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**Identity and Migration: an Ethnography of the Welsh in London**

Jeremy Segrott

Thesis submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Geography, University of Wales Swansea

September 2001

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## Summary

This thesis explores Welsh life in London, concentrating upon the post-war period. It is based upon in-depth interviews and participant observation carried out in London during 1998 and 1999. The central focus is on the construction of Welsh identities in London, and the links between identity and migration. The thesis draws upon theories of identity, travel and diaspora.

Questions of identity are explored on three levels. Firstly, experiences of Welsh people living in London are discussed. The thesis considers the effects of migration upon identity. It examines how self-identities more generally might be thought of in terms of travel and multiple geographical attachments. The ways in which people engage with Welsh societies in London is discussed.

Secondly, the construction of identities by London Welsh organisations is considered. It is suggested that Welsh culture in London can both replicate and be different from Welsh culture in Wales. The thesis examines how societies connect the Welsh language and culture with other social axes (such as education). It discusses how Welsh life in London is fragmented, particularly along lines of class and generation. The research examines the Welsh chapel network, new societies such as SWS (Social, Welsh and Sexy), and The London Welsh School. The role of London Welsh societies in shaping national life in Wales is considered. It is argued that this might lead to a less bounded conceptualisation of national identity.

Thirdly, the collective identity of the Welsh as a group in London is examined. The thesis argues that they occupy an ambiguous position in England as both 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. The Welsh are both fully integrated into London life as British citizens, yet maintain a distinctive cultural identity. It is argued that this points to the unstable nature of national identity.

## Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank all the research participants and Welsh organisations in London. Without their help and co-operation I could not have undertaken this research. Their willingness to share their experiences with me, and their kindness and hospitality were gratefully appreciated. *Diolch yn fawr iawn i chi gyd.* I am also extremely grateful to the University of Wales, Swansea for funding the first year of my research, and to the Economic and Social Research Council who did so during the second and third years.

I would like to thank my supervisors Dr. Prys Gruffudd and Dr. Vaughan Robinson for their advice and support. I am particularly indebted to Prys Gruffudd for his constant encouragement and positive advice. I am also very grateful to friends and colleagues in Swansea and elsewhere who helped me in many ways: Mark Llewellyn, Angela Ellis, Graham Thackarah, Tristan Quaiffe, Andrew Bateman, Nissa Finney, Dr. Charlotte Davies, Simon Barrett, Dr. Denis Linehan, Professor Marcus Doel, Alan Cutcliffe, Anna Radcliffe (who scanned the photographs and helped draw the maps with great efficiency) and Ellis Edwards. My thanks are due to Professor Emeritus Emrys Jones for sharing his considerable expertise with me.

I owe an enormous debt of thanks to Dr. Laurel Brake and Perdita who provided me with accommodation in London, and helped me to think about many issues while I was in the city.

Finally I would like to thank my family, and especially Catherine who has been patient and supportive during the long days and weekends of writing.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Migration is a key process that shapes human life at many geographical scales. It plays a crucial role in globalisation and has important consequences for national and local spaces (Castles & Miller, 1993). Migration is a major life experience for those who move, for the people and places left behind, and the destinations that migrants travel to (Pooley & Whyte, 1991). My own migration from England to study at university in Wales, for instance, was both an important life event, and sowed the seeds of a deep engagement with Welsh culture and language. Once perceived as marginal to the study of culture, migration and travel are now recognised to be centrally constitutive of it (Chambers, 1994; Clifford, 1997; Gilroy, 1993). The creation and development of many nations - sometimes seen as spaces of homogenous tribal groups, is now recognised to be created as much by the movement of multiple groups of people. Wales is no exception in this respect. Its early history was characterised by westward movements of invaders, who eventually built Offa's Dyke to keep the Welsh within their own territory (Williams, 1985). And more recent migration flows from England have occupied a central place in Welsh nationalist discourse and political culture (Aitchison & Carter, 1999; Davies, 1993). Predominantly a rural nation (historically at least), large-scale out-migration has been an important process in the social and economic life of Wales (Knowles, 1997; Pooley, 1983; Pooley & Doherty, 1991). High levels of unemployment and economic depression have characterised many periods of Welsh history: the poverty of nineteenth century mid Wales (Jones, 1994), and the collapse of the mining industry in the south Wales valleys during the early twentieth century (Linehan, 1998) are key examples. Such processes have taken Welsh migrants to the major cities of England and to countries around the world, creating a truly global diaspora.

This thesis examines a key aspect of such multiple processes - Welsh migration to London. The connections between Wales and London form a particularly important aspect of the Welsh Diaspora for a number of reasons. Firstly, the scale of Welsh migration to London has made it a major centre of Welsh life. Although other English cities have witnessed large numbers of Welsh 'exiles' in their midst, including Liverpool and Manchester, no other city has drawn migrants from all parts of Wales in such numbers (Francis, 1924; Jones, E, 2001; Knowles, 1997). As Jones, E<sup>i</sup> (2001: 114) argues in relation to the late nineteenth century, "Many of England's other thriving cities were also attracting the Welsh, but London was still the greatest magnet". Secondly, the position of Wales within the United Kingdom means that the Principality's links with London (as the UK's capital) are multi-layered and complex. On the one hand, London might be seen as a distant place which Welsh people migrate to, and where they establish 'exile' networks to maintain cultural traditions outside the homeland. Yet on the other hand, within the British nation state, Wales is ruled from London, as part of a unified political and economic territory (Cohen, 1994). Because, historically, Wales lacked a major city of its own, London operated as a Welsh capital, hundreds of miles outside of its territorial space (Jones, E, 1981, 1985). The contribution of London-based Welsh men and women to the cultural life of the nation back home, and the re-imagining of that nation therefore renders the study of Welsh identities in London uniquely important, and marks out the city from other major centres of Welsh migration (Jones, E, 1981; Morgan, 1986). Wales embraces a simultaneous closeness and distance from London.

## **Aims of the thesis**

In examining Welsh migration to London and Welsh life in the city, this thesis has two key aims. Firstly to explore the interconnections between self-identity and migration. It considers how Welsh people in London understand their identities, and the ways in which such identities are constructed of multiple social axes. Though the experiences of respondents whose main language is English are explored, the way in which Welsh speakers use their language in London and negotiate a specifically 'Welsh speaking identity' is an important issue. A key focus of the thesis is how collective and self-identities are constituted by generation, class, gender and sexuality (for instance), and how they might be cut across by these phenomena. The experience of migration, of leaving home, is a key focus of the thesis. Yet the stories of Welsh people born in London are also considered, demonstrating how different kinds of spatialities – different geographical and psychological connections with Wales, can underpin a sense of being Welsh.

The second aim is to examine the construction of collective identities by Welsh groups in the city. Welsh societies in London often draw upon multiple nodes of belonging in constructing different versions of Welshness - such as religion, language, sport and nationality. Such constructions may both replicate and differ from similar activities back home in Wales (Brah, 1996; Clifford, 1997). In particular the thesis explores the emergence of a new generation of Welsh social networks in the 1990s that defines Welshness in new ways. Such groups re-work the Welsh language and Welsh ethnicity in new ways compared to more traditional societies (such as loosening the ties between the religious and the linguistic found in the chapel). Their geographical organisation also contrasts with the centralised institutions that they are gradually replacing. Linked to the notion of collective identity is the wider question of how the Welsh in London should be conceptualised as a group. Whilst embodying many characteristics of an ethnic group,

the location of Wales within the UK makes their positionality in London ambiguous and ambivalent (Cohen, 1994). In London they are outside of their nation, but inside the nation state.

The thesis considers these issues within the context of Welsh migration to London mainly since the Second World War, and a number of key changes which have taken place to the connections between Wales and London, and the nature of Welsh life in the city during that period. Changes in Welsh economic and social patterns have had a significant impact upon migration flows, the outlook of migrants themselves and the kinds of collective networks they build in London. The notion of 'generation' as a key marker of differentiation within Welsh life in London is developed throughout the thesis. Improved transport and communication technologies have created much closer physical ties between Wales and London and brought them closer together. But, paradoxically, Wales has in some ways gained independence from London during the post-war period; in particular since the 1960s a political and administrative infrastructure has gradually developed, centred upon Cardiff. Starting with the recognition of that city as the Welsh capital in 1955 and the establishment of the Welsh Office in 1964 (Davies 1993; Jones, E, 2001), it has culminated with devolved power in the form of a National Assembly for Wales; the political connections with London have to a certain extent become more distant. These large-scale changes render the political map in Wales today very different to that which existed in 1945.

### **Theoretical Framework of the Thesis**

To theorise and understand these processes, the thesis draws upon three broadly defined areas of theoretical literature. The first of these is work on processes of national identity. Texts that discuss the formation of Welsh national identity are particularly pertinent in this respect. The interconnections between Welsh and British identities are also important, given Wales's location

within the British nation state, and the ambiguous identity of the Welsh as an ethnic group in London. The second key area of literature is concerned with the construction of self-identity. Much of this work emanates from cultural geography and cultural studies. It emphasises the processual, socially constructed nature of our identities, and the ways in which they are made through multiple connections. Thirdly, the thesis draws extensively upon academic work concerned with migration and its interconnections with processes of self-identity. Much of this work is written from within migration studies, highlighting both key issues in the study of migratory processes, and the stories of particular migrant groups (such as the Welsh in England). Emerging at the intersection of migration studies and identity theory is the current body of work on the geographies of diaspora. With its emphasis upon migration, travel, and multiple attachments in the construction of identity, diaspora is a key theoretical tenet of the thesis.

### **The social construction of national identity**

Language plays a crucial role in any understanding of Welsh national identity formation. The importance of language more generally is reflected in the theoretical literature. Benedict Anderson's (1991) *Imagined Communities* stresses that nations are socially constructed, challenging the view of an organic entity that is the inevitable container of, and dividing line between, groups of people. He demonstrates that nations (and their veneration as a key frame for collective identity) are relatively recent inventions, rather than stretching back through time as suggested by many nationalistic discourses. According to Anderson, European nations in particular were often welded together from and against earlier types of governmental units such as dynastic realms and religious communities (1991: 12). In the case of Britain, Williams (1985: 12) argues that in early Celtic society there was no place called Wales, but rather a series of tribes: "Their stronger kings started to hammer the whole bunch together and to make a country called

Wales". As Williams (1979) argues, before the crystallisation of a Welsh nation, what would later become its citizens held loyalties both to wider territories (such as an early British identity) and simultaneously local or regional territorial units that were more narrowly defined than Wales. In examining the development of state institutions in early Wales, Jones, Rh (1998) supports these arguments and suggests that "it is probable that the most important institutions in Wales during the early Middle Ages were organised on the basis of the regional kingdoms of Wales rather than on a wider Welsh political unit" (1998: 676).

Anderson (1991) argues that the fostering of particular linguistic forms as 'print languages' played a central role in the development of national consciousness in Europe. Such a process reduced linguistic diversity, amalgamating certain dialects and gave particular languages a heightened legitimacy. What Anderson stresses is that the coincidence of nations with unique and exclusive languages is not inevitable, and that the emergence of a particular national language was often the result of deliberately reducing linguistic diversity. He states that the choice of language was often a case of "unselfconscious inheritance or convenience" (1991: 84). Anderson's analysis here is important because it highlights that there can often be a discrepancy between national borders and national cultural or linguistic forms. Cultures and languages are not always synonymous with national boundaries. As he suggests: "Many nations/nation states share their national print languages with other nations, and some of these languages are only spoken by a minority of the people living in them" (1991: 44). And Jones (1998, E: 225) argues:

Er ei bod hi'n demtasiwn i gysylltu iaith â gwlad benodol, anaml iawn y mae hynny'n gweithio'n ymarferol. Nid oes dim sy'n cymylu ffiniau cenedlaethol yn fwy nag iaith, gan ei bod hi'n adlewyrchiad mor gywir o symudiadau parhaus pobloedd.

*Although it is tempting to connect a language to a specific country, it rarely works in practice. Nothing confuses national boundaries more than language, it being such a faithful reflection of the continuous movement of people.*

Of crucial importance therefore is to understand national identity as a socially constructed process which is made in different ways (Williams, 1985), rather than emerging inevitably out of the mists of time. But these accounts of the development of the nation also suggest the dangers of presuming an inevitable equivalence between national borders, languages and cultures. More specifically it points towards the need to move away from viewing Welsh culture exclusively within the borders of Wales, and understanding both the nature of Welsh life beyond Offa's Dyke, and its connections with Welsh life in Wales. It is in this context that the thesis will examine the Welsh language in London.

It is Anderson's contention that the nation is an 'imagined community', and the central role of imagination in the construction of national identity is raised by many other writers. Gruffudd (1995: 220) for instance describes the nation as an 'imaginative discourse' and stresses the "symbolic attributes of land and landscape and their role in the construction and mobilisation of national identity". In discussing the development of nationalist politics in early twentieth century Wales, Gruffudd argues that particular landscapes became imbued with significance in the construction of Welshness by Plaid Cymru (The Party of Wales). Morgan (1986: 19) states:

... historians have become more and more concerned with the role of imagination, myths, generalisations, images, clichés, in the cohesion of modern nation states, or groups, emphasising human activity in constructing these units or the deliberation of self-consciousness of such a process. This concern among historians contrasts with older wisdom that states are organic growth, or unselfconscious occurrences over centuries.

Because Wales is a nation, located within the larger nation state of Britain, Curtis (1986: 9) argues that the importance of 'cultural style' to the maintenance of national identity is reinforced:

National identity is, then, founded on 'cultural style'. But this is not necessarily synonymous with real power, for, by Max Weber's classic definition, a state is 'that agency within society which possesses the monopoly of legitimate violence'. Even allowing for the potency of cultural power groups within



broadcasting, the press and the education system, Wales, by those terms, clearly has no separate entity from England. The national urge for self-identification, for the autonomy of character and individuality, if not of political and economic power, has, necessarily to be achieved through the creation and maintenance of 'cultural style'.

As Morgan (1986) argues, the creation of traditions, myths, and the role of imagination have been crucial in the maintenance of a distinctive Welsh identity. And he suggests that in the case of Wales "the nation has not been conterminous with a political state" (1986: 20). Wales as a 'nation' sits within the wider 'nation state' of Britain, which often posits the Principality as a regional area of a national British identity. Davies (1993: 622) echoes Curtis's argument that, until recently, Wales was often not recognised as a distinctive unit or entity within official and governmental institutions:

... the south Wales coalfield was part of the South Western Region, while the coalfield of the north was included in the North Western Region. Despite James Griffiths' protests, responsibility for the electricity in Wales was divided between the South Wales Electricity Board (SWEB) and the Merseyside and North Wales Electricity Board (MANWEB). Road transport became part of the Western Region of the British Transport Authority, and Welsh railways became largely the responsibility of the Western Region of British Railways.

In his study of British identity, Robin Cohen (1994: 1) states that his "starting point is that a complex national and social identity is continuously constructed and re-shaped in its (often antipathetic) interaction with outsiders, strangers, foreigners and aliens - the 'others'. You know who you are, only by knowing who you are not". His theoretical framework is echoed by Hall and Du Gay (1996: 4-5) who state that "It is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what is not, to what it lacks, to what has been called its *constitutive outside* that ... identity can be constructed". Cohen suggests that "the boundaries of British nationality, identity and citizenship are only very imprecisely drawn and understood. This indeterminacy can be thought of as a series of blurred, opaque or 'fuzzy' frontiers surrounding the very fabrication and the subsequent recasting of the core identity" (1994: 7). And he "suggest[s] that ambiguity often characterises the boundaries between an English and a British identity (the internal frontier) and between British

and supranational identities (the external frontiers)". The 'Celtic Fringe' as Cohen puts it is the first 'fuzzy frontier' that he examines, including Wales's location within a British identity. His analysis suggests two central issues for the study of Welsh life in London. Firstly the ambiguous, liminal position of Wales on the fringe of Britain, capable of being seen as 'different' (when Britain is viewed as predominantly English), and yet at other times incorporated within the British nation state. These issues have gained increased relevance with the devolution of government to Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. More specifically in terms of the focus of the thesis, such issues have a strong bearing upon how the Welsh need to be conceptualised when they are in *England*. If Wales's position in Britain is 'fuzzy' and ambiguous, then the ways in which the Welsh in England are conceptualised needs to reflect upon and work through this complexity. The thesis argues that the Welsh in London should be seen as a group with multiple and complex identities. They are constantly shifting between being 'outsiders' - an ethnic group - and conversely 'insiders', whose location *within* Britain and their geographical proximity to London, means that they cannot be easily or unproblematically compared with groups of people more commonly known as ethnic groups (e.g. the Chinese community in Britain). The position of the Welsh as a predominantly white ethnic group is also relevant. As Hickman (1995) argues, post-war British discourses of race and racism have largely been based around notions of skin colour, excluding groups such as the Irish from debates about ethnicity in London until relatively recently. The analysis in this thesis therefore draws upon such literatures, including discussions of ethnic identity and diaspora, to make subtle readings of Welsh identity in London.

### **Self-identities**

Whilst issues of subjectivity, agency and human experience have arguably occupied a central position in the development of human geography (Pile, 1993, 1996), recent years have

witnessed the growth of a wide body of scholarly work concerned with new ways of thinking about the construction of self-identity (including many contributions from within cultural studies and other disciplines). At its heart is a 'deconstructive critique' which challenges "the notion of an integral, originary and unified identity" (Hall & Du Gay, 1991: 1). Critical of essentialist terms such as identity, scholars attempted to erase them, but found that there were no other terms to replace these words: "There is nothing to do but to continue to think with them - albeit now in their detotalised or deconstructed forms" (Hall & Du Gay, 1991: 1). Of crucial importance in this deconstruction is the insistence upon identity as being a social *process*, which is always being made and re-made, rather than as set in stone or already achieved: "Identities are therefore constituted within, not outside of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being" (Hall & Du Gay, 1991: 4). According to Thrift (1996: 40) "the subject's understanding of the world depends on a sense of self which we can, most generally define as not an objective thing as such, but a mobile region of continually self-reproducing activity ... It becomes possible to turn away from the current characteristics of the person as possessing a psychic unity, which we call 'self', and from the whole 'inner' vocabulary that supports it".

Matless (1996, 1997) describes three broad trajectories currently emerging within (and beyond) cultural geography, concerned with what he terms the 'geographical self'. The first strand of such research considers how subjectivity is worked out through conduct and everyday practice (Thrift & Pile, 1995). Of particular importance in this respect is Thrift's (1996) formulation of non-representational theory, "a line of thinking ... [which has] tried to conjure up the situated, pre-linguistic, embodied states that give intelligibility (but not necessarily meaning) to human action" (1996: 9). Such a theoretical framework therefore stresses physical embodiment and movement, and is critical about the limits of focusing too exclusively on the visual and linguistic to explain

everyday life. Citing Curt (1994), Thrift holds “a degree of scepticism about the ‘linguistic turn’ in the social sciences and humanities, suggesting that this term has too often cut us off from much that is most interesting about human practices, most especially their embodied and situated nature, by stressing certain aspects of the verbal-cum-visual as ‘the only home of social knowledge’” (1996: 7). For Thrift (2000: 217) “the world is a making (Threadgold, 1997): it is processual; it is in action; it is ‘all that is present and moving’ (Williams, 1997). There is no last word; infinite becoming and constant reactivation”. The notion of embodied performance is also important within this theoretical framework: “it expands our knowledge of how we know what we know about the world, most especially by stressing the arts of what people do (or can do) in real time through the expressive qualities of the body (including language, gesture, and so on) through the appropriate spacings of things, and through the way in which things themselves become part of the expressions” (Thrift & Dewsbury, 2000: 420). Dance, for instance, is put forward as a particularly salient example of such embodied performance:

... As one of the key means of performance, it is posing the question that many who write about performance want answered ... It has become an increasingly central mode of cultural expression ... as a contemplation which values improvisation and encourages attunement to emergent form; and it is one of the chief means of knowingly constituting virtual spaces through choreographic and other performance methods, all of which are now routinely taught. And last, dance has become a crucial political movement in modern feminist thought. (Thrift, 2000: 237).

As well as being derived through everyday embodied practice, the notion of the encounter is also important in this view of subjectivity. To draw again upon Thrift, “the ‘human subject’s understanding of the world ... is worked out in joint action and is therefore inherently dialogical. Many actions require co-operation to complete. In other words, the flow of dialogical action is a fundamental determinant of the intelligibility of social life: understanding comes from the between of ‘we’, not the solitary ‘I’” (Thrift, 1996: 38).

In reviewing theoretical work concerned with practice, Thrift & Pile (1995: 35) highlight the important contribution made by Actor Network Theory which they describe as “[using] the metaphor of the network to consider how social agency is constituted”. Actor Network Theory (ANT) forms a complex and multifaceted area of work and is not exclusively concerned with issues of subjectivity and self. For Thrift & Pile (1996) one strength of this theoretical framework is that it challenges the notion of actors as fixed, complete, or set in stone: “agents are not unified effects. They are contingent achievements” (1995: 35). There is a sense once again that are our subjectivities – our own senses of self, are constantly being made, rather than complete entities that move through the world. Another aspect of ANT is that it grants agency to non-humans (animals and machines) and thereby “conjures up the idea of a world where ‘the human’ must be redefined as highly decentred (or as reaching further) and as unable to be placed in opposition to the non-human” (Thrift, 1996: 26). As Matless (1996: 379) argues, “the general consideration of ‘agency’ in these studies follows a general sense of the subject as a decentred effect of relations and alliances, rather than as a conscious and controlling self”. The decentring of the human and the extension of agency to the non-human also unsettles many traditional divisions that have tended to structure our ways of thinking, such as nature/culture, for example (Matless, 1996; Thrift & Pile, 1995).

The second strand of work on the geographical self outlined by Matless concerns the way in which self-identities are constructed through the “internalisation of wider-spatial relations” (1997: 396). May (1996), for example, considers how his respondents’ identities are constituted through reference to notions of class, race and nation. For Mc Dowell (1994: 166) “The current challenge uniting cultural geographers is the investigation of how the interconnections between global forces and local particularity alter the relationships between identity, meaning and place”

And Pile (1993, 1996) is concerned with conceptualisations of the social, and structure-agency dualisms/dualities, exploring the 'psychoanalytic route to subjectivity', and the relationship between psychoanalytic and geographical thought (Matless, 1997).

What many of these studies suggest is that identity as a process is constituted through the internalisation of *multiple* social axes that intersect and cut across each other in complex, sometimes contradictory ways. Identities are worked out contextually through everyday practice in which different aspects of our self-identities may be prioritised (Thrift & Pile, 1995). In the analysis of self-identities, it is important to avoid over emphasis upon one aspect of its construction (Cohen, 1997). Brah (1996: 10) stresses "the importance of understanding the intersections between 'race', gender, class, sexuality and ethnicity". And May's (1996) study of people's understanding of place and identity in north London "... seeks to trace the complex ways in which class intersects with and shapes people's constructions of race and place identities" (1996: 196). Further, Bhabha (1994: 1) argues that:

The move away from the singularities of 'class' or 'gender' as primary conceptual and organisational categories, has resulted in an awareness of the subject positions ... that inhabit any claim to identity in the modern world. What is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities, and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences.

The final trajectory of research that Matless (1996, 1997) highlights in relation to work on the 'geographical self', is concerned explicitly with geography, and how identity can be thought of in terms of space and movement. Thrift & Pile (1995) suggest that spatial metaphors are being widely appropriated in current conceptualisations of the self, and they state that "some of the most fertile have tended to cluster around ideas of movement and mobility, journeying and travelling" (1995: 19). I turn now to examine the connections between ideas of identity and travel in more detail.

## *Migration, travel and identity*

A key characteristic of much of the theoretical debates over cultural identity is their exploration of the importance of geography to processes of identity. In particular many theorists are drawing upon the potential of travel and movement in such theoretical explanations. Clifford (1997: 25) describes the localising strategies of past generations of anthropologists for instance, who sought to mark out pure, distinct cultures in foreign lands, and argues: “If we rethink culture and its science, anthropology, in terms of travel, then the organic, naturalising bias of the term ‘culture’ - seen as a rooted body that grows, lives, dies and so on - is questioned. Constructed and disputed histories, sites of displacement, interference and interaction, come more sharply into focus”. If culture is re-theorised, then travel can be seen as centrally constitutive of it: “Practices of displacement might emerge as constitutive of cultural meanings rather than as their simple transfer and extension” (Clifford, 1997: 3) - “a view of human location as constituted as much by displacement as by stasis” (1997: 2).

Within migration studies, interest in migratory processes has tended to focus upon the important issues surrounding the physical movement of people. Pooley & Whyte (1991: 1) for instance argue that not only is historical migration worthy of study in its own right, but that it is “also an important diagnostic feature of the social and economic structures of particular societies”. Pooley & Doherty (1991) consider that migration has significant impacts upon migrants themselves (and therefore potentially their identities), the people and places left behind, and the destinations that migrants travel to. But equally, travel and migration might be used as a *metaphor* for identity, with movement seen as analogous to psychological transformations (Minh-ha, 1994):

“A minimal definition of travel would involve a movement from one place to another - between geographical locations or cultural experiences - but we can expand this common-sense definition to look at how movement functions psychically and metaphorically” (Robertson, *et al*, 1994: 2). If travel is used as a key way of thinking through ideas of identity then, as Clifford suggests, processes such as migration might be seen as centrally constitutive of culture. An emphasis upon movement stresses the connections between places, and suggests that identities are made of flows and connections, challenging fixed, organic, tribal identities - “Thinking ... as a mobile, fluid and vertiginous activity” (Thrift & Pile, 1995: 24). This chimes very strongly with Massey’s (1991, 1994) ‘Global Sense of Place’. She stresses the way in which places might be constituted through their connections to other places, rather than by drawing firm boundaries between them in order to create a local sense of identity. In her view it is crucial to understand places as ‘processes’, which are “articulated moments in networks of social relations” (1991: 28). Individual locations (Massey uses the example of Kilburn in north west London) are sustained and not threatened by their place within wider networks of people, money and goods. Each place is a unique intersection of such networks. Massey talks of a sense of place which is characterised by an “extraverted, consciousness of links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way, the global and the local” (1991: 28). Within such a framework, Wales might be seen less as a bounded, insular space, and more in terms of its connections to other spaces, such as London.

Thrift and Pile (1995: 19) see

spatial metaphors as a way of comprehending the subject, metaphors that can reanimate body, self, identity, person, subject. Of these different metaphors some of the most fertile have tended to cluster around ideas of movement and mobility, journeying and travelling, what Wallace (1993) calls the peripatetic mode of signification. Such metaphors can be used, so it is hoped, to construct new, more open figurations of the subject.



One area of work which has explored the connections between identity, travel and migration is that of diaspora writing. In recent years not only have the links between migration and identity been examined by writers in this field, but the possibility of using notions of travel and diaspora to think about identity in new ways has also been explored.

### **Diasporic Geographies**

Diaspora as a historical process can be traced back to Greek times, but its heritage is closely entwined with the experience of the Jewish citizens of Palestine, exiled and displaced to Babylon (Cohen, 1997). Whilst other groups also came to be referred to as 'diasporic', the term remained a descriptive one with clear characteristics, associated with the forced exile of particular cultural groups (Mitchell, 1997). Linked to the plight of the Jews and later African slaves, 'diaspora' was loaded with negative connotations - of exile, dispersal into the wilderness, and a sense of longing to return to the homeland, the memories and customs of which remained dear to those estranged from it. Clifford (1997: 247) describes the main aspects of diaspora as "a history of dispersal, myths/memories of the homeland, alienation in the host (bad host?) country, desire for eventual return, ongoing support of the homeland, and a collective identity importantly defined by this relationship".

In recent years, diaspora's terrain has both changed in nature and become much broader. The Afro-Caribbean Diaspora reinforced many of the painful and negative trademarks witnessed by groups such as the Jews. Yet the emergence of a mainly British-centred cultural studies that made connections with the postcolonial condition has led to the explosion of the term into mainstream identity literature. Gilroy's (1993) study of the 'Black Atlantic' represents an important moment in the appropriation of the notion of diaspora by scholars in the humanities, and

indeed in social science. Drawing extensively upon diaspora, he underlines the need to acknowledge that “the term ... comes into the vocabulary of black studies and the practice of pan-African politics from Jewish thought” (1993: 205). Gilroy critiques the way in which cultural studies has tended to view culture within a nationalistic framework, describing “the fatal junction of the concept of nationality with the concept of culture (1993: 2). *The Black Atlantic* also forms a powerful critique of what Gilroy terms ‘ethnic absolutism’ – the idea that ethnic and national groups can be thought of as separate and self-contained entities rooted in distinct, sealed-off spaces.

Gilroy uses the Black Atlantic as a unit of cultural, political and economic analysis: “In opposition to ... nationalist or ethnically absolute approaches, I want to develop the suggestion that cultural historians could take the Atlantic as one single, complex unit of analysis in their discussions of the modern world and use it to produce an explicitly transnational and intercultural perspective” (1993: 15). The notion of the Black Atlantic does not therefore mean losing sight of specific cultural forms, but rather acknowledging how they are made through connections and interconnections that stretch beyond homogenous national or ethnic groups. Central to Gilroy’s analysis is the image of the ship, which both constitutes and represents the circulation of people, money, goods and cultural forms between different points in the diaspora: “I have settled on the image of ships in motion across the spaces between Europe, America, Africa and the Caribbean ... The image of the ship – a living, micro-cultural, micro-political system in motion – is especially important for historical and theoretical reasons ... Ships immediately focus attention on the middle passage ... on the circulation of ideas and activists as well as the movement of key cultural and political artefacts: tracts, books, gramophone records, and choirs” (1993: 4).

