hemp's[2] List of Tumuli, published in the Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies (1923, nos 229A and 295A), but was not recorded on the Ordnance Survey Map of the Flintshire area (Fox, 1926b: 48).[3] In Fox's view, the connection between the Dyke and the Ysceifiog circle and barrow gave them a special interest (Fox, 1926b: 48). Fox described the Ysceifiog site as:

'a circular bank of slight profile (ranging from a few inches to 3ft.) with external ditch, the overall diameter being from 315 to 365 ft., and an earth mound, 68ft. in diameter and 4ft. high, placed eccentrically within the Circle...the earthwork is sited on approximately level ground, but with minor irregularities, especially on the east side of the Barrow.'

(Fox, 1926b: 48-49)

Excavation of the barrow itself (see figures 7.1 and 7.2) revealed its structural composition: the lower slopes of the southern side were constructed using 'a yellow, sandy clay, containing the occasional pebble overlaid by 9 to 12 in. of humus' while the floor was made of a thin band of 'clayey soil, orange grading into brown,

evidently representing the old turf line; the subsoil (unlike that laying to the north and south of the barrow in which Offa's Dyke was cut) was gravel' (Fox, 1926b: 52).
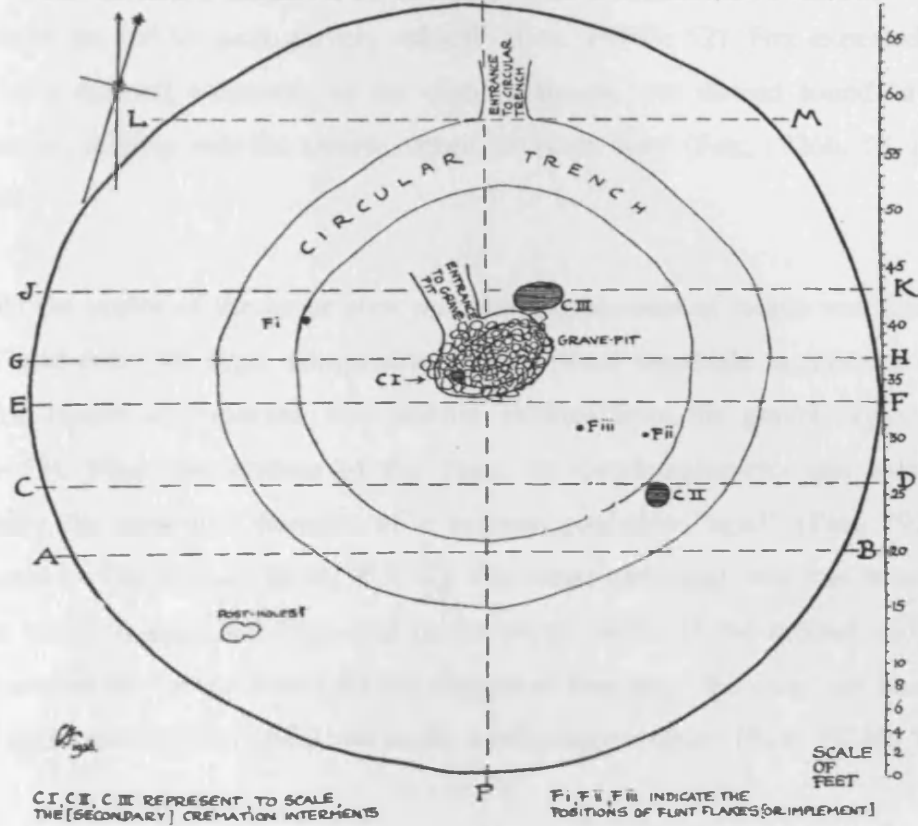

Figure 7.1: Ysceifiog Circle and Barrow (Fox, 1959: 4).

Figure 7.2: Ysceifiog barrow, half excavated (after Fox, 1959: xvi).

Once the barrow had been turned over from end to end, a circular trench some 43ft. in external diameter was revealed, 'concentric with the base-plan of the mound...the central space under the barrow thus defined by the trench was almost exactly 31ft. in diameter...the trench was 3ft. deep; the sides were as nearly vertical as it possible for a trench to be, cut in such gravely subsoil' (Fox, 1926b: 52). Fox expected to find traces of a defined causeway in the circular trench, but instead found 'a sloping passageway, leading *into* the trench...from the north side' (Fox, 1926b: 53, italics in original).

Towards the centre of the inner area, an oval-shaped cairn of stones was found, 10ft by 8ft, and over 2ft high, comprising entirely local materials: a mixture of large boulders, lumps of limestone and smaller pebbles from the gravel deposits (Fox, 1926b: 53). Near the surface of the cairn, an overhanging-rim urn was buried, containing the cremated remains of a woman, probably "aged" (Fox, 1926b: 76, comments by Sir Arthur Keith, F.R.S.). Fox concluded that this was a secondary deposit, since 'a hole had been dug in the exact centre of the mound and the urn placed among the stones found by the diggers at that spot; the cairn not being quite central to the mound, the burial was on its south-western slope' (Fox, 1926b: 53-54).

The removal of the cairn was completed without any indications of a primary burial, but further excavations revealed a large, oval-shaped, deep grave pit, measuring over 9ft by 7ft, its axis pointing N.E. - S.W; it was deeper than expected, and nothing was found until it had been dug down 5ft, below what would have been the original ground level (1926b: 54). This exposed:

'...a horizontal layer of fine white sand, the upper limit of which was sharply defined. On this sand a thin discontinuous layer of a curious substance having the appearance and consistency of porridge...was present...When the whole area of the floor of the pit had been opened up it was evident that a complete skeleton had been originally present. The position of the head was fixed up by the presence of teeth and of a curving line of this gelatinous material (representing the cranium); the thicker portions marked the position of certain of the larger bones.'[4]

(Fox, 1926b: 54)

The remains of the skeleton covered an area of 5ft by 2ft 3ins in the centre of the grave pit. The body had been laid out in line with the long axis of the grave, S.W. - N.E. and there was evidence that some of the bones of the skeleton lay across others

(Fox, 1926b: 54-59). Analysis undertaken by Prof. Arthur Keith of the lower jaw teeth suggested that they were probably those of a man between 35-45 years of age (Fox, 1926b: 59).

Surrounding the remains of the skeleton was 'a black layer' of what was imagined to be a border of turf or fern; around the body itself the layer was thin, but around the head area it was considerably thicker (Fox, 1926b: 59). In addition, in the grave pit there was a clearly defined space marked out around the body, in which, Fox estimated, up to five people could fit. No evidence of finds or grave goods was found (Fox, 1926b: 59-60). Fox believed this inner area represented 'the Holy Place' where 'only the elect in whose hands the carrying out of the last rites might set foot there' (Fox, 1926b: 68). Fox argued that the design and construction of the site enabled the choreographed ceremonial interment of 'the Chief or the Priest', the 'tribal ruler who combined secular and intercessory functions' (Fox, 1926b: 67). The bank and ditch, Fox supposed, were designed to demarcate access according to social status, and to exclude 'the common folk...who had no right on holy ground, not from sight of, but from participation in the ceremonies' (Fox, 1926b: 67-68).

In terms of dating the site, Fox concluded that the evidence of the primary burial alone was insufficient to determine an absolute chronology, but the inclusion of the secondary cremation in an overhanging-rim urn predicated the cremation culture of the middle Bronze Age (Fox, 1926b: 60). He concluded that the primary inhumation must necessarily be late Neolithic or early Bronze Age (Fox, 1926b: 60; see also Fox, 1950, 1959). Moreover, Fox viewed the Ysceifiog barrow as carrying over the traditions of Neolithic burial practices, particularly in its absence of any grave goods; consequently, he dated the construction of the barrow at around 2000BC (Fox, 1926b: 64).

At this point Fox called upon his own archaeological imagination (Thomas, 1996: 63-64) to transform the excavated remains of a burial site into a human story: a scene of theatre and drama.[5] Fox declared that the growing interest shown by the public in the early history of Wales represented the impetus for, as well as the primary beneficiary of, creative interpretations of the past rather than the archaeological academe (Fox, 1926b: 68). Apart from the functional role of the archaeologist in 'measuring,

weighing, restoring the dry bones' (Fox 1926b: 68), Fox insisted that their duty was to 'breathe into them the breath of life. It is a demand entirely justifiable. Our ultimate aim must be the reconstruction of the life of man in Wales in prehistoric times' (Fox, 1926b: 68). It seems this was a practice Fox sought to revive elsewhere: in a conversation with Fox's son (see Scott-Fox, 2002: 98-99), W.F.Grimes[6] recalled their joint excavation of Corston Beacon, an early Bronze age cairn in Pembrokeshire (see Fox and Grimes, 1928b), carried out in the late summer of 1927, at which Fox apparently offered an improvised, embellished interpretation of the site to visiting journalists. It culminated in the *Western Mail* newspaper headline:

'From out of the Past! Remains of man 3500 years old...the skeleton of a warrior chief, who forgotten by his tribe two or three hundred years before Tutankh-Amen (sic) was laid in his tomb in Egypt, has been excavated...the large capstone...was raised exposing – what no man had seen for 3500 years – the bones of a man in a coffin formed of upright slabs of red sandstone. By his side was a beautiful riveted bronze dagger...the man who owned it probably controlled the peninsula south of Milford Haven and was buried in an eminence overlooking his domain.'

(cited in Scott-Fox, 2002: 98-99)

The imagined scene Fox created at Ysceifiog has an immediate impact on the reader:

'On a certain day, probably nearly four thousand years ago, five old men stood silent and motionless on a level sward facing a circular trench; behind them was an empty grave-pit. They were looking to the north. The country on which their eyes rested was parkland-pasture, heath, patches of elder, hazel and alder scrub, with birch, thorn and willow, and groves of oak. No mines scarred the landscape and evidences of agriculture were very scanty, but familiar trees and the unchanged contours of the hills closely link their day to ours.'

(Fox, 1926b: 71)

What is particularly interesting is the Western-paradigmatic, Christian-oriented approach which is revealed in Fox's creative interpretation of the burial scene at Ysceifiog. There are echoes of the Victorian funeral, in which displays of ostentation and ceremony contrast with the restrained behaviour of the mourners (see Parker Pearson, 1999: 40; Curl, 1972; Morley, 1972; Tarlow, 1999).

Fox perceived a naturalised simile between how past peoples perceived and encountered their surroundings with the modern experience: '...familiar trees and the

unchanged contours of the hills closely link their day to ours' (Fox, 1926b: 71). It seems Fox wanted to overturn ideas of the past as unimaginably distant and removed, instead implying the concept of a more tangible, familiar past. The five male characters who stand 'silent and motionless', regarding 'the country on which their eyes rested' (Fox, 1926b: 68-71) become real, living beings:

'Between this group and the curving bank of a newly erected earthwork (the Circle) two lines of men faced inwards on a broad passageway leading from the entrance to the Circle to the entrance to the Trench which fronted the waiting Elders. Outside the Circle a numerous folk was gathered, men, women and children.'

(Fox, 1926b: 71)

The narrative tone creates a solemn atmosphere, where people have gathered outside the circle, just as onlookers might congregate outside a church or chapel to watch a funeral procession. Then, 'moving down the slope of the hill on the north side of the circle a body of men is visible, four of whom bear a burden' (Fox, 1926b: 71). Perhaps the 'burden' refers only to the actual, physical load resting on the shoulders of those carrying the body (the pallbearers?), although there is the suggested sense by Fox that an emotional burden is palpable. In Fox's narration, the procession and the movement of the actors involved, is choreographed to be deliberately slowed, formal and 'dignified': 'These step slowly into the sacred area; passing along the processional way between the two lines of privileged spectators they reach the Trench...the bearers turn to the right and immediately hand over their burden to the waiting group within; then, with their fellows, they take station outside the Trench' (Fox, 1926b: 71). Now the body has been passed over to the inner sanctum, the 'sacred' space into which only the selected and privileged few are permitted. This becomes the unknown, the other: 'The Elders...descend with their burden into the grave-pit. A long time elapses. They are almost invisible, but the spectators know that they have placed the chieftain on his bed of white sand and are performing the traditional and essential rites of which they alone know the secret' (Fox, 1926b: 71).

This vividly described episode evokes the visual impact of a cinematic scene, but seems soundless and subdued in Fox's perception. What of the sensory, aural experiences of the ceremony? – the vitality of the scene, the collision of sounds, smells, voices, music and dance, the visceral inter-connectedness of bodies in the space? Fox surmised that five people (five men, it was assumed) could fit comfortably

into the grave-pit, as if notions of designated personal space that befit a 'dignified' burial ceremony were viewed as important. There is also the issue of bodily-engagement, of physical contact between the living (and indeed the dead) as the bearers pass the body onto the 'Elders'.

The ceremony Fox envisaged is predicated on the notion of mourning – that the dead cannot be revived physically, and though commemorated in perpetuity, real time moves forward without them; that the future is always before us, and so the human gaze is fixed forwards. This is centred on Western ideas of a simultaneous, linear time, which emerged during the Enlightenment in Europe as 'the idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogenous, empty time...a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history' (Anderson, 1991: 26; see also Thomas, 1996). Hirini Moko Mead (1985, 1986) and A.T. Hakiwai (1996) have both highlighted the epistemological as well as methodological challenges inherent in liaising with a Western-orientated museum profession to produce the Te Māori exhibition of taonga Māori (treasured Māori objects) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 1984.[7] Hakiwai writes of his community's collective, active links with their past, not only through memories, stories and objects, but also through meaningful, continual contact with their ancestors (Hakiwai, 1996: 52-54). In Māori culture, people stand with their backs to the present and the future and face the past, in active social interaction with their ancestors, where objects operate as timeless 'anchor points' in continuing dialogues (Mead, 1985: 13).

Finally, in Fox's narrative the Elders emerge from the inner area: 'ceremonial lustration is performed in sight of all; orders are given for the filling in of the grave and trench, for the erection of the cairn and barrow, and the sacredness of the site in perpetuity is affirmed. The funeral feast, proclaimed on behalf of the dead man's successor, is then held. The people disperse.' (Fox, 1926b: 72).

Fox appeared to regard the process of the filling in of the grave-pit, and the construction of the barrow and cairn, as embodying the same measured, reverential displays of behaviour as those exhibited in the burial ritual itself. 'Though simple,' he wrote, 'it is a noble monument' (Fox, 1926b: 72):

'First of all the grave-pit was filled in; with stiff clayey sand on the west side, with gravel interspersed with thin bands of grey clay on the east side...but when the cairn was piled on top of it the pressure caused the a certain amount of settlement...the construction of the Barrow was then proceeded with. It was as symmetrical as were the constructions which it covered. This suggests the whole represented a single careful design carried out under supervision according to plan...The trench was then filled up, mainly with gravel, and the mound was broadened by the addition of a belt of the same gravel all round. This new material was evenly and symmetrically disposed and formed the most striking constructional feature of the mound...It is likely that importance was attached to the regular disposition of the excavation material...thus Trench, Grave-pit and Barrow were wrought with equal care.'

(Fox, 1926b: 72-74)

While Fox demonstrates that the re-constructive process shows elements of a visible choreography – of applied patterns in terms of layering and the use of materials – emphasising the notion of prescribed construction methods detracts from the idea of the dynamic, corporeal actions of the people involved. Lesley McFadyen (2006a, 2006b) has offered a new perspective to the way in which we think about the complex social dimensions of building technologies in the past. Her interpretation centres on the idea of material culture as architecture and the concept of 'quick' and 'slow' architectures. McFadyen focuses specifically on interpreting Neolithic long barrow sites in southern Britain, but her approach is illuminating in offering an alternative view of the post-burial constructive processes at Ysceifiog. In McFadyen's (2006a) concept of quick architecture, people's physicality is bound up with, and intrinsic to, the process of building, in which there is bodily engagement with one another and with materials. People become technologies themselves as they act as human buttresses, supports and wedges and where the often un-rhythmic rapidity of the construction process necessitates ever-changing visceral responses. As McFadyen writes, 'with quick architectures, bodies were made to matter through a negotiation of junction with other materials or living things' (McFadyen, 2006a: 130). Furthermore, that 'these connections were an important part in how people changed the ways in which they understood their worlds – who they were...what they could become' (McFadyen, 2006a: 128).

The reconstructive process at Ysceifiog, involving the filling in of the grave-pit and the building up of layers, as well as the movement and transferral of soil, gravel and stones, was a considerable task encompassing a wide area. It can be reasonably

inferred that the entire process involved a significant degree of human exertion and investment of time. It is not intended here to challenge the idea suggested by Fox that the Ysceifiog barrow and circle was constructed according to particular design parameters, but rather to emphasise the active presence of human energy and agency within this process: the physicality of the scene, the bodily toil of moving, displacing and altering materials either with tools or with bare hands; the tensions and dynamics stimulated through people being together, engaging with the materials around them through sensory touch. This links in with McFadyen's theory of people becoming articulations of technologies.

The excavation of Ysceifiog and the discovery of the burial clearly had a personal resonance for Fox, and he expressed the profound impact the experience had on him:

'The dignity and the simplicity of the excavations and constructions associated with the burial place, and the evidence of forethought and design which they offered, impressed me greatly during the three weeks I was engaged in their examination. I believe that the requirements of ritual will ultimately be found fully to account for the curious features of this and other contemporary monuments.'

(Fox, 1926b: 68)

It appears as if Fox, in wanting to connect and empathise with these past people and to see them as human, had to (unconsciously or otherwise) recast them as *humane*, the antithesis of the archetypal 'savage' of distant antiquity. In order to extract them from the unknowable 'other', Fox actively *civilizes* these characters, imbuing them with a sense of emotional dignity. Within this re-casting, everything which symbolises 'dignity' is directly expressed in the physical actions of the people present, from the silence of the onlookers, the careful treatment of the body and the meticulous, respectful approach displayed in the post-burial reconstruction of the site. The actions themselves imply a collective self-possession. Once assimilated within this modern perspectivism, it becomes difficult for Fox to imagine these characters responding to death, and their approach to the treatment of the body, in any way other than the culturally normative scene of his creation. Fox's approach to understanding the social meaning of the burial and ceremony encompasses what Bloch has referred to as the traditionalist anthropological idea that death unsettles social order, and that funeral practices 'are ways of transcending individual death to maintain the continuity of that order' (Bloch, 1982: 218).

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Yet Fox himself inferred that the filling-in and mound construction was carried out soon after the burial ceremony and that a nearby heap of dirty gravel was utilised in part to fill the trench, to augment the mound, and in the grave-pit (Fox, 1926b: 73). These actions might suggest that the reconstructive process and the materials selected – or at least certain elements – were, for reasons deemed appropriate, carried out at a more heightened pace and intensity than was exhibited in other actions.

Significantly, Fox stated that his decision to include a reconstructive interpretation in an otherwise conventional excavation report should be encouraged – and justified – so long as 'the imaginative picture is dissociated from the exact record' (Fox, 1926b: 68), entailing a supposed separation of the objective mind and the subjective imagination. It also assumes that the archaeologist-as-scientist can consciously delineate his/her practice from external processes and that archaeologies are produced in empirical isolation from the socio-political environment. Above all, Fox's statement amplifies the realisation of the archaeologist as the subjective reader of the past. In practice, 'we do not passively observe (or) contemplate the world...we create it. Science cannot, therefore, be separated from society' (Hodder, 1996: 3). Moreover, that any interpretation of the past is created within the present: 'archaeology in this sense is a performative and transformative endeavour' (Shanks & Tilley, 1994: 104).

Evidently, the methodological impasse highlighted by Fox's comment caused a generation of culture-historical archaeologists to treat any ideas of reaching into the minds of past people with a high degree of caution (for instance, Childe, Hawkes and Piggott). Glyn Daniel argued that archaeologists can only study the 'cutlery and chinaware of a society' (Daniel, 1962: 132, cited in Hodder, 1996: 112), not the complex social connections between people and material culture. Stuart Piggott maintained that the archaeologist can go so far as to examine the material traces of a burial site, or even to theorise on the processes of the ritual, but not beyond (Piggott, 1959: 95, cited in Hodder, 1996: 112). In light of this, it was less problematic to talk of grand themes of diffusion in prehistory and of the 'ladder of inference' (Hawkes, 1954).

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For processual archaeologists, the notion of an interpretive approach was fundamentally flawed, particularly with regard to recasting archaeology as 'a science with a capital S' (Flannery, 1973: 53, cited in Gamble 2001: 34). Ian Hodder offered a way forward through a conceptual framework which acknowledges the inherently subjective condition of archaeological research and centres on the innately complex connections between people and material culture (Hodder, 1996: 16-18). He argues that 'past and present, object and subject, text and context constitute each other and bring each other into existence. We need to chart a way between objectivism and subjectivism' (Hodder, 1996: 163). Since there is a 'dynamic relationship between an object and its context' (Hodder, 1996: 15), Hodder advocates a contextual archaeology involving 'thick description' which emphasises the need to understand the meaning of an object by placing it more fully into its various contexts (Hodder, 1996: 15). This approach facilitates interpretations which incorporate 'self-reflexity and dialogue' (Hodder, 1996: 197) and recognises the multi-vocality of the past as an experience, concept and discourse.

The Land and the Sea: the Personality of Britain

The Personality of Britain, written by Fox as an address to a meeting of the International Congress of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Societies in London in 1932[8] and subsequently published by the National Museum of Wales (Fox, 1932)[9], represents a significant contrast to the imaginative, almost poetic, interpretation of Ysceifiog. Fox utilised research from physical geography, ecology and the natural sciences and overlaid these theories onto an archaeological approach in an attempt to highlight the inter-connected duality of the natural world and 'Man' throughout (pre)history. The aim of the book was, as Fox stated, to 'express the character of Britain in prehistoric and early historic ages, and to indicate the effect of the environment she afforded on the distribution and fates of her inhabitants and her invaders' (Fox, 1932: 9). Elsewhere Fox stated that he viewed the work as 'a convenient summary of a variety of influences, internal and external, which helped to mould the successive cultures of the Highland Zone; and because it surveys the relations of that Zone (which includes Wales) to the rest of Britain, to Ireland and to Western Europe generally' (Fox, 1932: *preface*).

Since part of the book focused on Wales as 'an integral part of the Island of Britain' (Fox, 1932, *preface*), Fox anticipated that it would serve as a useful reference guide for scholars visiting the National Museum's Archaeological Galleries. Fox believed that the book would '(place) the Welsh antiquities therein displayed in their true perspectives as elements and manifestations of widespread cultures' (Fox, 1932: *preface*). Significantly, as Director of the National Museum, Fox put forward his proposal for the complete reorganisation of the galleries in order to emphasise the dichotomy between the natural world and 'Man' over time and space:

'The visitor...should visit Geology first to see what is known of the structure of the Welsh hills and valleys; the flora and fauna of Wales should then be studied successively in the Departments of Botany and Zoology. Passing thence to Archaeology the evidence of the life of Early Man in Wales would be examined, and the tour would be fitly completed by an examination of man's higher achievements, in technical skill linked with imagination, in the Art galleries.'

(cited in *National Museum Minutes of the Court and Council*, 1926-1927: 4)

Fox was convinced that future research in Welsh archaeology should be placed within an environmental context. Fox subscribed to the idea that climate and geography were the principal controls in shaping the social evolution, movement and diffusion of peoples and cultures in the past:

'The distributional aspect seems to me to offer...the freshest angle of approach; my underlying theme then will be the dominance of environment and the constancy of control exercised by place over circumstance; the time is coming when we shall find it possible to foresee, I believe, as though men were puppets and not creatures with free-will, the areas wherein the bearers of intrusive cultures will first be found.'

(Fox, 1934a: 6-7)

In *The Personality of Britain*, Fox plotted an overview of human habitation in Britain from the Neolithic (he considered the Neolithic period to be 2500BC – 2000BC, Fox, 1932: 8) to the 'Dark Ages', finishing at 1000 AD. Fox used a broadly geographical approach and took a topographical perspective in demonstrating how the landscape and climate of Britain shaped, influenced and even actively controlled the temporal movements and habitation patterns of humans over time. Fox believed it was possible to use distribution maps in order to determine the environmental factors which conditioned the movement, lives and activities of early peoples (Fox, 1932: 9). The

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primary supposition of his study was that the geographical form and position of Britain determined to a large extent the nature of population distribution throughout time, from influencing early settlers to controlling the invasions led by the Roman emperor Caesar (Fox, 1932: 13).

Fox's approach centred on the premise that the 'the structure of Britain has exerted a powerful influence on her prehistory' (Fox, 1932: 77). This included Britain's entire position and form, its climate and natural environment. Fox suggested that topographically Britain could be separated into two parts south of the Forth-Clyde isthmus: into the Highland Zone to the west and the Lowland Zone to the east (see figure 7.3). Fox imagined a diagonal line from Teesmouth (Durham) to Torquay (Devon) which 'roughly indicates the boundary of these two areas. In the Highland Zone, high plateaux and mountains are characteristic; in the Lowland Zone, such hills as occur are usually of slight elevation' (Fox, 1932: 77). Therefore, in Fox's view the geographical formation of Britain rendered it either as accessible to, or as a barrier to, travellers, traders and invaders throughout history, and influenced directly the introduction of new cultures and ideas. The lowland area on the eastern side of Britain, open to the continent, was 'easily overrun' by invaders (Fox, 1932: 77) and so:

'In the Lowland...new cultures of continental origin tend to be *imposed* on the earlier or aboriginal culture. In the Highland, on the other hand, these tend to be *absorbed* by the older culture. Viewed in another aspect, in the Lowland you get *replacement*, in the Highland, *fusion*. It is true enough that a given culture brought across the Straits of Dover or the North Sea tends to manifest itself less distinctively in the Highland than in the Lowland, more feebly, and...later. But the power of absorption, the tendency to fusion, in the Highland, may at times results in greater *continuity of cultural character*, or it may provide the west with a cultural character of its own.'

(Fox, 1932: 31, italics in original)

Fox cited the endurance of the Celtic languages as highlighting the continuity of established cultures in the Highland Zone (Fox, 1932: 33). Fox concurred with Mortimer Wheeler's view (see Chapter 6) that social practices – particularly burial customs – in Bronze Age Wales were not hugely different from the Neolithic period and that barrow burials continued for a long time after the introduction of Christianity (Fox, 1932: 33). Fox declared that Wales's geographical inaccessibility determined

the survival of 'her Brythonic speech' and indicated the Highland Zone's 'power of resistance to Lowland influences' (Fox, 1932: 33).

Figure 7.3: Map reproduced from *The Personality of Britain* (after Fox 1932: 26).

Fox emphasised the dominant element of individuality in the Highland Zone: '...though the first rush of an invasion may result in the establishment of a uniform culture in Lowland and Highland, the Highland tends to assert itself and to oust or transform the intruding elements. This is well seen in the Early and Middle Bronze

Age. The beaker culture is established along the eastern seaboard of the Highlands as well as in the Lowlands; but within a few centuries differentiation between the two areas is again apparent, the distinctively Northern type of ceramic, the food vessel, having been evolved' (Fox, 1932: 33).

In *Personality* Fox employed an essentially chronological approach and utilised theories from other disciplines to emulate an empirical overview of the archaeological record: material culture as population distribution, pots instead of the individuals who made them and sites instead of sociality. However, there are hints of an active engagement with the past when Fox places himself *within* the process of imagining:

'We can, of course, without any research, realize certain aspects of Britain in the distant centuries with which this surveys deals. We can see, as the shipmen who brought the megalithic culture saw, the height and range of the western bastions, as where the great scarp of the Cuillins flanks Skye; and we can, like them, enter deep estuaries which reflect blue hills and green forests on mile after mile of their mirrored surfaces. Britain to-day, as then, presents every type of hill outline and valley contour, of ravine and mountain scarp; her lowlands then as now were well watered and tempting alike to the keeper of sheep and the tiller of the ground.'

(Fox, 1932: 9)

The culture-historical paradigm and scientific rationale removed the potential for foregrounding the individual in discussions of the ways in which past peoples engaged with and negotiated the environment. Hodder (1996) has observed that the emerging trend in archaeological discourse in the early 20th century set itself apart from the often romantic and personalised writings of antiquarians, where the convention was to place the author actively within the discussion or event in question, whether it was the moment of discovery or recollection of the experience. By the time Fox was writing, the research environment within archaeology had evolved 'towards more distant, abstract, decontextualised accounts' (Hodder, 1996: 268). In increasingly descriptive archaeologies, the use of personal pronouns and the active inclusion of the author diminished (Hodder, 1996: 268).

Hodder argues that the removal of personal pronouns in favour of an objective and depersonalised stance negated the potential for multiple, open-ended readings: 'there (could) only be one possible interpretation. Indeed, admitted interpretation...largely disappeared behind objective description' (Hodder, 1996: 268). It seems that in

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adhering to a new discourse in which the first person is removed from the text and where the author takes an 'objective' approach with a dispassionate, detached gaze towards the past, empathy, engagement and the creative process of imagining become disconnected. In this way, people are represented through material culture deposits, complex communities as plotted occurrences on maps, and human movement as sequential distribution. In other words, where are the people in *Personality of Britain*?

Indeed, the title *Personality of Britain* at once implores us to assume an interpretive perspective, evoking ideas of the multifaceted self, of unique traits, characteristics, experiences and histories; but also, beyond that, to expand this self-conscious stance as a basis for exploring the complex archaeologies of past peoples living on an island across time. Carl O. Sauer, in his study entitled *The Personality of Mexico* (1941), drew on Fox's thesis as a starting point and wrote that the 'designation' of the word personality as applied to a selected part of the world entails 'the whole dynamic relation of life and land' (Sauer, 1941: 353). Sauer argued that 'it does not deal with land and life as separate things, but with a given land as lived in by a succession of peoples, who have appraised its resources for their time in terms of their capacities and needs, who have spread themselves through it as best suited their ends, and who have filled it with the works that expressed their particular way of life' (Sauer, 1941: 353). Yet, in the *Personality of Britain*, the deterministic and essentialist perspective assumes a dichotomy between 'Nature' and 'Man', where humans encounter the temporal physical world around them in prompted, almost reactionary ways. The emphasis on the nature-culture dualism, the methodological approach which endeavours to produce archaeologies using objective, known data in terms of assemblages and distributions, compresses the manifold archaeological record into a gradual process of cultural-evolution. For instance, Fox argued that by the Anglo-Saxon period, humans were demonstrating 'increasing command over nature' (Fox, 1932: 70). The increased use of more accessible, arable lowland in valleys during the Anglo-Saxon period was, Fox argued, part of an 'economic evolution' (Fox, 1932: 70): 'it is archaeologically possible to see the Saxon farmer at work, turning the valley bottoms into water meadows, the forest margins into arable and pasture' (Fox, 1932: 71). Fox cited the construction of Offas's Dyke in the wooded lowlands of Herefordshire as evidence of the gradual progression of human ingenuity over natural obstacles (Fox, 1932: 71).

It would be a generalisation to assume that *Personality of Britain* was received uncritically by the contemporary archaeological community, but undoubtedly it made a lasting impression as a striking new piece of cross-disciplinary research. Clearly, it was seen by some as having the potential to broaden the parameters of the culture-history framework in British archaeology. As perhaps is the inevitable case with any new approach with impact, its theory and applicability were subsumed, reconciled and expanded on by others across the board, causing Glyn Daniel to write of its 'canonization' as 'Fox's law' (Daniel, 1963: 9). Aileen Fox expressed openly the influence of *Personality of Britain* in shaping her own individual approach to demonstrating the inter-connectedness of topography and early settlement distribution and movement patterns in Neolithic and Bronze Age Glamorgan (see A. Fox, 1936).

The human geographer H. J. Fleure, whose study of Wales and the distribution of its population was acknowledged by Fox himself as being influential in the shaping of his own thinking, declared that Fox, had made a 'speciality of interpretative thought and is one of those students who looks beyond questions of evolutionary typology into problems of distributions, which he relates to geographical studies in a way that has made him one of the foremost of archaeological geographers' (Fleure, 1932: 412). Fleure saw *Personality of Britain* as contributing to an advancement of 'scientific humanism' and believed that Fox should expand his original thesis towards 'a general philosophical interpretation of British life' (Fleure, 1946: 340). R.E. Mortimer Wheeler regarded the publication of *Personality of Britain* as representing a 'landmark in synthetic prehistory' (Wheeler, 1963: 4). The geographer E.G.R. Taylor, writing in 1943 as a reviewer in *Antiquity* for the 4th publication of *Personality*, recalled that its first publication was a shock for many in the academic community because 'there appeared, from the pen of a non-geographer, a geographical interpretation of the prehistory of Britain' (Taylor, 1944: 103).

E. Estyn Evans took direct inspiration from *Personality of Britain* for his study *The Personality of Ireland: Habitat, Heritage and History* (1973), placing an emphasis on the 'regional personality' of Ireland (Mannion, 1975: 472), using research grounded in physical and human geography and interlacing approaches from archaeology, ethnographic and folklore studies to express 'the extent of cultural continuity from prehistory to the present and the extent to which indigenous Irish tradition has

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continued to assimilate new cultures, transforming them into something distinctively Irish' (cited in Mannion, 1975: 472). M.W. Barley dedicated his book *The English Farmhouse and Cottage*, a study of the vernacular domestic architecture of England from the Middle Ages until the 17th century to Cyril Fox, using both the distribution patterns put forward in *Personality of Britain* and the Highland and Lowland Zone theory as a basis for his study (Barley, 1961).

This may go some way to explaining why criticisms of *Personality of Britain* as being essentialist and geographically deterministic did not emerge until many years later. Iorwerth Peate, formerly an assistant in the Archaeological department of the National Museum and latterly Keeper of the Welsh Folk Museum, wrote a critical piece in 1961 questioning what he called the 'arbitrary binary classification' of existing divisions between Highland and Lowland areas of Britain (Peate, 1961: 251). Peate asserted that the original thesis of an upland-lowland distinction originally put forward by Sir Halford Mackinder[10] was intended as 'a broad physical-geographical classification', particularly since he wrote primarily as a geographer about physical geography (Peate, 1961: 251). Peate's criticism of the adoption and application of the theory in *Personality of Britain* was that:

'Fox...used it not as a self-evident physical-geographical principle, but as a decisive factor in the movement of prehistoric invaders and their cultures, and indeed as a basis for contrasts between cultural fusion and replacement. The application of the broad generalizations of physical geography to particular human problems is always dangerous.'