In *The Black Atlantic* there are a number of themes that might be particularly useful in considering the construction of Welsh cultural forms outside of Wales. Gilroy's analysis points to the problematic nature of trying to equate cultural forms with a single national space, and of creating absolute lines of difference around supposedly homogenous ethnicities. His discussion of the way in which multiple flows of people, ideas, money and goods continually circulate around the Atlantic highlights the way in which places and people are part of complex networks. In exploring the movement of music as a cultural form, Gilroy demonstrates that this includes not only physical materials (such as records), but also cultural styles (such as rhythms), as well as money and musicians themselves. What is also crucial in *The Black Atlantic* is the notion that cultural forms are re-worked as they move from one space to another: "the cultures of this group have been produced in a syncretic pattern in which styles and forms of the Caribbean, the United States, and Africa have been reworked and reinscribed in the novel context of modern Britain's own untidy ensemble of regional and class-oriented conflicts" (1993: 3). In the case of hip hop for instance, "The musical components ... are a hybrid nurtured by the social relations of the South Bronx where Jamaican sound system culture was transplanted during the 1970s and put down new roots" (1993: 33). Cultural forms do not lose their specificity as they track around the world, but can be altered, both by the social and political relations in the new country in which they are worked out, and through being mixed with other styles and cultures.

Though Gilroy was interested in a specific (if transnational) cultural unit, other writers have applied notions of diaspora much more widely. 'Loosened' from its exclusive ties to particular groups, diaspora has come to be used to describe processes of travel and displacement more widely, and as a *paradigmatic* theoretical concept for the postmodern condition (Clifford, 1994; Mitchell, 1997). Barkan & Shelton (1998: 3) argue that "discussions of diaspora ... have

become central to the intellectual investigation of postmodernist culture”. Diaspora appeals to identity scholars for two main reasons. Firstly, it emphasises notions of travel, displacement, movement, and multiple attachments. With its stress upon both ‘routes’ and ‘roots’, it undermines the idea of a singular, fixed, essential self that is already made and set in stone. Movement becomes “not an awkward interval between fixed points of departure and arrival, but as a mode of being in the world” (Chambers, 1994: 42). Diasporic peoples construct their identities through attachments to both ‘home’ and ‘away’. Diaspora undermines the privileging of one axis of identity, and considers the intersection of multiple social axes (such as class, gender and sexuality) in the construction of the self (Brah, 1996). As Clifford (1997) states, diaspora theory and discourse must take account of the ‘cross-cutting structures’ of class and race, and he stresses the gendered nature of diasporic processes. The dangers of uncritically reducing identity to one aspect of its multiple constitution are therefore avoided.

The second main appeal of diaspora is that its anti-essentialist, multiply located forms are in tension with the dominant claims of the nation state, and of tribal/indigenous groups (Clifford 1997). It is perhaps the former of these that is of most importance in the revisioning of identity, for diaspora challenges the notions of both space and time that are so central to the claims of nation states. Because diasporic identities are always made of connections - of attachments to multiple sites, they can never be conceptualised with reference to a single, exclusivist national space:

The cultural forms of Diasporas, Clifford (1994) insists, can never be exclusively nationalistic. Nation-states are about welding the locals to a single place, gathering peoples and integrating ethnic minorities. Diasporas, by contrast, imply multiple attachments. They accommodate to, but also resist the norms and claims of nationalists ... Diasporas are positioned somewhere between nation-states and ‘travelling cultures’ in that they involve dwelling in a nation state in a physical sense, but travelling in an astral or spiritual sense that falls outside the nation state’s space time zone.  
(Cohen, 1997:135-136)

Mac Éinrí (2000: 2) supports this statement arguing that “Diasporic identities, transnational and subversive in character, challenge the security of identities defined, but also limited, by national boundaries”. He suggests that diaspora brings about a de-centring of identity: “... the increasing use of the term diaspora denotes a de-centred approach in which migration, migrants and their multi-generational societies and cultures are seen as phenomena in themselves and not simply in relation to the countries of origin and reception”. Diaspora not only challenges the spatiality of the exclusivist nation state, but also its temporal claims. Clifford (1997: 264) describes “Experiences of unsettlement, loss, and recurring terror [that] produce discrepant temporalities - broken histories that trouble the linear, progressivist narratives of nation states and global modernisation”.

### *Critiquing Diaspora*

The appeal of such work in the theorisation of identity is powerful, but a number of writers warn against the uncritical appropriation of diaspora theory. One argument put forward is that diaspora is being applied too widely and thus losing its specific, subtle meanings. Clifford (1997: 272) suggests that “It is important to resist the tendency of diasporic identities to slide into equivalence with disaggregated, positional, performed identities in general”. Mitchell (1997) offers a highly convincing critique of the use of diaspora and hybridity within cultural studies. She suggests that these terms are viewed as somehow inherently progressive in that they can provide effective “resistance to essentialist narratives” of race and nation (1997: 536). But it is her view that diaspora has been over-abstracted and fetishized, often through the use of spatial metaphors: “Despite the imperative to contextualise ... many contemporary poststructuralist theorists have seized on the progressive theoretical potential of the term itself, and abstracted it away from the situated practices of everyday life” (1997: 535). In such cases diaspora is often used as a cultural or linguistic metaphor, and devoid of the political and economic relations in which identities are

actually made: “The fetishization of these terms, and the general overuse of abstract spatial metaphors such as ‘third space’, can lead to theories which neglect the everyday, grounded practices and economic relations in which social identities and narratives of race and nation unfold” (1997: 534). One of Mitchell’s central arguments is that diasporic cultures are not necessarily inherently progressive and can be used for the accumulation of capital, for instance. The economic and social context of the formation of diaspora cultures therefore needs to be held in focus. The thesis will examine the construction of Welsh cultural identities in London. But it will also view these in relation to the economic motivations underpinning migration, and the complex socio-economic networks linking Wales and London.

This thesis aims to use diaspora as a theoretical construct in several key ways, that take on board such criticisms. Firstly it can be used to help construct a framework for conceptualising the identity of the Welsh as a collective group in London. At one level, the experiences and cultural expressions of the Welsh in London can be held up against the key characteristics or markers of diasporic groups (as set out by writers such as Clifford, Cohen and Brah). The purpose of such a comparison would be to think through what kind of collective identity the Welsh possess as a group in London, and to try and understand if they can really be thought of as a diasporic group (or at the very least exhibiting signs of ‘diasporism’). The analysis in the following chapters considers the kinds of connections that Welsh people in London make with the ‘homeland’, and how returning to Wales might be important (or otherwise), for instance.

A second, perhaps broader way of cautiously applying diaspora theory to the London Welsh relates to Brah’s description of the meaning of diaspora; that is, the dispersal of people from a homeland to more than one destination – “It involves images of multiple journeys” (1996: 181).

Welsh migration that has radiated both across Britain, and throughout the world (including large Welsh populations in the United States) might be considered as a Welsh Diaspora, of which the ‘journey’ to London forms one important facet. There is theoretical potential in considering Welsh migration in such a way, because of the suggestion by Clifford (1997) that the relationships forged by co-ethnics within a diaspora might be as important as the connections made with the homeland: “De-centred, lateral connections may be as important as those formed around a teleology of origin/return” (1997: 250). This stresses the way in which diasporic identities are made of multiple connections. As Cohen (1997: 25) states:

... members of a Diaspora characteristically sense not only a collective identity in a place of settlement, nor again only a relationship with an imagined, putative or real homeland, but also a common identity with co-ethnic members in other communities in other countries. Bonds of language, religion, culture and a sense of common fate impregnate such a transnational relationship and give it an affective intimate quality that formal citizenship or long settlement frequently lack.

Although the creative potential of thinking of (e)migration from Wales in terms of a Welsh diaspora has yet to be fully developed, a number of writers have highlighted the economic and cultural connections between migration from Wales to England, and movements of Welsh people to the United States and Patagonia (e.g. Knowles, 1997; Williams, 1985). Much can be learnt from comparing the construction of Welsh identity in London with that of other centres of large scale migration from Wales, such as New York.

The experiences of other diasporic groups can be extremely fruitful in considering ways of conceptualising Welsh identities in London. In particular, a reading of Irish migration to London informs my analysis. Duffy’s (1995) study of literary reflections on emigration from Ireland, for instance, echoes many of the comments of my own research participants in its discussion of the experience of leaving home and adjusting to life in the migration destination. Walter (1997, 1999) and Hickman (1996) discuss one of the most important similarities between

the Welsh and the Irish as their identities are negotiated in London - their 'invisibility' as a mainly white ethnic group. Hickman describes the "invisibility of the Irish in official discourse (as opposed to popular discourse) about the newly emerged pluralism of British society" (1996: 30). They suggest that although the Irish in London have suffered high levels of discrimination, their identity as a separate group within the British state has been denied and suppressed through a number of mechanisms. As Walter argues, "Irish invisibility in Britain ... reflects a paradox. On the one hand, Irish people are strongly identified as different, and inferior, but on the other hand they are too much 'the same' for their separate identity to be recognised" (1999: 319). And she goes on to state that "the Irish are constructed as 'different' and treated less favourably because of their origins, yet there is a refusal to accept that they experience real racial discrimination because they are 'white'" (1999: 311). Jones, E (2001) suggests that on the whole the Welsh in London have not been subject to racism or discrimination in London. Yet despite being generally accepted into London society, historically the Welsh were often stereotyped and caricatured by satirists and cartoonists:

... their view of the Welsh generally [in the eighteenth century] may be summed up in a 1790 print by William Holland of a Welsh feast on St David's Day. Here we see a convivial group sporting enormous leeks and toasting their cheese before the fire. At worst, however, the Welsh were depicted as poor and rather stupid – the goat indicated an impoverished background, cheese an impoverished diet. Their symbols were the leek and the harp, and their difficulties with the English language were only too easy to ridicule. But they were tolerated. They were part and parcel of a great metropolitan city. (2001: 87).

Jones suggests that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, prejudicial attitudes tended to avoid the Welsh; Irish, Jewish and later 'coloured' groups became the key locus for 'social discrimination'. But he adds: "there remained an undercurrent of suspicion of the Welsh, always in danger of causing a ripple of concern here and there – for example, the card in the window of a Paddington boarding-house proclaiming 'No blacks, no Welsh'" (2001: 200).



Both Hickman and Walter suggest that in post-war Britain, race and racism have often been viewed as operating along axes of colour, thus marginalising the awareness and also the acceptance of discrimination towards the Irish in Britain. But as Hickman makes clear, “racist discourses in pursuit of natural symbolism of inferiority have never confined themselves to body images let alone skin colour” (1996: 32). Bonnett’s (2000) *White Identities* however, suggests that post-war discourses of a ‘white’ national British identity was not created solely in reaction to immigration of ‘non-white’ populations. He points to the fact that in the nineteenth century whiteness was not used to describe a homogenous national community, but rather was often restricted to the upper classes: “The British working class ... were marginal to the symbolic formation of whiteness and sometimes ... actively excluded from it” (2000: 28). In suggesting that the working class were located as a racialised other to white identity Bonnett’s analysis here points to the instability and complex interrelationships between class, race and nationality. He argues that in the twentieth century the working class were able to claim (and be included within) a British white identity because of the development of popular imperialism, and important shifts in the nature of capitalism. The move from a liberal economy to one based around state intervention and welfarism helped create the conditions for a more homogenous national community in which the working class could be incorporated around a unified white identity. It was such an identity that racist discourses could hold up against ‘non white’ ‘others’ from the 1950s onwards: “Mid-late twentieth century British racist discourse is often characterised by its allusions to ‘the national community’ (within England, an imperialistic conflation of ‘England’ with ‘Britain’ is also often apparent). Moreover such constructions frequently posit colour as the key site of exclusion and inclusion” (2000: 41).

The analysis of the ambiguous and shifting position of the Irish as a mainly white ethnic group in Britain clearly resonates strongly with that of the Welsh, and provides a robust theoretical framework within which to understand it. Work on Irish migration to London is also useful for a number of other reasons, partly because of the way in which writers such as Walter draw purposefully and thoughtfully upon theories of diaspora. Gray's (2000) study of the Irish in the city during the 1980s draws out many similar themes to my own study in terms of the experiences of migrants, and their differentiation across class, and generation. Gray (2000: 74) critiques the notion of multiculturalism, and the location of the Irish within such a framework: "Discourses and policies of 'multiculturalism' tend to produce a reified Catholic and nationalist profile of the Irish in Britain focusing more on a unified picture of disadvantage and discrimination than on the contradictory narratives that constitute Irish identity in London and elsewhere". Gray suggests that multiculturalism would tend to locate Irish identity primarily in Ireland, and a diasporic framework allows the recognition that identities are made through multiple attachments. Many of her research respondents had negotiated what she terms 'hybrid' identities such as 'London-Irish' or 'Irish in London' that made connections with both Ireland and London, and which were de-centred: "Their sense of themselves as Irish therefore had a multi-located dimension that involved reference to both Ireland and England/London and everyday practices that involved bridging the gaps between these places, both culturally and emotionally" (2000: 76). She adds that "those taking part in my study can be seen as negotiating a diasporic sense of Irishness" (2000: 76). Gray's study, along with those by Walter and Hickman also makes the clear the ways in which diasporas are gendered, and how gender cuts across ethnic and national identities.

The thesis seeks to apply diaspora theory contextually and meaningfully in using it to understand Welsh identities in London. It recognises the need to keep in view the large differences

between the Welsh (who in this case have migrated within Britain), and those migrants who migrate many thousands of miles, often under very different circumstances. King, *et al* (1995: xii) for instance refer to “the globalisation of migration - in which a move from middle-class Bombay to London may be less of a cultural shock than a migration from a remote Welsh hamlet to London”. It is not necessary to think rigidly of the Welsh in London as a diasporic form, but it is legitimate to consider how certain aspects of multiple Welsh identities in the city might be diasporic, or might even “wax and wane in diasporism – depending upon changing possibilities” (Clifford, 1997: 249). The third way in which Diaspora theory is used throughout the thesis is in this more pragmatic and general sense, as a theoretical tool that can be applied to processes of identity more broadly. It can help to work through multiply attached, mobile, fluid senses of self, rooted in London, rooted in Wales, criss-crossed by language, nationality, gender, and so on.

### **An Outline of the Thesis**

The construction of self and collective forms of Welsh identity in London through migration and travel (in its widest sense) is the key focus of the thesis. The following chapters tease out these theoretical and practical issues contextually, by exploring the narratives of Welsh people living in London. Chapter 2 offers an account of how this exploration was carried out. It outlines the research techniques that I used and stresses the importance of the research process to the final, neat text that has been produced from it. In Chapter 2 I am also interested in considering the role of my own self-identity, and how linguistic and cultural aspects of my subjectivity helped constitute relationships with those research participants that I worked with. Chapter 3 offers an historical account of migration from Wales to London, and Welsh life in the city. It introduces the reader to the key Welsh institutions that are explored in the substantive chapters of the thesis. The second section of the chapter reviews the extant literature on the London Welsh. From this historical and literary overview a number of key themes are drawn out. In outlining the main

Welsh organisations in London, some of the key Welsh spaces in the city (such as the chapel and the dairy) are described. The charting of migration to London and the discussion of the contribution made by the Welsh community in the city to life in Wales highlights the complex interconnections between Wales and London. Flows of people, animals, money, ideas (and even laundry in Chapter 4) constitute such networks. Finally, a key concern in reviewing the extant literature is to begin to find nuanced ways of conceptualising the Welsh as a collective group in London. In particular the work of Emrys Jones is utilised to consider whether the Welsh in the city can be called an ethnic group.

The subsequent four chapters explore Welsh identities in London from different viewpoints and draw out the key theoretical issues outlined above. The social axis of generation as a key marker of identity which cuts across a simple homogenous notion of Welsh identity forms a central organising principle of the discussions that are developed. Chapter 4 concentrates upon the experiences of respondents who left Wales in the period between 1920 and 1980. It is concerned with their experiences of migration to London. The chapter begins by exploring the reasons why people decided to leave Wales, and suggests that their migration motivations were often complex and multifaceted, even in times of economic hardship (Bartholomew, 1991). Whilst economic necessity acted as a key 'push factor' for some respondents, other migrants described how the appeal of living in a big city, or the fact that friends had decided to move to London could also be important motivations. The role of social networks - both in channelling migration to London and helping newly arrived migrants to negotiate life in the city is explored. The physical and social environments that migrants had to adjust to in London often presented a major contrast to the rural (and urban) communities they left, and the support of friends and family living in London helped temper such shocks. Many migrants also maintained close contact with relatives back home, thus

sustaining social networks linking Wales with London. Such ongoing connections highlight the need to think of identity as constituted through attachments to multiple geographical sites. They also suggest the need to view the connections between migrants and non-migrants (between placement and displacement) in relational terms (Clifford, 1997; Brah, 1996; Walter, 1999).

Chapter 5 continues the focus on the experiences of migrants who moved to London during the period up until 1980. It is concerned with the longer-term involvement they have sought with Welsh societies in the city. The chapter begins by considering how respondents described being both integrated into mainstream London life, and yet simultaneously part of a distinctive ethnic community. The multifaceted appeal of this community is explored. The vibrant social life sustained by the London Welsh Centre and the chapel network is put forward as a key factor underpinning the attraction of the community. But the socio-cultural background of migrants, their motivations for migrating to London, and their need for a sense of 'anchorage' are also explored. The chapter examines the way in which traditional societies such as the chapel and the London Welsh Centre construct collective Welsh identities. It is argued that in doing so they draw upon and interweave multiple strands of belonging (such as religion, gender and culture). In seeking to reproduce Welsh culture in London, such societies produce identities that are both alike and different from cultural forms back home, a characteristic that has been associated with diasporic groups (Barkan & Shelton, 1998; Brah, 1996; Clifford, 1997; Hall, 1995). The final section of Chapter 5 is concerned with the decline of traditional Welsh societies in London during the post-war period, focusing upon the chapel network. The shifting nature of migration from Wales and demographic changes within the chapel community itself are put forward as key issues in charting the decline of a once central institution in London Welsh life. The response of chapel members to the decline of their congregations (and the growth of new Welsh networks in London)

is considered. The unfamiliarity of many respondents with new Welsh networks in London is held up as an indication of the fragmented and multiple nature of Welsh identity in the city.

Chapter 6 moves on to examine the migration experiences and identities of respondents who have moved to London in the period since 1980. A central argument is that Welsh life in London needs to be seen as highly fragmented, in particular along lines of class and generation. The chapter begins by exploring the motivations underpinning migration by respondents who have moved to London during the last twenty years. In contrast to the migration narratives discussed in Chapter 4, it is argued that issues of career, lifestyle and identity are particularly important in shaping the decision to move to London for this new generation of migrants. Migrating outside of Wales had allowed some people to negotiate their sense of being Welsh in new ways, or even strengthen their identities (thus highlighting the connections between identity and migration). The ways in which such respondents engage with Welsh societies in London once they arrived there is considered. I suggest that these more recent migrants practice more cosmopolitan and individualised identities than older, longer established respondents living in London (Gans, 1979; Hannerz, 1990). Involvement in Welsh life becomes one activity amongst many other cultural activities (rather than the primary focus of people's lives), as individuals embrace diversity and difference in London to a greater extent. And involvement with Welsh life in the city is frequently concentrated around informal social networks that can be dipped into without regular, or long term commitment. During the 1990s, a number of new social networks have emerged in London that redefine Welshness, and create spaces in which such self-identities can be worked out. As well as often being highly informal in nature, these networks also contrast with older Welsh societies in terms of their geographical structure. They are de-centred, and exist in mobile, fluid spaces. Partly through utilising technologies such as the Internet they can stretch beyond London, developing

connections between different points in the Welsh Diaspora, in which Wales is but one connection. The chapter then considers how Welsh people practice cosmopolitan and individualised identities through their use of these networks. The final section of the chapter argues that although these new networks display strong contrasts with more traditional Welsh societies in the city, a number of continuities exist which seem to cross over from one generation to another.

Chapter 7 is concerned with the identities constructed in and by Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain (the London Welsh School). Two key theoretical themes are developed. Firstly, the interrelationships between language, identity and education; and secondly the role of geography in the construction of identity at the level of both the self and group. The chapter begins by re-exploring some of the theoretical connections between language, education and identity, with particular reference to Wales. The opening section also considers the need to think of children as active social actors in the construction of their identities rather than as passive recipients of adult social meanings. The history of Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain is outlined.

Three key issues are then explored. Firstly, the meanings that are attached to the decision of parents to send their children to the school. Issues of language and education are central motivations. But it is argued that the small size of the school and the feeling of a 'village school community' in the midst of a large city are also important factors in shaping the decision-making processes of parents. Secondly, though Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain seeks to recreate an authentic Welsh medium education in London, it is suggested the identity of the school embodies strong differences from comparable schools in Wales itself. The issue of how the school is funded is examined. The school has found difficulty in gaining long term funding from Wales (because of its location outside of the nation). Yet equally, money has not been forthcoming from relevant

English funding bodies, both because of the Welsh school's deviation from a predominantly English medium education, and simultaneously due to a reluctance to recognise the Welsh as an ethnic group in the city (and therefore eligible for funding given to other groups). I argue that the constant efforts of those involved with the school to raise funds to keep it open has created a strong sense of community. But the issue of how Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain is funded is also symbolic of the ambiguous, liminal identity of the Welsh in London as a whole; outside of the nation, but within the nation state – an ethnic group, but simultaneously British citizens. The third section of the chapter moves on to consider how some of the children in Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain construct their identities, and the ways in which they actively negotiate the linguistic norms and meanings attached to the school by parents and teachers. I argue that they use English and Welsh in contextual and creative ways, often within distinct spaces. The way in which their Welsh identities are primarily rooted in London (rather than in Wales), or constructed through multiple attachments is explored. The chapter considers how Wales is important to the children, and how the attributes that they attach to it are to some extent derived by juxtaposing London and Wales.

Finally, Chapter 8 provides a conclusion to the thesis. It seeks to tie together the key theoretical strands concerned with identity, migration and diaspora that have been woven through the individual chapters. It restates some of the reasons why studying the Welsh in London might be theoretically relevant, and also considers how effective the theoretical frameworks concerned with identity, migration and diaspora are in understanding Welsh identities in London. The original aims of the thesis are revisited with a view to assessing how well they have been addressed. To do this, three interconnected 'levels' of identity are considered. Firstly the issue of self-identity, secondly the construction of Welshness by organisations, and thirdly how the Welsh as a collective group in London should be conceptualised.



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<sup>i</sup> The thesis cites a large number of references written by authors with the surname 'Jones'. To distinguish between different references written in the same year, initials are used where appropriate throughout the thesis, so that the reader can identify the particular paper or book being referred to.

## Chapter 2

### Methodology

#### Introduction

This chapter outlines how the thesis was produced and the ways in which the research process itself was central to the final text. It begins by providing a background to the key research techniques used and factual details such as the timing and location of the ethnographic fieldwork undertaken. The focus then turns to my experience of actually *doing* the research, and some of the key methodological issues which had to be worked through. Drawing upon work by ethnographic scholars and my own detailed research diary, I examine how the research process was centrally constitutive of the thesis that has been produced from it. Throughout the fieldwork I negotiated multiple relationships with research participants, and continually re-framed how I presented myself and the aims of the project. I consider how, as a researcher, I occupied a marginal position in the everyday lives of those I studied, maintaining positions of closeness and distance, participation and observation. My own identity was often important in these intersubjective processes. In particular my position as an English person who had learnt Welsh (and conducted much of the research through that language) was important in locating me in relation to my research participants. In the final part of the chapter I consider some of the issues and problems that arose in interview situations and conclude by making explicit the writing strategies that I employ in the thesis.

## **Situating the Research - Qualitative and Ethnographic Research Methods**

Although many aspects of the thesis changed during the course of three years, a number of underlying aims have remained fairly central to the project. I was keen from the outset to study how Welsh people in London understood their identities and migration experiences - the *meanings* that being Welsh in London had. In doing so I immediately began to draw implicitly and explicitly upon a broad philosophical tradition present within Human Geography since the 1960s (what might be referred to as humanistic), and later cultural approaches that employed qualitative research methods. My concern with contemporary lived identities (as opposed to a more historical approach) also meant that I utilised some of the ethnographic methodologies that have become part of human geography (partly through the development of humanistic geography, and in particular as a result of the appropriation of research techniques from other disciplines such as anthropology). It is therefore appropriate to map out the geographical traditions in which the project has been located before discussing the more specific methodological issues surrounding my own thesis.

Many authors identify the 1960s and 1970s as a key period in the development of qualitative research in human geography (Eyles, 1988). A number of philosophical challenges were launched against the dominance of spatial science within the discipline – specifically its emphasis upon scientific models and spatial relationships, and its lack of concern with the lived experiences and actions of individual actors. Though the alternative approaches put forward were both complex

and multiple, Graham (1997) outlines two key groups of scholars that sought to undermine geography's dominant identity at the time; firstly radical or Marxist thinking which emphasised the importance of structural forces, and secondly the emergence of humanistic geography which stressed a concern with human agency - the intentions and actions of individuals rather than a "narrow concern with decision-making processes" that was characteristic of some Behavioural studies (Robinson, 1998: 408).

Cloke, *et al* (1991) provide a clear framework within which to understand the development of humanistic geography in the late twentieth century. They point out that although humanistic philosophies entered mainstream human geography principally during the 1980s, the connections between geography and humanism have a long heritage that can be traced back several centuries. Rather than being a homogenous set of theories, many different strands of humanistic thought entered geography during the 1970s and 1980s (such as phenomenology and existentialism) - areas of thought which sometimes possessed contradicting philosophies. For Cloke, *et al* (1991) humanistic geography as it developed in the 1970s and 1980s might be viewed as a both a *critique* (mainly of spatial science), and a *reconceptualisation* of some of geography's key terms and preoccupations (Johnston, 1997).

Humanistic geography's criticisms of spatial science focused upon its failure to study human agency – the ways in which people actively negotiated the world around them and gave meaning to their lives. Humanists were therefore concerned to bring human subjects and agency back into the foreground of geographical inquiry:

“It can hence be stated that the bottom line for humanistic geographers lies in the objective of *bringing human beings in all their complexity to the centre stage of human geography*” (Cloke, *et al*, 1991: 58, emphasis in original). But humanists were also concerned with reconceptualising the subject, as well as bringing it into closer focus: “numerous geographers with humanistic leanings discussed the limitations that arise when thinking about human decision-makers using either the ‘rational economic man’ models of spatial science (Wallace, 1978) or the various ‘stimulus-response’ models of behavioural geography” (1991: 70-71). The aim therefore was to study how human beings actively constructed meaning and knowledges and engaged with the everyday world around them.

This concern with ‘humanity’ - the way in which individual subjects construct knowledge, therefore formed an important part of humanistic geography’s project (Cloke, *et al*, 1991). But the preoccupation with how people construct knowledge and meaning was one which included the practice of researchers themselves. Rather than seeing an objective, external world which could be truthfully represented, a growing acceptance emerged that it was only possible to gain knowledge or ‘know’ reality through the ‘human mind’ and the researcher was therefore actively involved in the process of research. Cloke, *et al* (1991: 75) describe the humanistic view of “the centrality of the human subject, not just in ‘accessing’ but in fundamentally ‘constituting’ the knowledge to be had concerning these [human] objects”.

Humanistic geography was therefore an attempt to re-engage with and, centralise human agency, thereby forming a strong critique of spatial science and certain forms of behaviourism (that discussed the individual actor in the world, but in unsatisfactory ways) (Johnston, 1997). But Cloke, *et al* (1991) discuss how humanistic work also reconceptualised many of geography's key terms and preoccupations. In particular, the emphasis of inquiry was moved from 'geometric space' to 'existential space'. Rather than consider how people were located *in* space, geographers began to examine how individuals formed attachments to and senses of 'place', an emerging interest that redefined how 'place' might be thought of. This trajectory of thought is termed 'geographical humanism' by Cloke, *et al*, and they suggest that the humanistic concern with how individuals related to place was taken up by geographers in other parts of the discipline.

Another shift that took place within humanistic geography was the increasing importance attached to "interpersonal and intersubjective" forms of understanding (Cloke, *et al*, 1991: 85; Eyles, 1988). Individual human subjects were seen to make sense of the world around them partly through relationships with others. An emphasis upon intersubjective meaning opened up the possibility of studying collective groups of people such as communities, and a form of social geography emerged, of which Ley's (1974) study of the 'black inner city' of Philadelphia was a key contribution (Cloke, *et al*, 1991). Robinson (1998: 420) suggests that "One of the earliest, most important and readily identifiable pieces of research adopting a humanistic perspective was Ley's work on the black inner city in Philadelphia. This recognised the need to go beyond the abstractions of underlying

philosophy in order to penetrate the largely taken-for-granted meanings of life for different social groups”. In such a form of geography, objectivity and the need to be representative were no longer key criteria, and instead more specific, in-depth studies became acceptable, seeking as they often did, to understand people’s feelings within local settings. The emphasis upon intersubjectivity also meant that the role of the researcher and the relationships negotiated with those being studied were re-thought, and given a new significance (Smith 1994).

Cloke, *et al* (1991: 89) suggest that writers such as Smith and Jackson were partly responsible for another key moment in the development of such approaches, for “they begin to think of these intersubjective understandings as dimensions of the culture sustained by particular people in particular places”. The cultural and the social were therefore brought together: “they connect up social geography to cultural geography, but now a cultural geography concerned less with the material artefacts and technologies – the traditional interests of North American cultural geographers ... and more with immaterial modes of thinking and living” (1991: 89).

As cultural and social geography drew from each other’s approaches, both sub-disciplines were also appropriating philosophical and methodological ideas from outside geography. As Jackson (1989: 23) argues, “the reorientation of cultural geography involves a convergence of interests with social geography and an openness to developments in the broad interdisciplinary field of cultural studies” (See also Robinson, 1998). Mitchell (2000: xiv) also describes the process whereby cultural geography utilised ideas from a range of other disciplines, including “the British

cultural studies movement, the cultural materialism of British Marxist Raymond Williams, intriguing developments in ‘post-structural’ theory associated with a host of French philosophers and social theorists, and to some extent feminism”.

Humanistic (and cultural and social) geography also looked outside the discipline for new *methodologies*, particularly qualitative research techniques. As Cloke, *et al* (1991) suggest there was already some interest within humanistic geography regarding ‘personal geographies’, which involved the researcher getting close to those being studied, and using intensive methods such as ‘encounter groups’ and multiple in-depth interviews. But increasingly, humanistic, and human geography more generally, began to appropriate methodological thinking from other academic disciplines (Robinson, 1998). A key borrowing involved the adoption of hitherto mainly anthropological techniques such as participant observation (and ethnographic techniques more generally). Robinson (1998: 421) suggests that ethnography offered geographers a way of examining “how signs and symbols convey meaning”. In such borrowing from interpretative anthropology, the work of Clifford Geertz and his notion of ‘thick description’ was central.

The concept of ‘thick description’ was outlined in Geertz’s 1973 work *The Interpretation of Cultures*. For Geertz, ethnographic research was concerned with the exploration of social meaning: “what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people’s constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to” (Geertz, 1993: 9). And later he states that “the whole point of a semiotic approach to culture is ... to aid us in gaining access to the conceptual world in which



our subjects live so that we can, in some extended sense of the term, converse with them” (1993: 24). The different forms in which people expressed their ideas were taken to be just as important as the actual content of those sentiments: “the line between the mode of representation and substantive content is undrawable in cultural analysis” (1993: 16). Geertz suggested that gaining access to such meanings was a difficult task, and one that would always be partial and strategic. As Cloke, *et al* (1991: 91-92) argue, this was partly because such research involved the researcher (who constructs their own particular reading of events and meaning) trying to gain access to someone else’s view of the world. They discuss

the ‘mediation’ involved as a researcher brings his or her ‘frame of reference’ into contact with those of the people being researched (as the humanity of the researcher mingles with the humanity of the researched). It is now widely recognised that the researcher cannot ever hope to gain access to the *truth* of other people’s lives, and therefore cannot expect to do more than describe these lives carefully and in as much detail as possible (a process Geertz calls ‘thick description’) ....

Geertz stressed that ethnography could work at a local level, and extrapolate important ideas from contextual research: “The aim is to draw large conclusions from small, but very densely textured facts; to support broad assertions about the role of culture in the construction of collective life by engaging them exactly with complex specifics” (1993: 28). Such research would make detailed and sensitive readings of the cultures it was investigating therefore. As Eyles (1988: 9) suggests, “in concentrating on a small place or a few individuals or households, participant observation is a case-study approach, allowing theoretical generalisations to emerge from its detailed investigation of a selected dimension of reality”. Another key tenet was the increasing dialogue between theory and empiricism and the rejection of grand overarching theories of the social world (Smith, 1994; Eyles, 1988). Gillespie

(1995: 1) for instance, suggests that in the case of Ethnography, such an approach “greet[s] cultural theory with empirical questions”.

My own research draws upon a mixture of qualitative research methodologies. Whilst limited use of questionnaires was made at the London Welsh School, the key techniques employed were those of in-depth interviews and participant observation, supported by a reading of the literature on Welsh life in London. Whilst therefore not strictly an ethnography, the project draws heavily upon ethnographic research techniques. The following sections examine the process of actually doing the research upon which this thesis is based. I consider some of the key issues which arose, especially in relation to my fieldwork, and I attempt to link these back into some broader debates over ethnographic research touched upon in my discussions above.

### **Background to the ethnographic fieldwork**

My first year of research was taken up with three main tasks. Firstly I wanted to develop a credible theoretical framework, and spent a considerable amount of time making myself familiar with theories of identity and diaspora. Secondly, I conducted an extensive literature search for material on Welsh life in London to gain an understanding of what exactly had been written on the subject. This task was linked to my third preoccupation – that of finding out what exactly Welsh life in London consisted of. To a large extent I focused upon finding Welsh societies in the city and, as time progressed, arranging to visit these organisations. I reckoned that not only might I be able to do research on the institutions themselves, but that such

visits would be a good way of finding possible research participants for my interviews with individual Welsh people. I started by contacting two of the most public and accessible Welsh institutions in London. An interview with two members at the London Welsh Centre was arranged and I wrote to all of the Welsh chapels and churches in London asking for their help. I made a number of visits to chapels or churches during the early part of 1998 and conducted several interviews. But these were usually day trips or weekends rather than longer periods, reflecting my feelings of apprehension at asking people for their help, and my initial discomfort at playing the role of a postgraduate researcher. Nevertheless, by the beginning of the summer I had built up a significant amount of information on Welsh organisations in London, and developed a substantial list of possible research interviewees.

In August 1998 I began the main period of my fieldwork which lasted until September 1999. Most of my visits to London were of either two or four weeks, and comprised of fairly intensive participant observation and interviewing. Much of the fieldwork preparation (such as arranging interviews and planning which events to attend) was undertaken before leaving Swansea; on my return I completed initial analysis such as typing up my research diary, listening to interview tapes and undertaking transcribing work. The time spent in Swansea also meant that I avoided over-familiarisation with the settings in which I worked, and assisted me in maintaining a sense of strangeness towards the everyday activities I was studying. It also offered a chance to reflect upon some of the key themes and issues which arose whilst undertaking fieldwork in London.

Although no two days of the field research were the same, my time in London was always characterised by a mixture of participant observation and interviewing. At times participant observation was used primarily as a networking tool to find possible research participants who might be interested in conducting an interview with me. But I also used it as a research method in its own right to look at the work of Welsh institutions in London. As Jackson (1989) points out, there are always ethical issues to be worked through when using participant observation – how much to tell research participants about the work being undertaken, how to frame its aims, and outlining any possible benefits or harm that the research may bring those involved. I spent a considerable amount of time in working through how I would deal with the ethical problematics arising from my fieldwork. Though not all issues could be completely resolved, all of those who took part in the research knew that I was working as a researcher, and were familiar with the fundamental aims of the research. Issues of anonymity were always discussed at the beginning of interviews, for example. Throughout the thesis I have tried to retain as much information about respondents as possible whilst changing details that would render them individually identifiable.

The fieldwork soon developed distinct organisational patterns. Evenings and weekends were normally filled with participant observation in concerts and social evenings, and interviews with working people who could not speak to me at other times in the week. Sunday became one of my busiest days because it often provided the only opportunity to visit Welsh chapels and churches. During the

daytime I conducted interviews with retired people or those who were able to see me at their workplace. And I made time to reflect upon how things were going, and attended to the many housekeeping and administrative tasks that needed completion.

Approximately 85 interviews were conducted (an index to all adult respondents discussed in the thesis is contained in Appendix 1; the residential location of respondents is displayed in figure 2.1). The length of these interviews varied enormously, but most lasted for between 1 and 2 hours. In a number of cases I conducted follow-up interviews where particularly interesting issues had come up. All but about 20 of the interviews were taped and approximately 45 were transcribed. The fieldwork was undertaken in both English and Welsh with roughly half of the interviews and participant observation in each language. Initial conversations with research interviewees often developed an implicit understanding of which language would be used in subsequent interviews, but I tried to make a point of asking at the beginning of each interview which language people would prefer to speak in. A number of Welsh speakers either chose to use English or switched to this language part way through our discussions, often reverting back into Welsh after the tape machine had been switched off. I am still not quite sure why this happened. Perhaps some explanation can be found in the fact that as a Welsh learner my first language was English, and this may have come across in particular ways. I kept a detailed research diary, which by the end of the fieldwork had totalled 183 A4 pages. The diary moved between Welsh and English, often depending upon the linguistic context of the events I was writing about. The fieldwork took me to every part of London, though I spent far more time north of the River Thames.

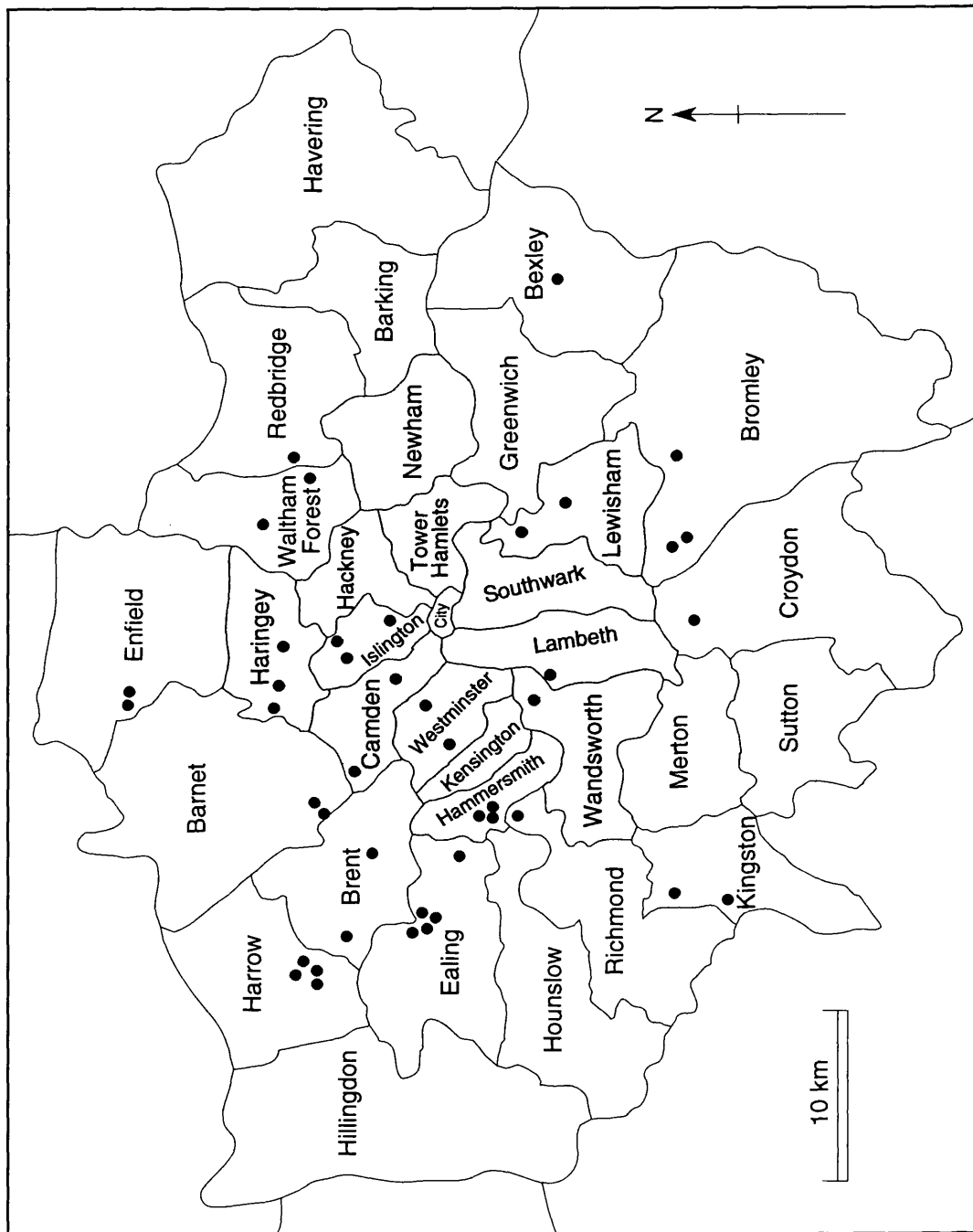


Figure 2.1: Map showing the residential location of respondents living in the Greater London area. Children interviewed at the London Welsh School are not included. Information was not available for some respondents interviewed.

Participant observation took place in a wide range of settings. Many hours were spent in chapel services, concerts at the London Welsh Centre, and social evenings that took place in pubs and clubs. But I also did work at the London Welsh School, and a Welsh-owned dairy in west London. The location of interviews followed a distinct pattern, often linked to the age of respondents, and as I explain later had a considerable bearing upon the dynamics of the relationships that I developed with research participants. Interviews with older participants (especially those involved with the chapels) most frequently took place in people's private homes, often accompanied by a meal of some sort. I interviewed working people (especially those in their twenties and thirties) in pubs or cafes. But interview settings also included a recording studio, an office in the Health and Safety Executive, chapels, a pub in Liverpool Street station, and in the front of a milk float.

The research conducted at the London Welsh School differed from the majority of the fieldwork undertaken. Firstly, I used a quite broad set of research techniques in the school that ranged from participant observation to questionnaire surveys. Questionnaires were distributed to parents (ten were returned) to elicit information about their involvement with the school. Taped interviews were conducted with six parents (individually), and two group interviews were also recorded with members of the teaching staff. Whereas fieldwork undertaken in the chapels and at the London Welsh Centre was concentrated into intense periods (at times when services or concerts were taking place), my research at the London Welsh School was nearer what might be termed an ethnography. In January of 1999 I spent

a whole week in the school, using most of the time for participant observation – observing what went on in the classroom, and getting to understand how the children understood their everyday lives. Two group interviews were held with around seven of the older pupils that built upon the observations drawn from participant observation. I returned to the school in September 1999, when three further group interviews were conducted with children from the senior class, again linked to participant observation in the classroom and the playground.

### **Getting started**

Starting my fieldwork in London was a very daunting experience, and the first few weeks that I spent in the city were characterised by feelings of uncertainty, nervousness and insecurity. I found living in London quite a shock – ironically (and helpfully) an experience mirroring those of many research participants who had moved there from Wales. My main concern at this time was to make the fieldwork a success and to secure enough information and interviews. Even after the preparation work which I had done, I still knew very few people when I first went to London, and was constantly working in situations where I was a stranger and unfamiliar with conventions and routines. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 99) suggest:

In the early days of fieldwork, the conduct of the ethnographer is often little different from that of any lay-person faced with the practical need to make sense of a particular social setting. Consider the position of the novice or recruit - a student fresher, a military rookie, a person starting a new job - who finds him or herself in relatively strange surroundings. How do such novices get to 'know the ropes' and become 'old hands'? Obviously, there is nothing magical about this process of learning. Novices watch what other people are doing, ask others to explain what is happening, try things out for themselves - occasionally making mistakes and so on. The novice thus acts like a social scientist: making observations and inferences, asking informants, constructing hypotheses, and acting on them.



During the initial stages of research in London I tended to work with a rather uncritical and narrow view of Welsh identity in London which to some extent originated from my background reading on the subject. Although I tried to gain an overall sense of Welsh life in London I tended to focus on the most visible and public of institutions (especially the chapel/church) which were largely traditional Welsh societies in the city. Perhaps this was in part because I felt relatively comfortable in such societies, and also due to the fact that gaining entry to chapel services and other events was easy. But there was a danger that I read off the experiences of a particular group of Welsh people in London as those of all 'exiles' living in the city. My focus upon one area within collective Welsh identity was problematic in its own right, but there was also a danger that I spoke about the lives and identities of Welsh people who were involved in Welsh societies as if they were the experiences of all Welsh people. Yet in reality, the people frequenting Welsh societies in London make up a very small proportion of the Welsh population in London as a whole, and this has been true for many centuries (Jones, E, 1981).

At various points I agreed with my supervisor that I would firstly try to look at a wider range of Welsh groups in the city (which I did with some success), and secondly I would at the very least 'sample' the experiences of Welsh people who were not actively involved in 'exile' networks, but who might nevertheless identify themselves as Welsh. The practical problem with this was of how I would locate such people. The Welsh as an ethnic group in London are highly integrated into London, scattered across the city, and often impossible to distinguish from the rest of society, unlike many other groups (Heald, 1983). Almost by default I kept coming

back to public, formalised networks as a way of making contact with Welsh people who lived in the city because it was difficult to do so in any other way. A result of this approach is that a tension runs through the thesis between a project examining the self-identities of individuals, and one that looks primarily at the work of institutions. The way in which I conceptualised the experiences of Welsh people living in London was also problematic in the initial stages of the research. Again I was guilty of working with a rather fixed idea of the experience of migrating to London, and I tended to look for people who spoke Welsh, as if this was the only marker of identity. I hope that I have succeeded in resolving most of the methodological issues that arose during the research, partly by making them explicit, and through greater reflexivity and more nuanced thinking.

The focus of the thesis is therefore primarily upon Welsh people living in London who are involved in some kind of Welsh network there. It is a situated, strategic and partial account, shaped by my own interests and attitudes. But it tries to avoid privileging the accounts of particular groups, and reading these as being representative of all Welsh people in London. Both from my own experience of fieldwork and from theoretical reading, I have gained a greater sense of the multiplicity and contested nature of Welsh identities, the many various resources that might be drawn upon to construct them, and the fact that people may define being Welsh in all kinds of different ways. The stories in the following chapters draw upon the experiences of a range of people who describe themselves as ‘Welsh’ in the widest meaning of the term. It includes the experiences of English people, who, like myself have taken on a sense of Welshness. In the next section I turn to some of the

issues that emerged in terms of my relationships with research participants, and the importance of my own identity to the research process.

### **Key issues in the Research Process**

One of the key themes in academic discussions over methodological strategies is the insistence upon research as an intersubjective and “dialogical process, which is structured [both] by the researcher and the participants” (England, 1994: 80; Katz, 1994). The texts written by the researcher cannot be value-free or objective because such accounts are partial and strategic, written from ever shifting but located positions: “Both the ethnographer and those being studied present, represent, and invent themselves across boundaries of different subjectivities and identities, forged of class, nationality, gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation” (Katz, 1992: 496). The identity of the researcher is therefore bound up in the constitution of the research process. An objective, scientific approach would seek to eliminate any impact the researcher might have upon the research process, but increasingly such a position is being challenged: “With greater theoretical understanding of the self, the analyst’s intervention is immaterial, so long as it is clearly acknowledged and built into the analysis” (Smith, 1988: 26). Evans’s (1988) call for a reflexive ethnographic approach is based partly upon the need to make explicit the position of the researcher in relation to those studied, what England (1994: 80) describes as “the relationship between the researcher and those being researched”. The researcher constantly presents and represents her/his self and the aims of the research to those being studied (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995), and this presentation is highly contextual, changing between different settings and

participants (Goffman, 1969). Through the way in which they work, and the presentation of their own self-identities, researchers also position themselves in relation to research participants in important ways. The use of participant observation in particular, entails achieving a balance in this relationship, between participation and observation, closeness and distance from those being studied. The researcher should ideally occupy a position of liminality and marginality in the field of study, avoiding over identification or familiarity with research participants, which might reduce a necessary analytical distance (Jackson, 1983; Smith, 1988).

### **Being the Researcher**

A major issue which arose from an early stage in my own research was the way in which I presented the aims of the project to those I was studying. In the chapels I often found it difficult to make explicit the detailed theoretical aims of the thesis, and tended to fall back on a more general outline. As Jackson (1983: 42) states; “While the social scientist may reasonably be expected to have revealed his [sic] broad research goals to the subjects of his study, need he also feel obliged to specify in detail the exact hypothesis he seeks to test or the particular topics on which he would like to concentrate?” Although I tried to put across the research in terms that I thought chapel members would relate to, what often happened as a result of my reticence was that the aims of the project were distorted. Many people seemed to think that I was writing a *history* of the chapels, and at times I went along with this concept. I also found that people in the chapels thought that I was doing a thesis that focused specifically upon the chapels and the dairy trade, rather than Welsh life in

London as a whole. On my second long visit to London I began to make my worries in this respect explicit in my research diary:

An interesting day. But increasingly I have been trying to resolve a number of problems with this research project - namely the relationship I have with my research subjects, how they perceive me, and what they consider to be the aims of my project. I think that many of them see me as (A), a fellow chapel/church goer who wants to write a thesis celebrating and defending their way of life, culture and faith. Or (B) a naive student who will write a project for his own good, and that will never see the light of day. I felt as though I am being deceitful because I seem to give the impression that this is an historical project - just the relation of key facts and memories. What it really is, is a critical academic study of their culture.

(Research Diary, November 1998)

A few months after the end of my research in London I returned to one of the chapels that I had been conducting research in, to give a talk on my project. The member of the congregation who was to chair the evening asked me 'So your thesis is on the Welsh dairy trade in London?', and perhaps was very surprised when I talked about contemporary middle class migration to London. In general I seemed to feel a need to suppress the academic content of the thesis at times. Presenting the aims of the research was often difficult *because* it was an ethnographic project. My interest was in the lives and identities of people, rather than particular 'facts' about Welsh life in London. It was therefore sometimes difficult to get across what exactly I was looking for:

Much of what I'm asking people is about their daily lives, commonsensical things, (perhaps), things that are part of practical consciousness [sic]. I'm trying to bring out, highlight, take out of context, theorise, discuss things that are just there. It's often quite hard to get across to people the information I want, because basically I'm interested in their life stories quite generally. The focus is their Welsh identity, but it's much more general than say, doing an interview with members of bowls club about their identity and bowling.

(Research Diary, September, 1999)

I realised that I was continually re-shaping how I framed the aims of the research in different contexts, and how I presented my self-identity according to the situation in which I found myself. I would stress different aspects of the research according to the particular group of people I was talking to. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 87) suggest “There may be different categories of participants and different social contexts which demand the constitution of different selves”. When I attended events organised by some of the emerging Welsh social networks in London, the way in which I framed the research was very different to my presentation of it in the chapels. Not only did I stress my interest in these new societies, but I also placed far more emphasis upon issues of identity, which the younger generation attending such events seemed more readily able to relate to.

As I ventured into more and more areas of Welsh life in London that were unfamiliar to me, my research diary began to include increasing amounts of discussion about the way in which I presented the PhD and its objectives to different ‘audiences’. During an early visit to London I went to a cultural evening organised by the Welsh chapels in London, and explained to someone the aims of my research; “Met William - really interesting bloke - worked in the dairy trade. Really impressed upon me that I needed to understand what life was like in days gone by in the dairy trade, and that my Ph.D. shouldn’t just be full of academic knowledge” (Research Diary, October 1998). Several days later I was undertaking the same exercise, but this time with a Welsh person in his mid twenties:

[He] described the psychology of many Welsh people in London. He asked me about my project, and I gave him the outline that I have given many people in the chapels - i.e. it would be made up of say five chapters, each of which would examine a different aspect of Welsh life in London. He asked if there was more to it than that, since it sounded like a GCSE project, and very descriptive. So I think I told him what it was really about - the ideas of self-identity and nationality. It made me realise that I am constantly re-framing the research as I introduce it to different people - I am always putting it across in different ways, and as something different.  
(Research Diary, October 1998)

In the initial months of fieldwork I sometimes found living out the role of researcher difficult. There was the continual need to meet people, to introduce who I was, and what I was doing. I often felt guilty as my main purpose in attending chapel services or rugby games was to ask for people's help, to ask for their time. Consequently, on occasions I was reluctant to be direct in asking for help for fear of imposing upon people, or offending them. On one of my first visits to London a Welsh minister

offered me quite valuable comments in making the fieldwork work. He was of the opinion that I needed to let people know what exactly I was looking for - they would be far more likely to help if I did so. He too wanted to know exactly what it was I was interested in - what were the real, the exact aims of my project? He also suggested a kind of directness which I had to admit I still felt quite uncomfortable with.  
(Research Diary, July 1998)

A few days later the same sort of comments were voiced again by a participant in a 'Noson o Hwyl' social event: "Like the minister, he also suggested that I needed to be direct, clear with people, as to what exactly I was doing - explain it to them. I felt quite nervous about doing this, and felt as though I would be intruding upon these people's social time" (Research Diary, July 1998).

## Marking myself out as a researcher

Partly because of my feelings of awkwardness and also due the nature of the settings in which I worked, I therefore sometimes found it difficult to emphasise my identity as a researcher. When I went to concerts or formal meetings, the only chance to emphasise my role as a researcher - to make new contacts and speak to those I wanted to try and arrange interviews with - was at the end of the evening. In the chapels it was necessary for me to attend many services, not only to consider these in their own right, but also to use the socialising afterwards as a means of talking to people. I was sometimes mistaken as a new member: “Afterwards, people left quite quickly and I didn’t have a great deal of chance to talk to many people. I wasn’t quite sure of how to approach people, since I think many of them thought I was here mainly to worship” (Research Diary, August 1998). And I was made particularly welcome because I was young, and represented a generation that had largely deserted the chapels. It was also often difficult to mark myself out as a researcher when I took part in social evenings. I felt lazy for spending several evenings a week in pubs with Welsh people, and on many occasions people made well intentioned sarcastic remarks about how hard my research must be: “Some thoughts about my research. One issue is that I do a lot of my interviews in social situations. To make contacts you have to move within these social situations. It’s quite difficult sometimes to keep pushing my research. To succeed in say getting an interview you sometimes have to actively not stress this side of things, but rather get to know people”



(Research Diary, September 1999). As Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 60)

suggest 'pure sociability' may be important, and

It may be very threatening to hosts if one pumps them constantly about matters relating to research interests. Especially in the early days of field negotiations it may be advantageous to find more 'ordinary' topics of conversation, with a view to establishing one's identity as a 'normal', 'regular' 'decent' person ... such 'neutral' topics are not actually divorced from the researcher's interests at hand, since they can throw additional and unforeseen light on informants, and yield fresh sources of data.

The way in which I presented an image of myself also shifted across different social contexts. It is Goffman's (1969) contention that the presentation of the self by a social actor is a contextual act. Drawing upon the work of Flournoy he argues that we show ourselves differently to different groups; the social actor "has as many different social selves as there are distinct *groups* of persons about who he [sic] cares" (Flournoy, 1917 cited in Goffman, 1969: 57; emphasis in original). Goffman (1969: 1) stresses how in everyday life we enact different kinds of 'performances', managing the image of ourselves that we portray to others, as much by non-verbal messages that are 'given off' as by verbal communication. And he states that "Information about the individual helps to define the situation" (1969: 1). Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 83-4) argue that "Personal appearance can be a salient consideration. Sometimes it may be necessary for the researcher to dress in a way that is similar to the people to be studied ... the researcher's appearance can be an important factor in shaping the relationships with people in the field". Dress was a key aspect of the way in which I presented and located myself, and I continually adapted my appearance according to the setting I was in. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 85) argue it is sometimes necessary to dress in different ways to "preserve relationships with multiple audiences". The need to dress in similar ways to those being studied became apparent to me at times when I felt out of place in the

setting in which I was researching: “The minister wore a suit and tie, like the rest of the congregation. I was the only person there not dressed smartly, and I felt scruffy and guilty” (Research Diary, August 1998). It was this early episode in one of the Welsh chapels that prompted me always to wear a shirt and tie when attending services or meetings. The feeling of being out of place also happened on a number of other occasions when I visited an event which I was not familiar with:

Travelled down to Regents Park [for a rugby session] - rather apprehensive. Waited outside the tube station. I saw a large chap in a tracksuit and T-shirt, and asked him if he was here for the rugby - yes he was. I felt very awkward and rather out of place - I had nothing in common with these people. ... I did my best to explain my research to the people that I met. We walked into Regents Park. Reaching the open grass, everyone deposited their bags on the ground and got changed. I had already said that I was no use at rugby, and they had replied 'Neither are we' - i.e. I could join in. One by one people changed into their shorts and T-shirt until I was the only person in long trousers, and not on the pitch - I felt incredibly self-conscious ... I was beckoned to play, as without me the sides would be uneven - I was useless, and contributed nothing ... Another player arrived, and I retired, feeling that I looked strange as a spectator.  
(Research Diary, September 1999.)

### **Same but different - locating myself in relation to research participants**

As Katz (1994: 68) suggests, “ethnographers still generally rely on at least some displacement from home grounds to elsewhere to distinguish and differentiate the objects of their enquiries”. The researcher is therefore normally a stranger, different from those (s)he studies. Jackson (1983) describes how ethnographic research can draw on differing combinations of participation and observation, with interviewing for instance being at the observation end of the spectrum. It is Hammersley and Atkinson’s (1995: 112) contention that the ethnographer occupies a marginal position, of being a “simultaneous insider-outsider”. This is because doing

ethnographic fieldwork “involves living simultaneously in two worlds, that of participation, and that of research” (1995: 113). The researcher therefore occupies a liminal place, a space on the edge of the world which (s)he is studying - the position of a ‘marginal native’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). The relationship that one maintains with research participants therefore needs to be a balance between what Whyte (cited in Jackson 1983) describes as ‘familiarity and detachment’. In the view of many writers, the risk of over identification with researcher subjects is more likely than becoming too detached from the people being studied. Jackson (1983: 41) discusses the “problem of ‘over-rapport’, of going ‘native’ to the extent that his [the researcher’s] observational acuity is reduced”. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 115) make the crucial point that although maintaining a marginal position in the research setting may often be uncomfortable and stressful, it is vital to do so: “There must always remain some part held back, some social and intellectual ‘distance’. For it is in the space created by this distance that the analytic work of the ethnographer gets done”. Maintaining this relationship with research participants and negotiating “tensions of engagement and distance, familiarity and strangeness” was perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of my research (Atkinson, 1990: 158).

### **Participating and Observing**

I utilised many different combinations of participation and observation according to the very varied situations in which I found myself. In musical concerts, and sometimes in chapel services, I was much more of a participating observer. On several occasions I went to gigs in pubs and clubs where Welsh bands were playing. At these events I saw a very different cross section of Welsh people to those I had

spent most of my time interviewing, yet it was almost impossible to try and interest people in talking to me because of the noise, and the fact that this was a 'strictly' social event:

Felt completely out of place here, and unable to conduct much meaningful research. Exhausted. Left early. People in WRU [Welsh Rugby Union] shirts coming out of West Kensington tube station when I arrived. Couple more on the tube later, and a few Scots supporters. Club One Four - again felt completely outside of things. Night-club - impossible to function as a participant - 100% observation. But maybe, I had finally found young Welsh society in London.

(Research Diary, February 1999)

There were other situations though, in which I was located further towards the participant end of the spectrum; this was especially so with regard to the work I did in certain chapels and churches. And these were some of my most stressful moments. I sometimes went to chapel services to get to the people that I wanted to interview, but by virtue of being at the service I faced the dilemma of how far I should participate. This happened on my very first visit to one of the churches:

There came a very awkward moment for me, when Communion was taken. I was invited to take it, and really didn't know what to do. As a non-Christian, would I offend the congregation if I took it, and then they later discovered my lack of faith (which was quite possible)? Or if I didn't take it, would this also cause offence? In the end I didn't take the communion.

(Research Diary, July, 1998)

It was an issue which remained unresolved right until the end of my fieldwork:

I still find it incredibly difficult to get the material I want. To do your research, to get interviews, you have to go to chapel - and of course just going along to a service is interesting in itself. If you go to chapel you can't stand at the back and not take part. This morning there was communion - I thought 'This kills me - do I take it, or not?' The minister said that everyone who was a member of the Church of Christ was welcome to take it. It seems that to get what I want, I have to conform, take part, which in some ways is rather deceitful.