(Peate, 1961: 251)

Peate contended that the revival and re-application of Mackinder's original thesis of a highland-lowland divide produced 'a conception of Britain which may be fairly called a false dichotomy', masking connections and processes which could be explained by human politics rather than geography (Peate, 1961: 251).

More recently, Gordon Barclay (2004) has emphasised the impact of what he calls the 'regionally restricted vision' in reviving and applying the idea of a physical and thereby invoked cultural division between the so-called Highland and Lowland areas of Britain (Barclay, 2004: 157). He argues that the principal themes of *Personality of Britain* continued to shape the basis and focus of archaeological research in prehistory

until the 1970s, and remain an accepted dictum for some contemporary archaeologists, most notably Burl's (2000) *The Stone Circles of Britain, Ireland and Brittany* (cited in Barclay, 2004: 157). Furthermore, Barclay argues that Fox's perception of the chalk plateau of Salisbury Plain and the White Horse Hills as being the cultural core of the Lowland Zone had a contributory effect on the wider conceptualisation and privileging of prehistoric Wessex as an 'archetypal landscape' (Barclay, 2004: 158). In *Personality of Britain*, Fox had argued that 'the most complete and full manifestation of any primitive culture entering eastern or southern Britain from the continent will come to be in the Lowland Zone. The centre and focus in the Lowland Zone of such a culture will be the Salisbury Plain region because it has the largest area of habitable country, is close to the south-coast seaports...and is the meeting point of the (natural) traffic routes of the Lowland Zone' (Fox, 1932: 79).

Glyn Daniel defended emerging criticisms of *Personality* by reasoning that the broad classifications set out by Fox were adopted 'as immutable facts' by others (Daniel, 1963: 8). Daniel saw Fox's thesis as a pioneering attempt to address the ways in which the physical personality of Britain influenced human history and development (Daniel, 1963: 9). Daniel believed that Fox provided archaeologists and historians alike with 'new ways of thinking about early Wales, ways grounded in the geographical approach' (Daniel, 1963: 21-22). Mortimer Wheeler argued that *Personality* was, as a broad synthesis, subject to modification over time, but he maintained that 'it remains a pattern and stimulus; it has inspired emulation as far afield as India'[11] (Wheeler, 1963: 4). Bruce Trigger has since argued that, despite criticisms of the overly deterministic nature of Fox's approach, *Personality of Britain* nonetheless 'established beyond doubt the value of a geographical approach to history' (Trigger, 1971: 322).

In the closing stages of *Personality of Britain* Fox sketched a brief interpretive narrative of a person from the past. He envisaged a trader in iron and bronze, living in 500-400 BC at the dawn of the Iron Age. Fox rarely identifies 'him' as an individual, but rather his referencing is more towards the collective: 'the trader', 'the iron-using invader' or 'our Lowlander' (Fox, 1932: 82-83). Fox imagined this person 'coasting along the beaches and the cliffs of southern Britain' (Fox, 1932: 82), seeking a safe and accessible place to land. Fox portrayed much of southern Britain at this time as

densely forested, apart from 'the downs and heaths which here and there touched the sea or navigable rivers, and where the overseas adventurers beached their oaken ships, were the terminals of far-reaching stretches of open and semi-open country, grassland and parkland' (Fox, 1932: 82). It was these areas of the Lowland Zone which 'nourished much of the human life of the time' (Fox, 1932: 82). Fox evoked a romantic scene of settlement and domestication: 'here were flocks and herds and patches of corn, groups of thatched huts with trails of smoke...' (Fox, 1932: 82). The open country allowed Man to move freely 'above the environing forest, and his eye ranged over wide spaces' (Fox, 1932: 82). Lowland Britain, Fox believed, 'took shape as an environment in which Man's life was canalized, and movement shepherded, along belts of open country which, here expanding into wide acreage, there contracting into a narrow ridge, and occasionally gapped by river valleys, ended either at the sea or in the mountains; the memory of movement along them took the form of a succession of great landscapes – the Weald of Sussex seen from the South Downs; the lower Severn and the hills of Wales from the Cotswolds; the Fenland from the Ickfield Way; the Vale of Trent from Lincoln Edge' (Fox, 1932: 82).

Fox interpreted parallels between how modern people use the same cognitive processes and frameworks of reference in remembering and re-tracing routes as did prehistoric people: 'Just as we moderns, reviewing our journeys...along valley roads, identify our routes by the towns passed through, so they moving along the now deserted ridgeways, recalled the forms of the higher hills...their landmarks on long journeys' (Fox, 1932: 82). He imagined the damp oakwood forests as representing a dark, unknowable other for prehistoric people, who 'shunned and feared' these unexplored expanses roamed by wild animals (Fox, 1932: 82).

Finally, Fox sees his character, 'our Lowlander', starting on a long journey bound for the west, towards the moorland and mountainous landscape of the Highland Zone, which became wilder as valleys narrowed and forests seemed more impenetrable (Fox, 1932: 83). In a poetic close, Fox watches the figure reach the end of his journey, yet with the contemplation of new experiences beyond: 'our traveller steered his way along the ridges, past barrow and cairn and stone circle, by the sight of successive mountain tops. So guided he reached his goal, the shore of a forgotten harbour, and saw against the sunset – like blackbeatles – the barks of the Irish' (Fox, 1932: 83).

Undoubtedly the publication of *Personality of Britain* through the auspices of the National Museum and its positive reception contributed to the enhanced reputation of the institution's proclamation of being both a field museum and a research centre; similarly, the success of *Personality* placed Fox, and, by association, the National Museum, at the forefront of British archaeological research. The collaboration between other staff in the Museum – notably H. A. Hyde, Colin Matheson and Dr F. J. North on botanical, zoological and geological aspects of the book – indicates an emphasis on inter-departmental discourse. The overall style and focus of *Personality of Britain*, with its macro-scale view and largely deterministic approach to establishing the dominance of geography, climate and the natural world over the lives and pathways of past humans, exemplifies many elements of the culture-historical framework. Within this perspective, people are represented by artefacts and determined by distribution patterns, new cultures are imposed or absorbed by waves of diffusion and the autonomous, agency driven individual is wholly absent. Arguably, *Personality of Britain* represented an attempt to assimilate methodologies from other disciplines in a bid to demonstrate archaeology as an objective, empirically modelled approach to understanding the past.

Rediscovering the archaeological imagination

Fox's interpretive touches reappear particularly in the late 1930s and early 1940s, when he undertook a series of excavations of Bronze Age burial sites in the Vale of Glamorgan (Fox, 1938, 1941a, 1941b, 1943; see figure 7.4).

Amid description of the excavation process, Fox would pause to offer brief interpretive remarks. His articles tend to be peppered with these unexpected vignettes: this is illustrated in his account of a Bronze Age cremation at Pond Cairn, in the Vale of Glamorgan (Fox, 1938; see figures 7.5, 7.6 and 7.7). Pond Cairn was 'a hybrid construction; an earthen centre surrounded by a stone ring...erected over the ashes of an adult personage of the Middle Bronze Age' (Fox, 1938: 156).
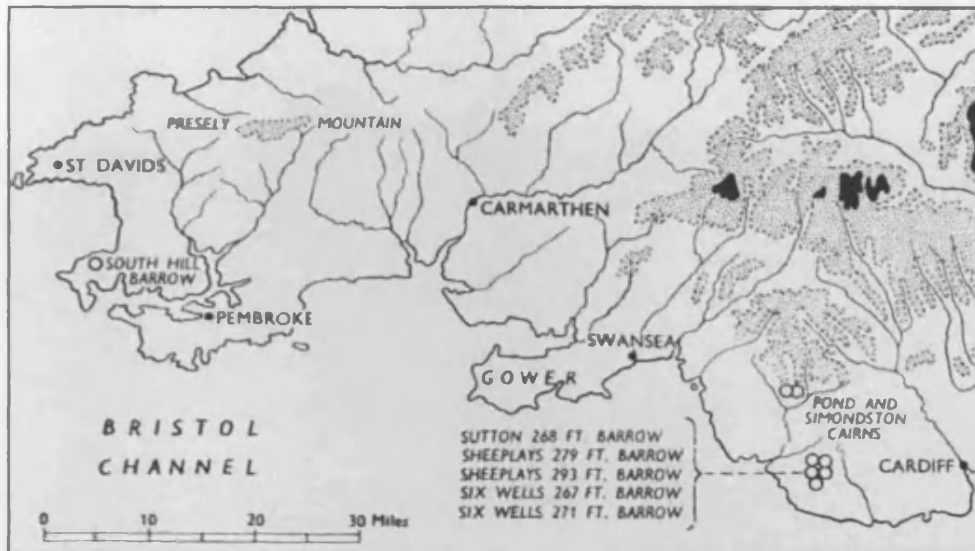
Figure 7.4: Map showing the location of the Bronze Age barrows excavated by Cyril Fox (after Fox, 1950: 56).

The majority of the article focused on presenting the details of the excavation until Fox ventured into 'a measure of interpretation' (Fox, 1938: 156). His reconstructive narrative is worth citing in detail:

'The site chosen for the burial-place of the high personage to be commemorated was first dedicated. A child's body was burnt; a pit was dug and the burnt bones, washed clean of charcoal, were then scattered in it; at the same time the pit was being filled with stones. It was then sealed with clay. The body of the dead personage was subsequently burnt (not on the site)...The inurned ashes of the dead, having been placed in position, with a slab of pink stone atop, ritual was performed which involved filling the bottom of the basin with charcoal from the pyre...A small stone-heap and a turf-stack...were raised in rapid succession over and around the urn...A complete ring of stones...was then built (and) the second phase of the ritual was then carried through; wood ash was scattered on the turf-stack and the floor of the interspace between stack and ring; the trodden floor of the interspace suggests a ceremonial movement of men round the stack.

The third phase is perhaps the most interesting of all; it seems to represent the dedication of the monument as a whole. The inner face of the cairn ring...was broken into at one point where a shallow pit was dug. The point selected was on the side of the monument (the east side) from which...the ashes of the dead man were brought. A sloping ramp was made in place of the vertical wall-face of the cairn ring...and a small hole dug at the eastern end of the shallow pit. This was dedicated by fire, much charcoal...was thrown in to it and a fire was lit...Then an offering of the fruits of the earth – sheaves of wheat and barley with their associated weeds from the cultivated fields of settlement – was placed on top of the mass...One slab of stone, selected for its light colour and pattern, was placed in the centre of the mass of charcoal and cereals. The whole offering was then carefully enclosed, weighted down, and covered high with stones. The ceremonies...which may have taken a year or more to complete, were thus ended.'

(Fox, 1938: 157-158)

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Figure 7.5: View of Pond Cairn after complete clearance, looking towards north-east (after Fox, 1959: 100).

Inevitably there are aspects of Fox's interpretation of the social practices at Pond Cairn which can be criticised: the way in which he features adult males as the officiators at the event; the implied religious tempo of the burial and construction process; the idea that aesthetics determined the selection of stones; or that people in the past attached the same meaning and significance to the cycle of the seasons. These criticisms relate also to his early interpretation of Ysceifiog circle and barrow. Nevertheless, Fox remained engaged with the archaeology principally and he allowed the material culture, rather than any other schema, to ignite his imagination:

'The cumulative importance of the human burial (sacrifice?) in the rite with which the work was begun, the employment of the symbol of fertility in the rite and the choice of...corn in particular for the act which must be regarded as the final dedication, cannot be ignored...The observed facts suggest that the person whose ashes were in the urn occupied a position of exceptional importance...Was he a 'corn-king' – an embodiment of the corn spirit?'

(Fox, 1938: 158)

It seems that Fox retained the human connection throughout the excavations and subsequent publications during this period. On occasion, his language reveals an emotional subtext: this is clearly evident in his own reaction to barrow Sutton 268, containing the burial of a young male: 'seldom is the known setting of such an interment so spacious, so dignified, so monumental' (Fox, 1943: 100; figure 7.8). Fox sought the significance or symbolic meaning of structural features as they were discovered; for instance, the ramps constructed to provide access to the turf stack

surrounding the mid to late Bronze Age cremation burial at Sheeplays 293, Llantwit Major, gave a greater degree of control to those individuals involved in the ritual process (Fox, 1941a: 112), while Fox interpreted the space of time between the building of the turf barrow and the final addition of the soil barrow as an intentional, symbolic rite: 'a ritual interval between, let us say, seed-time and harvest' (Fox, 1941a: 113). The archaeology suggested that the top of the turf barrow had started to fall in during this interval, and Fox believed it was at this stage that 'living men again entered the dwelling of the dead. They trampled the whole floor, except the dome, packing the whole interior of the hut with turves in the process of creating a turf stack' (cited in Fox, 1950: 59).

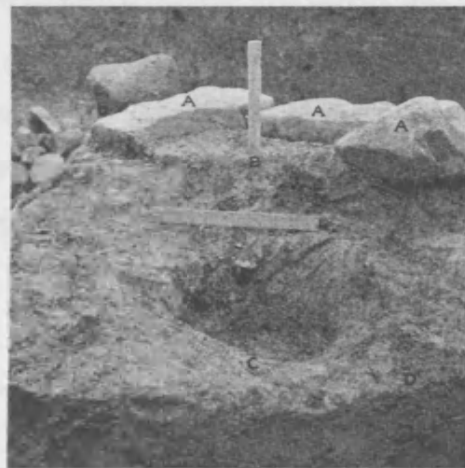Figure 7.6: Pond Cairn – the central stone heap and basin (after Fox, 1959: 100).

Figure 7.7: Pond Cairn – the central burial basin (after Fox, 1959: 100).

Figure 7.8: Sutton 268 – skeleton in grave (after Fox, 1959: 53).

Fox imagined the burnt remains of a young male to be:

'A well-born youth who lived close to a marshy flat (and) died about 1300 B.C.; his cremated remains, placed in an overhanging rim-urn, were interred on the adjacent upland. An earth-dome marked the site; it was carefully built, and at...the final stages of its construction tree branches were laid, criss-cross fashion, on it...Close around the dome, ritual acts were performed, as evidenced by stake-holes and hollows which seem to have played no part in subsequent events. A circular hut with wattled walls and a ring of internal posts was built round the interment; the hut was symbolic not functional.'

(Fox, 1941a: 114)

Fox went on to speculate whether the ritual huts or 'mortuary houses' (Fox, 1959: 177) and circular rings constructed at Sheeplays 293, 279 and Six Wells 267 (see figure 7.4) were symbolic references to the ways in which Bronze Age people *lived* as well as died: 'We are apparently dealing with a group community with ideas about the after-life as an existence not unrelated in character to the Bronze Age setting which the individuals composing it would be leaving. Of particular interest to the archaeologist is the incidental indication of the scale of their houses in this world – since no Bronze Age settlement in Wales has as yet been recognized' (Fox, 1959: 177).

Fox's reconstructive interpretation of the ritual pit discovered in the centre of the excavated barrow at Six Wells 271 was possibly his most dramatic creation. The site was one of three Bronze Age turf barrows, all surrounded by stake circles and located in close proximity to one another in Llantwit Major, Glamorgan (see Fox, 1941b). Six Wells 271 was a substantial construction; Fox's excavation recorded that it measured 90 feet in diameter and more than 6 feet in height at the centre point; the turf mound contained a centrally located ritual pit, surrounded by a stake circle (Fox, 1941b: 142). A stone cist containing the cremated remains of an adult had been placed on the line of the stake circle intentionally, breaking its continuity (Fox, 1941b: 149-150; see figure 7.11). Fox was struck by the precision of the layout; the ritual pit was located in the exact centre of the both stake circle (50 feet in diameter) and the centre of the barrow (90ft in diameter) (Fox, 1941b: 158). The condition of the soil layer surrounding this area indicated an absence of trampling or pressure from human feet; Fox interpreted this as the 'untrodden area' where trespass by men was avoided (Fox, 1941b: 144).
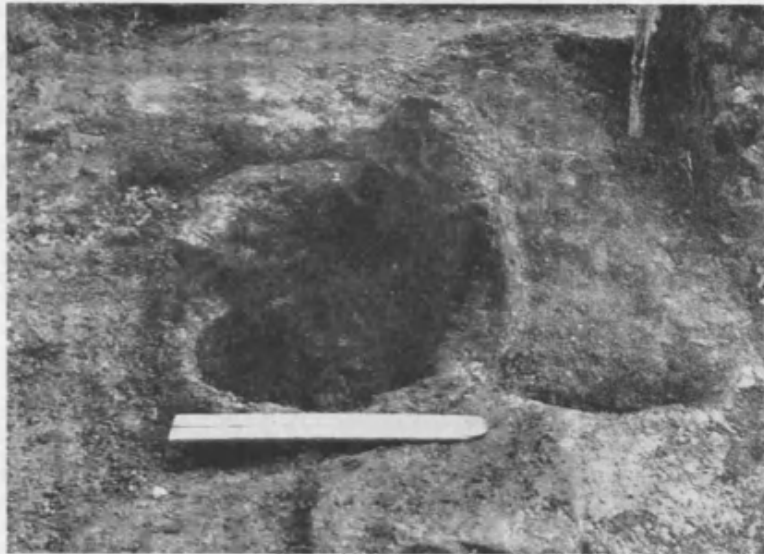
Figure 7.9: Six Wells 271 – the 'ritual pit' (after Fox, 1959: 164).

In Fox's view all this was highly significant: the primary cause behind the construction was the ritual pit itself: 'the barrow was...centred on the shrine, not the burial' (Fox, 1941b: 159). He suggested that the ritual pit might have been used as a kind of portal medium, through which offerings to and communications with godly powers could be achieved:

'We receive unexpected and welcome evidence that the stake circle was in effect the precinct wall of a shrine or sanctuary; burial would pollute an area 'occult, withheld, untrod', and could not be permitted. A votary, marginally interred, might however expect favour from the Power to whom the pit was dedicate, or with whom contact was established by libations, food-offerings, or other ritual centred on the pit.'

(Fox, 1941b: 158)

Drawing on ancient Greek mythology and the idea of contact with gods, Fox suggested that the ritual pit in Six Wells 271 was 'a vehicle by which a chthonic Power was approached, consulted or appeased. One may further emphasize the classical parallel by stating that we may have here a barbarous version of the sanctuary with its τέμενος' (Fox, 1941b: 159).[12] In Fox's interpretation, the contemporaneous nature of the burial process and the construction of the circle related to the importance of the area containing the ritual pit: 'Contact with the Power in the pit...is likely to have been sought and achieved on the death of the individual in question' (Fox, 1941b: 159). However, the ephemeral nature of the 'shrine', used only

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once, indicated to Fox that 'the Holy place with the τέμενος necessarily ceased to function when the barrow was built' (Fox, 1941b: 159). He imagined that the floor space of barrow 271 was not the 'scared site of a tribe' (Fox, 1941b: 160) but rather was 'a secular plot of ground wherein priests or shamens, on behalf of an important local family with over-estuary connexions, who had suffered bereavement, performed ritual acts by virtue of which contact was obtained with an underworld Power and a place provided for the ashes of the dead in the shadow of Its presence' (Fox, 1941b: 160).
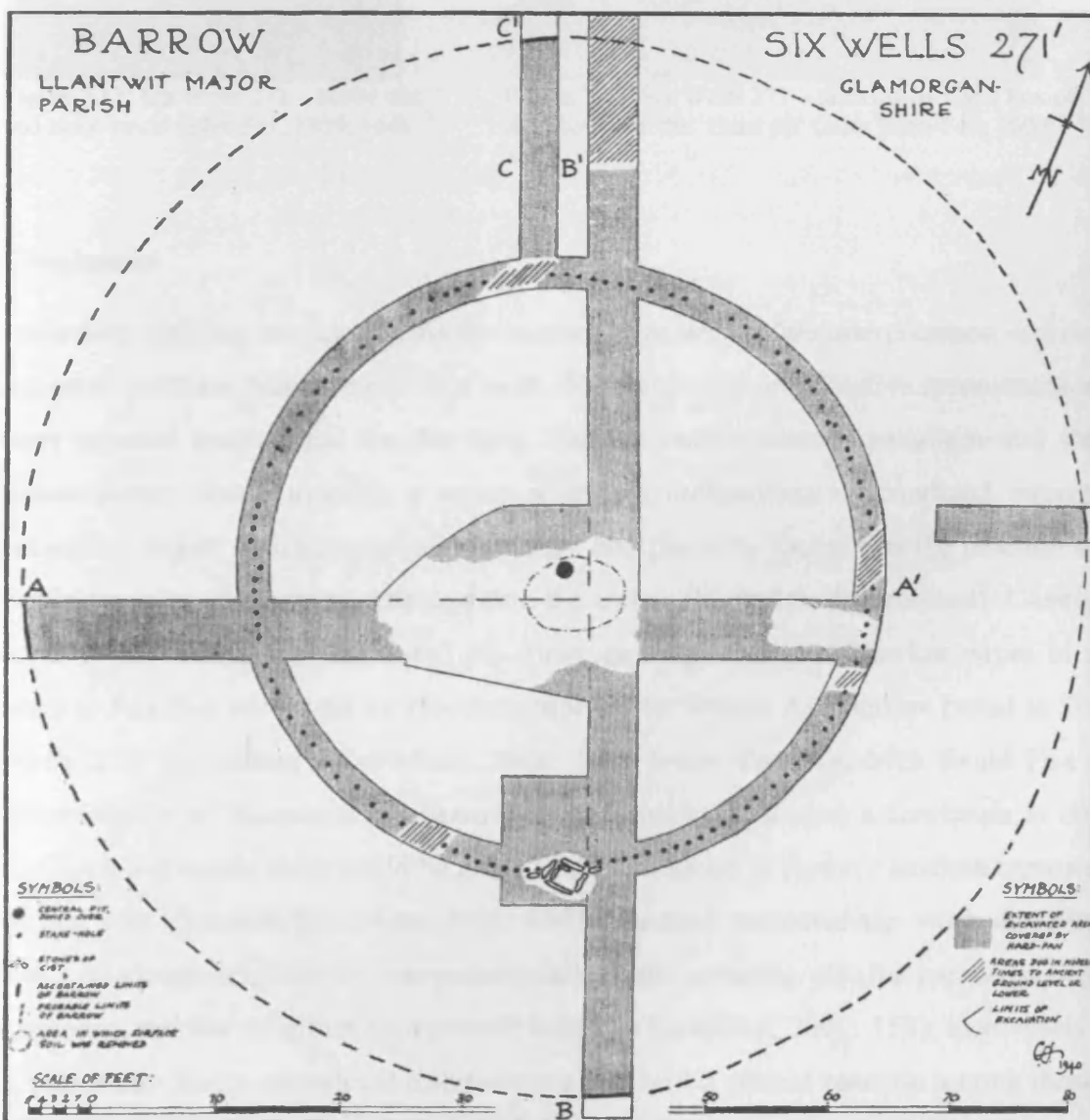

Figure 7.10: Plan of Six Wells 271 drawn by Fox (after Fox, 1959: 158).

Figure 7.11: Six Wells 271 – burial cist and stake circle (after Fox, 1959: 164).

Figure 7.12: Six Wells 271 – drawing by Cyril Fox of the libation in the 'ritual pit' (after Scott-Fox, 2002: 160).

Conclusion

Invariably there are a range of possible reasons as to why active interpretation was not a central, permanent feature of Fox's work. His forays into imaginative reconstruction were unusual and unique for the time, but the culture-history paradigm and the contemporary strive towards a more scientific archaeology discouraged overtly subjective modes of interpretation. Certainly one plausible factor was the reaction to Fox's reconstructive interpretation within the archaeological profession itself. Clearly some of his contemporaries found his ideas exciting: Jacquetta Hawkes wrote in a letter to Fox that she found his reconstruction of the Bronze Age barrow burial at Six Wells 271 'enthralling' (Scott-Fox, 2002: 160), while Tom Kendrick found Fox's interpretation of Sheeplays 293 barrow equally striking: '(it was) a revelation to me that such a dramatic story could be made of a small group of poverty stricken barrows of that sort' (cited in Scott-Fox, 2002: 158). Kendrick lamented the work done by Fox's predecessors, who in comparison lacked his 'amazing gift for reconstructing ceremony and the religious background' (cited in Scott-Fox, 2002: 158). Conversely, it seems that Fox's attempts at interpretation received a critical reaction among those archaeologists who saw such interpretive practice as contrary to rational, objective research; Hubert Savory, a member of the curatorial staff in the department of Archaeology at the National Museum, recalled that by 1938 'stories were being told of Fox behaving or speaking rather strangely or being too subjective in his

reconstruction of Bronze Age burial ceremonies' (cited in Scott-Fox, 2002: 147). Savory, however, took the view that 'creative imagination has a role in prehistoric research even if one's reconstruction ultimately turns out to be not quite correct. Without it progress towards understanding the remote past is slower' (cited in Scott-Fox, 2002: 147).

Writing some closing remarks in his book *Life and Death in the Bronze Age* (Fox, 1959), a collected work which gathered together selected extracts from his earlier excavations in Wales, Fox reconnects with the imaginative mind. In an attempt to visualise aspects of life in the Bronze Age, Fox created a convivial scene where different families came together 'to feast with friends, or indeed strangers, and to take part in or to witness – if need be – such ceremonial observances as cannot but be associated with the structures we study' (Fox, 1959: 185). Fox evoked a sense of the dynamic, an awareness of the performativity (Butler, 1993) immanent in the gathering together of people and he appeared to conceive of these past people as intrinsically social beings. He communicated the idea of the archaeologist as the vicarious medium through which the imprints and actions of past people are both rediscovered and revived:

'For it is the acts of living men and women that we archaeologists write up: the choosing of the site, the toil in a circular trench...the ground well-trodden in the dance, the clouds of dust enveloping the performers, who may have been the whole community of full age, the pottery and tools dedicated by the living to the use of the dead, wherever they may be – and so on: Life and Death with the accent on the former.'

(Fox, 1959: 185)

This chapter has explored the presence of an interpretive thread imbedded within the wider, encapsulated culture-historical framework of Fox's approach to the study of archaeological record in Wales and beyond. It was significant that Fox's research was conducted and presented to the academic archaeological community through the auspices of a newly established National Museum for Wales.

Finally, this chapter has highlighted the existence of such a distinctive perspective in juxtaposition to the dominant ideological concerns of the culture-history model in British archaeology during the first half of the 20th century.

[1] Fox supposed this as the approximate dating for the site (see Fox, 1926: 63-64).

[2] W J.Hemp was Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Wales.

[3] The precise co-ordinates given by Fox are: Lat. 53° 16' 2", Long. 3° 16' 19".

[4] Fox supposed that the condition of the human remains was caused by 'dissolution of the phosphate of lime in the bones...In some cases skeletons are said to have completely decayed away; but it is probable that a certain amount of the gelatinous portion of the bone remains for a very long period' (Fox, 1926b: 54).

[5] It should be acknowledged that Charles Scott-Fox refers to Cyril Fox's attempts at imaginative reconstructions of archaeological sites in his biography of his father's life (see Scott-Fox, 2002). Frances Lynch (1993) has also made reference to the originality of Fox's approach in the interpretation of Bronze Age burial sites in Wales.

[6] W. F. Grimes was Assistant Keeper in the Archaeological Department of the National Museum of Wales.

[7] The exhibition toured the U.S. between 1984 and 1986, moving to San Fransisco, St Louis and Chicago before travelling back to New Zealand. See:
http://www.teara.govt.nz/NewZealandInBrief/Maori/1/ENZ-Resources/Standard/2/en

[8] Cyril Fox, *The Personality of Britain* (a summary of) in *Proceedings of the Congress*, London, 1934, p 27-29.

[9] *Personality of Britain* was reprinted in 1933, 1938, 1943 (revised) and 1959.

[10] Peate is referring specifically to Chapter 5, 'The Uplands and Lowlands' in H. Mackinder, (1902) *Britain and the British Seas.*

[11] Wheeler is referring to *The Personality of India* by B. Subbarao, published in 1956 and 1958.

[12] In Greek to English this translates broadly as 'temple'. Translation by Dr. D. Fimi.

Chapter 8
Negotiated identities: imagined representations of Welsh life in the National Museum

Introduction

The last chapter examined Cyril Fox's theoretical approach to the archaeology of prehistoric Wales, which alternated between active humanistic interpretation and traditionalist culture history. The cumulative impact of R.E. Mortimer Wheeler, Fox and the influence of early 20th century archaeological paradigms of cultural diffusion brought the archaeology of Wales increasingly within the wider chronological framework of European prehistory. As the previous chapters have shown, this culturally comparative, rather than intrinsically national, approach to the past by British-orientated archaeologists left a structural imprint on the National Museum and on Welsh archaeology. In many respects, this research trajectory continued throughout the early to mid 20th century. However, within this overall scheme additional complexities emerged which challenged the established ideology of the Archaeology department. The beginnings of this shift occurred as Cyril Fox focused increasing attention on the Welsh folk material culture in the care of the Archaeology department. The contribution of the recently appointed curatorial assistant and overt Welsh nationalist, Iorwerth Peate, produced competing definitions of the study, purpose and meaning of the collections. The interpretation of Welsh history within a recognisably nationalistic perspective marked another transformation in the philosophy and identity of the Museum as it developed.

This chapter seeks to identify and deconstruct the cultural and political dynamics which underpinned the role and ethos of the Archaeology department in its development of a Welsh national folk culture collection. In keeping with the overall research premise of this thesis, it is argued here that critical attention must be shifted from constructing macro-scale museum histories towards tracing the active role of micro-processes within the institutional structure itself. This chapter shows that such influential elements are woven into the ideological fabric of a museum, shaping the interpretation of material culture, the construction of histories and expressions of national identity.

The Dynamics of Perception: Cyril Fox, Iorwerth Peate and the politics of valuing Welsh folk life, the past and the *gwerin*[1]

This section examines the professional, political and personal values behind the establishment and growth of a Welsh folk culture collection within the Archaeology department. In the course of analysis of this defining period in the Museum's identity and ideological development, it could be argued that the temptation exists to portray Iorwerth Peate and Cyril Fox as wholly opposed, disparate figures in this narrative: the ardent Welsh nationalist, writer and poet and the British-orientated English archaeologist. This would be a simplistic polarisation. In reality, their individual and combined approach to the folk material culture of Wales was more complex and engaged in a continual process of convergence and divergence as differing ideologies, politics and values were expressed.

While Keeper of the Archaeology department, Cyril Fox had sought provision from the Museum management in the beginning of 1925 for temporary exhibition space in which to display a selection from the large folk collections inherited from the Cardiff Collections (*National Museum Minutes of the Court & Council (NMMCC)*, 1924-25: 30a). The National Museum had acquired its collection of 'Welsh bygones' through the official transfer in 1912 of Cardiff Museum (also known as the Welsh Museum of Natural History, Art and Antiquities). Its origins can be traced back to the early 1890s, with donations from the Cardiff pharmacist Robert Drane, the artist T.H.Thomas (Arlunydd Penygarn), local Glamorgan historian T.C.Evans (Cadrawd), T.W.Proger and latterly John Ward, curator at the Museum (Bassett: 1966: 5; Bassett, 1984: 241). The Cardiff Collection of 'bygones' was subsumed within the new National Museum's Archaeology department under the curation of John Ward, who organised an exhibition of these 'Welsh Antiquities' in 1913 to illustrate 'old-fashioned life, and especially that of Wales – the life which is slowly and silently passing away' (*National Museum of Wales, Guide to the Welsh Antiquities*, 1913: 6).

Clearly, Fox viewed the folk collection as constituting a form of historical archaeology: as a material illustration of 'the life, social and economic, of the people of Wales prior to the industrial revolution' (*NMMCC*, 1924-25: 30a). Fox admitted that he was 'especially struck with the value of the material dealing with the life and work of the people' (*NMMCC*, 1924-5: 30a) and believed that an exhibition would be

'of the greatest interest to all classes of the community' (*NMMCC*, 1924-5: 30a). He suggested the idea of constructing a temporary gallery adjoining the Museum building on the basis that an exhibition 'would emphasise the national character of the Museum, and its importance to the Welsh people' (*NMMCC*, 1924-5: 30a, p 2).

The Museum Committee agreed to the scheme and the Bygones Gallery was opened to the public in 1926, by which time Fox had been promoted to the Directorship (NMMCC, 1924-5: 50). The Gallery (see figure 8.1) featured some 1,284 objects selected from the stored collections and chosen to illustrate domestic, social and agricultural life, folk crafts and customs (cf Peate, 1929a: 80): 'The exhibits of Welsh interest cover a very wide range, from a pin to a plough, a loom to a Lucifer match' (Fox, 1929b: viii). The particularly distinctive aspect of the Bygones Gallery was its recreation of a 'traditional' Welsh kitchen and bedroom, reconstructed from the array of material culture held in the Museum's store (see figure 8.2).

Figure 8.1: Bygones Gallery (National Museum of Wales, *Guide to the Welsh Bygones*, 1929: 151).

Figure 8.2: The 'Welsh Kitchen' in the Bygones Gallery (*Guide to the Welsh Bygones*, 1929: i).

The Bygones exhibition attracted significant public interest, receiving on average 600 visitors per day (*NMMCC*, 1925-26: 108). The enduring success of the Gallery prompted the Museum to publish in 1929 a *Guide to the Collection of Welsh Bygones*. This detailed guide was written by Iorwerth C. Peate, who had joined the Archaeology department as an assistant in 1927, having initially been passed over the year before in favour of W.F.Grimes (*NMMCC*, 1925-26: 95). Although Peate undertook archaeological duties, including writing up reports on recent finds for journal publication (e.g. Peate, 1925, 1926, 1930), he openly admitted that his increasing interest lay with the 'entrancing' Welsh folk life collections rather than prehistory (Peate, 1934: 210). In an address to the Royal Archaeological Institute, Peate declared that 'the study of folk culture is always a corollary and sometimes a corrective to archaeological research' (Peate, 1934: 210). In contrast to Fox, Peate perceived archaeology to be inanimate and unreachable, but saw vitality in folk objects, memories and stories: 'the skeletons of the past become sensitive living creations when the evidence of archaeology is substantiated by that of Folk Study' (Peate, 1934: 212). In Peate's perception, the study of Welsh folk culture could 'illuminate' (Peate, 1934: 215) archaeological studies of Wales. Fox, meanwhile, valued their material importance in documenting the chronological and cultural development of

human society in Wales over time. In an internal Museum report, Fox wrote: '...since the archaeology with which we are primarily concerned is the archaeology of Wales, and the ethnology of Wales, the two studies are closely related and the two collections form, chronologically speaking, an unbroken sequence' (*NMMCC*, 1932-33: 25).