(Research Diary, September, 1999)

At one of the churches “Huw asked me to read the first lesson, and this struck me as quite significant. I had obviously been accepted to a certain extent. But secondly I was no longer observing, or passively participating - I was taking part in the service” (Research Diary, July 1998).

On a night of particular angst, I wrote in my research diary; “I seem to have become familiar with their culture to such an extent that at points I don't feel like the researcher I should be” (Research, Diary, November 1998). On one afternoon especially I felt that I had sold myself out as a researcher when I agreed to make up the numbers in the choir at a special service which I had attended with the specific intention of making new research contacts:

I had asked the vicar if I could come along and hand out some leaflets/talk to people, and he said that was fine. When I arrived at the church, Huw greeted me, and told me he had brought six choir gowns. He asked me if I would go in the choir, or perhaps he told me that I was in the choir. I spent a few minutes in the main part of the church talking to people including the visiting preacher, before being ushered into the vestry by Huw. We had to put on black gowns, with a kind of white garment that covered the top half of you, and was very baggy around the arms - I don't know the proper names for them. Huw disappeared and I wasn't sure exactly what I was meant to do. He arrived back after a few minutes with another raw recruit, who asked me if I had been roped in as well. He had never been to this church before. Within a few minutes, the service began. The cross bearer lead the way, followed by Huw, then the other raw recruit, then the vicar, and finally the guest preacher. We processed down the side aisle to the back of the church, and then down the centre aisle towards the front of the church, taking our places in the choir stalls. It was really quite interesting to observe and take part in the service from this point of view. Huw said not to worry too much about the singing - making up the numbers was the most important thing - if they could have a choir they liked to. The hymns weren't too bad, but I'm afraid that I mumbled through the religious anthems. It was certainly an honour to be asked, and it made me feel as though I had been accepted within the church. But I just wonder if I have been accepted in the wrong way - do people really understand what I am

trying to do? I was slightly concerned that many of the people in the congregation would be meeting me for the first time, and their first glimpse of me would be as a chorister.

(Research Diary, October 1998)

Many of the church members present on that occasion live long distances from London now, and they only attend the church two or three times a year. A large number of the people there were what I termed in my research diary as 'guests' who were to be treated as such. What I came to realise after the event was that it was *because* I was a researcher that Huw asked me to sing in the choir rather than despite it. Due to the fact that I occupied a marginal role in the service he felt able to ask me to undertake a job that he would not have deemed it proper to ask a 'normal' member.

### **Acting as the marginal 'member'**

Although as Katz (1994) outlines, ethnographers usually undertake research in settings that involves a degree of displacement from their own everyday world, Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) suggest that the researcher may have a similar background or identity to those (s)he is studying. England (1994) for instance describes how she conducted ethnographic research in her own community and argues that she was doing what she would normally in her everyday life, except that she was writing about it. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) feel that although the researcher's identity may be very close to those being studied, they must always maintain a 'self conscious awareness', always maintain some critical distance that marks them as different from the people they study. Over the course of the fieldwork, I inevitably passed to some extent along the continuum from 'stranger' to 'friend' as I got to know my research participants better, and both sides became more

familiar with the terms of the research encounter. These feelings were often transmitted into my research diary: “It was nice to see quite a few familiar faces, and I feel less of an outsider than on previous occasions” (Research Diary, October 1998). Indeed, it is Hammersley and Atkinson’s (1995: 112) contention that the participant observer working as an overt researcher is “poised between stranger and friend”. My own identity was very close to those I was studying; I was white, British, and of a middle class family that matched the experience of many of my respondents. I spoke Welsh, and my interest in the lives of people, and particularly the institutions to which they belonged endeared me to them to a certain extent.

At times I found my relationship with the older generation of research respondents particularly problematic, because I seemed to take on the persona of a friend. In part this was linked to the way in which I put across the aims of my research in the chapels as the recording of their culture and way of life. These tensions occupied a prominent place in my research diary:

... they treat me like a friend.  
(Research Diary, October 1998)

Noticed that I seem to be becoming quite well known. I was meeting quite a few people for the second or third time, and some of these people seem like friends.  
(Research Diary, October 1998)

My position as a researcher has been quite hard to practice today. These people treat me like a friend, as a guest, make me genuinely warmly, welcome.  
(Research Diary, October 1998)

To some extent such a relationship also developed from the context in which research was undertaken. Participant observation was frequently carried out in social situations. And crucially, interviews (especially with older respondents) took place in people's homes. Throughout the research I was treated with exceptional kindness and hospitality. Interviews were frequently woven around meals when I went to talk to people:

*Food after the interview.*  
(Research Diary, October 1998)

*Thought I was visiting them to do an interview, possibly a taped interview. When I arrived, it became obvious that this was much more a social event in some ways. A three-course meal was ready.*  
(Research Diary, October 1998)

*Travelled down to Orpington to see Huw, and to do a taped interview with him. He bought me dinner at a restaurant near the station, and then we went back to his flat. ... Had a taped interview at Huw's flat, glass of sherry, etc., then back to the restaurant for tea.*  
(Research Diary, October 1998)

Acting as a friend towards to my research participants was sometimes problematic, and as Smith (1988: 24) suggests "Ingratiation (the appearance of wanting to be liked), though inevitable to some extent, is ... to be avoided, in that it demands all kinds of compromises that could verge on the deceitful". The way in which I came to be viewed (and came to act) as a friend had a bearing upon the research, because at times it created an implicit understanding that I shared the views of those I was researching. Especially when I was invited to somebody's house this could sometimes prevent me from broaching more awkward subjects or challenging views that I disagreed with: "They talk to me like a friend, as someone who they think shares their views, and as if I am of the same mindset"



(Research Diary, October 1998). It was perhaps fortunate that on the whole I did share the views of those I spoke to. Yet on the several rare occasions when people made racist comments to me for instance, I found it very difficult to challenge such statements, seated at a dinner table. Such events effectively undermined my role as the researcher. Of particular importance to me at such times was my research diary which gave me the chance to think through these issues and maintain some necessary distance.

There was another sense in which my own self-identity, my 'biography' as England terms it, helped position me in relation to my research participants. My ability to speak Welsh created a degree of familiarity with those respondents who spoke the language, a sense that I shared common values. It was often a facet of my identity that helped gain people's trust or secure an interview. And I was able to attend events that were conducted through the medium of Welsh and understand them. Yet the fact that I was English and had learnt Welsh placed me in a liminal or marginal position. I was inside the language, and yet outside the culture. It was this fact that often helped me to maintain a necessary sense of analytical distance. I seemed close enough for people to trust me, to tell me confidential information, or occasionally to speak negatively about the English. On one occasion for instance, I interviewed a Welsh-speaking couple from north Wales: "My relationship with them was very interesting. They were very critical at times of the English, and the south-Walians [where I learnt Welsh] - yet in both cases they seemed able to temporarily exclude me from these categories. It occurred to me that this interview couldn't have taken

place in the same way if I had not been Welsh speaking” (Research Diary, February 1999). When they criticised the English and the southern Welsh however, they suddenly realised that I belonged to both categories (to a certain extent), and half apologised for not remembering that I was English and had learnt Welsh in south Wales.

My position as a Welsh learner that made me unfamiliar with traditions and conventions of the culture that I was studying meant that I maintained some distance from those I was studying, and a feeling of strangeness at events that were familiar to those who took part in them. Attending the annual children’s Eisteddfod at the London Welsh Centre, the afternoon opened with a song which everybody took part in. The minister who was compering the event said that we didn’t need books, but I didn’t know the words. And in one of the chapel services that I attended “*We sang a hymn (or just a verse of it) at the end. Everyone knew it, and it was announced that ‘as always we will sing X’*” (Research Diary, November 1998). Sometimes people noticed my unfamiliarity: “*Pissed bloke said to me that if I had been on the ‘97 Lions Rugby tour I would know the words to the song they were singing*” (Research Diary, September 1999). My position outside of the culture also meant that I was able to ask questions about aspects of people’s lives that might not have been possible had I been Welsh. Chapel structures and routines and politics in Welsh rugby (for instance) were issues about which I was unfamiliar and I felt able to ask questions that might otherwise have seemed commonsensical. In interviews with non-Welsh speakers I often found myself, paradoxically, much more

of an outsider, and much more English: “Quite a lot of people were intrigued by the fact that I was from Norwich and studying Welsh life in London, and wanted to know why. Of course at this point not being able to speak Welsh to them, I came across, I suppose, as very English” (Research Diary, September 1999).

### **Managing Interviews**

In the interviews that I conducted my primary aim was to discuss the individual experiences and self-identities of Welsh people in London, as well as to gain information about Welsh life in the city. As Evans (1988: 208-9) states with regard to asking questions in interview situations:

they are the routes of access to subjective meanings. By their use we obtain data and in this respect they have an informational function. However, we are also able to use questions and our ability to listen to accounts as a means of acquiring the perspectives of respondents, at which point we tap the underlying processes of social phenomena - the essence of empathy.

Although I sometimes arranged interviews with respondents to discuss their role in running a particular society, usually my main aim was to focus on their experiences as individuals. At times people were surprised by this, and seemed to be expecting a conversation about the history of Welsh life in London, and the different Welsh societies that exist in the city:

Mari said that she was quite surprised at the kind of questions that I asked, the kind of aspect I was looking at. I took this to mean that my focus on asking about people's personal experiences and identities, not simply about the history of the London Welsh, and their chapels. At the beginning of the interview I ask her about where she was born ... She starts off by telling me something of her family - i.e. her mother was born in London. But very soon she reverts to something of an historical narrative

of what activities went on in the chapels, working through the decades, noting new societies, the drop in numbers after World War Two. It comes across that this was what she expected me to want - a kind of overview.  
(Research Diary, September 1999)

Equally, at times I went into some of my interviews with rather fixed ideas of the experiences of Welsh people in London, and was perhaps guilty of measuring interviewees' responses against my somewhat distorted yardsticks. In part this was linked to my narrow view of Welsh identity at the outset of my project, and the naive idea that all Welsh people would somehow conform to the same feelings of being away from home. I was guilty of romanticising the experience of migration, and reifying the notion of being Welsh, as if this was the only component of people's identities. Initially, my questions sometimes failed to connect with people's own experiences because I was trying to explore a set of issues that either weren't there, or were very different from the way in which I imagined them. Sometimes when I tried to follow my own agenda rather than responding to what the interviewee was saying I became unclear, or the person I was talking to queried the point of the interview. I asked Louise, for instance, if my questions were different to what she had expected and she replied; "Yn gwbl wahanol, rhai o'r cwestiynau - ai hynny yw'r pwynt wyt ti'n ceisio rhoi drosodd?" (*"Completely different, some of the questions - is that the point you're trying to get across?"*). One of the worst interviews I undertook was with a middle aged Welsh man who admitted to me during the interview that "Yes, I've lost you a bit":

JS Does it make sense, that point that I was saying about that I am not trying to put my own analysis on people?

Alun No.

Looking back I find it rather difficult to understand why I felt the need to bring in complex and irrelevant frameworks when, as I later found, it was far more desirable to allow people to tell me what was important to them. I revised my interview technique, and tried to work with a much more flexible and responsive approach. I knew the broad areas of discussion that I wanted to cover. But within these areas I tried to listen much more carefully to the kinds of issues that people flagged up as being important to them, and develop the interviews through discussing these, rather than sticking rigidly to a pre-determined checklist of questions I came along with. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 30) state “it may be discovered that the original formulation of the problem was founded on erroneous assumptions”. Although a painful one at times, my experience of undertaking such interviews highlighted for me the intersubjective nature of them. As I looked back through the transcripts, I could see how what people said to me had shaped the questions I asked later on, and the changing way in which I thought about Welsh identities in London. Interviews were often exchanges of ideas, not simply occasions when I asked questions. I always tried to begin interviews with an outline of my research project and its aims. And frequently people were interested in my reasons for wanting to do the research, especially because I was English, and keen to know why I had learnt Welsh.

As I tried to refine my interviewing technique, I most often took the position of the ‘semi-naive student’. But I discovered after several months that I was working in different areas of Welsh life which were relatively unconnected, and members of the Welsh chapels who often had little knowledge of new societies such as SWS were keen to know what young Welsh people in the city were doing and the kinds of

attitudes they held. Such moments turned the tables around, and impressed upon me how fragmented and differentiated Welsh life in the city was across a range of social axes. Mari – a retired respondent and a life long member of a Welsh chapel in London asked: “A chi’n sôn am Noson o Hwyl. Beth - ga i ofyn i chi - beth yw eu hadwaith nhw at y capeli? Troi [‘r cwestiwn] rownd!” (“*You talk about The Noson o Hwyl. What - can I ask you, what is their attitude towards the chapels? Turn the [question] around!*”).

One of the biggest problems that I experienced in doing taped interviews was actually recording them. The first two dictaphones that I used were designed to be hand held, and not for interviews where the two or three people taking part might be some distance away. A lack of knowledge and money prevented me from purchasing a better machine for some months. As a result, a number of interviews that contained valuable material were inaudible: “Disaster number 2, the tape is crap. You can hear a rainstorm, which drowns out the two faint voices that you can occasionally discern” (Research Diary, February 1999). The feelings of frustration and sheer depression were summed up by comments in my research diary such as “the tape of the interviews with the Jones’s is completely inaudible” (February 1999). For several months I tried to struggle on with equipment that simply was not designed for the jobs I was asking it to do. I tried different kinds of tapes, moving interviewees as close to the microphone as possible, but still I kept coming away with tapes that were of poor sound quality. This was the most demoralising aspect of the research, having worked so hard before

and during an interview, only to come away with nothing. And even the majority of the tapes which were audible took much longer to transcribe than would otherwise have been the case. Eventually I decided that being better off financially than when I had embarked upon the fieldwork, it was time to buy a tape recorder that could do the job I needed it to. So I bought a new machine, and a Pressure Zone Microphone (PZM), which was able to record voices much further away than a conventional microphone. The PZM which I bought was very small, and was much less intrusive than a bigger dictaphone which could be left in my bag, plugged into the microphone on the table. I found that this seemed to put people more at ease, perhaps because they couldn't see a red light or a tape going round. I felt more comfortable and relaxed in interviews, knowing that I could concentrate on what people were actually saying to me, rather than checking to see if the tape machine was working properly. In one sense these problems of tapes, tape machines and microphones can appear trivial, but their reluctance to work properly was a major issue whilst they interfered with the quality of interviews, and my ability to concentrate on what interviewees were saying.

### **Producing the thesis - the end result**

The neat, cohesive presentation of the following chapters perhaps does not indicate fully the extent to which they have emerged from a complex process, one that has been full of methodological and ethical issues, of failures, of changes. The research itself has been an ever-evolving process, shaped both by researcher and researched, by self-identities and the relationships I negotiated with my subjects. The research process changed me also. I know a great deal more about Welsh identities

in London now than I did three years ago. But I hope also that I look at these identities far more in terms of their complex, fragmented nature, rather than essentialising and romanticising them as perhaps I was inclined to do at the outset of my research. What follows therefore is a partial and situated account that looks at a small part of a big subject. It does not try to speak for Welsh people in London as a whole, to identify an authentic Welsh identity or experience in the city. It seeks to acknowledge both that there may be many kinds of Welsh identities, and how such identities are multiply constructed, through class, gender, language, and so on. The four fieldwork-based chapters draw heavily upon quotations drawn from interview transcripts, and to a lesser extent my research diary. They represent the stories of others and set them within my own authoritative text (Atkinson, 1990). What was a two-way conversation has gradually been made into a text which I own; interview transcripts have been covered in highlighter pen, and marked with 'important' or 'interesting'. And passages from interviews have been set within my arguments to bolster them, thus appropriating the voices of others.

Throughout the thesis, the names of all research respondents (unless specifically noted otherwise) have been altered, and other personal details have been changed<sup>i</sup>. Each research respondent has been given a pseudonym (consistent in terms of gender) which is used throughout the thesis. Therefore the interviewee referred to as Huw in this chapter is the same person referred to by that name in later chapters. Where quotations from Welsh language material are used (either from my research diary, interviews or published works) the original language is retained in most cases, and an English translation provided. I argue that it is important to retain the bilingual



spirit of the research project and the original words of research participants where I have offered my own translation. In quotations drawn from interview material, pauses or interruptions by another speaker are indicated by use of three dots, whilst “[...]” indicates that the text has been abridged.

Having outlined some of the methodological issues surrounding the production of the thesis, it is now necessary to offer a further contextual preface to the substantive chapters of the thesis. The following chapter sets out both the history of Welsh life in London, and the some of the key literatures produced on the subject. These mappings out (together with my methodological discussion here) provide a backdrop to the ethnographic explorations in Chapters 4 to 7.

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<sup>i</sup> Where respondents’ original names have been retained, permission to do so has been obtained in all cases.

# Chapter 3

## Welsh Life in London – An Historical Overview

### Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to Welsh life and identities in London. It maps out the history of migration from Wales to London, and considers how these two spaces have been connected through economic, social and cultural networks. The development of Welsh culture in London is examined from two key standpoints. Welsh organisations and societies in London have evolved to meet the needs of a large ethnic population in the city. But the role of such London based institutions in processes of national life in Wales itself is also important. Collective forms of Welshness in the city need to be seen as more than simply the replication of Welsh life back home. The central place of London to Welsh life well into the twentieth century demonstrates that the city is more than simply a major migration destination.

The chapter is divided into three key sections. The first section examines Welsh life in London up until 1945, whilst the second part of the chapter is concerned with the post-war period. Both these sections are structured in a similar way. They begin by tracing the key migration flows between Wales and London. The focus is then turned to Welsh life and the construction of Welsh identities in London itself. The third section of the chapter provides an overview of the extant literature on the Welsh in London. It reviews academic studies, texts produced by London Welsh organisations, and narratives of Welsh life in the city written by individuals. The chapter concludes by re-stating some of the key gaps in current research that this thesis seeks to address.

## **The Historical Development of Welsh life in London: 1500 - 1945**

Trade and migration links between Wales and London have a very long history and can arguably be traced back to the middle ages (Francis-Jones, 1984). One of the earliest economic connections with London which began in the thirteenth century was the practice of droving cows and sheep to fairs in Barnet, Brentwood and Smithfield (Morgan & Thomas, 1984). The drovers helped link rural Wales with the British capital, circulating animals but also money: “By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it [droving] had acquired greater significance as a means of transferring money to the London homes of Welsh landowners. Money could be deposited on cattle in Wales and the herds moved and sold in London” (Jones, E, 2001: 56). Significantly the drovers brought images of London and information regarding its economic opportunities back to the villages from which they came (Gregory, 1995; Knowles, 1997). As Knowles (1997: 69) suggests; “Travelling merchants and the drovers who took Welsh livestock to markets in south Wales and England created vital links between the rural economy and urban and industrial centres. Until the railroad era, drovers facilitated the exchange of goods, capital and information between city and countryside”. And as Jones, E (2001: 57) suggests “they had helped forge a very strong bond between Wales and London, a line of communication that ensured that no part of Wales, however remote, was out of touch with London”.

By the end of the fifteenth century a recognisable Welsh community existed in London. According to Griffith (2001: 9) “Up to 660 Welshmen or men of probable Welsh antecedents (but few women), were counted by Bob Owen for the first half of the sixteenth century; and he ventured an estimate of a Welsh population of some 1,500 in the 1540s, which Emrys Jones has suggested formed about 1 per cent of the total”. When King Henry VII came to power he repaid the loyalty of his Welsh supporters: “Henry David, now King Henry VII, was certainly generous

with his favours to his Welsh supporters. High offices were showered upon his closest allies, many of them Welsh, and London became a magnet for countless ambitious Welshmen seeking to advance themselves at Court, in the administration and in the professions” (Morgan & Thomas, 1984: 70). During the sixteenth century there was a general influx of well-educated Welshmen who worked as officials in the Court, and as doctors, printers and publishers. In 1550 there were 169 Welshmen in the Court of Queen Elizabeth I (Jones, E, 1996a, 1996b). By 1582, the Welsh community in the city had grown to around 6, 500 people, nearly 6 per cent of the total population (Griffith, 2001).

But Welsh migration to the city was characterised by workers from across the socio-economic range, many of whom were temporary residents or traders whose work brought them to London. Griffith (2001: 10) suggests that the Welsh in London “seem to have been drawn from the artisan or small tradesman groups ... - drapers, tailors, vintners and bakers – supplemented by a substantial servant population”. In mid Wales the news of employment opportunities brought back by the drovers was particularly important. For some time women had been accompanying the drovers on their journey to London, sewing socks for sale on their arrival. The trade in woollen goods had formed an important economic connection between Wales and London for some time (Jones, E, 2001). During the mid eighteenth century the demand for labourers in the city’s commercial gardens increased as the population rose sharply, and increasingly women began to migrate to London independently each spring to take up gardening work over the summer months (Williams-Davies, 1978). Knowles (1997: 73) suggests that “By the mid eighteenth century, a good share of the Welsh seeking work in Lambeth’s vegetable and fruit gardens were young women”. They became known as *Merched y Gerddi* or ‘The Garden Girls’ (Linnard, 1982; Williams-Davies, 1978). The journey to London took approximately seven days, often following the well-worn paths of the drovers. The women tied their shoes around their necks to avoid

excessive wear to the soles and walked barefoot over the 200 mile journey to London. On arrival the garden girls often worked very hard for low wages, but these compared extremely favourably with the levels of pay they would have received at home. They slept in basic accommodation - often barns provided by their employers (Williams-Davies, 1978).

The eighteenth century was characterised by general migration of labourers to London, and a sizeable Welsh population developed in the area to the south of the River Thames. Many found work in the boatyards as carpenters, and Welsh sailors were often present in the docks, on ships that had arrived from Wales carrying wood, ballast and other raw materials (Knowles, 1997; Owen, M, 1989). During this period agricultural or hiring fairs in Lambeth became important social gatherings for the Welsh population in the capital, known as 'Taffy's Fair' (Knowles, 1997). Although the lure of a big city and the freedom from home life were important, economic factors were most often the critical factor in the decision to migrate from Wales (Williams-Davies, 1978). As Knowles suggests, Welsh rural migrants were "attracted by the city's superior wages and range of employment" (1997: 72). From the 1760s onwards increasing flows of permanent migration developed, primarily driven by economic depression in rural Wales. This was caused partly by harvest failures and what Knowles (1997: 75) describes as the undermining of "the subsistence base of Welsh agriculture".

The nineteenth century was a time of immensely important and highly complex socio-economic transformation in Wales. Rapid industrialisation in the south east of the country contrasted strongly with severe economic and social deprivation in more rural counties (Jones, 1994; Thomas, 1896; Williams, 1985). Williams (1985) describes "the rural Wales which was in permanent crisis from 1841 onwards, which experienced an endless drain on its people and which lived, despite its subjective spirit, in objective dependency on industrial Wales". Pooley (1983)

suggests that rural to urban migration played an important role in the industrialisation of Wales. Rural parts of the nation suffered from a series of economic disasters throughout the nineteenth century. Agricultural depression after the end of Napoleonic wars in 1814 affected smaller farms particularly badly, and high levels of rural unemployment became a characteristic of many areas (Jones, 1994); inclement weather in the 1830s affected harvests and the health of the population. Many problems centred around the poor treatment of tenant farmers and labourers by their landlords. High rents and taxation, low wages, and other issues such as tithe payments and field enclosures lead to unrest and caused real hardship to the population of rural Wales (Thomas, 1896).

During the first half of the nineteenth century the population of Wales rose steadily, and increasing levels of migration into the burgeoning industrial south east of Wales took place (Knowles, 1997). Seasonal migration was initially commonplace but gradually more permanent settlement occurred: “Earlier in the [nineteenth] century, seasonal and long term migration to Glamorganshire and London offered Cardiganshire residents both higher wages and more appealing living and working conditions than the lead mines. Both of these migration traditions began with the seasonal journeys of agricultural workers but developed into very different kinds of permanent settlement by the middle of the nineteenth century” (Knowles, 1997: 56). This was reinforced as the coal mining industry expanded rapidly towards the end of the century. Growing industrial centres also provided a welcome demand for agricultural and clothing produce from the rural hinterland to the north, further connecting it with the south east of Wales (Knowles, 1997). A crucial point made by Williams (1985) regards the complexity of migration patterns in nineteenth century Wales. While parts of the country lost significant proportions of their population to England and overseas, the more industrial areas of the south (and to a lesser extent north east Wales) were key migration destinations, from both sides of Offa’s Dyke. The south

Wales coalfield became what Williams (1985) terms a 'gravity point'. Jones (1994: 152) suggests that the second half of the century was marked by increasing levels of migration *from* England: "The trend of migration to the industrial areas speeded up dramatically from the 1850s as labour flooded the coal fields, augmented by immigration from Ireland and England".

Both Williams (1985) and Knowles (1997) argue that Welsh population movements within Britain during the nineteenth century should be seen in the context of a much wider set of migration processes that connected Wales to countries overseas. Williams describes how Wales in the 1800s needs to be seen as an industrialising nation, becoming enmeshed within global economic networks and an Atlantic economy. Migration to the United States and other foreign destinations was closely tied up with the scale of internal migration. When demand for coal and other materials in America was high, increased levels of employment at home meant that all things considered, fewer people decided to emigrate. Conversely, when export levels dropped emigration became a far more attractive option. Knowles argues that Welsh migration to London cannot be seen divorced from emigration to the United States - they are related parts of the same process. By 1850 nearly 30, 000 Welsh natives were resident in the US; in 1890 this figure had reached over 100, 000. In 1851 there were 17, 500 Welsh people living in London (Knowles, 1997).

In the 1840s when many parts of mid Wales were again suffering from severe economic depression a number of structural changes took place in the dairy trade in London which provided a means of escape and a livelihood for thousands of Welsh families. The importation of foreign cattle into England had spread disease into domestic herds and this had discouraged large dairies that would have otherwise brought economies of scale (Atkins, 1977). Victorian concerns about the environmental and moral implications of keeping rural animals within the city had also led to increased regulation of the trade (and therefore increased costs to cow keepers) (Atkins, 1977)

Philo's (1995) study of the place of livestock in nineteenth century London argues that we need to view animals as

a marginal 'social' group discursively constituted and practically affected by human communities, and as a group which is thereby subjected to all manner of sociospatial inclusions and exclusions. The argument is that animals should be seen as emmeshed in complex power relations within human communities, and in the process enduring geographies which are imposed upon them 'from without' but which they may also inadvertently influence from within.  
(1995: 655)

He suggests that in nineteenth century London, livestock animals were implicated in the contestation of urban space. Animals such as cows were constructed as 'rural', and their presence in the city (mixing with humans who were the legitimate residents of urban space) rendered them 'out of place'. Both the presence of live animals (by virtue of their smells and waste products), and the practice of slaughtering them was deemed to have serious implications for human health. The herding of animals through the confined spaces of the city was also considered to hold serious consequences for the *moral* health of the urban population. Philo (1995: 669) suggests that

a transference of associations was occurring here, in that a locality regularly inundated with large beasts devoid of human qualities was automatically being cast as one in which the 'higher' processes of thought and sensibility were impaired in the people living and working there. The anticipation was hence that these people would be debased, bestial in their habits, and strangely similar to the animals with which they shared their spaces.

The relocation of Smithfield market out of the centre of the city was illustrative of the desire to move animals to a more appropriate location away from urban spaces designed for human beings. It involved "removing animals from the throng of the city (which was increasingly being identified as the place for people rather than for beasts) and taking them to more secluded countryside surroundings" (1995: 671).

Philo is interested both in the response to the slaughtering of animals within the city, and their presence as live creatures (being herded through London streets to market, and their



supposedly insanitary location in urban cowsheds). Welsh drovers and dairy-owners were key actors in both of these latter practices (indeed the illustration on the front cover of Jones's *The Welsh in London* depicts Smithfield Market). Dairying was an occupation whose necessary skills matched those of the rural inhabitants of mid Wales very closely:

[In the late nineteenth century] a regime in which costs were cut to a minimum became the rule for the surviving cow keepers. ... Most cow keepers ... were not able to bear the personal sacrifice required in terms of the hard work and meagre reward, and in the late nineteenth century production was increasingly concentrated in the hands of rural immigrants, especially from Wales ... because 'they alone among the inhabitants of the United Kingdom [could] make cow keeping in London pay' [Booth, 1903]. For them the occupation was ideal because it offered a rare chance to use their rural skills in the city, and it was therefore a convenient stepping stone to urban life.  
(Atkins, 1977: 392)

As Knowles (1997: 78) suggests, "producing and selling milk, butter and cheese was an ideal economic niche for migrants with pastoral experience, few industrial or artisanal skills, and little capital". Jewin Crescent Welsh chapel in London recorded its first dairyman member in 1839; by the beginning of the twentieth century the Welsh had literally taken over the milk trade in the city (Atkins, 1977) (see figures 3.1 and 3.2).

Towards the end of the nineteenth century improvements in transport technologies helped bring about a number of shifts in the economic trades of the Welsh in London. The extension of the railway network to mid Wales in the 1860s meant the end of droving animals to London as they could now be transported by train (Jones, 1994; Phillips, 1968). In many ways the dairy families of nineteenth century London were the successors to the drovers (Jones, E, 1981). But the railways also brought changes to the dairy trade itself. The practice of keeping cows in sheds behind London dairies was made redundant when it became possible to transport milk from Wales overnight. The mid nineteenth century also brought changes for the lives of women migrants, and the presence of Welsh women in the parks and gardens of London came to an end. The evolving nature of the agricultural industry and the arrival of large numbers of Irish migrants were partly responsible, but the increasing employment opportunities offered by the industrialising south



Figure 3.2: Morgan's dairy in Hammersmith, south west London. This is one of the last Welsh dairies still functioning in the city, and still delivers milk.



Figure 3.1: Amwell St dairy near Islington.

Wales valleys were also important (Williams-Davies, 1978). By 1901 35, 000 Welsh born people were living in London (Jones, E, 2001).

Yet towards the end of the nineteenth century new economic opportunities opened up in London for Welsh women, which reaffirmed the city as a key destination for young women in search of work. Such processes demonstrate the highly gendered nature of Welsh migration to London, and how both the employment and experiences of women can be distinct from those of male migrants (Bartholomew, 1991; Walter, 1999). Indeed, as Jones, E (2001) argues, women have frequently outnumbered men in migration flows to London: “A recurring feature of the Welsh migrant population in the ... [nineteenth] century was that there were so many more women than men, running counter to the general trend in migrant groups. Wales itself had an excess of men – 50.3 per cent males to 49.7 females, but in London they were only 42.9 per cent, compared with 57.1 females” (2001: 122). Domestic servants were recruited in large numbers to work in both private homes and hotels: “given the lack of job opportunities in Wales, Welsh women migrated in large numbers to the more prosperous regions of England. They were an army of domestic servants and in 1931 there were at least 10, 000 Welsh women domestic servants in London” (Beddoe, 1988: 133). The readiness of employers to use Welsh women drew partly upon the view of them as hard working and disciplined, which had earned them praise in previous decades in the gardens of London: “In the nineteenth century *merched y gerddi* – Welsh garden girls, gained a reputation for being industrious, clean and well clad” (Knowles, 1997: 73).

The hosiers of past decades became established drapers and the drapery trade became a key employer for young Welsh people (Jones, 1985): “The drapery business was to be a speciality of the Welsh, second only to dairying” (Jones, E, 2001: 58). Some of these firms grew to be large concerns and remain in business today as household names, such as Dickens and Jones, John

Lewis and D H Evans. Daniel Harries Evans came to London from Llanelli during the nineteenth century and opened a small shop in Westminster. A member of Castle Street Welsh Baptist Church, he opened a new shop in Oxford Street in 1879 (Ellis, 1971). Ellis outlines how the Drapers' Chamber of Trade was formed among the members of this church, and David Lloyd George agreed to act as their solicitor. But there were countless other smaller concerns such as Timothy Evans in Walham Green and Jones Brothers in Holloway Road, north London:

The year 1892 was a turning-point [for Jones Brothers], when the row of shops [which was the original premises] was replaced by a splendid building six storeys high and including three floors of hostel accommodation for 250 men. In all there were 500 assistants, and very many of them were from Wales. ... [For the staff] there were sitting-rooms and reading-rooms and a recreation room for concerts, a library of 2, 500 books, dining rooms for men and women, as well as clubs for football, cricket, swimming, music and drama, and a Bible class and Temperance Lodge.  
(Jones, E, 2001: 111)

The early twentieth century marked a significant change in the predominant flow of Welsh migrants to London. Whilst rural Wales continued to suffer from high levels of unemployment, economic depression began to have serious consequences upon the coalfield of south Wales which had been a destination for large scale migration, both from mid Wales and beyond Offa's Dyke (Jones, 1994; Morgan & Thomas, 1984). During the inter-war years south Wales suffered from extremely high levels of unemployment and economic depression, with valleys such as the Rhondda devastated by the collapse in the coal mining industry (Owen, 1937). Many workers decided to try and find work in the large cities of England, with London being a key destination. As Morgan & Thomas (1984: 55) suggest, "quite new migration streams were initiated from the coalfield to destinations which were typically in the English Midlands or the London region, where the newer consumer goods industries flourished and labour was short". They argue that during the inter-war period when south Wales could no longer attract rural populations (or keep many of its own inhabitants in employment), migration rates to London rose steadily.

Through a series of mechanisms the government itself sought both to recondition the work force of the 'distressed' areas and transfer them to areas such as London where there was demand for workers with the 'right' skills. Training centres offering a "six month course in preparation for skilled employment" and Instruction Centres that provided a "three months re-conditioning course" were part of the strategy adopted by the Ministry of Labour (Owen, 1937: 339). Direct industrial transference of working labour also played a major part in the government's action to balance what Geoffery Crowther writing in *The Listener* called 'the inequalities of unemployment' (Crowther, 1935). Linehan (1998: 8), citing the Report of the Industrial Transference Board describes how

In 1928 the representation of some industrial areas as derelict ensured support for a government policy for assisted labour migration, known as Industrial Transference. In 1927 the Department of Labour scheduled the central industrial belt of Scotland and the extensive coal mining and metal working districts of South Wales, Cumberland, Northumberland and Durham as 'depressed'. It established the Industrial Transference Board to facilitate 'the transfer of workers, and in particular of miners, for whom opportunities of employment in their own district or occupation are no longer available'.

By 1937 a quarter of a million people had been assisted in finding work in the large cities of England, and between 1921 and 1935 47, 000 people left the Rhondda Urban District - approximately 28% of the 1921 population (Owen, 1937). There were grave concerns voiced by many writers regarding both the consequences for areas such as the Rhondda whose young population was being stripped away, and for those individuals who migrated. Thousands of families were broken up and the loss of population made it difficult to maintain community activities such as the local chapels (Owen, 1937); the loss of those workers with economic and other vital skills was often greatest. Linehan argues forcefully that

The term 'Transference' depersonalised what was in reality a highly emotive practice which drew a high cost on the migrant and the community she or he left. Workers were effectively told to grin and bear it. 'Senses of ties of home and locality' were regarded as merely 'a psychological factor which operates against the policy of transfer'. ... The heritage and sensibility of the people from these 'derelict' places were not validated. ... The government appealed to common sense and simply made it clear that 'certain areas are at present carrying an industrial population too big for their needs; this population must move'.  
(1998: 8-9)

In an article succinctly entitled ‘The Tragedy of an Exiled Generation - an appeal to reason by Kenneth Williams: Himself an Exile’, the author outlined his concerns about the social and moral welfare of young Welsh people in London. He described his own plight as that of “a young Welshman, driven from the hard-hit South Wales area by force of economic circumstances” (Williams, 1938: 102). He painted a grim picture:

In London and its environs there are to-day literally thousands of half-trained, ill-educated, and semi-starved young Welsh men and women who are floating along helplessly whither the tide of boom trade chooses to take them ... It does not require an expert knowledge of sociology and economics to assess with reasonable accuracy the suffering and heartache which is the result of breaking up homes ... My concern is for those young people in their ‘teens and early twenties who have been hounded from their homes by worklessness and the Means Test ... In London, Birmingham, and other major centres to which transfers have been effected these youngsters come face to face with the appalling loneliness which awaits every poor stranger. Is it any wonder that a large proportion of them are slipping, slowly but surely, into immorality and apathy? I hear, with increasing frequency, stories of respectable, tenderly nurtured girls going on the streets to supplement their meagre earnings so that they can ‘buy’ companionship. Usually that means pubs and cheap wine. Many of the young men, for the same purpose, play the dogs and horses, making their pathetic bets with a terrifying grimness. (1938: 1).

Reporting the results of an enquiry into the condition of the young people of south Wales, Lush (1941: 58) was of the opinion that “Industrial transference was not regarded with favour by many parents, but juvenile transference, during the period covered by the Enquiry, was being accepted as the *only possible solution* of unemployment in such areas” [emphasis added]. Miles Davies (1938: 854), writing in *The Listener*, spoke in the following terms of the Rhondda Valley:

There are a large number of exiles from Rhondda in London today. It has not been easy to find employment in the mining valleys of South Wales during the past few years. There has been no room in the pits, or in the shops, or on the staffs of the schools for very many ambitious young men and women. And so they have come to London. ... I was speaking to a group of Rhondda people in London the other day and asking them if they would go home if they had the chance, or whether they would prefer to live in London. A young fellow who came from the valleys at the age of fourteen, and has been in London ever since except for holidays, shrugged his shoulders. ‘Well there’s nothing down there these days’, he said; ‘it’s pretty dead there now’. He has found his life up here in London. A girl who has been three of four years in London in domestic service looked doubtful. She was tired of meeting her friends only in the cinema and parks, tired of being always outside things. ‘No, I’d sooner be down there’, she said, and then added, ‘except that so many girls I knew have gone from there now’. Another who has uncles and aunts in London and many friends preferred to stay. One or two among them were older people, who had lived thirty years or more in Rhondda before their exile began. They were quite unanimous. ‘We would go back tomorrow’, they said, ‘if there was work’.

With the outbreak of war in 1939 the fortunes and future of the valleys was changed dramatically, and the Second World War had an equally immense impact upon Welsh life in London. The migration flow that had brought thousands of young Welsh men and women in to London was effectively reversed as much of Wales became a reception area for thousands of children from the large cities of England, including London (Davies, 1993). Thrift (1996: 140-142) outlines the massive scale of this movement from mainly English urban centres out to rural areas of Britain:

By 1939, some two million people (mostly those with some means) had evacuated independently and another million-and-a-half (mainly poorer) people had been evacuated in the government scheme ... In particular there was a net shift of between one-and-half and one-and-three quarter million people from London, the South-east and the East-Coast regions towards the North and West between 1938 and 1942.

For Thrift this mass migration represented a shift “in the intricate mosaic of contexts that went to make up English society” (1996: 140). Many people found themselves living in unfamiliar social contexts and interacting with different class groups, for instance. The billeting of working class children with middle class families is highlighted by Thrift in this respect. Such experiences “were sufficient to force some people to re-account for their world, either by virtue of changes to the contexts that they knew, or by catapulting them into contexts to which they had never previously been exposed (and to which they had to try and adjust). In this joint talk, people were therefore able to reach different conclusions from those that they had come to before the war” (1996: 140).

The centenary histories of the Welsh chapels speak poignantly of the many young men called up for service, some of whom never returned. Jenkins (1989: 34; translation from the Welsh text) for instance, speaks of how Y Tabernacl chapel in King’s Cross “remembered deeply the 10 members who were killed whilst serving with the armed services”. The publication to mark the centenary of Clapham Junction chapels states that “The two world Wars stripped the church

of many of its young people, some of whom were fatally injured. We cannot ever fully realise our loss” (Jones, E.G, 1996: 8). And such texts also describe the exodus of Welsh people from London back to Wales: “In August 1939 many members were away on holiday and did not return when the war was declared on Sunday September 3<sup>rd</sup>. Others left for the Country [i.e. Wales] at once because of the dangers; a number of young members were called up for services in the Armed Forces, and most of the children were moved out of London” (Davies, 1996: 32; translation from the Welsh text). As Davies (1993: 600) suggests, “The offspring of London milk retailers were sent to the homes of their ancestors in Cardiganshire, and the children of the Welsh of Dagenham and Slough returned to the valleys of the coalfield; wealthy exiles from south-east England settled into hotels on the Welsh coast, with the intention of sitting out the war drinking gin, reading novels and playing cards”.

### **London and Welsh Culture**

The economic hardship in rural Wales and the absence of a major urban centre within the country that could offer significant employment thus made London a major migration destination. But from an early time the city developed other kinds of connections with Wales, linked to its position as a large city. Firstly, it provided a general metropolitan infrastructure for Wales – Jones, E, (1996a: 5) suggests that “London was Wales’s metropolis”. Printing and publishing were key facets of this role. Up until the eighteenth century virtually all Welsh books were published in London and between 1547 and 1800, 521 Welsh language texts were produced there (Jones, E, 1981):

Llundain ydoedd pencadlys cyhoeddi llenyddiaeth Cymraeg am gyfnod maith ... Gwyddom fod cyfifer â 345 o argraffwyr yn byw yn y brifddinas yn y cyfnod 1500-1700. ... Ni all dyn [sic] lai na rhyfeddu bod cymaint â 521 o lyfrau Cymraeg wedi'u hargraffu yn Llundain o fewn dwy ganrif a hanner (1547-1800). ... Dyna gyfraniad aruthrol i'n llenyddiaeth medd rhywun. Ie, fe ddichon. Ac eto dylid cadw mewn cof na sefydlwyd gwasg yng Nghymru hyd ddechrau'r ddeunawfed ganrif.

*The publishing of Welsh literature was centred in London for a long period ... We know that there were as many as 345 printers living in the capital during the period 1500-1700. ... One has to marvel at the fact that as many as 521 Welsh language books were printed in London within two and a half centuries*



(1547-1800). ... *That was a major contribution to our literature someone once said. Yes, undoubtedly. And yet it must be kept in mind that a press was not established in Wales until the early eighteenth century.*

(Evans, 1956b: 97)

During the eighteenth century London attracted many educated Welshmen, and provided a home for the Welsh cultural elite that was central to the development of many key Welsh cultural societies. Crucially, whilst these served the Welsh population in London, they were also *the* Welsh institutions of their time, controlling and leading national cultural processes from outside of the nation itself; it was the cultural societies in London that were primarily responsible for the Welsh cultural revival that took place during the century (Jones, E, 1981). In 1715 The Most Honourable and Loyal Society of Antient Britons<sup>i</sup> was founded, and established the first Welsh school in London<sup>ii</sup> in Clerkenwell Green in 1738, ““for the instructing, clothing and putting for apprentices, poor children descended of Welsh parents born in or near London”” (*A Brief Account of the Rise, Progress and Present State of the Most Honourable and Loyal Society of Antient Britons and their Charity School*, cited in Jones, E, 1981: 470-471). Re-formed in 1751 as The Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, the society, along with The Gwyneddigion (The Gwynedd Society) and Cymreigyddion sought to promote Welsh culture and learning. The Cymmrodorion supported the charity school in Clerkenwell: “but it was primarily a literary and antiquarian society which met regularly for debates and discussions and was the focus of a remarkable revival of Welsh culture as well as serving periodically as a centre for Welsh national aspirations” (Jones, E, 1981: 471). As Jones states “Welsh city life lay outside its borders. When the literary revival came in the eighteenth century, as R.T Jenkins points out, Wales did not have its Edinburgh – it could only happen in London” (1984: 464).

Jones, E (2001: 69) argues that the Cymmrodorion and Gwyneddigion were essentially tavern societies: “The Cymmrodorion was meant to be a centre of fellowship and the conviviality, and it certainly did this with gusto. It was a club, very much in the spirit of the tavern and coffee-

house society that flourished in London, in addition to having the serious aim of rescuing the [Welsh] nation's literary heritage". Already what can be seen here is the production of Welshness through particular spaces in the city. The use of the coffee house and tavern also demonstrates the way in which the Welsh in London were part of wider socio-cultural trends in the city. Ackroyd (2000) suggests that by the beginning of eighteenth century there were several thousand coffee houses in the streets of London. They were centres of social networking and economic trade, as a wide variety of social and professional groups adopted particular coffee houses as meeting places. Ogborn (1998) has suggested that the coffee house, through which flows of luxurious substances such as tea and coffee passed, were key spaces of consumption in eighteenth century London.

Referring to the Gwyneddigion Jones, E (2001: 75-76) states: "They had started the society in the Goose and Griddle in St. Paul's Churchyard, but they were to sample many a tavern in their history as they moved (or should we say staggered?) from one meeting place to the other. Nevertheless, their influence was significant". In this respect also, the members of Welsh literary societies reflected the dominant culture in which they lived:

if the seventeenth century might rival any of its predecessors for the amount of alcohol flowing through the veins of London, it was overshadowed by the eighteenth century when drinking reached massive, even crisis proportions. This was the period when Samuel Johnson, that great London luminary, declared that 'a man is never happy in the present unless he is drunk'. A vast number of his fellow citizens seemed to agree" (Ackroyd, 2000: 349).

The Gwyneddigion met most frequently in the Bull's Head tavern in Walbrook Street:

Dyma un o'r lleoedd mwyaf nodedig yn hanes Cymry Llundain. Yma y buwyd yn trefnu'r Eisteddfodau cynnar, yma yr ymdriniwyd â'r gwaith o gyhoeddi cynnwys yr hen lawysgrifau, yma y clywodd y cyhoedd gyntaf am Orsedd y Beirdd ac y trefnwyd i gynnal cyfarfod ar Fryn y Briallu ... Nid gormod dywedyd mai'r ty hwn ydoedd canolfan bywyd llenyddol ein gwlad yn y cyfnod 1790-1815.

*This is one of the most notable places in the history of the London Welsh. Here the early Eisteddfodau were organised, here the work of producing the contents of the old manuscripts was dealt with, here the public heard first about the Gorsedd of the Bards, and the arrangements were made for the first meeting on Primrose Hill ... It is not an exaggeration to say that this house was the centre of the literary life of our nation in the period 1790-1815.*  
(Evans, 1956b: 112)

Iolo Morgannwg, a Welshman working as a stonemason in London convinced the Gwyneddigion that Welsh poets were the direct descendants of the Druids; although bardic standards had fallen in his home county of Glamorgan compared to Gwynedd in the intervening period, Morgannwg was the sole remaining direct descendant of the Druidic lineage (Evans, 1956b). Taken in by his story, the Gwyneddigion held the first meeting of the Gorsedd of the Bards<sup>iii</sup> on Primrose Hill in north London, on 1st March 1792, thus creating the National Eisteddfod as we know it today (Morgan, 1986). This event reflected clearly the role of London in the construction and re-construction of Welsh identity in the eighteenth century. Other important national institutions such as the National Library of Wales and the University of Wales were established partly through the leadership and finance of the London Welsh (Morgan, 1986). On the 26th October 1863, Morgan Lloyd gathered a number of London Welshmen together at his chambers in Mitre Court in the city for a meeting which decided to purchase the Castle Hotel in Aberystwyth as the first home of the University College of Wales (Ellis, 1971).

In other ways too, London was developing as an important centre of Welsh national life, not least in the field of religion. A number of individuals and organisations based in London (not necessarily Welsh ones) undertook important work in promoting Christianity and education in Wales. Though they were not primarily interested in the preservation or promotion of Welsh *per se*, its use as a linguistic medium in their projects nevertheless had a beneficial effect upon the language, and significantly they were based in London (Evans, 1956a; Gregory, 1995). Jones, E (2001: 50) states that such work represented “ideas generated in London benefiting Wales, partly the result of the desire to bolster Protestantism, partly a reflection of the fact that the resources and administrative capabilities could be found only in a metropolitan city”. During the sixteenth century it was in London that a Welsh version of the Bible and the *Book of Common Prayer* were printed (Evans, 1956a). The Myddleton Brothers who were leading London Welshmen (Hugh

Myddelton helped bring about a water supply for London) sponsored a pocket edition of the Welsh Bible in 1630 for instance (Ellis, 1971; Jones, E, 1996a). In 1674 the Welsh Trust was formed in the city, primarily through the efforts of Thomas Gouge, an English vicar resident in London. The Trust produced a revised version of the Welsh Bible, distributing 8000 copies in Wales, and established over 300 schools in the Principality. The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) founded in London in 1699, was also prominent in undertaking the translation of religious texts into Welsh and distributing them throughout the country. In its lifetime the society opened 96 schools in Wales, though as Gregory (1995) points out the Principality was merely one region where its activities took place, which were primarily religious in nature.

But during the eighteenth century Welsh religion in London began to take on forms more closely associated with the existence of a large ethnic group living in the city. In 1715 the first Welsh medium sermon was delivered in London in St. Paul's Cathedral (Evans, 1956a). Yet it was to be another seventy years before the pioneer Welsh chapel congregation was founded near Clerkenwell Green in the north of the city. It met initially in an upstairs room in Cock Lane, moving to Jewin Crescent in 1823, from which place the present chapel inherited its name. Moving again in 1876 to a site in the Barbican, Capel Jewin was eventually destroyed by enemy bombs during the Second World War, but was rebuilt and continues today (Ellis, 1971; Roberts, 1974) (see figure 3.3).

As the nineteenth century opened, the chapel came to the fore in Welsh life and began to usurp the power of the literary cultural societies which had been so important in the previous two centuries (Jones, 1985): "The [cultural] societies soon gave way to sober congregations of chapel-goers. There had been changes in Wales, and it was to be expected that these changes would be reflected in the lives of the more recent migrants" (Jones, E, 2001: 94). The chapel (and to a lesser

extent the church) became the controlling institution of Welsh life during the nineteenth century. As Knowles argues, “Nonconformist chapels were the primary institutions that bound together the dispersed Welsh community in nineteenth century London” (1997: 83). Pooley (1983: 279) suggests that the chapels played a central role in the construction and maintenance of Welsh identity away from home, “provid[ing] both a focus for the Welsh community and also a medium through which traditional Welsh values and the social hierarchy of rural Wales could be maintained in an urban environment”. The rapid growth of the chapel network during the nineteenth century related to both the increasing levels of migration from Wales during this period (Jones, E, 1996a, 1996b), and reflected the rise of Nonconformism in Wales itself: “The nonconformist way of life became ‘the Welsh way of life’” (Morgan & Thomas, 1984: 163). In terms of the migration flows linking Wales and London, the presence of growing numbers of dairy families in the central area of the city is crucial to the expansion of the chapel network. But other economic processes played an important part in the early development of the Welsh chapels, in particular south of the River Thames (Owen, M, 1989). At the turn of the nineteenth century Britain was at war with Napoleon and the number of Welsh sailors and carpenters in London increased rapidly as a result of this conflict (Ellis, 1971). Many of these workers had limited English and this meant that they did not attend local places of worship. A tradition of Welsh language services began on board the Welsh boats berthed in the docks of London (Owen, M, 1989). Chalked on the side of the boat where the sermon was to be held was the word *pregeth* or ‘sermon’. An informal gathering at first, this weekly event transferred on to dry land, becoming the Cambrian Union Chapel, and eventually Capel Falmouth Road.

The mid nineteenth century witnessed the accelerating growth of the chapel network (see figures 3.7 and 3.8), sometimes because of the swelling of the Welsh population in the city, at other times due to political infighting. In 1853 Capel Wilton Square (which had been formed as a

Sunday School branch of Jewin) became a congregation in its own right. In part this was due to the increasing Welsh population there, primarily carpenters employed by two Welsh building companies in the area (Ellis, 1971). But there were less amicable splits. Eglwys y Boro, the mother church of the Welsh Independents in London was formed when a number of members of Capel Jewin became unhappy with the behaviour of Edward Jones, one of its leading members (Ellis, 1971) (see figure 3.4). Jones (1985) describes how “Edward Jones, who established the first Welsh congregation was nicknamed ‘Gin-shop Jones’. I [Emrys Jones] am not given to environmental determinism, but I almost make an exception in this case. In the 1770s Booths gin factory was already a thriving institution just to the west of Clerkenwell Green; while to the east, in Moorfields, John Wesley was laying the foundations of a new way of life. Edward Jones was moved by both *spirits*, but eventually leaned – or was it lurched? – to the east, and into the arms of Methodism”. In 1840, members from Jewin formed a breakaway chapel in Soho (what later became Capel Charing Cross) after a dispute relating to working on the Sabbath (Knowles, 1997). Some dairy families who delivered milk to their customers on Sunday mornings were refused permission to baptise their children so serious were their actions viewed. This is a clear example of disjuncture of the economic and cultural lives of such migrants. As Knowles (1997: 84-85) states: “The rule [of keeping the Sabbath] was relatively easy to follow in rural Wales ... But the pressures of economic competition in London made every Sunday a test of faith for Welsh migrants involved in retail trades, particularly those who sold milk”. Capel Wilton Square has been demolished, but Capel Charing Cross’s building still stands though it now functions as the Limelight night-club (see figure 3.5).

The congregations formed in central London during the middle part of the nineteenth century tended to be further towards the west of London, and new chapels began to develop in the suburbs of London as sizeable Welsh populations migrated there (Jones, 1985). The Welsh



Figure 3.4: The Borough Church.



Figure 3.3: Jewin Chapel in the Barbican.



Figure 3.5: The Limelight Club in Shaftesbury Avenue, formerly Charing Cross Welsh Chapel.

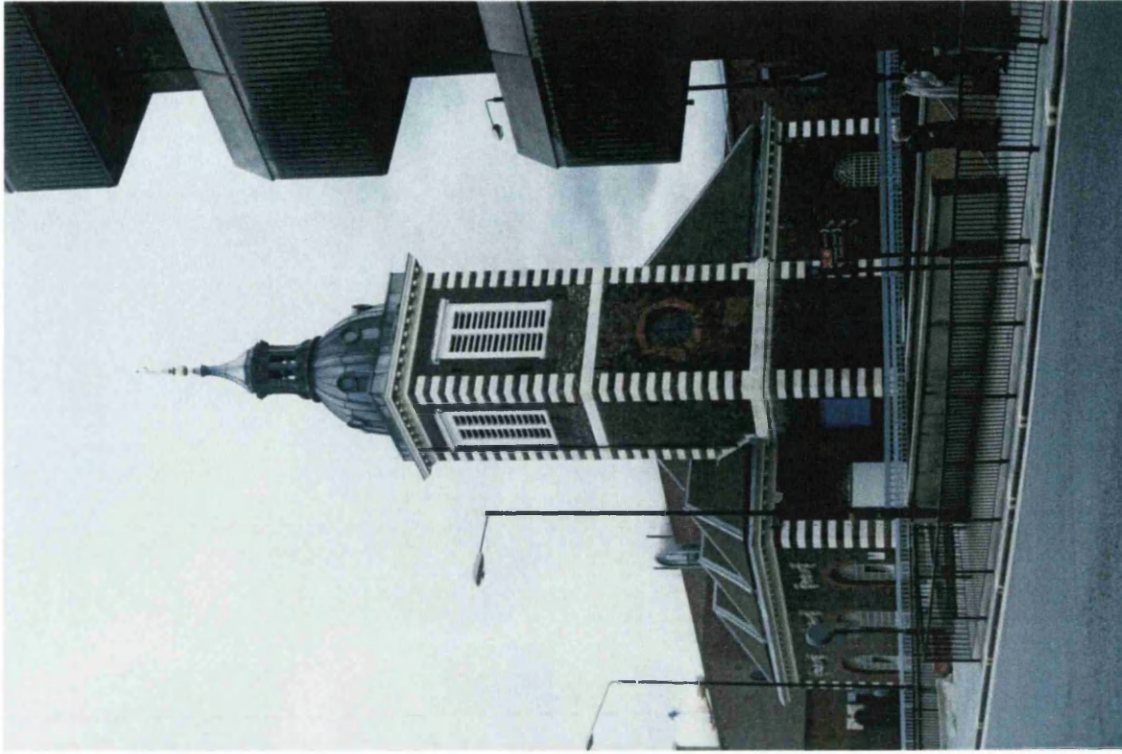
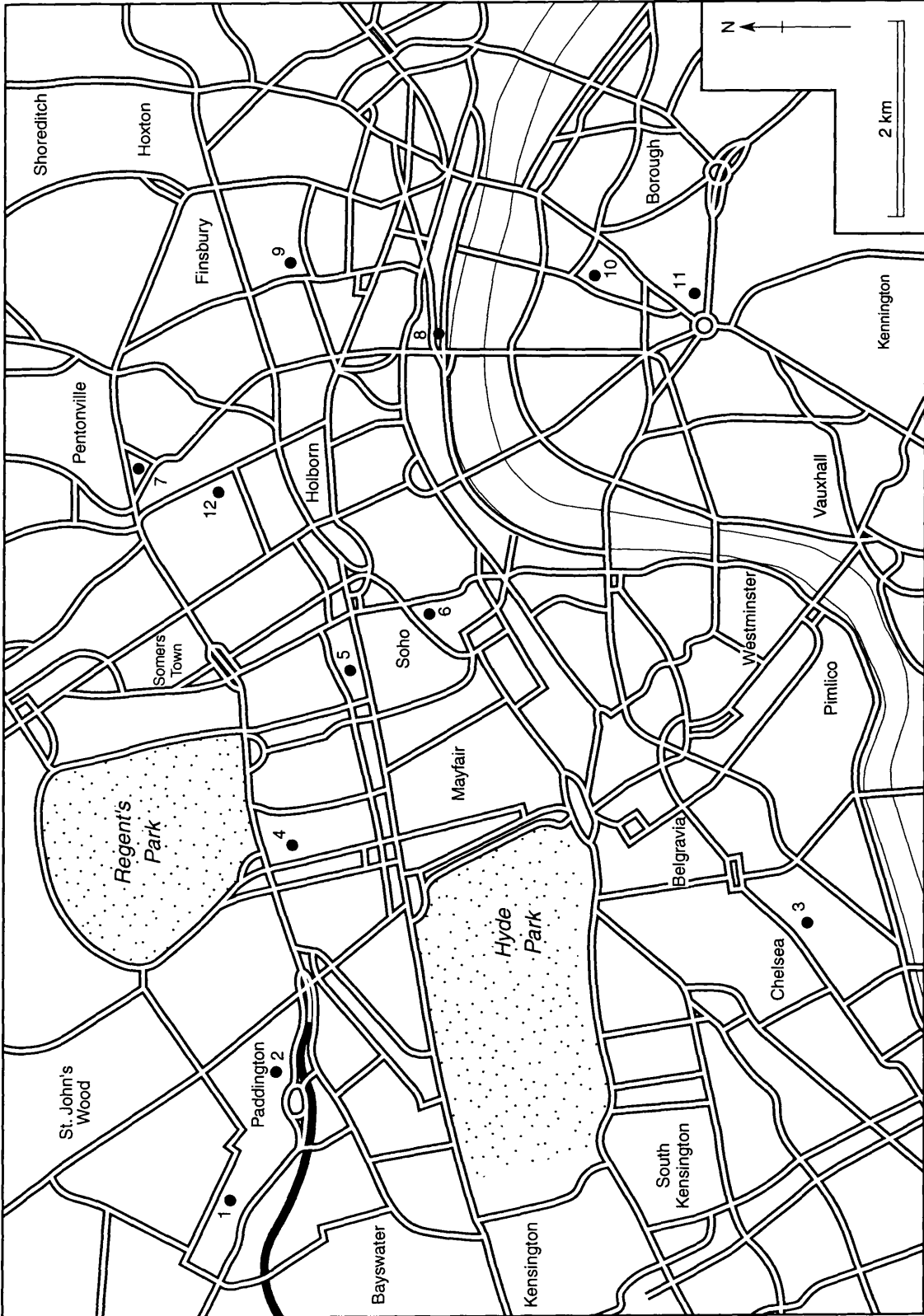


Figure 3.6: St Benet's Church in Queen Victoria Street, Central London, designed by Christopher Wren.