Brought up in Welsh-speaking, rural Montgomeryshire, Peate was a graduate in human geography from Aberystwyth University. Throughout his undergraduate studies and later in his role there as lecturer in extra-mural studies, Peate was heavily influenced by the human geographer Prof H.J.Fleure, in particular his anthropological study of rural Welsh society and his emphasis on the unity of 'Man' and the natural world (Stevens, 1986: 51). Peate's external interests and ideological outlook would permeate aspects of his conceptual approach to the academic study of Welsh culture. Peate was a prolific writer and poet, a campaigner for the Welsh language and an active member of the National Eisteddfod. He was also one of the first members of the Welsh Nationalist Party, Plaid Genedlaeothol Cymru, founded in 1925, and took an editorial position in the production of the party newspaper *Y DDRAIG GOCH*, before becoming disillusioned with the political scene (Stevens, 1986: 55). [2]

Peate was subsequently promoted to the position of Assistant Keeper, responsible for Folk Culture and Industries as a sub-department within Archaeology. In 1936 it attained full departmental status and Peate was appointed to the Keepership (Bassett, 1984, 1990). As his curatorial standing increased, so did his creative control over the underlying representational messages contained within the exhibited displays of Welsh folk life. As will be shown, this extended to his ambition that the folk life collections should play a fundamental role in igniting a full cultural renaissance in Wales.

Peate's *Guide to the Collection of Welsh Bygones* (1929a) necessitated much descriptive account in documenting the seemingly vast assortment of objects exhibited or in storage, but this was juxtaposed with displays of expressive, romantic prose which flouted the conventional style of museum communication. In his opening sentence, Peate pronounced: 'Welsh culture like the group of European cultures to which it is akin is based to a large extent upon the love of craftsmanship, and

therefore the craftsman has always occupied an honourable place in Welsh life' (Peate, 1929a: 1). Elsewhere, he informed the reader that:

'...to understand Welsh life as it used to be and as it still remains in the least accessible of the rural areas, one must picture small communities of folk, inheritors of a complex tradition and a developed culture, living in separate units determined geographically, valley and moorland communities, the foci of which were the places of worship and the workshops of craftsmen.'

(Peate, 1929a: 4)

In contrast to Peate's idealistic eulogy was Fox's introduction, which stated the primary purpose of the collection:

'...to illustrate the life and work of the people of Wales before the centralized industrial developments of the 19th century in areas affected by these changes, and the still-existing environment of the people in areas as yet but little influenced by them. The characteristic feature of the cultural phase thus illustrated is that the everyday requirements of the people were mainly satisfied by local craftsmen, who either employed traditional forms and methods, or, in utilizing machine power to a limited extent, made a not inconsiderable industrial activity an essential and intimate part of the life of the countryside.'

(Fox, 1929b: xiv)

In keeping with the revivalist philosophies of the Arts and Crafts Movement, of which Fox was a supporter (see Scott-Fox, 2002), he wrote of the importance of sustaining the rural folk craft industries under threat in 20th century commercial society:

'The growth of centralized industry and of rapid transport is flooding the Welsh countryside with machine-made goods, of a class hitherto produced locally, exported from the great towns. These, though inferior, are too cheap for the local craftsman to compete with; their meretricious advantages, such as fine finish, attract the buyer; local work cannot find a market, and the makers move to the towns or seek other employment.'

(Fox, 1929b: xvi)

Peate would go a step further, making the impassioned declaration that the move to mass-production, 'in squeezing the rural craftsman out of existence has...impoverished the spiritual life of the people' (Peate, 1929a: 1-2). Peate believed that the wellbeing of self-sufficient communities hinged on their ability to produce (and consume) of their own free will through active involvement: 'The joy of producing the finished article – the yarn, and the dyed trimmed cloth of the weavers and fullers, the ploughs of the smiths and the chests and the tables of the carpenters' (Peate, 1929a: 3). In a separate article on Welsh rural crafts, Peate asked:

'...is there not a connection between the methods of labour and the condition of the soul? The smith making his complete plough, the carpenter his chair, were richer in experience than their sons who turn out nuts and bolts and chair spindles by the million...Is it, one wonders, part of the inexorable process which will ultimately metamorphose our community?'

(Peate, 1929b: 141)

For Fox, it seems that the Museum's folk life collections had a particular resonance not only as the material genealogy of decades of craftsmanship in Wales, but also as representative of a pivotal point in the changing configuration of society:

'To-day is, without any doubt or question, a turning point in our history, the parting of the ways. Before us lies the industrial era of highly developed and centralized industry based on cheap power. Behind us lie organizations of society which, whether communal or individualistic were based on the soil and on local production, and were largely or entirely self-contained...The breakdown of this social order, in so far as it is complete, represents therefore the end of an era so venerable that our minds can with difficulty grasp its antiquity, and the objects illustrative of its final phases demand more than a passing glance.'

(Fox, 1929b: xiv-xv)

Interestingly, his emphatic statement that the 'the National collection of "Welsh Bygones" should not be regarded merely as an aggregation of obsolete and obsolescent material' (Fox, 1929b: xiv) ascribed a living value to the objects beyond their artefactual status. Moreover, Fox endeavoured to balance his earlier comments on the perpetual decline of rural crafts, stressing that 'the picture of decay here painted is, fortunately, not without its highlights. In the less accessible parts of the country the old order still survives, and some skilled trades notably those of the wood-turner, the wheelwright, the smith, continue to flourish' (Fox, 1929b: xvi).

While Fox and Peate converged in their approaches to preserving and collecting folk culture and in their openly expressed wish of a revival in folk craftsmanship, the point at which they diverged was one of politics. As has been shown, both appeared enchanted by the idea of the rural craftsman embodying an organic union between 'Man' and the soil, of fusing self-sufficiency and function with innate artistry. The idealisation of pre-industrial craftsmen as spiritually-free individuals formed an elemental part of the writings of William Morris, from whom Peate, in particular, and Fox drew inspiration (see for example Peate, 1940, 1944 and Scott-Fox, 2002). Fox's motivation for establishing a national folk life collection reflected his interest in documenting past ways of life, as well as his wider interest in preventing the

destruction of the natural environment and areas of archaeological importance (see, for example, Fox's article 'The Preservation of Ancient Wales', 1930b: 75-8). It can be inferred that Fox's endorsement of, and support for, the revitalisation of rural and small-scale craft industries in Wales (and beyond) echoed his wider ideological concerns regarding the shifting nature of British industry, architectural design and the dominance of commercialised mass-production. As Fox wrote: 'It may be hoped that the growing appreciation among Welsh people of the value of the native tradition and of the native social organization may help to maintain these and other crafts...the existence of which in the future must, having regard to present-day tendencies, be regarded as precarious' (Fox, 1929b: xvi).

Peate's political aspirations for the development of a national folk collection encompassed far reaching aims for Welsh society. His expressed intention was that the preservation and public display of Welsh folk life would stimulate regeneration in the cultural life of the nation, thereby strengthening its expression of identity. In Peate's view, the Welsh nation had long been nurtured by a wealth of spiritual leaders 'sprung from the peasant-artisan class' (Peate, 1932: 294), who shared their knowledge of philosophy and art, religion and poetry (1932: 294). At the forefront of this source of 'rural wisdom' (Peate, 1929b: 140) was the craftsman, who 'has given our world many a bright hue...it is the craftsman in every age who keeps the nation's soul alive' (Peate, 1933: 86, translation cf Stevens, 1986: 19).

The idea of the craftsman as representing the spirit and core of Welsh social life was central to Peate's imagery of the *gwerin*. In stating that Welsh culture was 'based to a large extent upon the love of craftsmanship', the craftsman therefore 'always occupied an honourable place in Welsh life' (Peate, 1929a: 1). He argued that their folk legacy extended far beyond a material contribution:

'Much of that which is finest in any collection of Welsh bygones is the work of these folk, and it is always the fitness of each object for its purpose that first attracts attention, and then the quality of the workmanship; and in numerable cases, the worker in wood or leather or iron, able to produce with his own hand an object beautiful as well as useful has also been the philosopher the poet and the preacher in Wales.'

(Peate, 1929a: 1)

His writing carried with it the implication of exclusivity, that knowing and understanding Welsh culture demanded knowledge which was innate rather than acquired:

'Anyone who knows the *real* Wales well can estimate the importance of these craftsmen in the life of their communities, and with the decline of the demand for their services comes the disintegration of small societies of folk which are of real value in a civilized state.'

(Peate, 1929a: 1, my italics)

This approach was extended to those researching Welsh folk culture: Peate maintained that John Ward, the first curator of archaeology at the National Museum and responsible for the 1913 exhibition of 'Welsh Bygones' in Cardiff City Hall, was 'an Englishman who did not, and could not...understand the mysteries of Welsh culture' (Peate, 1948: 41). In Peate's view, Ward dismissed 'these "bygones" as old-fashioned things which had completely vanished...it was as an archaeologist that he looked at *our* culture' (Peate, 1948: 41, my italics). In contrast, Fox paid tribute to the 'devoted labours' of John Ward (Fox, 1929: ix). Taken in their specific context, Peate's comments were based on the importance of the requisite skills needed to study Welsh folk culture from an anthropological perspective, as well as detailed knowledge of the Welsh language and the variations in dialect. However, writ large, Peate's statement raises important questions in relation to the construction and interpretation of histories and identities within the National Museum itself. Would Peate have applied this distinction to other Museum departments and other aspects of Welsh culture? What of the political undertones present within an inter-mix of Welsh and non-Welsh curatorial and managerial staff, and what narratives and articulations of Welsh identity were formed through this negotiated process?

Peate's vision of the true *gwerin* of Wales was heavily romanticised and politically selective: the rural, monoglot Welsh speaking communities unaffected and untainted by the industrial process. He cited that a natural existence 'based on the soil' and the organisation of society into small, self-contained units had ensured a life of convivial dwelling, of 'mutual striving and labour with hardships shared, experiences compared and pleasures mutually enjoyed' (Peate, 1929a: 2). It was this supposedly harmonious way of living which ensured that 'the outlook of the people of the Welsh countryside has always postulated a natural courtesy and a willing kindness engendered and

fostered by the combination of labour and leisure for the benefit of the community' (Peate, 1929a: 2).

The daily life of subsistence in rural Wales becomes in Peate's portrayal the natural cycle of life, where people worked with the seasons, the soil and the land, and with the materials around them. The collective soul of the *gwerin* was nourished through simple and independent living, through religious worship and maintained in an equal balance of labour and leisure. The idyllic scene created by Peate was one of community and conviviality, where 'work and leisure, individual enterprise and mutual co-operation were combined to produce a rural polity where poverty was never extreme nor wealth out of all proportion to the needs of those who enjoyed it. Craftsmanship and agriculture, professional work and farming were combined, so that unemployment was never possible to a degree that made life precarious' (Peate, 1929a: 2). As a result, 'this social inter-dependence and economic co-operation manifested themselves in all directions...It is a natural result of the organization of life upon a basis which presumes the brotherhood of man and family as the unit of life' (Peate, 1929a: 2).

Peate's representation of the rural craftsman portrayed 'him' to be knowable and yet enigmatic; as the maker of functional objects he was the steady force in community life, but his artistry made him a mysterious, revered figure. 'Turn where you will in the history of our people and this intimate relationship between crafts and things spiritual is always conspicuous' (Peate, 1929b: 140). As Catrin Stevens (1986: 18) argues, Peate's reconstruction of Welsh folk life omitted suggestions of poverty or inferior craftsmanship. Instead, Peate chose 'to dwell panegyrically upon 'the glorious ability of ordinary men to create everyday, ordinary objects...wedding beauty of form and excellence of shape' (Peate, 1933, cited in Stevens, 1986: 18) with practical usefulness, of making everyday objects both handsome and functional' (Stevens, 1986: 18). Such an image of utopian living necessarily masked the alternative realities of a rural, self-sufficient existence: social deprivation, poor health, sickness and political oppression.

Stevens has also argued that Fox's description of the exhibited folk material, in which he stated that 'many of the objects are "Museum pieces"; others are common, in a

sense trivial, and without intrinsic value' (Fox, 1929b: viii), in effect 'damned (the work) with faint praise' (Stevens, 1986: 2). Stevens appears to regard Fox's valuation of the folk life collections as dependent on their ability to illuminate the earlier history and archaeology of Wales (1986: 2). However, it is important to point out that Fox's comment could be read in a variety of ways, since, as a selected extract, it is isolated from its original context. Fox goes on to qualify what he meant in his earlier statement: 'the universality of these latter, however, provides full compensation for what they otherwise lack; the commoner the object the more faithfully it reflects the everyday life which the collections seeks to represent' (Fox, 1929b: viii). In addition, Fox reasoned that the exhibition of folk life objects had the potential to stimulate the interest of Museum visitors, who might recognise some of the artefacts on show from their own childhoods, or from familial traditions (Fox, 1929b: xiv). It was Fox's view that, 'once this nexus of interest is provided it leads...to an appreciation of exhibits illustrating the earlier history and the pre-history of Wales, which necessarily lie outside personal experience' (Fox, 1929b: xiv).

In accordance with his other writings (see section of this chapter entitled 'An Art and a Mystery: folk life industries'), Fox expressed his desire to see a renaissance of folk art and industries in Wales and beyond. Fox promoted the role of the National Museum in fostering public appreciation and in 'teach(ing) that beauty springs not only from conscious art, but from fitness to purpose, soundness in construction and simplicity and adequacy of form' (Fox, 1929b: xiv). As Lord (2000: 389) has argued, Catrin Stevens' (and others') tendency to equate the development of a folk life collection and its eventual expansion into an open-air museum with Iorwerth Peate as 'the prime mover' and 'creator' (Stevens, 1986: 1) does not acknowledge Fox's key role (see also Scott-Fox, 2002: 178-179). It should be reiterated, as Scott-Fox has also stated (2002: 179), that it was Fox who approached the then Director, R.E. Mortimer Wheeler and the Museum Council in 1926 to request the space and resources to study and display the folk life collections in the first instance, which culminated in the construction of the Bygones Gallery. Indeed, Peate himself wrote that 'I had warm support from Cyril Fox in the work of cataloguing the collection and (it) was a discipline of the best kind' (Peate, 1976, translation cited in Scott- Fox, 2002: 108).

Certainly, it is fair to say that Fox's and Peate's working relationship was complex, in part as a result of differences in individual political and personal outlooks, and in part due to events at a Museum level. In his autobiography published in the 1970s after Fox's death, Peate was critical of Fox's ability and standing as an academic archaeologist; he asserted that Fox utilised Mackinders's geographical theory of upland and lowland Britain for his publication *The Personality of Britain* without due acknowledgement (Peate, 1976). Furthermore, Peate accused Fox of plagiarising his personal research on agricultural practices in Wales as a basis for the journal article 'Sleds, Carts and Waggons' published in *Antiquity* (see next section of this chapter):

'I remember (Fox) coming to my room one morning and seeing on my desk a number of photographic prints of drag cars and drag carts with wheels; photographs taken by my father...Without a word he took them and shortly I read in the journal *Antiquity* his paper...the precise subject that I was working on at the time.'

(Peate, 1976, translation cited in Scott-Fox, 2002: 109)

Scott-Fox has since pointed out that Cyril Fox acknowledged all of Peate's photographs in his paper (Scott-Fox, 2002: 109). Elsewhere in his autobiography, Peate makes more personal judgements of Fox, particularly in his capabilities as Director of the Museum.

Fox's review in *Antiquity* (1940) of Peate's (1940) published book *The Welsh House* was critical in part and though it is debatable to what extent it contributed to the source of professional tension, it clearly had a significant impact on Peate. In his autobiography, Peate was careful to point out that while his work 'was reviewed quite unfavourably by my Director, Cyril Fox', it received 'a princely response by specialists...and...other scholars' (Peate, 1976: 115-116, cited in Scott-Fox, 2002: 160). Furthermore, Peate claimed that Fox was reluctant to incorporate congratulatory remarks made by the Art, Archaeology and Folk Culture and Industry Committee into the official Museum minutes (Peate, 1976: 116, cited in Scott-Fox, 2002: 161). As Scott-Fox has observed, this incident may have been instrumental in elevating 'minor issues to major issues and led to challenges to authority and the polarisation of Museum committees partly on nationalist lines' (Scott-Fox, 2002: 161). Equally, it must be remembered that the content of autobiographies is necessarily the opinion and (inevitably biased) interpretation of past events by the author.