Calvinistic Methodists became increasingly concerned at the spiritual welfare of many young Welsh people in the city who attended no place of worship. Having commissioned a report into the situation it was established that there were many parts of London such as Lewisham, Clapham and Wandsworth where it was impossible for Welsh inhabitants to attend a place of worship that offered Welsh medium services (Owen, M, 1989). It was therefore decided to appoint a missionary “*a’i waith pennaf fyddai chwilio am y rhai a oeddynt ar goll*” (“*his primary work would be to search for those who were lost*”) (Jones, W.J, 1996: 11). There was a strong moral impetus for such work, which sought to reclaim a ‘lost’ population from the dangers of English secular life (Knowles, 1997). The founding of the Welsh chapels in Lewisham, Clapham Junction, Willesden Green and Walham Green were the tangible results of this concern. Clapham Junction opened in 1896, Walham Green in 1897, Willesden Green in 1898 and Lewisham in 1899 (Evans, 1956; Owen, M, 1989). Meanwhile in central London, Y Tabernacl, an off-shoot from the Boro church south of the Thames, was formed in 1847 and moved to its current building in Pentonville Road in King’s Cross in 1889 (Owen, W.T, 1989). Castle Street Welsh Baptist Church opened its doors in 1859. The appearance of new chapels was increasingly concentrated in the suburban areas however, with Holloway opening in 1865, Walthamstow in 1903, and Eglwys Dewi Sant (St. David’s) - an Anglican church in Paddington in 1885. Between 1855 and 1939, 14 Welsh Presbyterian churches opened in London (see figures 3.7 and 3.8) (Evans, 1956a). Into the twentieth century the Welsh chapels and churches in London flourished with ever increasing attendances, swelled by large pulses of migration from Wales in the 1920s and 1930s especially. Jones, T (1959: 54), recalling the history of Radnor Walk Chapel in Chelsea describes how “Consequent on the industrial troubles of the early and middle nineteen-twenties, the membership was expanded by an influx of families affected by unemployment etc. in Wales”. And later in the same book, another writer states that “The middle thirties saw the arrival in London of very many young people. Many of them found their way to Radnor Walk and within a short time made their



- 1. Shirland Road (Presbyterian) - now closed
- 2. Dewi Sant (St. David's) Anglican
- 3. Radnor Walk (Independent)
- 4. Chiltern Street (Methodist)
- 5. Castle Street (Baptist)
- 6. Charing Cross (Presbyterian) - now closed
- 7. King's Cross (Independent)
- 8. St. Benet's (Anglican)
- 9. Jewin (Presbyterian)
- 10. The Boro' (Independent)
- 11. Falmouth Road (Presbyterian) - now closed
- 12. London Welsh Centre

Figure 3.7: Welsh Chapels and Churches in Central London (Source: Lloyd, et al, 1956).

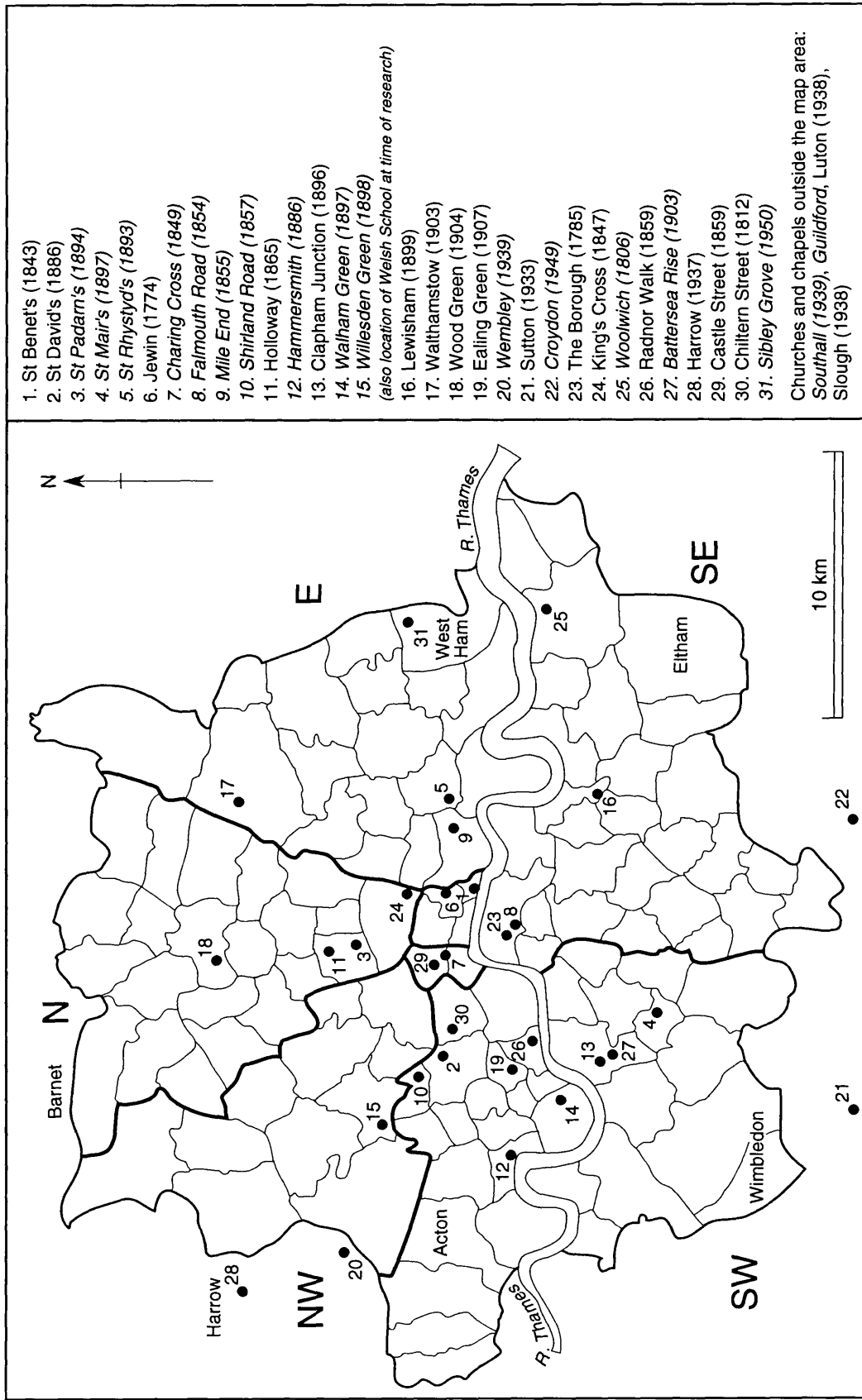


Figure 3.8: Welsh Chapels and Churches in London in 1956 within the London Postal Area. Year of founding of congregation given in brackets. Chapels and churches that have now closed are indicated by italics (Source: Lloyd, et al. 1956).

presence felt, injecting new life into many of the activities connected with the church” (Jones, B.T, 1959: 55). Migration during these periods was particularly prevalent from the depressed industrial areas. Although many young men and women worked in the centre of London in dairies, drapers or as domestic servants, increasing numbers of Welsh people began to live further out from the central areas (Jenkins, 1987). To some extent this was linked to the growth of factories in such areas as Slough and Dagenham – industries which Wales supplied considerable workers for (Jones, E, 2001; Morgan & Thomas 1984). According to Jones, E (2001: 132)

The attraction of the western part of London [to the Welsh] was confirmed in the 1930s by the development of new light industries in Ealing. Park Royal was a vast estate based on a former munitions factory, and its success foresaw the spread of light industry to Hayes, Southall and Acton ... These industries attracted thousands from Wales, and the expansion of suburban houses which accompanied this growth also provided ample work in the building industry. Even today, defects in the houses are put down to the fact that they were ‘built by the Welsh’: ethnic migrants are easy scapegoats.

Such processes were reflected in the establishing of Capel y Lôn in Slough in 1938 and Capel Harrow in 1931 for instance. In charting the historical development of Capel Harrow, however, Jenkins (1987: 7) suggests that some migration of the existing Welsh population outwards from central London also took place during the early twentieth century:

Ar ddechrau'r ganrif, arferai pobl fyw yn bur agos i'w gwaith. Gyda gwell gyfleusterau teithio a'r posibilrwydd o gael ty modern a gardd, symudodd llawer iawn o boblogaeth Llundain i'r maestrefi newydd i fyw – a Harrow oedd un o'r rheiny.

*At the beginning of the century people used to live very close to their place of work. With the advent of better transport networks and the possibility of having a modern house with a garden, a substantial proportion of London's population moved to the new suburbs – Harrow was one of those suburbs.*  
(1987: 7)

Other places of worship opened further still from central London, in Watford, Kingston and Sutton (Evans, 1956a). As the severe economic depression of the 1930s drove thousands of Welsh people out of the south Wales valleys, the chapels drew in high numbers of new members each year to the point that they overflowed. They provided religious services, a vibrant cultural programme, sporting activities and educational classes. In many ways, London Welsh societies at the time could be thought of as one aspect of chapel life. The chapel was until recently the centre of Welsh

life - secular and spiritual alike - and its importance to a study of the London Welsh cannot be overstated.

### *The Development of Welsh Societies in the early Twentieth Century*

As the Welsh population in London grew towards the end of the nineteenth century, new networks emerged to provide an increasing range of activities throughout the city. In 1891 the London Welsh Rugby Club was formed. Footloose at first, it occupied various sites, before finally settling in Old Deer Park, Richmond in 1957 (Becken & Jones, 1985). Describing the opening match at Old Deer Park, H.B Toft of *The Observer* commented that “the warmth, the sunshine, the rich green, the marquee, the bare heads, blazers and bright trees and Welsh national costume provided as gay a scene as if it were in one of the valleys” (cited in Becken & Jones, 1985: 128). The early 1970s remains the golden era of the Exiles, when the cream of Welsh international talent played for the side. Becken & Jones suggest that this success was to a large extent due to the excellent coaching skills of its captain John Dawes, and the development of innovative playing techniques. But in charting the relative decline of the club in the late 1970s, they also implicitly point to the importance of the number of young Welsh men making their way to London to find employment or study at university. The large numbers of Welsh people in London during the late 1960s and early 1970s provided a significant pool of talent from which the club could draw. As Jones, E (2001: 153) suggests, the club “has always been dependent on the talent of individuals who have come from Wales, many of them to medical schools, and the emergence of brilliant teams was almost fortuitous”.

In 1920 the London Welsh Association was formed, meeting initially in hotel rooms in the city. A purpose built centre was constructed on land donated by the Welsh builder Sir Howell J Williams, and opened in 1931 (Jones, 1946). Jones suggests the new building was to be the

home of a national centre for the youth of Wales, partly funded by subscriptions from the people of Wales; this was something much grander than merely a meeting point for Welsh people away from home, important though that function came to be. The advent of the war brought these plans to a halt however, and the premises in Gray's Inn Road was converted into the Welsh Services Club to accommodate Welsh Servicemen and women whose duties involved staying in London (see figure 3.7). Jones's (1946) account of the work of the Welsh Services Club describes how the centre provided both overnight accommodation for service personnel, and arranged a programme of cultural activities. In total there were 120 beds for male visitors and 12 for women. The centre represented a community that was constantly in flux, as the title of Jones's account suggests ('They Passed Through'). By the end of the war 100, 000 people had stayed at the centre. The flows of people through the Welsh Services Club was linked to the transfer of large sums of money from the people of Wales to pay for its running costs. The London Welsh Centre (LWC) as it became after the end of the war functioned as a focal point for Welsh life in the city. A full programme of cultural events such as concerts and dances were developed. The dances held on a Saturday night were immensely popular and attracted large numbers of young Welsh people living in the city (I explore the appeal of this event in more detail in Chapter 5). The LWC also acted as a key information point for Welsh people arriving in London, and served as kind of link between Wales and Welsh life in the city. It is what Latour (1987) might term a 'centre of calculation', controlling the flow of information and people in both Wales and London. An advert contained in *Cymry Llundain Ddoe a Heddiw* (1956) described how "Its office which is open from 9.30 am. to 9.30pm, is in touch with all London Welsh churches, County and other Societies, Welsh Sports Clubs, and with over 50 suburban and outer London Welsh Societies. It deals with numerous enquiries received in connection with these organisations and other matters appertaining to Welsh life in London". Though certain activities have disappeared from the LWC's calendar, it continues to organise a programme of concerts and other musical events. Welsh learners' classes are an



important aspect of its activities. Courses for those learning the language are also offered at the City Literature Institute in central London, and by various bodies in locations including Lewisham and Hampton.

The London Welsh Centre has also provided a base for a variety of societies (some which are under its auspices); in particular, a number of choirs have been formed. The London Welsh Choral was established in 1948, for instance, and competed in the National Eisteddfod at Caerphilly in 1950<sup>iv</sup>. The London Welsh Youth Choir (formed in 1952) was the basis for two later choirs which are still in existence today – The London Welsh Male Voice Choir, and the London Welsh Chorale. A third choir still in existence and based in Gray's Inn Road is the Gwalia Male Voice Choir.

The 'county societies' which were formed during the early part of the twentieth century have also made considerable use of the LWC for concerts and other events. Lloyd, *et al* (1956) noted 5 such societies, representing Caernarfonshire, Flintshire, Meirionydd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire. All of them were founded during the period between 1900 and 1932, and represent a regionalised 'exile' identity focused around bringing people together from the same local area in Wales (Knowles, 1997). Finally, the Welsh Masonic Lodges in London both date from about the same period as the county societies, and display a similar allegiance to particular areas of Wales. The London Welsh Lodge was formed in 1920, which is the 'mother lodge' for the other lodges which have been established. In 1999 there were five remaining lodges in London – The London Welsh, Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, St. David's and the Gwalia. In addition there are two Welsh lodges outside of central London (The Middlesex and Harrow lodges) (Notes from interview with Alec and Keith, September 1999). The presence of increasing numbers of Welsh people in the suburbs of London (Jenkins, 1987) led to the creation of suburban Welsh societies

during the early part of the twentieth century (the Welsh societies in Croydon and Harrow are good examples of this). In the same way that the county societies drew upon attachments to a particular area of Wales, these suburban societies created a localised Welsh identity rooted in London.

### **Welsh life in London in the post-war years – the changing face of migration**

The period since 1945 has been characterised by important changes in the flows of migrants from Wales, the economic occupations undertaken by Welsh migrants in the city, and the kinds of collective networks that they have formed in the capital. Whilst a number of academic studies exist on the Welsh in the city during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, much less has been written in relation to the twentieth century, in particular the post-war period. However it is possible to highlight a number of key aspects of Welsh migration to London during the decades following the Second World War. Although the availability of statistics is limited, Jones (1985, 2001) suggests that in the post-war period – particularly since the 1970s, the level of migration from Wales to London has fallen sharply. The number of Welsh-born people living in the city fell from 108, 900 in 1971 to 70, 286 in 1991 (see also Ellis, 1971 and Francis-Jones, 1984). To a certain extent this can be attributed to the relatively prosperous state of the Welsh economy, which whilst still suffering from major problems has been in a much better position than during the 1930s for instance (Davies, 1993). According to Jones, E (2001: 130), “Pressures to leave the country eased considerably as the Welsh economy improved and as more foreign investment was attracted, particularly into south Wales”.

The migration of Welsh people to London in order to enter the dairy trade was one particular process that ended during the post-war period, partly because of increased competition from supermarkets and other retailers. Francis-Jones (1984: 125) suggests that the response of many dairy owners was to convert their shops into cafes and general stores: “By now, milk was



arriving bottled and crated, and churns full of milk had disappeared from outside the London dairies. Many dairy shops turned to the making of sandwiches and filled bread rolls for the workers in their area as well as widening their range of groceries. But it does not require the services of a dairyman to sell milk in bottles from grocer shops". There is also clear anecdotal evidence to suggest that many dairy owners made the move into the bed and breakfast market when delivering and selling milk was no longer profitable (Jones, 1985). There are still a number of Welsh owned hotels in the areas surrounding Euston and Paddington stations in central London.

One migration flow which was very important during the decades following the cessation of hostilities in 1945 was that of Welsh teachers who moved to London in large numbers. Once again there is a dearth of available statistical information on this aspect of Welsh life in the city<sup>y</sup>. Clwyd (1987) who moved to London as a newly qualified teacher in the 1950s suggests that in this decade 70% of teachers in London were from Wales. Jones, E (1996b: 5) outlines how "Wales exported teachers on a vast scale, and the London County Council was a generous employer. There was no school without a Taff on the staff". Heald (1983) points to the high numbers of Welsh staff in London hospitals, something that is mirrored in descriptions of migration from Ireland (Walter, 1997). My own ethnographic research suggests that to some extent London has become a centre for middle class migration during the last 10-20 years, with migrants seeking employment in professional careers. If these stories and experiences are representative of the wider picture of migration, then the Welsh in London during the 1980s and 1990s share many similarities with the Irish in the city during the same period (Gray, 2000). Jones, E (2001) suggests that at the end of the twentieth century there are approximately 80, 000 Welsh people living in London.

## Welsh Societies in Post War London

In the period since 1945 the changing nature of migration from Wales to London has been linked to important developments in collective forms of Welshness in the city. In terms of the development of new Welsh societies and institutions in London, the 1950s was an important decade. The Welsh Book Club was formed in London in 1953 by four prominent London Welshmen including Emllyn Evans, who were concerned at the perilous state of the Welsh language press in Wales. The society distributed books to its members and was also responsible for republishing a number of works, including the famous *Storiau'r Hennllys Fawr* (Lloyd, *et al*, 1956). By the time the society was dissolved in 1978, 25, 000 books had been distributed (Parry, 1978). The objectives that underpinned the forming of the society in 1953 display strong similarities with the Welsh cultural societies in the eighteenth century. The Book Club arose from a concern with national life in Wales itself; the response to this concern was inspired and driven forward by the Welsh in London. Branches of the Club were launched in Birmingham a few months after the forming of the society in London and later in Liverpool. By 1956 the society as a whole had nearly 550 members (Lloyd, *et al*, 1956). Lloyd, *et al* (1956: 83) describe how the first branch in Wales was formed in Aberystwyth in 1955 when a special meeting was held in the town; “llwyddiant y gymdeithas yn Llundain a oedd i gyfrif am alw'r cyfarfod hwnnw” (“*the success of the society in London was the motivation behind calling that meeting*”). In total, 10 branches of the society were founded in Wales. The development of the Welsh Book Club clearly demonstrates that Welsh life in London is something more complex than simply the replication of national life back home:

Melys yw sylweddoli mai ein tân ni yma yn Llundain sy'n gyfrifol am y Cymdeithasau Llyfrau sydd erbyn hyn wedi eu cynnau ym mhob sir yng Nghymru ac mewn canolfannau yn Lloegr. Hefyd, y mae'n bod erbyn hyn Undeb y Cymdeithasau Llyfrau i unoli'r gwaith, dan lywyddiaeth y Dr. Thomas Parry, ein Llywydd ni yma yn Llundain.

*It is wonderful to realise that it is our inspiration here in London that is responsible for the Book Society, which has now been re-kindled in every county of Wales and in centres in England. Also, the*

*[London] Book Society now unifies the work [throughout the UK] under the guidance of Dr. Thomas Parry, our President here in London.*  
(Hughes, 1958: 6)

Also at the heart of London Welsh literary life in the early post-war era was Griff's Bookshop, located in Charing Cross (now closed), which supplied the city's Welsh population with literature in its native tongue and provided a key meeting place (Jones, E, 2001). Ellis (1971: 22) suggested that the Griffiths family who ran Griff's had done much to support Welsh literature and added: "Dyma gyrchfan llawer ohonom bob tro y byddwn yn Llundain; y mae'n werth galw heibio, nid yn unig er mwyn gweld pa lyfrau sydd ar gael, ond hefyd i dderbyn croeso cartrefol a chynnes" ("*This is a focal point for many of us each time we are in London; it is worth calling by not only to see the books which are on sale, but also for the warm and homely welcome that awaits you there*").

The second Welsh society to be launched during 1956 was Clwb y Cymry (The Welsh Club) in Oxford Street by the millionaire London Welshman David James (Ellis, 1971). The club was opened by Sir David Maxwell Fyfe, the Government's Welsh Affairs Minister at the time. Rather similar to 'English' members' clubs in the centre of London, Clwb y Cymry declared itself as "London's West End Social Club for Welsh Men and Women" (advertisement in *Cymry Llundain Ddoe a Heddiw*, 1956). Clwyd (1987) suggests that Clwb y Cymry differed from other West End clubs in one major respect – it allowed women to join. The need to create a space of Welshness was perhaps more important than defining membership along lines of gender. The club's premises included television and reading rooms, a library, lounge, and some sporting facilities. Evans's description of Clwb y Cymry indicates that drama and reading groups existed under the auspices of the Club, as did whist and bridge drives. Catering facilities and committee rooms were also provided, suggesting that this was a substantial building. The Club's lounge was supplied with Welsh daily newspapers, which as Clwyd (1987) who was a member suggests, was a major attraction:

Lle delfrydol uwchben dwy sinema fodern a'r adeilad i gyd yn perthyn i David James, gwr cefnog iawn o Sir Aberteifi. Lolfa gyfforddus yn llawn cadeiriau esmwyth, ystafell fwyta, llyfrgell, lolfa deledu a 'stafell gerdd. Pob papur o bob rhan o Gymru ar gael yno wedi'u gosod ar ryw ffrâm debyg i resel defaid. Clwb wedi'i gynllunio ar batrwm clybiau'r West End gydag un gwahaniaeth mawr – caniateir i ferched ymaelodi yn hwn. Lle gwerth chweil i gyfarfod rhywun neu i gael coffi ar ganol hwrli-bwrli'r siopa yn y stryd gyffrous hon.

*It's an ideal place, above two modern cinemas; the whole building belongs to Sir David James, a well-to-do man from Cardiganshire. A comfortable lounge full of easy chairs, a dining room, library, television lounge, and a music room. Every paper from every part of Wales is available there on a kind of frame like a sheep's rack. The Club has been designed along the lines of the West End clubs, but with one big difference; women are allowed to join here. It's a good place to meet a friend or to have a coffee when you're out shopping in the hurly burly of this exciting street.*  
(1987: 51)

Though Lloyd, *et al* (1956) indicated that the membership of Clwb y Cymry had increased significantly since its opening in 1953, Ellis (1971: 72) stated that “Bu rhaid ei gau bellach oherwydd diffyg cefnogaeth” (“*It had to close eventually because of a lack of support*”).

A third institution that was founded during the 1950s was Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain (The London Welsh School), which sought to offer children living in the city a Welsh medium education (I outline the history of the school in more detail in Chapter 7). Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain is an important institution because of the ways in which it intertwines language, culture and education in the (re)construction or replication of Welsh identity away from home. But its unique geographical position as the only Welsh medium school outside Wales also highlights wider, symbolic issues about how the Welsh are conceptualised as a collective group in England. Because of its location outside of the Welsh nation, the school has not been able to secure long term, full funding from Wales (Woodward, 2000). Yet the ambiguous, ‘fuzzy’ position of the Welsh in England (still in the British nation *state*) has meant that the education authorities in London have been reluctant to consider them as an ethnic group, and therefore deserving of funding (Cohen, 1994; Edwards, 1999; Roberts, 1971; Woodward, 2000). In this context the fact that the Welsh are a predominantly white ethnic group is also relevant. Ysgol Gymraeg has arguably become a key site in the contestation of Welsh identities in London therefore.

The founding of organisations such as Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain and societies such as the Welsh Book Club in the 1950s can be contrasted with the decline during the post war period of many of the ‘traditional’ Welsh institutions that were established during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The London Welsh Centre, the various ‘county’ societies and the Masonic movement have all ‘lost ground’ as David (1991) puts it. One of the clearest and best-documented examples of this phenomenon is that relating to the Welsh church and chapel network in London. Jones (1985) suggests that the Welsh chapels in London experienced a peak membership at around the time of the Second World War, from which point nearly all congregations have suffered a continuous decline in attendance. If the number of Welsh chapels and churches in London is examined, this alone provides evidence of a major shift in the nature of Welsh life in the city during the post war period. The handbook to Welsh life in London published in 1956 (*Cymry Llundain – Ddoe a Heddiw*) listed approximately 30 Welsh chapels and churches (more if congregations outside London such as Guildford and Luton are included). By 2001 this number had fallen to 16 (again excluding those places on worship in the outer suburbs and towns beyond London). The steady fall in membership of individual chapels is also consistent, and even more striking; that 16 Welsh chapels and churches still exist in London would appear to be a high number when the total number of people attending them is considered (a little over a thousand according to David, 1991). In 1946 Clapham Junction Chapel had a total membership of 298, but by 1982 this had roughly halved and stood at 145. Ten years later the number of members had continued to fall and stood at just 70 (Eglwys Clapham Junction, 1996). The Methodist chapel in Lewisham, south east London, provides another clear example of the significant fall in both members, and the change of outlook of the congregation in the 50 years following the end of the Second World War. The booklet to commemorate the centenary of the chapel in 1949 (re-printed in Owen, *et al*, 1999) spoke of an active, confident and faithful spirit flowing through the church,

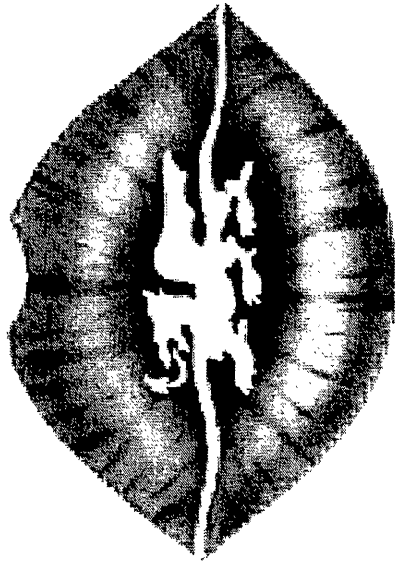
and described its bright future. At the close of 1949 the chapel had 159 members, and significantly, 41 children were attending its services. By 1997 only 29 members were left and the number of children had been reduced to 2 (Owen, 1999: 25). Capel y Lôn in Slough reached a peak of 102 members in 1947. Almost every year since that time has marked a decrease in membership, to the point where in 1998 there were but 27 members still involved with the chapel (Capel y Lôn, 1998). The reasons underlying the decline of the chapel from its centrality to Welsh life in the city are complex and multiple. To some extent the fall in numbers can be attributed to the reduction in migration from Wales (Jones, 1985, 2001). But it also seems to be the case that the changing spiritual socio-cultural background of those migrants still moving to London is also relevant (Owen, W.T, 1989). As Davies (1993: 642) suggests “religious decline is one of the most striking aspects of the history of Wales in the period after the Second World War”. He argues that the 1970s marked the splitting of the fusion between religion and nationality in the minds of many Welsh people. Those Welsh migrants who do not attend chapel or church at home are unlikely to do so upon arrival in London (Owen, W.T, 1989).

In the 1990s a number of Welsh social networks have been founded in London. They are constructing new forms of Welsh identity and problematise the simplistic notion that the decline of traditional institutions (such as the chapel) can be attributed entirely to a fall in migration from Wales. A reworking of the geographies of Welshness is also taking place in London. Centralised Welsh spaces are to some extent being replaced by decentred mobile networks of Welshness that in many cases stretch beyond London. Perhaps best known among contemporary Welsh societies in London is ‘SWS’ (Social, Welsh and Sexy), launched in 1995. ‘SWS’ means ‘kiss’ in Welsh, and so the acronym is also a play on words (see figure 3.9). Meeting six times a year, SWS is essentially a social night out, held in bars and clubs around central London (and has also started a branch in New York<sup>vi</sup>). Glw@d, whilst not a specifically London based network, has become an



**Social Welsh & Sexy**  
HOMEPAGE

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Bryn Terfel, Bonnie Tyler & Colin Jackson

**Cymraeg** **SWS in NY** **Contact**

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3.9: The SWS (Social, Welsh and Sexy) logo. The incorporation of the Welsh dragon and the River Thames can be clearly seen. Note also the link to the society's New York branch.

important aspect of Welsh life in the city. Gwl@d is essentially an Internet site for grass-roots followers of Welsh rugby, and it is coincidental that the person who manages the site lives in London, and Welsh people around the world regularly log on to its site. *Gwlad* is the Welsh word for 'country', and the use of an Internet @ symbol in its title therefore symbolises a fusion of technology and patriotism. One important part of Gwl@d's web site is its chat board. During 1998 two 'physical' social events were arranged through this chat board for members living in London. Firstly, informal weekly rugby matches began in Regents Park in central London. And secondly Gwl@d'ers as they are known, began to organise regular social evenings in central London pubs (and recently in Sydney and south Wales). Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg<sup>vii</sup> (The Welsh Language Society) has had a London branch for many years. Apart from activities to promote the use of, and rights for the language, it has been responsible for running Y Noson o Hwyl (A night of fun) - a monthly pub crawl for Welsh speakers and learners. Another equally important network is Dyddiadur Llundain (London Diary), an Internet site providing details of Welsh events happening in London.

Meanwhile, many of the more traditional Welsh networks in London are still highly active. The decline in attendances at the London Welsh chapels and churches has had most effect upon the programme of cultural activities which have now disappeared from many congregations, leaving the religious services as the main focus of chapel life. A number of chapels such as Capel Jewin and Capel Lewisham still maintain a regular literary or cultural society however. 'Eglwysi Ynghyd yn Llundain' (Welsh Churches together in London) has taken over the work of Undeb y Cymdeithasau (the Union of Welsh chapel Societies) and arranges a number of concerts and joint services each year. The London Welsh Centre maintains a role as an important focus for Welsh life in the city, both through its own musical and cultural events, and its use by outside organisations (such as the London Welsh Male Voice Choir). But the difficulties in attracting a



new generation of Welsh people to the centre, and how the Association should be doing this are crucial issues, if it is to have a long term future.

Whilst this thesis focuses primarily on social networks, a number of other Welsh networks in London merit mention and some discussion in the following chapters. In terms of political organisations, Plaid Cymru's London branch (now part of the wider South East England group) plays an important role in the party's activities (such as dealing with the Westminster-based media), as well as providing a focus point for Plaid members living in London. A number of Welsh societies exist in London that are aimed towards the business community working there. 'Wales in London', which has developed in recent years as a forum for business people with Welsh connections in the city, organises regular dinner evenings. Finally, The Dewi Sant Club, based in the Naval Club in central London provides social events, catering facilities and accommodation for its members from the Welsh business community.

### **The Welsh in London - an overview of the extant literature**

Migration from Wales to London has a long history, and it is important for a number of reasons, quite apart from the scale of migratory movements in periods such as the 1930s. The flows of migrants from the Principality have connected Wales and London into complex economic, cultural and social networks; people, money, animals, goods, books and ideas have (and continue to) circulate between these two spaces. Welsh life in London also merits attention. Welsh organisations there have constructed Welsh spaces for an ex-patriot population; but significantly they have frequently been central in shaping national life in Wales itself, from a geographical position outside of that nation.

Considering the key role that London has played in Welsh national life and the significance of the migration connections between Wales and London, the amount of research on the subject is limited. Very few academic studies have explored Welsh life in the city either compared to the Welsh in America, or the extensive literature on the Irish Diaspora (including migration to London). The Welsh are also largely invisible in the extensive literature on London itself. As Jones, E (2001: 1) states, “The word ‘Welsh’ never appears in the indexes of the countless books on the history of the capital; no London encyclopaedia seems to find the Welsh worthy of mention (shades of the infamous ‘For Welsh see English’). Yet we are here in our thousands, and have been for centuries. Why doesn't someone see us?” Works by Porter (1994) and Jones, G.S (1984) do not specifically discuss the Welsh as a group in London. Ackroyd’s (2000) *London - The Biography*, for instance, devotes only two lines to the Welsh dairy trade in the city.

However, studies of Welsh life in London can be broadly divided into two main categories. Firstly, there is a modest collection of academic studies mainly concerned with distinct historical periods of Welsh life in the city, some of which focus upon particular aspects of Welsh life there (such as John’s 1995 study of the Welsh suffragette movement). Secondly, there are a number of texts produced from within the Welsh ‘community’ in London - either by institutions in the city or the accounts of individual migrants.

In terms of academic work, the authoritative scholar on Welsh life in London is the geographer Emrys Jones, whose work has examined both the history of Welsh migration to, and Welsh life in the city. *The Welsh in London 1500 – 2000*, edited by Professor Jones, is the first book length academic study on the subject<sup>viii</sup>. It encompasses some material previously published, in particular two papers (Jones, 1981, 1985) which focused upon the seventeenth, eighteenth and

nineteenth centuries. Jones's (1998) study of the Welsh language in England during the nineteenth century also makes an important contribution to the understanding of Welsh identity in London. He discusses both the linguistic background of migrants moving from Wales to London during this period and the role of the chapel in cities such as London in preserving the language (see also Knowles, 1997 on this point). From Jones's work and the limited number of other academic studies on the subject, a number of key themes can be identified.

The first of these concerns the charting of migration from Wales to London. In particular, Jones (2001) provides a clear historical record of the key migration flows, outlining the social and economic conditions in Wales that underpinned the movement of people to London during the nineteenth century, for instance (Knowles, 1997 and Pooley, 1983 also offer accounts of migration to London set within the context of wider migratory flows). Jones discusses the peak in migration during the inter-war years, and the sharp decline in migration to London from the 1970s onwards, pointing to improved economic conditions in Wales and the development of a national infrastructure in Cardiff as being partly responsible for this. *The Welsh in London* is also concerned with the particular trades and sectors of the London economy that Welsh migrants have been associated with at particular points in history. Jones discusses the development of droving networks between Wales and London, and the movement of Welsh women to work in the metropolis's gardens and markets, for instance. The dominance of the Welsh in the drapery and dairy trades in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is covered in some detail. In relation to the dairy trade, Atkinson's (1977) study of London's milk supply during the nineteenth century sets out in some depth the structural and social changes that took place in the dairy trade of the mid nineteenth century and the way in which they opened up a space for the Welsh to become dominant in this sector of London's economy. A key point which Jones (2001) emphasises is the need to look beyond famous Welsh figures in London (such as politicians and prominent figures

within the Welsh community) to the many thousands of rank and file migrants who have moved to the city: “I saw this book as a survey of all the Welsh migrants who came to London, and not just of the famous – or infamous – whose lives are often recorded elsewhere” (2001: x).

The second theme which can be drawn out from Jones’s work concerns the construction of Welsh identities in London by societies and other organisations. To some extent this can be seen as identifying the key Welsh spaces in London – the location of Welsh chapels, societies and other meeting places across the city. Though not strictly an academic text Ellis’s 1971 *Crwydro Llundain (Wandering London)* is a scholarly and often detailed account of Welsh life in the city. Each chapter forms a guided tour of a particular area of London, a kind of geography that maps out spaces of Welsh interest. On another level however, *Crwydro Llundain* traces the historical Welsh connections of buildings, parks and monuments, and does so in considerable detail.

Jones (1981, 1985, 2001) provides an overview of the key Welsh institutions that have developed in London. In particular he is interested in the rise of the literary-cultural societies, such as the Gwyneddigion and Cymmrodorion during the eighteenth century. The cultural societies of this period and some of the colourful individuals involved with them are also the subject of Carr’s (1996) study of Welsh life in the eighteenth century. She deals in particular with a number of high profile Welshmen in the city, including the Morris brothers who were closely involved with the Cymmrodorion. Jones (1985, 2001) considers the way in which contrasting forms of Welsh identity have been produced from different points within the ethnic group. In particular he is interested in the shift of power from the cultural societies during the eighteenth century to the Welsh chapel during the nineteenth century, which became the dominant form of London Welshness. Griffiths (2001) describes the growth of Welsh chapels and churches in London, and discusses the particular cultures that grew up within individual congregations. Both Jones (2001)

and Griffiths (2001) illustrate the way in which Welsh societies in London have constructed forms of Welsh identity that both replicate cultural forms in Wales, and yet simultaneously embody differences from those cultural forms.

Jones (2001) is concerned also with the decline of Welsh institutional life in London during the post-war period. He suggests that this decline can be linked partly to the changing social background of those migrants moving to London. But he also indicates that the reduction in migration levels from Wales, and the movement of Welsh people living in London further and further out from the city centre has also played an important part in this process. Jones points to the fact that although many traditional Welsh institutions in London are suffering from decline, new Welsh networks are emerging at the turn of the twenty first century. He argues that we may be witnessing a shift in Welsh life away from the fixed space of the chapel, and towards more mobile fluid geographies of Welshness in London. His comments highlight the fragmented, contested and multiple nature of Welsh communal life in the city.

Thirdly, Jones highlights the central role that London and Welsh societies in the city have played in the national life of Wales. He demonstrates that societies such as the Cymmrodorion not only serve the Welsh population of London, but have also operated as national Welsh institutions, functioning for and leading cultural processes in Wales: “In addition to the many foci for the cultural and recreational activities of the Welsh in London, there exists that thread, unbroken throughout the history of the community, to be of service to Wales itself” (2001: 159). Morgan (1986) and Morgan & Thomas (1984) have also explored the role that Welsh culture in eighteenth century London played in shaping life in Wales. In particular Morgan points to the centrality of the London Welsh to the founding of the modern day National Eisteddfod, describing the founding of the Gorsedd of the Bards on Primrose Hill. The importance of London and London Welsh

societies to national socio-cultural processes in Wales points towards a more open and less bounded view of national identity. It demonstrates also the complex networks that have connected Wales and London, and continue to do so. The flows of people between Wales and London need to be seen alongside those of ideas and money, for instance, that have helped constitute the Welsh nation.

An important study that examines the notion of London as a key space of Welshness is John's (1995) study of the Welsh suffragette movement. She suggests that this movement was centred in London, reinforcing the notion that the construction of Welsh identities in the city has been something more complex than simply meeting the needs of an 'exile' population away from home: "in London was based the only Welsh Suffrage society" (1995: 84). John describes the way in which the campaign for the emancipation of Welsh women was sustained partly through networks that linked campaigners in London with the population of Wales itself: "CSU [Cymric Suffrage Union] members in London were encouraged to disseminate literature and badges when they returned to Wales on holiday, and Mrs Mansell Moullin [a leading figure in the union] went on several speaking tours of north Wales" (1995: 87). The CSU, through its campaigns, interweaved notions of gender with senses of national identity in subtle ways, according to John – "the fusion of a desire for the vote and a careful cultivation of Welshness" (1995: 85). She suggests that "symbiosis was created between the advocacy of suffrage and Welsh identity, creating a dual cause" (1995: 85).

The final theme which can be drawn out from these academic studies concerns how the Welsh are conceptualised as a collective entity in London. Of key importance in this respect is Jones's (1985, 2001) belief that the Welsh should be thought of as an ethnic group that shares similarities with other minorities in London:

Here were a group of people [in the nineteenth century] who were content on small returns, on the whole enjoying standards of comfort above the average for industrial classes, for only 30% lived in crowded conditions, and capable of ousting the Londoner from a distinctive sector of business [i.e. the dairy trade]. Does this sound familiar? One of my doctoral students is studying a phenomenon which, in most cities with considerable numbers of Asians, is as obvious today as the Welsh dairy was in 1900, namely the number of corner shops, sub-post offices and newsagent tobacconists run by Asians. They have common characteristics: the businesses are small, they are independent; they control one outlet only, they live above the shop, they are content with a small turnover and have moderate rateable values: they are run by family units (only 16% have two or more employees): they are financially marginal. All this could be said of 90% of Welsh dairymen [sic]. Were they not, therefore, the 'Pakistanis' of the nineteenth century?

(Jones, 1985: 155)

Yet Jones also highlights a number of characteristics of Welsh ethnicity in London which mark them out as different from other groups in the city that are more commonly thought of as ethnic groups. The first of these refers to the way in which the Welsh population of London has never been concentrated in any one area of London; they have always displayed a highly dispersed pattern of residence in the city: "One of the enduring themes in the history of Welsh migrants is that they have never clung together in any specific locality in London" (2001: 130). For Jones this can be linked to the general acceptance of Welsh migrants by London society, and their ease of integration into city life. The lack of clustering of the Welsh in London has meant that a sense of Welsh community has been focused around institutions in the city, rather than more general districts: "If there was a community [in the nineteenth century] it does not manifest itself in the distribution or depend on close contact. ... In London they [the Welsh] would turn to their institutions – in particular the chapel – for community" (2001: 99). In part also, Jones argues that the Welsh have on the whole tended to assimilate very easily into London life, and have not encountered the same barriers (such as racism or linguistic difficulties) as many other ethnic groups, in doing so: "The history of the Welsh in London has thus been very much one of melting into the host community, and as each generation became assimilated to a greater or lesser degree new migrants appeared to keep the Welsh community alive and to give continuity" (2001: 195). Chapels and other societies have therefore frequently operated as what Jones calls 'reception

centres', which migrants use in their initial years of residence in London, but later move away from as they become more confident and integrated into London life.

A key point which can be drawn out from *The Welsh in London* regards the unstable, ambiguous identity of the Welsh as a collective group in the city. On the one hand, the Welsh in London have integrated themselves into the city. They are largely invisible, and indistinguishable from the dominant English society. Jones suggests that in some ways Welsh people in London share the same experiences as other migrants from distant parts of Britain. Yet, through community organisations, through language and culture, the Welsh have maintained some form of distinctive collective identity. They occupy an unstable position, for as Jones argues, they have often been seen as different, but yet not completely different: "However similar they seemed to be, to the Londoner they were slightly odd – they were strangers, albeit familiar strangers" (2001: 193). Heald (1983) has also discussed the shifting, contradictory nature of Welsh identity in London. Though his account of the history of migration from Wales to London is unsatisfactory, his comments regarding the collective identity of the Welsh in the city are particularly helpful:

Of all these exile networks the Welsh is the most peculiar mixture of infiltration on the one hand and apartness on the other. They first came to London during the depression [sic]. Many of them started small dairies ... The Welsh operate so effectively as a network because they are at one and the same time part of British society, prominent and powerful and integrated, particularly in medicine and the law, on the stage and in parliament, and yet at the same time - for the most part, so conscious of their Welshness, continuing to feel a pride in it but also a sense of exclusion by the English oppressors which is a powerful legacy of the past.  
(1983: 163-166)

The unstable position of the Welsh in England as being insiders and outsiders, strange and yet familiar, is one that I develop throughout the thesis.

The number of studies focusing upon Welsh life in the post-war era are extremely limited (but see Segrott, 2001a, 2001b). David's (1991) polemic account of 'The Rise and Fall of the London Welsh' is a key exception, and is concerned with Welsh life in the city during the post-war



era. David considers the class fragmentation of the Welsh as a group in London, suggesting that there are two kinds of London Welsh:

First, the lower middle class, the professionals, and the small (and sometimes quite large) business men, often Welsh-speaking and chapel and church members. ... Among them are respectable workingmen, usually artisans, making their way up the social ladder. ... [Second the] working men and their families, to be found in any Welsh locality, who are perceived as under-educated, unambitious and culturally deprived. They assimilate to the prevailing English community within a generation. They came to London in very large numbers between the wars, when Wales lost a quarter of its population to the south-east and the Midlands. They soon made up over ten percent of the population of Slough, for instance, and dominated it politically. In several places they formed into communities, notably in Willesden, then home of the Gwalia Workingmen's Club, founded in 1940. It still celebrates St. David's Day, though not in a recognisably Welsh way; it has long since become a London workingmen's club. (1991: 57)

Having explored some of these class divisions within London Welsh society, David examines the decline of Welsh collective life in the city. As I argue in Chapter 5 his contention that “*all* the London Welsh organisations are losing ground” (1991: 59; emphasis in original) needs to be problematised. But nevertheless David puts forward a number of theories to explain the falling membership of what were once the controlling and most popular Welsh societies in London (including the chapel network and the London Welsh Association). The progressive movement of Welsh people from the centre of London to the outer suburban areas is a key tenet of David's hypothesis: “The Welsh like other immigrants, moved out of inner London when they could, to more salubrious places on the margins” (1991: 62). He suggests that the inter-war years marked the peak of migration from Wales, and that its reduced scale during the post war period to some extent accounts for the falling membership of Welsh societies in London. In a similar vein to Emrys Jones, David argues that the number of Welsh people involved in organised societies in London is but a small proportion of the total ethnic population. He concludes by suggesting that the appeal of London for the Welsh has been diminished, in particular with the advent of Cardiff as a national capital. For David the physical and political connections between Wales and London have been reconfigured:

London is different from what it was. For all its pretensions, it is overcrowded, over-cosmopolitan, unkempt, with a surprisingly large underclass of impoverished people. And for the Welsh it is no longer

able to pretend to be the true capital. Only three decades ago the Permanent Secretary for Education in Wales ruled from London. He is now, with much else, within the maw of the Welsh Office in Cardiff<sup>x</sup>. Three decades ago the London Welsh Association were seriously thinking of acquiring a Welsh Centre in London with facilities for visitors, all of whom, they assumed, would not return *on the same day as they had arrived*. The Severn Bridge and British Rail have changed all that. People now commute from Cardiff. Wales does not belong to London any more. The truth is, it never did.  
(1991: 62; emphasis in original)

### *Non Academic Accounts of Welsh Life in London*

Of the second main strand of work on the Welsh in London - that produced from within the London Welsh 'community', the literature can usefully be further broken down into two distinct sub groups; firstly, those texts produced by Welsh organisations in London, and secondly, a diverse collection of texts produced by individuals – often autobiographical narratives of life in the city. Of the former, the extensive collection of chapel histories which have been produced by nearly every Welsh chapel in the city is a key body of literature. Most such books have been published to coincide with a particular milestone in the life of an individual congregation (i.e. *Hanes Clapham Junction 1896-1996*). These historical narratives often follow a semi-standard format, outlining the founding of the chapel, its growth up until the Second World War, and the day to day activities which filled its calendar. Although most of these texts focus exclusively upon the development of an individual congregation, several take a wider view of the development of Welsh religion in London, or link the growth of Welsh churches/chapels in the city with the migration flows from Wales. Meurig Owen's (1989) *Dros y Bont - Hanes Eglwys Falmouth Road, Llundain* is particularly important in this respect. Owen describes the founding of a number of early Welsh chapels south of the River Thames, and sets this within the context of the wider developments in Welsh Nonconformism. What is also particularly useful is the way in which *Dros y Bont* connects the growth of particular chapels to a broader description of the geography and socio-economic characteristics of Welsh migrants in London during the eighteenth century. Roberts' (1974) *Y Ddinas Gadarn*, whilst examining the history of Capel Jewin also sheds light upon the wider religious context of its founding.

A number of other key Welsh institutions in London have also produced (or been the subject of) books that have marked anniversaries or particular periods in their lives. The story of the Welsh Services Club in Gray's Inn Road is chronicled by Jones (1946) and outlines the origins of the London Welsh Association as it later became. Becken & Jones's (1995) account of the history of the London Welsh Rugby Club though aimed primarily at the rugby aficionado, makes a number of interesting points about the heightened meanings that surround a Welsh rugby club outside the borders of Wales: "there is something extra special about an Exiles' Club, such as ours. On top of all the normal club loyalties ... there is the special feeling of representing one's country in 'foreign' parts. ... Our clubs are far more than just rugby clubs. They are rallying points for our countrymen living in London and the surrounding areas" (1985: xi). *Cymry Llundain Ddoe a Heddiw* (produced by Union of Welsh chapel cultural societies in 1956) also merits mention here, because it offers a detailed record of which Welsh societies and chapels existed in the mid 1950s, the activities that they undertook, and the leading figures involved in them. The book also contains a number of well-written historical accounts of Welsh religious and cultural life in the city (especially those by Emlyn Evans).

The diverse collection of material written by Welsh individuals in London also represents a rich seam of narratives, often providing the only readily accessible record of everyday Welsh life in the city. Of particular note is Hafina Clwyd's (1987) *Buwch ar y Lein*<sup>x</sup>, which charts her migration to London as a newly-qualified teacher during the early 1950s. Clwyd's diary-like account speaks poignantly of leaving home, of adjusting to life in London, and the sometimes difficult connections that she maintains with Wales. *Buwch ar y Lein* is also an important source of information on the many literary and cultural societies that Clwyd was actively involved in during her time in London (such as the Drama Group at the London Welsh Centre).

Francis-Jones's (1984) *Cows, Cardis and Cockneys* is a blend of the autobiographical and anecdotal, which charts the history and day to day life of the London Welsh milk trade. Not only does she provide a fascinating insight into the working practices of the Welsh dairy in the city, but also succeeds in capturing the culture of such workers, whose lives revolved primarily around the chapel. She describes "a vast community of friendly faces meeting on Sundays, like an extended family. ... Faces would recognise each other on Sundays, as part of a wider family, having spent their lives in dozens of different and varied London communities (1984: 73). The title of Francis-Jones's book evokes a sense of the multiple flows of people, animals and money that have continually connected London with Wales.

Jones's 1943 *London Welsh Memories* is a collection of articles previously published in *The Merthyr Express* that reported news from the Welsh community in London each week to the people of his home town. It contains many fascinating snapshots of Welsh life in the London area: "The Rainham Welsh Glee Singers gave their first concert at the Methodist Church on Saturday. ... The conductor is Mr T Jones, a native of Victoria, near Ebbw Vale. ... I had not even heard of this wonderful little band, but I can assure our readers that more news will most certainly be given of this little venture" (1943: 20). Throughout the collection of articles, Jones is concerned with stressing the connections between London (both its English and Welsh population) and the people of Wales. In the foreword to the book, Beverley Baxter suggests that "Mr Emlyn Jones, in his *London Welsh Memories*, has built a bridge of words across which the Londoner and the Welshman can walk" (1943: 3). Jones wrote many of his weekly articles during the war years, and he often stresses the unity of the Welsh and English as part of a British 'family: "we [the Welsh] are joining with England, Scotland and the Dominions in a tremendous drive towards victory" (1943: 19). And later he states that "This island of ours is a fortress now in more ways than one.

Fundamentally the English, Welsh, and Scots are just one family. They are working as a family and what finer force in this island is greater than that of the family!” (1943: 24).

A number of other prominent Welsh ‘exiles’ in London - many of them from within the literary world, have produced accounts of their time in the city. Among these include contributions by Gwenlyn Parry (1992), and John Morgan (1993). In *John Morgan’s Wales - a personal anthology*, the author describes his own migration to London in a comic yet poignant tone:

On the day we drove away from Swansea for the last time – now persuaded that we were travelling to a remote jungle in which few survived, not just a city 190 miles up the road – a friend, a one-time European boxing champion, stopped us and took it upon himself to tell us that when economic disaster had forced him to work in London, he used to go home every month and needed to get blind drunk every time he got on the train for Paddington, otherwise he would never get on it. We offered our thanks for this cheerful message. ‘Not at all’, he said, shaking his head sadly. If he’d been a religious sort of man, no doubt he’d have crossed himself.  
(Morgan, 1993: 176-177)

Manon Rhys’s *Y Palmant Aur* (‘The Golden Pavement’) represents one of the key novelistic accounts of Welsh migration to London, and it shares with Francis-Jones its focus upon the dairy families from rural Cardiganshire. The three volumes of Rhys’s collection trace the fortunes of a farming family from the village of Fffynon Oer, and its members who migrate to London. Rhys captures both the economic and cultural lives of the family in London, and the complex connections that they maintain with those relatives left behind in Wales. The book continually shuttles backwards and forwards between the family farm in Cardiganshire and the urbanity of London<sup>xi</sup>:

Pedwar o’r gloch ar fore tywyll, oer, a does dim i’w glywed yn y sièd y tu ôl i’r Jenkins Dairy [yn Llundain] ond swish, swish y llaeth yn llifo i’r bwced sydd rhwng coesau Annie. Yng ngoleuni’r lamp fe welwn ddwy fuwch Friesian a glymwyd wrth y rhastal yn cnoi eu cil yn jocôs, eu hanadl yn codi’n stêm at y nenfwd isel. Gwelwn Annie, siôl frethyn am ei hysgwyddau a’i chap gwlan du yn isel dros ei thalcen, yn pwyso’i phen ar fola cynnes Daisy. Mae bysedd Annie’n goch yn erbyn pinc y tethi a gwynder y llaeth sy’n rhaeadru ohonynt. ‘Gw’ gerl fach, Daisy’. Ymhen tipyn mae’r llif yn pallu, ac mae Annie’n codi o’i stôl ac yn ei gosod wrth dethi llawn y fuwch arall. Fe glywn yr un swish, swish ym meudy Ffynnon Oer ac fe welwn John ac Ifan Jenkins, sachau am eu cefnau, eu capiau pig wedi’u troi sha ‘nôl, yn tynnu’r llaeth o dethi dwy fuwch Friesian.

*Four o'clock on a dark, cold morning, and nothing can be heard in the shed behind Jenkins' Dairy [in London] except for the swish, swish of the milk flowing into the bucket that is between Annie's legs. In the light of a lamp we see two Friesian cows tied to the stalls chewing the cud, their breath rising as steam up towards the low ceiling. We see Annie, a cloth shawl around her shoulders and her black woollen cap worn low across her forehead, pressing her head against Daisy's warm stomach. Annie's fingers are red against the pink teats and the whiteness of the milk that is pouring from them. 'Good girl, Daisy'. Within a short while the flow stops, and Anne picks up her stool and places it by the full teats of the other cow. We hear the same swish, swish in the dairy of Ffynnon Oer and we see John and Ifan Jenkins, sacks over their backs, their pointed caps turned back, pulling the milk from the teats of the two Friesian cows.*

(Rhys, 1998: 16).

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to map out some of the key aspects of Welsh migration to London and Welsh life in the city. Multiple migration flows have connected Wales and London for many centuries, binding these two spaces into complex economic, social and cultural networks. Such networks have been characterised by the constant flow of people, money, goods, ideas and animals along the roads and railways linking London with the Principality. The migration flows from Wales have been constantly changing; from drovers to gardeners to dairymen to teachers. The post-war period has been no exception to this pattern, and has been a time of change both in terms of the quality and quantity of migration from Wales.

Welsh societies have developed in London to meet the needs of an ethnic population away from home. They allow migrants to maintain their cultural traditions. And as Knowles (1997) outlines, the Welsh chapels of the nineteenth century also allowed the maintenance of social values and hierarchies away from home. But as has been demonstrated, Welsh life in London needs to be seen in other ways, and not exclusively as the replication of life back home so as to maintain cultural traditions. Welsh societies and individuals in London have played a central role in the national life of Wales, leading and inspiring cultural and social processes from outside the nation. Many Welsh societies in London have not only served an ethnic group in the city, but have been *the* Welsh institutions of their time, serving the whole of Wales. The founding of the Welsh Book Club in London (which later spread to Wales itself) is a classic example of this.

In the following chapters I develop and explore some of the key themes identified in the extant literature. Jones, E (1981, 1985, 2001) in particular makes a number of important points about the nature of Welsh life in London. Contrasting forms of Welsh identity have been and continue to be produced from different points within the same community. Welsh identity in London is multiple, contested and fragmented along many different social axes. The need to explore the way in which constructions of Welsh identity are both similar to and different from equivalent cultural forms in Wales is also highlighted. Finally, the way in which London and Welsh societies have played a key role in the national life of Wales should be kept in view. Rather than being seen as a bounded territory, Wales might be seen more in terms of its connections with London, and its place within flows of people, goods and ideas.

This thesis seeks to address two major gaps highlighted in the existing literature on the Welsh in London. Firstly, to bring Welsh life in London during the last fifty years into sharper focus. Despite the important changes that have taken place to the nature of Welsh life in the city during the period since 1945, the focus of most work to date on the subject has been upon earlier periods (particularly the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries). In particular virtually no research has looked at the new Welsh networks emerging in London during the 1980s and 1990s. Their development indicates the continued vibrancy of Welsh culture in the city, and points towards the inadequacies of the narrative put forward by David (1991) and others, that Welsh life is on a collective and continual downward slide. The emergence of new social networks in the late twentieth century demonstrates the contested and multiple nature of Welsh identity. What has also been absent from nearly all of the work undertaken on the Welsh in London (but see Bartholomew, 1991; Segrott, 2001a, 2001b) is research that has tried to capture the lived experiences of Welsh people living in London. Issues of self-identity have remained largely unexplored amid the

concentration upon historical analysis that from necessity must focus primarily upon second hand written accounts and official archives and statistics. Regarding the Welsh in London during the twentieth century, Jones, E (2001: 4) suggests: “Facts have yet to be assembled in figures and tables, and oral evidence, valuable though this is, is almost impossible to collect in so large a city”. In the following chapter I begin this exploration of contemporary lived identities, focusing upon the migration motivations and experiences of respondents who moved to London in the period up until 1980.

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<sup>i</sup> Jones, E (2001) suggests that the inclusion of the term ‘loyal’ was meant to indicate allegiance to the Crown. He adds that that the styling of the society as ‘antient Britons’ was “a claim by the Welsh that they were the original inhabitants of these islands, a proud boast which gave rein to their passion for genealogy and suggested a kind of superiority over the English” (2001: 62).

<sup>ii</sup> This school was relocated to Ashford in 1857, and eventually became the Welsh Girls’ School (Jones, E, 2001). Jones suggests that the Welshness of the school gradually became more tenuous, and in 1967 it was renamed as St. David’s School.

<sup>iii</sup> The event itself involved the gathering of Welsh bards (or poets) on Primrose Hill to celebrate the Autumn equinox. They assembled around a circle of stones, in the centre of which was a form of altar (Gregory, 1995). The ceremony remains much the same today. It takes place in the local area which the National Eisteddfod visits in August. Members of the Gorsedd are dressed in long flowing robes, and gather around a stone circle. In addition, exactly one year before the Eisteddfod visits a particular town, a ceremony is held there by the Gorsedd to mark its impending arrival.

<sup>iv</sup> The information on the choirs is taken from information posters at the London Welsh Centre.

<sup>v</sup> Jones, E (2001) suggests that despite lengthy investigation he has been unable to locate detailed information regarding the thousands of Welsh teachers working in London in the post-war period.

<sup>vi</sup> On March 1st 2002 SWS will launch a new branch in Wales. It is a development that draws strong parallels with the growth of the Welsh Book Club during the 1950s and 1960s.

<sup>vii</sup> The Welsh Language Society was formed in 1962, partly inspired by a radio lecture given by Saunders Lewis on the fate of the Welsh language. Davies (1993) and Williams (1979) suggest that Cymdeithas yr Iaith believed (and still does) in the primacy of the Welsh language as the definitive marker of Welsh identity. In part its development as a society grew from a dissatisfaction with the way in which the dominant Welsh nationalist political party (Plaid Cymru) was pursuing a more politically based definition of Welsh nationality at the time, in which language could be but one part. If Wales was defined primarily as a political unit, it had to include non Welsh speakers. Cymdeithas yr Iaith has undertaken both political campaigning and direct action (such as sabotaging television masts) in its attempts to gain official status for the language, and resist anglicization in Wales. The linguistic form of mass media in Wales has been a key arena in its activities, for instance, with campaigns for a Welsh language television channel in the 1970s.

<sup>viii</sup> The book was published in August 2001 when I was in the final stages of completing this thesis.

<sup>ix</sup> The Welsh Assembly has increased the transfer of political power from London to Cardiff.

<sup>x</sup> The title of the book translates as ‘Cow on the line’. It refers to her childhood memories of cows escaping on to the local railway line, and her grandmother summoning the family to chase them away before the next train passed by. Throughout the book Clwyd refers back to her childhood in Wales.

<sup>xi</sup> *Y Palmant Aur* has recently been televised on S4C.



## Chapter 4

### Leaving Wales: migrating into networks

#### Introduction

This chapter explores the migration experiences of people who moved to London in the period between 1920 and 1980. I begin by examining the reasons why people left home. A key factor underpinning the decision-making process of respondents was the unavailability of paid employment or the limited economic opportunities in many parts of Wales (Knowles, 1997; Morgan & Thomas, 1984). Migration was therefore undertaken reluctantly, out of need and necessity, and not primarily driven by the magnetic attractions of life in London – by ‘push’ rather than ‘pull’ factors. However, as a number of authors argue (e.g. Bartholomew, 1991; Boyd, 1989; Jones, R, 1981) the importance of economic factors in shaping migration decisions needs to be seen within a wider context. The decision to migrate is often highly complex, and determined by multiple factors, even during periods of considerable economic hardship. The complexity of the motivations that led to people leaving home could also create complex and ambivalent feelings towards Wales. Moreover, those who stayed behind could harbour negative sentiments towards Welsh people that decided to make a new life in England.