An Art and a Mystery:[3] the folk industries of rural Wales

Cyril Fox's increasing interest in folk 'industries'[4] culminated in an article in *Antiquity* entitled 'Sleds, Carts and Waggons', which detailed a selection of surviving agricultural examples drawn from rural areas in Wales (Fox, 1931b). Fox revealed that while on fieldwork, he had glanced 'a remarkable vehicle the like of which he had never imagined...it was a 'wheel-car' and was of a standard type used throughout the Radnor forest area...it had been made entirely by himself and his smith' (Fox, 1931b: 185). Fox was so struck by both the quality of the craftsmanship and the unusual design, that a second example was purchased for the 'Welsh Folk Collections' of the National Museum (Fox, 1931b: 185).

In many ways, Fox took the conventional archaeological approach of the period in his treatment and assessment of the modes of transport used in rural farming. He traced an evolutionary sequence in line with the generic culture-historical model, classifying different examples into groupings, and identifying certain types as 'primitive' in design and therefore necessarily predecessors to later developed forms. This is illustrated in his diagrammatic example (informed by the findings of Walter Davies in his 1815 publication *General View of the Agricultural and Domestic Economy of South Wales*) of the evolutionary sequence of the Wheel-car (see figure 8.3).

Elsewhere, the 'slide-car', as a 'primitive and usually home-made vehicle' was categorised as 'a probable ancestor of the Truckle and its related forms' (Fox, 1931b: 190). There are indicators of a diffusionist approach to understanding the form and distribution of types throughout history. For instance, Fox noted a parallel between the 'gambo', a type of farm cart used in Wales and 'ox-carts met with on the northern shores of the Mediterranean...We may then regard the vehicle as of high antiquity, and as the British representative of a Continental ox-cart' (Fox, 1931b: 188). Tracing the evolutionary patterns of four-wheel waggons in Britain 'would carry us far in space and time. The type, generally speaking, is the common inheritance of western European peoples. An important example is the waggon accredited to the Early Iron Age civilization of Denmark found in the Deibjerg bog, West Jutland, and dating from the early in the Christian era...Other Celtic waggons of similar date but less completely preserved are known' (Fox, 1931b: 195).
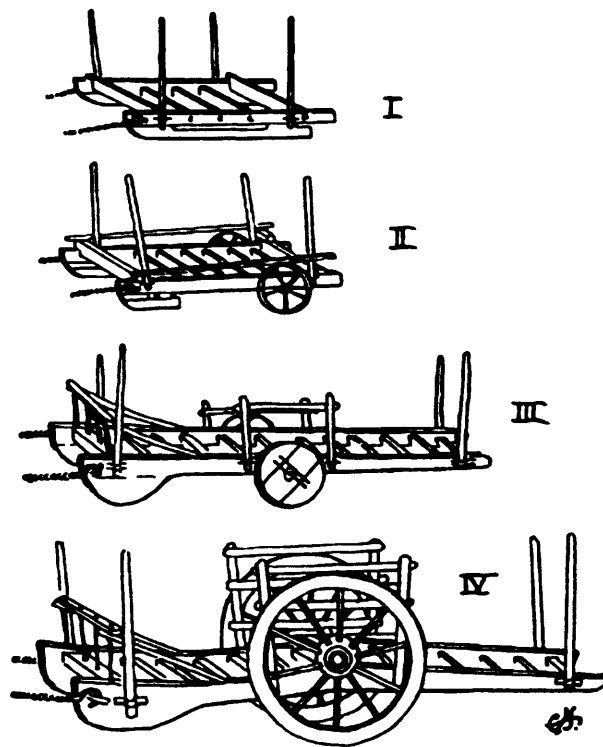
Figure 8.3: The evolution of the wheel-car (after Fox, 1931b: 189).

In an approach reminiscent of the geographically based model he applied to the archaeological record in *The Personality of Britain* (1932), Fox proposed the construction of a distribution map to record styles and types while such information existed, and to reveal 'to what extent the zones thus defined are related to political, geographic or economic areas' (Fox, 1931b: 194). Fox emphasised the need, in his view, to preserve representative examples of each known regional type across England and Wales in order to articulate 'the highest expressions of our native craftsmanship' (Fox, 1931b: 194). He seemed enamoured by the imagery of the craftsman as artisan, by the idea of an organic connection between the skilled producer and natural materials. He saw the constructive process as creative as well as functional; that it elicits 'the innate artistry which our peasant stocks in Britain have manifested in all culture periods before the present' (Fox, 1931b: 197). Elsewhere, Fox described the craft of the country blacksmith as 'an art as well as a mystery' (Fox, 1931b: 194).

Fox's appreciation of folk crafts is reflective of his wider interest in the philosophy of the Arts and Crafts movement of the 19th and early 20th century (see Scott-Fox 2002: 100)[5], which venerated the work of the skilled craftsman and promoted individualism

and organic design in reaction to the mass-production of Victorian industrialism. The writings of Morris, Pugin and Ruskin celebrated the practice of individual craftsmanship, which ascribed aesthetic qualities to functional designs and espoused simplicity of form over ostentatious decoration. Designers and architects utilised the romantic image of pre-industrial craftsmanship for their own stylistic vision, often favouring revealed construction as a material signifier of skill and integrity, and as a mark of beauty as well as function. By endorsing the work of the artisan and by championing the idea of a holistic, harmonious relationship between the craftsman and the use of natural materials, the proponents of the Arts and Crafts movement sought to initiate a socio-cultural revival which would free the skilled worker from the artistically constrained environment of industrial labour.

In relaying the design aspects of a late 19th century waggon made at a wrights in the Vale of Glamorgan, Fox highlighted what he saw as the artistic skill of the craftsman in his ability to embellish the functional with aesthetic touches: 'The blacksmith has everywhere accurately related the form and scantling of the iron to constructional needs, and, where opportunity offers, has created beautiful detail' (Fox, 1931b: 193). Fox recalled his conversation with a blacksmith who worked at the wrights and who explained its construction with 'the proper pride of the craftsman' (Fox, 1931b: 193). Fox went on to argue that 'it would be difficult to overpraise the feeling for form and proportion, and the skill, exhibited by the school of craftsmen in the Vale of Glamorgan...in the 18th and 19th centuries' (Fox, 1931b: 192). Fox appeared captivated by the image of these pieces of craftsmanship being used in daily life, being worked on the landscape. He created an idyllic pastoral scene:

'The curved lines of these waggons seem loveliest when they are drawn, empty, across the dipping and rising 'lands' of the cornfields; they possess the seemingly-inevitable beauty and fitness of the last phases of the sailing ship, and of other specialized creations which have been perfected by generations of men content to work in one tradition.'

(Fox, 1931b: 192)

In this passage, we witness Fox re-connecting with his 'archaeological imagination' (see Chapter 7) in an attempt to enliven material culture through blending real experiences with imagined reconstructions. Watching as the waggon is drawn across the fields before him, he was impelled to imagine the imprints and shared legacies left

through the actions of these 'generations of men' as they worked the landscape and 'perfected' their craft (Fox, 1931b: 192). This idealised representation ignored the harsher realities of rural subsistence, romanticising daily toil into a picturesque image of rustic country life.

In his conclusion, Fox indicated his support for a revival in folk crafts and industries: '...this impulse towards beauty and efficiency in craftsmanship will in some form reassert itself may confidently be predicted' (Fox, 1931b: 197). Fox's positive stance towards a revitalisation of folk crafts, industries and traditions in modern society corresponded, in broader terms, with the ultimate social aims of the Arts and Crafts philosophy. In reality, the small-scale or collective movements which seek either to foster particular practices and traditions through patronage, or to venerate through acts of preservation as in the case of the National Museum of Wales, actively transforms the subject in focus. The process of preservation 'captures' items at a particular point in time, effectively fixing them within a defined conceptual framework. Such moves to conserve often counteract the inherent fluidity and temporality of the practice itself, extracting them from their original environment and assimilating them to complement other interests. For example, the designers Charles Rennie Mackintosh, C.F.A.Voysey and Ernest Gimson favoured 'folk craft' motifs such as the rose, leaf, bird and heart as they were perceived to epitomise the naturalistic ideals of Arts and Crafts design. Despite the fact they were employed to evoke a model of simple, harmonious domesticity, they formed part of a heavily stylised presentation, which 'manipulated in a sophisticated manner...their humble origins. In the hands of an accomplished designer, they assume an air of calculated naïveté' (*The Arts and Crafts Movement*, 2002: 24-25). A paradox of the Arts and Crafts Movement was that the production of designs which sought to emulate the style of individual craftsmanship often entailed the use of the very modern manufacturing methods its followers deplored.

It is the ascription of particular sets of social and political values which alter the intrinsic nature of the practice in question. For instance, the act of selecting examples of rural craftsmanship and re-categorising them as national heritage adds new layers of meaning and status as to how they are valued and understood in the cultural sphere. There are additional dimensions within the museological context. Acquired objects become artefacts once they enter the museum space, undergoing re-labelling and re-

interpretation, and assuming new roles as narrators, symbols and referents in particular representations of the past. The research and/or personal interests of museum curatorial staff can determine the nature and scope of collecting practices just as effectively as wider museological and academic trends.

Constructed Realities: exhibiting Welsh life at the National Museum

The success of the displays in the temporary Bygones Gallery, as well as the growth in the folk life collections, prompted Cyril Fox to allocate more space in the eastern wing of the National Museum in order to transfer and expand the exhibition (*NMMCC*, 1930-31: 4). Under the curation of Peate, it was recommended that two of the reserve galleries should be utilised for the re-creation of four rooms 'typical of a Welsh farmhouse' – a kitchen, dairy, parlour, and bedroom (*NMMCC*, 1930-31: 4). In addition, the renaming of the collection as the 'National Folk Collection' confirmed its rising museological and cultural status. These four rooms were designed to represent the interior of a typical rural Welsh farmhouse of the 18th and 19th centuries (*Museums Journal*, 1932: 532). This was not the only new avenue for the National Museum; in collaboration with the young National Orchestra of Wales, 135 recitals were performed in the entrance hall attracting a record attendance of 33,180 people (*Museums Journal*, 1931: 197). Such a venture was politically symbolic, a synergy of high culture through the showcasing of Welsh national culture, history and music.

The Welsh farmhouse kitchen exhibit (see figures 8.4, 8.5 and 8.6) has been selected for discussion here, as it reveals particular representational issues in relation to the display of the daily life of the *gwerin* together with the promotion of an idealised image of the Welsh nation.

The reconstructed exhibition as a whole, while not unique in British museum practice, offered a visitor experience which operated outside the modes of the conventional, didactic museum case display. In part, it mirrored the accessible forms of display pioneered by the open-air folk museums (Dicks, 2000: 86). It encapsulated and reintroduced the notion of 'spectacle', drawing on the visual excitement evoked by 'fairs, carnival shows and cabinets of curiosities where the objective was to induce wonder and surprise' (Dicks, 2000: 86). It went against the ingrained practice of ordered exhibits, situated 'in standardized glass cases to display the scientific

principles of classification and specialization' (Dicks, 2000: 86). The recreated rooms at the National Museum of Wales offered the visitor the experience of an 'in-between' gaze – that is, between reality and make-believe.

Figure 8.4: The 'Welsh Farmhouse Kitchen' (*National Museum of Wales Short Guide*, 1938: 74).

The reconstructed Welsh kitchen invited the viewer to imagine the human aspects of the representation, the relationships between people and objects and to picture the people who made, owned and used the objects now on show as conserved artefacts. This was in striking contrast to the mode of display used in the Archaeology gallery, where artefacts were separated out according to prescribed (pre)historical periods and organised behind glass cases, in which 'objects stand solitarily' and where 'the people who made them are irretrievably out of sight and out of mind' (Shanks & Tilley, 1992: 69).

Iorwerth Peate stated that limitations of space in the Museum determined that the reconstruction 'cannot pretend to be a representation true in every dimension, though true in detail' (Peate, 1929a: 7). Furthermore, he defended the use of objects drawn together from different time periods and locations on the basis that 'a normal interior of the 19th century might well contain objects made at any time during the preceding three hundred years. This feature is reproduced, and it is interesting to observe that so

unbroken is the cultural tradition that no incongruity results from the association of objects widely divergent in date' (Peate, 1929a: 7). Peate appeared to highlight this point in order to emphasise the importance of achieving 'authenticity' in the reconstructed display; in another publication it is noted that technical staff were enlisted to fashion life-like replicas of butter, ham and cheese using plaster, colourings and other materials, to be used in the displays (*Museums Journal*, 1932: 535).

The claim of authenticity in reconstructive displays either within a museum or in an open-air context is an issue which is now heavily contested and debated in contemporary museological practice. Indeed, some have asked whether the pursuit of authenticity is itself 'an illusion' (de Jong & Skougaard, 1992: 156) and a futile quest for a 'museological utopia' (Gailey, 1998: 30). Shanks and Tilley would regard such collective representational practices as 'shop-front commodification' (Shanks and Tilley, 1992: 81), in which the constituent parts of reconstructive period museum displays combine to become not a replica but a simulacrum, 'an exact copy of an original which never existed' (Shanks and Tilley, 1992: 79).

There is a sense of timelessness *and* immediacy in the representation of the Welsh kitchen. It is timeless in the sense that it brings together objects from disparate points in space and time, constructing historical relationships between objects which never existed in reality. The objects selected for their representational purpose, from the pictures hanging on the wall to the chair placed by the fire, are unrelated to each other in real time, but when fused together in harmonious display imply meaningful links and shared histories. The Welsh kitchen display is further suggestive of a sense of timelessness precisely because the objects have endured, while other things have degenerated and been lost to history and memory (Shanks & Tilley, 1992: 85).

The sense of immediacy is evoked through the representational vision of the display itself. The staging of the scene, and the way in which an entire room is enacted – the dining table laid with crockery, the chair drawn up to a reading table with the book left open – invites the audience to see these trails of human activity and to imagine that the people who live here have been called away but will eventually return. The completeness of the display, with its realistic-looking ceiling beams, roughly rendered

walls and smoothed stone floor, draws the eye into a visualised scene which is both naturalised and harmonious. The audience knows that the stairs behind the door do not lead anywhere, and that the fire could never be lit, but the 'authenticity' of the display through its appropriation and transformation of 'real' objects, encourages an active suspension of disbelief. Peate acknowledged that 'the success of the reconstruction...depends upon the attention given to details. A pair of spectacles on the open Bible on the master's table, dried herbs hung from a beam, the drip of wax on a candlestick- such intimate details...give a reality to an exhibit which it would not otherwise possess' (cited in *Museums Journal*, 1932: 535-6). Evidently the Welsh kitchen display ignited Peate's imagination, as he was inspired to write the sonnet 'Y Gegin Gynt yn yr Amgueddfa Genedlaethol' (Peate, 1933), subsequently translated into English by J. P. Clancy (1982) and renamed 'Museum Piece':

Slowly the clock is ticking the long hours,
silent is the wheel, its spinning done,
quiet the baby beneath its coverlet,
no one bends over the Great Bible now.
 The gleaming dresser full of bright blue dishes,
and all the china in the little cupboard,
bowls on the board await the servants' company,
the kettle, nonetheless, completely mute.
Will you come again, old people, to your kitchen
from fold and cowshed, from tending to the crops?
(Hurry up, my girl, and fetch the bellows
to kindle flames within the glowing peat.)
My only answer is the ticking of the clock,
are they all away from home? ...tick tock, tick tock.

The way in which Peate imagines the Welsh kitchen is simultaneously frozen in time and yet active: he sees the spinning wheel as dormant, the kettle cold and the dishes unused, but the clock is still ticking in the hope that the owners will return to their kitchen. The fact that he visualises the idea of the kitchen being enlivened by human activity reinforces the underlying messages of the representation. Implanted within the exhibited scene is the cultural imagery of the kitchen as 'the heart of the home', the natural centre of domestic and familial life.

One way of thinking about the representational dimensions of the Welsh kitchen display is to conceive them in a performative sense as a piece of enacted theatre – both structurally and dramatically. The parameters of the audience experience are shaped by the physical space itself; the visitor is guided towards the vestibule point (see figures 8.5 and 8.6), from which he/she can view the farmhouse kitchen in three-dimensional form. The eye is drawn to the different objects, to regard the sense and proportions of the room: from its rough walls to its matte floor, smoothed by generations of tread and wear. Like an audience at the theatre, whose gaze centres on the staged set, they choose whether or not to accept the array of props and painted backdrops in an active suspension of disbelief. Similarly, a social code is established between audience, stage and actor; while there are barriers demarcating the separation of stage and stalls, the audience member knows that the stage is a space with defined actual and imaginary boundaries.

Yet there is always the presence of human and material agency. If we accept that objects are meaningfully constituted (Hodder, 1992: 30), and form part of social relations (Appadurai, 1986), they, like people, have 'life histories' (Kopytoff, 1986). The transformation of objects to artefacts through the museum process adds new meanings to their surfaces. Just as narratives are constructed in museum representations, their messages are deconstructed each and every time, and anew, as individuals and collective audiences encounter them. Identities are made and remade, negotiated and mediated in a continual social exchange. Each visitor to the Welsh farmhouse kitchen created his or her own unique and individual reading.
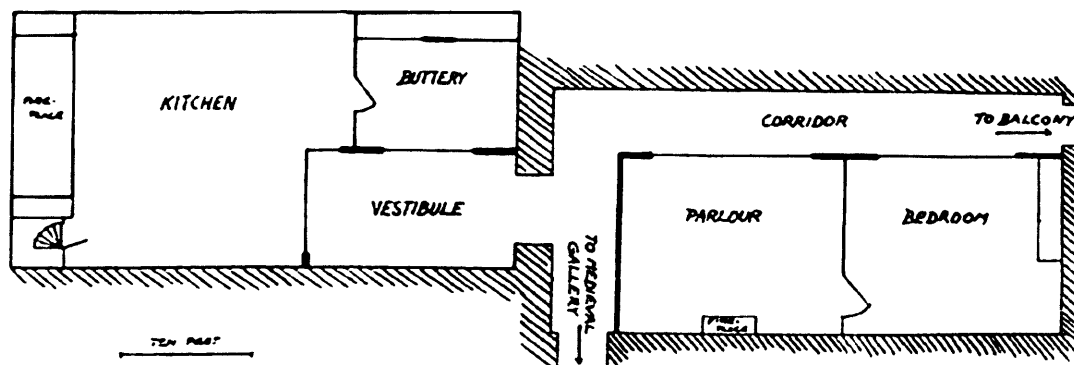

Figure 8.5: Layout of Welsh Farmhouse Display (*Museums Journal*, 1932: 532).
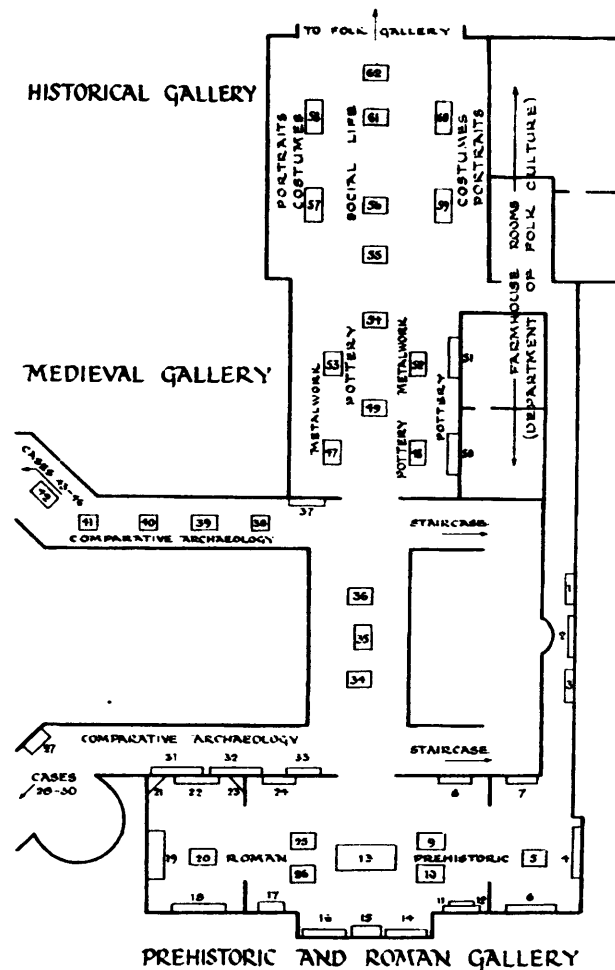
Figure 8.6: Plan of First Floor Galleries (*National Museum of Wales Short Guide*, 1938: 14).

Contemporary criticisms of the representational processes at the Museum of Welsh Life[6] can be analysed usefully in this specific example, since they relate more generally to its origins in the form of the folk culture displays exhibited in the National Museum of Wales.

Both David Adamson (1999) and Peter Lord (1992) regard the representational practices at the Museum of Welsh Life as historically apolitical. Adamson (1999) argues that the visitor is transported to a 'pre-modern world', screened from 'any visual intrusion from the twentieth century' in which relocated and restored buildings are presented to imply 'a contemporary relationship with each other' in an illusory scene of ruralia (Adamson, 1999: 62-63). He criticises the Museum for presenting the

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domestic 'minutiae of daily life' and for omitting to acknowledge wider, active societal and political processes – Chartism, the Merthyr Rising of 1832, poverty, strikes, religious revivals and the impact of socialism, for instance – in this 'timeless, village existence' (Adamson, 1999: 63). Lord (1992) includes a critique of the Museum of Welsh Life as part of his wider critical deconstruction of the collecting policies of the Art Department of the National Museum of Wales. He argues that indigenous art and the visual culture of Wales have been excluded from interpretation at the Museum of Welsh Life in favour of a more organic representation of rural crafts 'sanctified as a truly Welsh phenomenon' (Lord, 1992: 39). Lord regards the Museum as presenting 'a society without intellectual life, opinions and politics, possessing only customs', and which 'locks Wales into a perpetual rural past' (Lord, 1992: 39-40). In this sense, any notion of temporality is frozen: 'Wales has come to an end at some indeterminate point in the nineteenth century, a passive nation existing in a time warp. It is a concluded story' (Lord, 1992: 40).

While both Lord's and Adamson's specific criticisms remain valid, it is suggested here that the representational displays of Welsh life exhibited in the National Museum are not devoid of politics, but are, on the contrary, *imbued* with politics. The complex manner in which the academic and individual interests of both Cyril Fox and Iorwerth Peate assumed an underlying role in determining their approaches to valuing the folk life collections and in shaping their own particular interpretations of the material culture invests the entire process with layers of personal, national, social and cultural politics. The selection of particular objects, the values and interpretation ascribed to those objects by curators and the merging of unconnected things into a unified, rationalised display is in itself an intrinsically political process. With regard to reconstructive displays – whether the recreated Welsh farmhouse kitchen scene in the National Museum or the furnished interior of a reconstructed building at the Museum of Welsh Life – there are further political dimensions relating to their visual impact and implication of a constructed reality. Such displays are often assembled with the stated intention of exhibiting objects in a factual, educational sense, in which the various uses and meanings of objects are best explained when they are situated in their 'natural' setting.

However, it is within this active curatorial process that value judgements are made, objects are recast to become narrators or points of reference in particular stories and layers of meaning are added. Through the assemblage of objects drawn together to form a naturalised visual display, there is a *promotion* of meaningful, authentic representation, of reflecting elements of real lives lived by real people. The intentions and ideological outlook of the curator are a fundamental element in the creation and shaping of knowledge in the museum context, influencing the interpretation of collections and the construction of narratives. In the dissemination of museum representations, authoritative histories foreground a particular, socio-politically located perspective. There is a highly suggestive element within the Welsh kitchen display, which implies that the recreated scene captures the material essence of the 'real' folk people of Wales, who lived in the rural, pre-industrial Welsh landscape. Through the staging of objects as the material embodiment of folk life, elevated to museum artefacts and ascribed a cultural status, a particular vision of Wales and its people was imagined and projected.

Transforming Objects to National Heritage

As Director of the National Museum, Cyril Fox was well placed to generate interest in, and support for, the continued study and display of Welsh folk culture. Significantly, Fox chose the topic of open-air folk museums for his presidential address to the Museums Association conference in Bristol in 1934. He stated that the establishment of a national open-air museum in Wales was 'educationally, culturally and historically a vital and urgent need' (Fox, 1934b: 121). This followed Fox's study tour, on behalf of the National Museum, of eighteen Scandinavian folk museums some four years earlier. In a subsequent report to the Museum Council, he emphasised the social role of such museums in sustaining 'traditional' ways of life (*National Museum Minutes of the Court, Council & Committees (NMMCC)*, 1929-30: 82a).

Fox found the unique visual experience of the open-air museum enthralling; he wrote of how 'the intense interest aroused by an examination of these collections is heightened by the extraordinary effort made to create an air of reality. The storerooms of the farmhouses are *stacked* with dresses, furnishings, materials as they were when the buildings were inhabited' (*NMMCC*, 1929-1930: 82a, p3, italics in original). Fox was equally enthused by a speech given to the Museums Association by Dr. E. Klein

of the Northern Museum in Stockholm (cited in *Museums Journal*, 1931: 257-262), who pronounced that their collections 'try to be living things, not dead "memorials". They try to inspire the people of today and give them a deeper and more conscious love of their home country' (cited in *Museums Journal*, 1931: 261). During the ensuing discussion, Fox praised what he regarded as 'the astonishing interest, vitality and possibilities of the museum movement in the northern countries' and spoke of their 'vivid, living quality' (cited in *Museums Journal*, 1931: 263).

Peate revealed that his own visit to the Scandinavian open-air museums had left a profound impact on him: 'The experience was wholly ineffaceable. I felt I had consciously conquered Time and had returned to a distant past to find revealed to me the spirit of far-off ages whose mystery I had never expected to penetrate' (Peate, 1948: 27). It was the imaginative draw of discovering another land, of experiencing 'the past' through an almost other-worldly encounter which appealed most to Peate:

'At Skansen, where I was allowed to wander alone far from the noise of the animals, the past took complete possession of me: at Maihaugen I came to know the spirit and nature of the Gudbrandsdal in a way which would have been impossible had I contented myself with merely a tour of the region itself; at Bygdoy I had completely forgotten that I was within half-an-hour's distance of Oslo and had just as completely lost all feeling of being in a museum.'

(Peate, 1948: 27-29)

For Peate, the exhibited displays were not museum representations of an imagined past, but a symbol of cultural vitality: 'The *living* past of Norway took shape before and I felt that I understood its traditions and the very foundations of its society. It is indeed difficult to imagine the effects of such a museum upon the members of the nation which it serves' (Peate, 1948: 29). It is particularly interesting that Peate considered a national folk museum as having the restorative power to ignite and affirm a sense national identity among the Welsh people; other contemporary nationalists determined that consolidation of the Welsh nation would be realised only through political and economic self-governance (Stevens, 1986: 56). In addition, Lord (2000) observes that 'even within the nationalist and Welsh-speaking community Peate was at odds with Saunders Lewis and his followers because, in his view, they sought to attach Wales to a continental tradition of urban high-culture' (Lord, 2000: 390).

Peate endorsed the creation of an open-air folk museum in Wales with equal passion. He proclaimed that it would 'integrate itself within all the elements of Welsh life' and in representing 'a picture of the past and a mirror of the present, it will be an inspiration for our country's future: from it will radiate energy to vitalize Welsh life' (Peate, 1948: 55-57).

Peate envisaged that an open-air museum would become the focal point of Welsh culture, and communicated his vision in poetic tones:

'The Museum will be a home for new life and not a collection of dry bones, since there will be gathered together in it every national virtue until it becomes in Welsh history...the heart of Welsh life...a means of uniting every movement in our land into the national identity...so that we may, by drinking of its own well, quench our thirst ready for our national purpose in the future.'

(Peate, 1938: 105, translation cited in Stevens, 1986: 56)

This resounding statement echoed his belief – as stated in extracts from his writings cited elsewhere in this chapter – that Welsh folk culture in its various material, social and visual forms was active, tangible and *alive*. Peate declared that the museum would not be a repository for inanimate, forgotten things, but its antithesis as a 'temple of live inspiration' (Peate, 1938: 105, translation cited in Stevens 1986: 56). In ascribing a vital, sentient quality to folk life, and through attaching a range of museological and preservationist values, its transformation to 'living heritage' was complete.

Peate's romantic vision for the protection and revival of folk culture in Wales drew readily on the 19th century European experience. However, far from being a collective movement 'of the people' (see Bennett, 1995: 109-110, also Burke, 1977: 145), the Scandinavian folk museum movement was underpinned by socio-political concerns, embodying the ideological outlook of a middle-class intelligentsia seeking to preserve the traditions, cultures and vernacular architectures perceived to be under increasing threat as a result of modern industrialisation. As de Jong and Skougaard (1992) observe, 'while the working classes united themselves to protect their rights, the founders of open-air museums gathered the remnants of the traditional rural communities and their 'unspoilt' environment' (de Jong and Skougaard 1992: 154). Within this movement, 'history, folklore, territory, culture or religion could all be

used to demonstrate the past traditions of a nation, symbolic evidence of its historical continuity and hence its authenticity' (Woolf, 1996: 2, cited in Adamson, 1999: 49).

Perceived as the seminal model of the open-air museum movement, Skansen, in Stockholm, represented the material embodiment of the idealistic aspirations of its founder, Artur Hazelius. Established in 1891, Skansen exhibited re-constructed farm buildings and dwellings in its bounded landscape, as well as craft industries and folk traditions. Museum guides dressed in traditional folk costumes mingled with dancers and musicians performing folk customs. Within Hazelius' vision, visitors would be able to walk freely among the exhibited buildings and interiors on display, encountering the displays in three-dimensional form and uninhibited by the constraints of the traditional museum glass case.

The Museum as a repository and a facilitator of Swedish folk life was filled with nationalistic and political motives. Hazelius' mission was 'to use the idea of heritage and understanding of the past as a steadying influence in the face of violent changes of modern life' (Alexander, 1979: 85, cited in Walsh, 1992: 95-96).

Barbro Klein argues that Hazelius sought to present an appealing view of peasant life to the urban middle classes in the hope that it would ignite a feeling of national pride. 'To teach all Swedes to 'know themselves' was the great task of the museum, and Hazelius pronounced the spiritual and material traditions of the peasantry as the base upon which the future cultural repertories and moral standards of the nation were to rest' (Klein, 2006: 59). However, the peasant way of life was not an immediately suitable display for urban public consumption; it had to be refined in an aesthetic and moral sense (Klein, 2006: 59). Its transformation also incorporated a wider political function: 'The shaping of a beautified repertoire of peasant traditions was part of a reform project to educate all citizens, to make them better, more ready to become moderns' (Eriksen, 1993, cited in Klein, 2006: 59).

As is inherent in all ideological institutions, Skansen's collecting and representational practices were highly selective, privileging certain traditions and histories while pushing other aspects to the periphery. Klein has argued that although Skansen's remit was to represent all social groups and geographical regions, in practice Hazelius gave

precedence to particular varieties of peasant or rural culture (Klein, 2006: 59). What occurred at Skansen was 'simultaneously an act of preservation and modernization' (Klein, 2006: 59), where the Museum's selective collecting and representational policies reflected certain political and nationalistic concerns in its treatment of the past and its use in the present. There are some interesting parallels with the Welsh experience and with Peate's own exclusionist perception of Welsh folk culture. Peter Burke regards the interest in folk culture and the development of preservation methods as part of a wider societal, essentially progressive movement among intellectuals on the cultural periphery seeking 'self-definition and liberation in regional or national terms' (Burke, 1977: 145, cited in Bennett, 1995: 115). Michael Wallace's (1981: 72) reading of the Skansen movement and its proponents as indulging in a 'romantic nostalgia' is particularly relevant here in view of Peate's interpretation of a classless, rural and apolitical Welsh people: 'What they commemorated, and in some degree fabricated, was the life of 'the folk', visualized as a harmonious population of peasants and craft workers' (Wallace, 1981: 72, cited in Bennett, 1995: 115).

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the complex interplay of professional and political dynamics between Cyril Fox and Iorwerth Peate and the collision of conflicting identities, ideological viewpoints and personal endeavour. These dimensions all had an impact on the representational practices employed within the Archaeological department in the treatment of Welsh folk culture. Increasingly the folk collections were subsumed within a wider nationalist ideology under Peate, which blended their history, meaning and materiality with political idealism. The issues explored in this chapter also relate to one of the key themes running throughout this thesis – that of curatorial intentionality and influence. The curatorial and interpretive legacies of Iorwerth Peate, Cyril Fox, Mortimer Wheeler and others are still apparent within the material character of the National Museum and its collections today; their collective impact was cumulative and defining. The next chapter draws all these elements together in conclusion.

[1] There is no direct translation into English of the Welsh word gwerin, but it is understood principally to refer to the 'original' folk people of Wales (P Morgan, 1986a; Adamson, 1999).

[2] Peate's association and involvement with the Welsh Nationalist Party (Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru) began in the 1920s while he was studying at University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. Other prominent founder members included the Revd. Lewis Valentine, Saunders Lewis and Ambrose Bebb, who saw their new party as 'embodying the organic unity of Wales and of medieval European Christendom as it had existed long ago, before the sectarian divisiveness introduced by the statist nationalism and the Protestantism of the sixteenth century had fractured Welsh culture' (Morgan, 1981: 206). The re-emergence of Welsh nationalism in the 20th century is a complex subject in itself; it was a markedly different movement from the Liberal cultural nationalism of the 19th century, although it drew on the still resonant national consciousness in Wales (Aull Davies, 1989: 14). The decline of the Liberal Party, the centralistic policies of the Labour Party and the post-war economic and social conditions of the 1920s and 30s were all instrumental factors in bringing about a specifically nationally orientated political movement in Wales (Morgan, 1981: 206). In 1923, Peate himself declared: 'There is a need for Nationalists to represent Wales – not Conservatives and Liberals, but nationalists first; they can be party men second' (Peate, cited in Hywel Davies, 1983: 28). The Welsh Nationalist Party, D. Hywel Davies argues, was 'born...into a Wales of political, industrial and social turmoil, and was itself a by-product of that turmoil' (Hywel Davies, 1983: 3). Initially the party's objectives concerned the protection of the Welsh language, which was seen to embody and signify 'true' Welsh identity (Morgan, 1981: 207). Political self-governance was not the defining motivation in the beginning; rather, the party was shaped more by traditionalist cultural and moral ideals concerning the establishment of Welsh as the official language of Wales, the promotion of Welsh culture, the teaching of Welsh history in schools and the inculcation of conservative Christian values (Morgan, 1981: 207; see also Hywel Davies, 1983: 35). However, the worsening state of the British economy, growing unemployment in Wales and the rippling effects of the Wall Street crash in 1929 caused the party to rethink its core policies; where before the party had entreated Welsh voters to shun any loyalty to British political parties, by the 1930s it was calling for a Welsh Free State so that Wales could manage its own economic and political affairs (Hywel Davies, 1983: 72). Iorwerth Peate's philosophical outlook and concerns remained predominantly cultural, and in this way he conformed with the party's underlying 'conservative traditionalism' (Hywel Davies, 1983: 35). Peate's idealistic view of (rural) Wales, and his vocal calls to protect it from change and development, was rooted in a growing awareness of the declining economic situation as it unfolded throughout the first half of the 20th century. The unevenness of development which occurred in Wales as a result of the very localised nature of industrialisation left a legacy of regional imbalance throughout the Welsh economic and social landscape (Evans, 1989: 70). Neil Evans (1989) argues that the emergence of Plaid Cymru in 1925 was in part an expression of this 'disintegration and the ebbing of the old sense of self confidence. History became a sad decline from medieval glories. Welsh culture was only safe if preserved in the aspic of rural society; they did not try to foster rural development, as Liberalism had done, but to impede it' (Evans, 1989: 70). Increasingly, Plaid Cymru argued that there was over-development in Wales, and that further change threatened the entire basis of Welsh identity (Evans, 1989: 70). Evans cites Peate's objection (voiced in the 1930s) to the proposed link road between north and south Wales on the basis that, in the absence of self-governance, Welsh rural culture could not be protected (Evans, 1989: 70). The Cardiff-based, south Wales orientated *Western Mail* made the remark that working in a museum environment had made Peate 'anxious to see...Welsh intelligence deposited there' (Evans, 1989: 70; although see also Gruffudd, 1995: 232-236). Evans argues that this polarisation of attitudes produced a kind of 'fortress nationalism' which envisaged that 'identity could be preserved only in the rural areas' (Evans, 1989: 70). This vision of Welsh national identity, or 'creed' as Evans terms it, was 'especially hostile to the industrial society of the south and the cosmopolitan popular culture which inhabited it' (Evans, 1989: 70). Furthermore, trade unionism connected south Wales with the wider British structure, which, Evans argues, consciously regarded itself as being part of industrial society (Evans, 1989: 70). In the light of Peate's political stance, it is a supreme irony that the financial and civic structure which ensured the establishment of the National Museum of Wales (and, to a lesser degree, the Welsh Folk Museum), was derived from benefactors of a predominantly mercantile, industrial society: the dominant middle-class, civic-minded, Liberal and Conservative faction of South Wales.

[3] Cf Fox, C. (1931b) 'Sleds, Carts and Waggons', *Antiquity*, p 194.

[4] The term folk industries refers, in fact, to agricultural practices and equipment.

[5] Scott-Fox (2002) writes: 'Fox had a highly developed and acute appreciation of architecture. The Arts and Crafts movement embodied everything that most appealed to Fox, with its emphasis on hand finishing and freedom to express the characteristics of individual materials' (2002: 100).

[6] Originally known as the Welsh Folk Museum from its inception in 1947, the Museum was renamed the Museum of Welsh Life in 1995 in order to encompass a broader remit in representing Welsh social history, particularly with regard to the industrial and post-industrial landscape of Wales. In 2005, the Museum assumed the new title of St Fagans: National History Museum as part of a wider renaming of the National Museum and Galleries of Wales network. The National Museum of Wales is now known as National Museum Wales.

Chapter 9
Conclusion: drawing the themes together

This thesis has examined selected issues, stages and processes within the formative development of the National Museum of Wales in order to provide a critical perspective on the array of identities, archaeologies and representations produced. A further aim of this study has been to identify and deconstruct the trajectories of research and thought within the Archaeology department during its early years. The thesis has sought to demonstrate the complexities of the museum experience and to highlight the nuances and subtleties within the national context. Studying the period of time between the initial move to establish a Welsh national museum in the 1890s and the development of a national archaeological collection in the 1920s/30s, reveals the shifts and transformations in cultural politics, institutional practices and museological philosophies.

The top-down influence of cultural and political nationalism was instrumental in driving the movement towards a national museum for Wales at the end of the 19th century. Within any museum structure there is a nexus between external socio-cultural determinants – such as nationalism, imperialism, globalisation – and the interior politics and agencies at work. In many respects the value systems operating within museums reflect the broader, predominant cultural trends and world views over time, but that is not to say that a seamless duality exists. There are layers of micro politics within institutional structures which shape and imprint upon their roles, philosophies and representational practices.

The principal themes which connect throughout this thesis are the resonant cultural dynamics produced through the ideological influence of nationalism, its impact on the construction of identity and on the interpretation of the past. This study has traced how these agencies have been active throughout the development and activities of the National Museum of Wales, but also how they have been negotiated or altered over time.

The National Museum was founded in order to be both a material and a symbolic representation of the Welsh nation; in accordance with many forms of European

nationalism, in 19th century Wales the past was becoming increasingly drawn into the political present. Hobsbawm's (1990) and Gellner's (1983) emphasis on nations and nationalisms as wholly modern constructs, explored in Chapter 2, as well as Anderson's (1983) concept of 'imagining' national identity are all relevant here. The establishment of a national museum for Wales was seen by cultural nationalists as a celebration and confirmation of Wales's historic past, but there was also an underlying political dimension in the idea that the endurance of the Welsh nation demonstrated its right to greater national autonomy within the British political system. The present and the past were collapsed together in the process of constructing the identity of the modern Welsh nation. However, while Welsh nationalism required its citizens to 'imagine' their own sense and shared experience of national identity, the issue of the location for the new national museum and library unlocked an array of competing ideologies, conflicting politics and cultural divisions which subverted the idea of a united national community. Furthermore, the social and economic power of Cardiff within the national museum movement provoked intense, polarised reactions across Wales which highlighted the dichotomies beneath concepts of local and national, urban and rural, place and region. The civic and political scene of Cardiff revealed its own disparate groups, whose motivation and vision for a national museum were shaped as much by class alliances, economic interests and party politics as by national or museological concerns. The competing definitions of what constituted 'Wales' and the most 'authentically' Welsh – language, culture, region and political affiliation – demonstrate that the act of 'imagining' national identity is a multi-dimensional process which, as an experience and cultural construction, is selective, fragmentary and always changing.

Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrated that the museum campaign formed part of a much broader social movement to achieve national status and recognition within the political makeup of the United Kingdom. The establishment of a national museum was bound up with demonstrating Wales's rich antiquity and its eminence in the contemporary world. As with any manifestation of nationalism, the Welsh experience had its own layered complexities. The 19th century Liberal nationalist concept sought to express its Welsh identity as well as affirm its central place within Britain and the Empire. At this time, the majority of Welsh nationalists did not view loyalty to their own sense of identity and to Britain and the imperial Crown as mutually exclusive;

this was evident in the early 20th century Liberal ideology of 'unity in diversity' (Ellis, 1998: 399), as explored in Chapter 4. The Welsh social and political elite was highly aware of Wales's economic importance within industry and wished to consolidate both its and Wales's status within the British imperial system. While the early philosophy of Welsh nationalism and the foundation of the National Museum of Wales celebrated Welsh history and progress in the context of the cultural superiority of imperial Britain, in subsequent years this ideology shifted considerably as a result of external influences.

This change was most clearly evident in the archaeological context: as Curator and Director of the Museum during its principal developmental stage, R.E. Mortimer Wheeler projected the imperial view *onto* interpretations of the Welsh past. As Chapter 6 showed, Wheeler approached the archaeology of Wales from a distinctly colonial and Anglocentric perspective. He measured the social progression of the people of Wales against the more 'advanced' archaeological cultures of Britain and Europe, and interpreted changes in material culture and society as the result of cultural diffusion and inward migration. Wheeler's specialism in Roman archaeology privileged certain aspects of Welsh history over other time periods, while his professed bias towards classical studies framed the underlying imperialistic perception that Roman culture inculcated 'civilised' social mores to the isolated peoples of Wales. This is an example of how the angle of interpretation can alter according to shifts in curatorial authority as much as reproduce external political and cultural events. Wheeler's lasting influence on the trajectories of archaeological research and thought within the National Museum attests to the power of curatorial interpretation in transforming, and sometimes controlling, objects, knowledge and representational practices.

Under the direction of Cyril Fox (and latterly V.E. Nash Williams), the interests of the Archaeology department corresponded more with general developments in contemporary archaeological thought. The ethos of the department supported the application of scientific research objectives onto the archaeological record of Wales, a continuing move which represented a conscious shift away from the enduring romantic antiquarian tradition referred to in Chapter 5. Cyril Fox attempted to bring a humanistic dimension to the pervasive culture-history paradigm in his literary

interpretations of prehistoric burial sites. The distinct contrast shown between Wheeler's and Fox's perceptual approach to reconstructing the past is striking, and demonstrates how the uniquely personal perspective colours everything from the initial engagement with archaeological landscapes and material culture to the particular narratives they generate.

While the department's overall perspective towards the Welsh archaeological landscape followed prevailing academic world views rather than initiating a contextual approach, Fox's reconstructive endeavours did at least focus attention on the *human* aspects of Wales's material past. While it is clear that Fox's motivation was not to create romanticised histories of distant Welsh ancestors, he was the first archaeologist working within the institution (and possibly within the archaeological discipline generally) to actively introduce an element of humanity into interpretations of the past – and specifically the Welsh past. However, Chapter 7 identified that while a recursive interpretive thread was present throughout Fox's work, it was not an essential element in his overall methodological approach. This was a reflection of the conventions of contemporary academic discourse in the early to mid 20th century, where such a literary approach was at variance with the empirical rationale of 'objective' archaeological science. Apart from these external, conditioning factors, it should be remembered that the new National Museum of Wales provided the scope and freedom for Fox to pursue an interpretive route in conjunction with conventional archaeological and curatorial duties. In a broader sense, it also challenges the implicit notion that institutions exert an overarching, structural control over interior agendas and practices, when, in reality, the process is much more subtle, discursive and contingent upon continually evolving value systems. Fox's reconstructive approach to the past positioned material culture centrally within the social world of its creators, and as such represented an alternative, if marginal, archaeology of people and sociality. His endeavour to introduce a sense of humanity into the character of archaeology was a pioneering venture within the accepted rationale of object-orientated culture-history.

It followed that within the National Museum the archaeology of Wales was approached, studied and located more within the internationalist framework of western European archaeology rather than within an exclusively national or

nationalistic context. In many ways this state of play was inevitable, when one considers that the National Museum received its primary funding from central government and that influential members of its academic and executive staff were primarily Anglo - or British-orientated in outlook. On another level, the concept of 'national' archaeology and the study and collection of a particular region, past and material culture is itself inherently problematic. Both the idea and the practice of an archaeology 'of the nation' overlooks the modernity and constructed nature of the political nation-state. As Chapter 2 highlighted, nationalism naturalises the selective process of creating political borders, of designating land as national territory and including particular peoples and cultures while excluding others. The deep time and archaeology of a particular area can become the defining history of a nation.

Chapter 1 addressed the inter-connected relationship between archaeology and nationalism, so the intention here is not to reiterate particular arguments, but to emphasise that the ideological construction of the nation has a significant bearing on the scope and intentionality of the archaeologies produced. The act of defining, studying and preserving the archaeological past within a specifically national remit imposes a political view which ignores its pre-national status and history. In order for archaeological research to be truly meaningful it must be both contextually and spatially orientated in time and scale; thus, for instance, in order to study Bronze Age society and material culture in Wales it must be placed within a wider, informed understanding of the array of social connections between peoples living, interacting and moving across Britain, Europe and beyond. Such a comprehensive, temporal and cross-cultural approach goes against the nationalist mindset. Archaeologies carried out either within an official national capacity or within a nationalistic context have the potential to substantiate as well as perpetuate discrete, separatist histories. As this thesis has revealed, in the case of the National Museum of Wales the situation was complicated by the influence and intermix of Welsh and English staff, evolving philosophies and shifting archaeological paradigms. This study has demonstrated that while cultural nationalism was a shaping force in the creation of the Museum, its impact on the established institution was deflected by changes in the management infrastructure and the wider socio-political climate. The study of archaeology in Wales and the development of the national collections were subsumed within a pan-

European approach which treated Wales as a geographical region rather than a cultural and political space.

The politics of identity and the residual impact of nationalism re-emerged in the Archaeology department over the representation of Welsh folk culture. Chapter 8 analysed the disparate political and personal world views held by Cyril Fox and Iorwerth Peate with regard to the interpretation of daily life in pre-industrial Wales. Their contrasting outlooks were underpinned by differing values; while Fox's principal motivation was to record and conserve disappearing ways of life, Peate's ambition was their complete revival and reintegration. For the first time, a discernibly nationalist agenda was emerging within the wider ideology of the department. The issue of contested identities and the role of the National Museum of Wales had resurfaced, but this time in a different sense – from within the institution itself. Peate's interest in the social history of Wales was exclusionist; it ignored industrialised, urban and border areas and ultimately produced purist, idealised representations of country life. The projection of rural, Welsh-speaking Wales as the embodiment of Welsh nationality was highly ironic, in view of the Museum's locale, metropolitan identity and complex Anglo-Welsh political background. Mortimer Wheeler had endeavoured, as a self-proclaimed 'neutral' outsider, to diffuse some of the existing tensions caused by locating the National Museum in the economically dominant and anglicised Cardiff (Wheeler, 1955: 68-69), but there is less evidence that this 'unbiased' view extended to deconstructing the impact of his own and other identities on the character of the institution. Iorwerth Peate, however, was adamant that only the Welsh were qualified to engage with and understand the folk culture of their own nation (Peate, 1948: 41, see Chapter 8) – a loaded statement which in reality distinguished Welsh-speaking, rural areas as constituting the 'real' Wales.

Frequently, the distant past is a malleable, emotive resource in nationalist rhetoric, but significantly the proto-history of 'Celtic' Wales was of little interest to Peate, as Chapter 8 revealed. He had stated openly that Wales's archaeological past lay outside his own particular interests (Peate, 1935: 210, see Chapter 8), a seemingly incongruous admission given his initial role as curatorial assistant in the Archaeology department. As the chapter explores in depth, Welsh folk culture had a far more powerful resonance for Peate, who ultimately viewed the preservation and revival of

rural folk life as vital in safeguarding the 'true' identity of Wales. While archaeology and the past were remote and unknowable, the traditions, social practices and everyday objects associated with Welsh folk culture had a residual, tangible quality: particularly during the early part of the 20th century, such traditional ways of life lay in the blurred area between the past and the present, which for many people just grazed the border between memory recollection and nostalgia. While Peate and Fox were both captivated by the romance and aesthetics of traditional Welsh folk life, they differed fundamentally in perception and intention. Nevertheless, the idealised representations of 'authentic' Welsh life created through the reconstructive exhibitions at the National Museum were influential, visual constructions. The naturalised image of pre-modern, rural Wales promoted in the folk culture displays was paradoxical in comparison with the macro world view of the Archaeology department, or the high culture of the Museum's Art department (see Lord, 1992; also Mason, 2007).

The declaration made at the foundation ceremony of the National Museum of Wales emphasised that the new institution would be truly national in every sense: 'Above all things, it must not attempt to be a copy of the British Museum on a small scale which happens to be in Wales' (*National Museum of Wales, Laying of the Foundation Stone*, 1912: 15). In many ways, this was an obligatory political statement, given that the original campaign hinged on the need for Wales to have its own national institution. However, this remit has been influenced and enacted in different ways since the Museum's beginnings. The contrasts in the constructions and interpretations of the Museum's identity are traceable across the time span of this thesis: from the Edwardian Liberal ideals of Welsh-Britishness to the imperial and Eurocentric world views of the Archaeological department. Over time, the Museum as a whole and the departments within have inherited the legacies of ideological directions taken at particular stages. These have imprinted upon the intellectual, material and representational nature of the National Museum of Wales and, to some extent, inform the character of the institution today. The modernist concept of national archaeology has become an increasingly complex application in practice, as the examples cited in Chapter 1 highlighted.

There are a myriad of issues which are entangled with and shape national museums in a post-modern and increasingly globalised setting (Corsane, 2005: 1). As much as museums remain places of object-orientated exploration and experience, they are also political structures and constitute subjects for focused intellectual critique: 'Discourses on...museums...have become a massive, complex and organic network of often loosely articulated understandings, ideas, issues and ways of perceiving things; a network that is fluid, dynamic and constantly reconfiguring itself as individuals critically reflect on and engage with it' (Corsane, 2005: 1). An awareness of the archaeologies, paradigms and representations produced during the formative development of the Archaeology department augments our overall understanding of the successive approaches to Welsh (pre)history in the National Museum. A critically reflective, historical view of the early life of the Museum, the politics in action and how they influenced the interpretation of the Welsh past has a contemporary value for the institution in post-devolution Wales.

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