Having explored the motivations that migrants had for leaving home, I go on to consider the important role played by Welsh social networks in migration to London (Bartholomew, 1991; Boyd, 1989). Relatives or friends in London could help attract

potential migrants to London through their presence (Doornheim & Dijkhoff, 1995; Böcker & Havinga, 1999), and by providing information on employment opportunities. Networks of family or other Welsh contacts in London could also help newly arrived migrants in adjusting to life in the metropolis. Everyday life in the city often presented a stark contrast with that back home, in particular in terms of its physical environment and socio-cultural differences. Whilst migrants drew heavily upon such networks, they maintained contact with their families and wider communities back home, thus investing in networks that connected Wales and London, helping to sustain a tradition of migration from the Principality to south east England (Boyd, 1989).

### **Migration and the Necessity of Leaving**

For a number of those who left Wales within the broad time span outlined above, migration took place against the backdrop of high levels of unemployment or even economic depression. The paucity of employment opportunities in Wales is a strong theme that runs through many respondents' migration stories. In discussing Welsh migration to cities in north west England in the early twentieth century, Jones, R (1981: 33) argues that "Many migrants to the north west were forced to move as a result of the economic distress at home, particularly in the northern counties of Wales". Further south, in the industrial valleys of Glamorgan, the collapse of the coal mining industry during the 1920s and 1930s led to economic depression and high levels of out-migration. Owen (1937: 333) stated that "Some 47, 000 people (on balance) left the Rhondda Urban District between 1921 and 1935 – about 28% of the 1921 population". Mass migration included both men and women as Beddoe (1988) demonstrates, and by 1931 around 10, 000 Welsh women were working in London as domestic servants. The

government of the day intervened in directing the flow of unemployed workers from what were termed the 'distressed areas' into the economic epicentre of south east England. 'Industrial Transference' as the scheme was known, began in 1928 and by 1937 250,000 people had been assisted in leaving south Wales under the programme. A key aspect of the scheme was the establishment of training centres in the major English conurbations to which migration was being directed. Male workers (many of them unemployed miners) were re-trained with what were deemed more 'appropriate skills' such as those needed for the building trade, whilst women were prepared for domestic service in London homes and hotels (Beddoe, 1988; Linehan, 1998; Owen, 1937).

For many of the established migrants that I interviewed in London, the decision to come to the city had been motivated to a large extent by economic factors. In some cases the lack of economic advancement or the availability of jobs in particular careers, played a part. But for others, such as Dafydd, leaving home was about survival at a time when his own community could offer neither work nor meaningful welfare benefits. He grew up in the Rhondda Valley during the 1920s and 1930s and worked in the offices of the local colliery until it closed when he was sixteen years of age. He was out of work for eighteen months and had no entitlement to unemployment benefit. He left Wales for London in 1937:

Dafydd [I left] because the depression in Wales at that time in the thirties was so bad that my generation left the Rhondda.

JS And was that why you left, because you ...

Dafydd Yes, because I couldn't get any work down there.  
(Dafydd, dairy owner, 80s)

What comes across strongly is not only a sense of the depth of the economic depression that hung over the Rhondda, but also the sheer scale of the migration that it led to; a whole generation left the valley. As Smith (1993: 78-79) states:

No statistics can convey the bleakness that the contemporary press reveals. The impression is of a society cracking under intolerable strains – the bankruptcy of local authorities, the adoption of pit villages by such places as Hampstead and Bournemouth, the soup-kitchens, children choosing bags of potatoes instead of dolls as their prize in raffles. More insidiously, the unending columns, with addresses in London and the south-east, advertising for Welsh maids on the outside pages of the Welsh press.

Such processes separated individual members of families and weakened the strength of the local community (Gilbert, 1992):

Dafydd ... because so many of them [the miners] were unemployed and out of work, especially in the south Wales area, and they were drifting to these training centres, you see, to get work, in order to get work, and the main thing about it was the fact that it broke up families. It depleted, depleted the village that you were living in, so much so that even when I go home now I very rarely know anyone. Although I was there last year I don't recollect meeting anyone I really know very well, I don't remember any school boys and girls who were brought up with me, and in the same period of time as myself. I can't remember any of those living there now in the villages ...

JS So that whole generation ...

Dafydd The whole generation had gone from the valleys, in the late twenties and early thirties - absolutely depleted the valleys [...].

At the heart of Dafydd's story is the necessity of leaving rather than a conscious desire to move away from home. Migrating from the Rhondda meant separation from family members and a close-knit community built around the chapel and workplace (Gilbert, 1992). The realisation that leaving was the only answer brought a sense of ambivalence into an otherwise solid loyalty to his community:

JS But as you were preparing to leave, as you were preparing to leave for London, how did that feel? Was it ...

Dafydd Very, very, I was very upset.

JS Did you kind of feel almost angry towards Wales, that it couldn't offer you a job?

Dafydd Yes in one way and no in another.

JS So you were mainly sad to leave?

Dafydd I was very very sad to leave. I didn't want to leave home to be quite honest. I was quite happy at home, I was very happy at home. I had a wonderful family, and my

mother and father didn't want me to leave home either, you know, type of thing, and my brothers and sisters were there. But I had to leave because I had no work, and the thing was this, I wasn't, I wasn't allowed any unemployment benefit, or social security.

JS Because of the stamps?

Dafydd Because I didn't have enough stamps - got me? .... I was fortunate I had good parents, and that was the family life down there in the Rhondda at that time. It was a wonderful family life, and anybody who was out of sugar they would go next door and ask for a cup of sugar, until Friday, or something like that, you know, type of thing [...]

JS It was very supportive then?

Dafydd Very very very supportive. As I say, it was just like one big family, and everybody knew everybody. And if I was to walk down the road and did something wrong, you know, someone from across the road would say 'I've seen you, I saw what you did, I'll tell your mother about you!' And that was true boy ... but you see, that's how close we were,

JS So on the one hand ...

Dafydd Fantastic, fantastic, you could not believe it! And everything was bound round the chapel.

Evan grew up in rural mid Wales towards the end of the Second World War in a very different social, economic and environmental context to Dafydd. Yet his account of moving to London shares the ambivalent attitude towards a place that could not offer him the opportunity to take his life forward. As a child during the Second World War he was frequently made to help weed the school allotments as part of the 'Dig for Victory' campaign rather than taking normal lessons. Finally, when a history lesson was cancelled for this reason he refused to work in the gardens and was caned and slapped across the face by the headmaster. Disillusioned with education, he left school at the age of 14 and went to work in a clothes shop in the local market town. While he paints a partly idyllic picture of Welsh rural life in the 1940s, he makes it clear that employment opportunities were limited to agricultural labour or the poorly paid shop work which he undertook. His weekly wage did not cover his basic living expenses, and his mother was subsidising him to go to work. For other respondents too, the reality of their lives was that home, and Wales more generally, could not offer them a job, or more specifically a career. Excellent education and qualifications, but a scarcity of jobs

in which to use them is an experience that many people recited. Huw, for instance, was brought up in north Wales and lived with the knowledge that he would have to leave Wales. When he was training to be a teacher in the 1940s there were no jobs in the country, and he went to south east England to teach:

JS Were you sad to leave Wales, upset about leaving Wales?

Huw I had been brought up with the idea that I would have to leave that area, because children were well educated in the local county school and there were just no employment opportunities for them locally. A few boys maybe stayed and carried on the family farm, but it was mainly an agricultural district, and most of the young people grew up and left. The educational system had of course produced a lot of teachers, and um, oh, I, when I was applying for jobs on my teachers training year in Cardiff, there were no vacancies. The only, I did apply, in 1954, for two posts, - a post in Llandudno Technical College, and I also applied for the post in Machynlleth Grammar School. I was short-listed for both posts, but was not offered the jobs. Those were the only two jobs I applied for in Wales, but um, really there were no, no jobs in my line.

JS Did that make you quite sad really, that you had to leave?

Huw Not really. I always felt that Pwllheli was a good place to come from [...] But er, you couldn't live on the scenery - no jobs there. And all my generation, they grew up and moved elsewhere.

(Huw, retired teacher, 70s; moved to London in 1949)

And when asked about how he had maintained his Welsh language since moving to London, he told me:

Yes, the idea of, you know, of keeping up the language has always sort of appealed to me, you see. And er, but anyway, when I was in school, my father used to say, 'Oh your Welsh is good enough - it's good enough for what you want, you know, into England you will go'. Oh my father particularly always - my mother, before she married, was nursing in Leicester, and er, oh my father and mother had always given me the idea that into England I would go to work, you know, that there wouldn't be anything left in you know, in Wales.

David left Wales in the mid 1960s. He trained as a scientist, but then found that there were simply no jobs in Wales: "[...] the reality was at that time, that there was no opportunity that I could find of carrying on with research of that nature in south Wales [...]. So my reasons for coming to London were fairly simple - I was a scientist, I wanted to carry on the research work, and London was the place to be" (David, scientist, 50s).

As the experiences above demonstrate, migrants could hold highly ambivalent feelings towards a country that they were simultaneously sad to leave, and yet angry towards for its lack of opportunity. Yet those who stayed in Wales could also view migrants in highly negative ways as people who had somehow turned their backs on their nation. Such attitudes to the London Welsh in particular, arguably have a long history. Francis (1924: 89) wrote that “The Principality maintains its prejudice against the London Welsh”, and he argued; “In all thirteen counties [of Wales] there is still a lingering suspicion that the London Welshman [sic] is a prodigal son who has left his father’s home to go into a far country” (1924: 85). Clwyd (1987) describes the sentiments of hostility expressed towards her for turning her back on Wales, a situation that David experienced when he went to the National Eisteddfod on a visit to Wales. He described

[...] the way we were perceived at that time by the Welsh fanatics in Wales. And um, one little anecdote, if you want it is that soon after I came to London I went back in to an Eisteddfod in [Wales]. There were a group of guys at the bar, and they were clearly talking about me, and you know I just went over and said, basically, ‘What the hell are you talking about?’. And the answer was, ‘We know you, you’re a traitor’. ‘Why am I traitor?’ ‘Because you’ve left Wales’. Now this was at the time again - it’s before your time, but it’s when some of the Welsh nationalists and the Welsh language supporters were systematically blowing up dams in Birmingham, or blocking the water going into the Midlands and so on. So there was a great ‘anti-feeling’ around at that time, for people like myself who’d actually come to London. On a personal level, I mean, my answer to that guy was; ‘Well, I would have liked to have stayed in Wales, but there wasn’t work’. And he said ‘Well, there’s always work in south Wales - what do you do?’ ‘Well I do [...] science - I mean can you find me something along those lines?’, and clearly the answer was no, even, at that time anyway. So I think the reality of life was that to pursue a scientific career which was then the aim, I really had to get out of south Wales. The other interesting thing is that whenever I would say at the end of a day’s work, ‘Well I’m going home’, I never meant I’m going back to wherever it was I was living in London - home was always south Wales - I know it’s corny, but home is where the heart is. And certainly the heart was always in south Wales. And that’s why I took offence at these guys saying, ‘Well you know, you’re a traitor’. Home was still in Pontypridd. I was living in a bedsit up in Highgate. Home was south Wales, you know, and to be called a traitor hurt at that time.

(David, scientist, 50s; moved to London in the mid 1960s)

## **The Complexity of Migration Decisions**

As has been demonstrated, economic necessity and the scarcity of employment opportunities at home were crucial factors in shaping the decision to leave Wales for these respondents. But in focusing upon such imperatives there is a risk that the migration decision-making process is oversimplified. As Bartholomew (1991: 179) argues in relation to Welsh migration to England during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, “Economic necessity no doubt provided a spur, but other influences played their part, and the pull of the town, freedom from parental supervision, and the chance of independent income were other elements”. Jones, R (1981: 35) echoes Bartholomew’s description of the complexity of migration decisions, and highlights the importance of methodological approach in eliciting such information from migrants: “Only through listening to oral evidence does the complexity of the migratory process emerge. Availability of work, family and local contacts, personal considerations, an impatience with rural constraints – all these played a part in an individual’s decision to leave his or her native society and move to the city”.

Some respondents (such as Evan) who left Wales in the 1940s described having to leave because of a shortage of work, yet equally some of their contemporaries migrated because of the attractions of life in London rather than a absolute need to move away to find work. Tecwyn and Llian moved to London from rural Carmarthenshire in 1959. Both had good jobs, Tecwyn as craftsman and Llian working in a doctor’s surgery. Their decision to move to London was inspired by a weekend spent in the city staying with relatives:



- Tecwyn Priodion ni yn 1958 [yng Nghymru] [...] a daethon ni lan ar ein gwyliau yn 1957 at 'nghefnider yn byw yn Llundun. A ni wedi cael amser da a *weekend* gyda 'y nghefnider i a oedd yn byw yn Llundun.
- Llian A deseidon ni aros i weld rhai tai a siopau, ac fe aeth yr *agent* â ni i weld *dairy*<sup>i</sup> bach. A fe licon ni fe, a fe wnaeson ni benderfynnu dod lan [...].
- Tecwyn *We got married in 1958 [in Wales] [...] and we came up to London in 1957 on our holidays to stay with my cousin who was living here. We had a good time – a good weekend with my cousin.*
- Llian *And we decided to stay and look at some houses and shops, and the agent took us to see a small dairy<sup>ii</sup>. And we liked it, and we decided to come up [...].*
- (Tecwyn and Llian, retired)

And when asked explicitly what their reasons for leaving Wales were they stressed the economic possibilities that they saw London as offering:

- Tecwyn Wel y rheswm oedd, oedd ein ffrind, oedd 'da fe ...
- Llian Gwesty.
- Tecwyn Gwesty [yn Llundain], ac oedd e'n gorffod talu sut gyment am *repairs* a pethe fel 'ny. A saer coed o'n i, ac o'n i'n meddwl gall y wraig edrych ar ôl y siop yn Hackney f' 'na, a finne'n mynd ma's i wneud bach o waith fel ...
- Llian *Builder.*
- Tecwyn *Well the reason was that we had this friend. He had a ...*
- Llian *A hotel.*
- Tecwyn *A hotel [in London], and he had to pay so much for repairs and things like that. And I was a carpenter, and I thought Llian could look after the shop in Hackney, and I could go out each day and do carpentry work as a ...*
- Llian *Builder.*

Other respondents described how the move to London was made because a friend was thinking of migrating (or had already done so). Sophie had left Wales in the 1960s shortly after finishing her college studies: "I just fancied coming to London. Yes – I'd studied in Bangor and worked there for a while, and then I thought, a few of my friends were up here. So I thought, well, I fancy that move to London, and that's what happened" (Sophie, chemist, 50s). Mair who had moved from Pontardawe near Swansea in the 1950s also felt that the fact that one of her friends was coming to London to be an important part of her decision to leave south Wales:

- JS           What was it that made you kind of decide to leave Pontardawe? Was it because of the lack of work or because you wanted to have a change or ...
- Mair        A change – just that my friend was coming to London and I just thought that it would be nice to have company.
- (Mair, caretaker, 50s or 60s)

For Fflur, London was an attractive and fashionable migration destination when she migrated in the mid 1950s: “My main reason for coming up to London? Because I found that it was the in place to go to at that point” (Fflur, retired teacher, 60s).

### **The Role of Social Networks in Migration**

The previous sections illustrated how economic necessity was often central in the decision to leave home, but that other factors were also important. As Mair’s comments above suggest, the role of social networks might help explain why migrants chose London over and above other possible migration destinations that were open to them (such as Birmingham or Liverpool). The importance of studying how networks of family and friends shape migratory processes has been widely acknowledged within migration studies. Boyd (1989) argues that social networks might be as important in shaping migration flows as economic factors. Migrants already established in the place of destination can attract migration because of their presence (Doomheim & Dijkhoff, 1995; Havinga and Böcker, 1999). And as Boyd (1989: 639) suggests, they can pass information back home: “Existing across time and space, social networks are highly relevant for studies of international migration. By binding migrants and non-migrants together in a complex web of social roles and interpersonal relationships (Massey, et al, 1987: 138), these personal networks are conduits of information and social and financial assistance.”

The stories that Evan and Dafydd recounted suggest that both economic necessity and social networks helped inform their migration decisions. Established Welsh contacts in London offered general advice about opportunities in London. Dafydd's move to London was linked directly to information that he received from his sister, who was already living in the city:

This is true now – I didn't have a penny to bless myself with to be honest, and my brother was the only one who was working. So my sister was in London on domestic service, and she had wrote back. She wrote home one week and said that Jones in Putney are applying for [recruiting] young men for staff. And she knew that I was applying all over the place for work, so she said 'Well why don't you apply?'

(Dafydd, dairy owner, 80s; moved to London in 1937)

Evan described how his move to London came about through a chance conversation with a London Welsh woman who was recuperating in Wales after her dairy had been bombed during the war:

And I went there to this house ... and this woman was there, very sergeant major she was, rurr, rurr, rurr, you know, and this bandage round her head you know, and I'm a little titch, right. And she said to me 'What do you do then?' I said 'Oh I work in Davies Clothes Shop'. Now she was a bit dismal, and she said 'How would you like to come to work for me?' she said [...] Now can you imagine, I'm fourteen years of age, and London was like someone saying 'D' you want to come to Bogga Wogga?', you know? London! She said 'Now that is some way', you know, and I said 'Yes'. She said 'Right'. I was to go up in so many weeks time [...]

(Evan, retired dairy owner, 70s; moved to London in 1945)

Gladys (who left Wales in the 1920s) explained how established migrants visiting Wales brought back news of how good life was in London. This spurred her uncle into thinking about moving to the city. She described “[...] listening to people coming back on holiday, [saying] how well they had done and things like that you see” (Gladys, retired dairy owner, 90s).

## Arriving in London

For migrants leaving Wales in the 1930s and well into the post-war years, London was a distant, somehow foreign space – almost another world. Gladys left Wales during the 1920s as a young child. Growing up in rural Cardiganshire, she had not even visited towns in her immediate area, and therefore travelling to London was a major experience - one far beyond the realm of normal daily life: “we had never been to Aberystwyth let alone Carmarthen and come into town you know. It seemed as if it was forever, and of course it was so dark because October you see, no January sorry, half of the journey was in the dark, and it was awful” (Gladys, retired dairy owner, 90s). Knowles (1997: 43) suggests that the previous generation of rural inhabitants in Wales often knew very little “about places outside their native regions”. But she argues that these nineteenth migrants tended to move to cities they knew most about (such as locations where family members were already living) even when economic opportunities existed closer to home. In Gladys’s case both the stories of local people already established in London and her father’s visit to an exhibition in Wembley convinced the family that they should move to the city.

In Evan’s mind, London was akin to a foreign city, and it was not socially acceptable for a teenager to travel alone to such a far away metropolis:

[...] the minister of our chapel, Daniel Evans, was going to preach in Radnor Walk in London. [...] So I came up with him you know, he was in charge of me [...] my escort, you know, a minister. Because you couldn’t really go on your own to London, could you, at fourteen? Well it was like going to Bangkok, wasn’t it? [laughs] So, the ten o’clock train from Llandeilo, change at Carmarthen, change at Swansea, and we got to London at six o’clock, June 22nd I think it was, 1945. You know, and when I saw Paddington station, can you imagine that, after Llandeilo station? ‘Right’ you thought, ‘Goh! Bloody hell, wooh, look at this!’ you know? All these trains puffing, belching out smoke, you know?

Here Evan describes what was for most migrants their first sight of London - the entrance into Paddington or Euston station. It could be argued that Paddington station has constituted a 'Welsh' space outside of Wales for many generations. As Francis-Jones (1984: 90) suggests: "The atmosphere of Paddington station is thick with memories for many London Welsh people". Richards & MacKenzie (1988: 7) describe how "The station [in general] was truly a gateway through which people passed in endless profusion on a variety of missions – a place of motion and emotion, arrival and departure, joy and sorrow, parting and reunion". Welsh family reunions and funeral services, for instance, have taken place on its wide concourse 'The Lawn': "Seeing off the Dead' at Paddington station had the quality of state funerals in miniature, in the days when London Welsh people willed to be buried in Wales, and before cremation had become available or acceptable. ... As a funeral cortège arrived at Paddington, and moved to the train – not a great distance – the minister would lead the hymn singing and, before departure, say a prayer" (Francis-Jones, 1984: 87). Welsh milk once arrived daily at the station's platforms (Francis-Jones, 1984; Rhys, 1998). Hourly, trains arrived and departed linking London and Wales:

Yma y deuai cefnogwyr Cymru ar eu ffordd i Twickenham: oddi yma y cychwynai perthnasau pan gludid eirch eu hanwyliid i orffwys yn naear yr henfro: yma yng Ngorffennaf 1966 y daeth y trê'n o Gaerfyrddin y teithiai arno ymgeisydd buddugol yn yr is-etholiad nodedig hwnnw [Gwynfor Evans AS cyntaf Plaid Cymru].

*Here the Wales rugby supporters arrive on their way to Twickenham: from here the relatives of the recently deceased started the journey back to Wales to bury their loved-ones in the earth of their birthplace: here in July 1966 the train from Carmarthen brought the victor in that notable bi-election [Gwynfor Evans, the first ever Plaid Cymru MP].*  
(Ellis, 1971: 76)

Yet for many respondents, the arrival in Paddington station impressed upon them how different and distant London was from Wales. The experience of using the underground with its clockwork trains and moving staircases epitomised the technological gulf between life back home, and here in the metropolis (Ellis, 1971):

- JS            So what kind of things ... like the tube ... I mean how was that? [...]
- Evan        Oh God I remember going the first time. I mean a moving staircase was another thing [JS - Laughs] ... can you imagine it? You know - esc-iw-lator, '*Yn ni'n mynd ar yr esciwlator, ynde fe*' ['We're going on the escalator']. And then Mrs Jones said 'Now step off on your left foot' you know? All this business of step off on your left foot - it was like a major operation - major operation.

The size of Paddington station and the technological wizardry of the underground system made a lasting impression on Dafydd:

- JS            What kind of experience was getting off the train at Paddington station?
- Dafydd     Amazing, amazing. I couldn't believe it ... the size of it ... You know, I'm amazed when I go up and see it now, as it is - how it's been revamped, you know, in the last few years ... fantastic now - but then it was amazing - huge place! [...]
- JS            Had you ever ... I guess ... was the Underground a completely new experience?
- Dafydd     Never been on the Underground - didn't know what on earth it was, you know ... amazing, it was fantastic. [...] it was like a miracle world to me, you know - a new world, in other words!
- (Dafydd, dairy owner, 80s; moved to London in 1937)

## Adjusting to life in London

Of all the contrasts with life back home, one of the most important was the physical environment in which people found themselves (Bartholomew, 1991). For rural migrants and also those from urban areas of Wales, London was a very different landscape to the one that they had left behind. In the 1950s and 1960s, for instance, smog was a persistent problem that made what was already an unpleasant environment even worse to live in. Merfyn had come up to London from mid Wales in the 1950s as a teenager to work as a policeman in the city of London. He described coming back to the city after a visit home:

Yn y flwyddyn neu ddwy nesa wy'n cofio [...] dod mewn ar y trê, dod yn ôl o Gymru nawr wrth gwrs, tua Paddington, a'r tai mawr. Oedd y mwg a phethe'n ddifrifol lan yn Llundan adeg 'ny - weld y tai a'u cefnau nhw ddu, a'r swt a'r mwg a'r *steam trains* 'ma. Wnes i bron troi'n ôl mwy nag unwaith i fod yn berffaith onest - o'n i'n meddwl 'Beth yn y byd dwi wedi dod lan ato nawr?' Ond dod yn ôl a sefyll lan wnes i, ac wrth gwrs wy'n cofio nôl yn diwedd y pumdegau 'na, pan oedd y *smog* 'da ni - wy'n cofio cerdded lawr Oxford Street o blaen y *traffic* - o'ch chi'n methu gweld i groesi'r ffordd. A pryd hynny o'n i'n meddwl 'Beth yn byd ydw i'n wneud lan fan hyn?' - ond wrth gwrs mae'r *smogs* wedi mynd erbyn hyn, diolch am hynny, fe aethon nhw yn ganol y chwedegau mwy neu lai [...]

*In the first year or two I remember ... coming in on the train, coming back from Wales into Paddington of course. And the big houses, the smoke and things were serious up in London at that time - seeing the houses with their blackened backs, and the soot and the smoke and the steam trains. I almost turned back more than once to be perfectly honest - I thought 'What in the world have I come up to now?' But come back and stay is what I did, and of course I remember back at the end of the fifties when we had the smog - I remember walking down Oxford Street in front of the traffic you couldn't see to cross the road. And at that time I thought 'What in the world am I doing here?' - but of course the smogs have gone now, thank goodness, they went in the mid sixties more or less [...]*  
(Merfyn, retired police officer, 60s)

Angharad left the south Wales valleys in her mid twenties during the 1950s, to work in the London media:

[...] by the time I had a car in the early sixties, we would try and drive home occasionally from Shepherd's Bush where I was working, to Islington, and had to abandon the car - that was all we could do - was abandon it, and everybody else did the same thing. Because it wasn't fog in the way that you and I see fog around here. It was thick yellow gummy kind of, it was really awful. I remember one day, crossing the Essex Road, which was - I lived on the road up the road from Essex Road. And not only could you not see - you couldn't hear. So what traffic there was trying to move, you couldn't even hear. So you had to try and cross that road both blind and deaf ... Now that's the kind of thing London smog was, that I think unless you have been in that, people wouldn't know it as fog.  
(Angharad, retired television producer, 60s)

Working as a milkman, Evan also had very direct experience of the smog in London:

I mean when I came up just - you know, after the war and we used to get smog - I tell you what - you couldn't, you couldn't see that window. I can remember it. I used to do the milk round, and then I'd put a light on my barrow, you know, a little paraffin thing, you know, and the bus drivers would have a torch thing, and walk in front of the driver - conductor would have an oil burning thing it was, and he'd walk down the road in front of the driver, so the driver, you couldn't - he'd say 'Right a bit Fred', and then when the fog got really bad there was no buses, and when the buses didn't run that was a blanket - that was black! Black! Oh! Horrendous, horrendous. All up your nostrils - I mean it used to kill hundreds of people, and you see, but you can't wonder can you - if you look at the millions and millions of chimney pots in London - belching out smoke, by God.  
(Evan, retired dairy owner, 70s; moved to London in 1945)

There were also many other adjustments that migrants had to make. Discussing the experiences of people from south Wales who moved to London under the Industrial Transference Scheme of the 1930s Owen stated:

Settlement in an entirely new area is not easy for workers who have been brought up in what are essentially village communities with strong and distinctive local traditions. The familiar physical and social context of life having disappeared, transferees, especially isolated transferees in depersonalized suburban areas, are often lost and unhappy in spite of themselves. Unfamiliar food or methods of cooking; unsympathetic landladies; strange working conditions (even where transference is inter-regional, not inter-industrial) and changes in the rhythm of life and work make it extraordinarily difficult for some transferees to settle down in a new environment, and they are apt to find their way home at the first breath of trouble, such as temporary unemployment or illness.  
(1937: 348)

The barter economy was part of everyday life in Evan's Cardiganshire community, and it contrasted sharply with the economic system of central London:

- Evan [...] my father worked for the council, on the roads you know ... he probably only earned £2 a week, you know. [We were] seven children, but we had chickens, milk, pig, we had, a garden [...]. Self sufficient, you see. My father was a big gardener ... [he] would help all the farmers around with hay making, corn, whatever. And they would never pay my father - if he was say, picking potatoes, or carrots or cabbage or whatever, they'd say to him, I could hear them saying it, you know, '*Gei di dwy rych o dato 'da fi*' ['I'll give you two rows of potatoes']. So you had two rows of spuds from this farmer, and another farmer would give him two rows of carrots. Another farmer would give him two rows of swede, you know, and then they would bring these to our house [...] when they were picking them. And [...] my mother would have a cellar full of everything she wanted, you know, parsnips, carrots, cabbage, so they didn't have to go to the shop in Llandeilo to buy them. So they were better off than people living in towns.
- JS So really you went from an economy in Llandeilo which wasn't based around money, and into London where money was everything.
- Evan Everything, you see.
- JS It almost sounds as though that Capitalism hadn't really arrived in Carmarthenshire?
- Evan That's right you see, hadn't arrived you see, and my father worked - nobody ever said to my father 'Here's £5 for you' for working, or whatever, breaking a horse in, or whatever, [...] or haymaking whatever [...]. And during the war we never knew there was a war on, you know, because we had butter, milk, eggs, everything, and rabbits [...]. But [...] people in London had to have money, you know [...].



Even before he left Paddington station on his way into London he became aware of the different ways in which the war had affected the city compared to his home area:

[...] and you'd get to London [Paddington] then, and you'd see this monster of a place. And that was my first cup of tea ever in London, without sugar, in the war. We got to the buffet thing with Mrs Jones, and Daniel Evans the minister, and the bloke who was meeting him [...]. And we had a cup of tea ... and there was no sugar. And I remember saying to her 'There's no sugar'. They said 'Sugar? - there's a war on!', they said. 'You can't have sugar' and I'd always had sugar back home ... amazing, really.

Differences in cultural and societal life were also important. For some Welsh speakers, moving to London effectively meant learning or becoming confident in a new language. Carys described how when she arrived in Paddington, it was extremely difficult to understand English:

- JS            So when you first arrived in London, you said that you didn't really speak much English?
- Carys        No, I couldn't understand them. I remember saying "I'm Welsh and proud of it" and my Aunt said '*Cau dy ben di nawr* - Keep quiet, you know, you're amongst the English now'.
- (Carys, 70s; moved to London in the 1940s)

Clwyd (1987: 23-24) bemoaned the fact that no-one had prepared her for the linguistic challenge that living in London would present: "... sut ar y ddaear yr ydw i'n mynd i lwyddo i siarad Saesneg drwy'r dydd? Does gen i ddim digon o eiriau i lenwi mwy nag awr" ("*... how on earth am I going to manage to speak English all day? I don't have enough words to fill more than an hour*").

Chris left south Wales in 1979 soon after completing his A-Levels, and went to study in east London. While he talks about the urban environment that he found himself in, he also refers to the flow of everyday life, and the way in which many of his images of England and London were sharply challenged by what he experienced:

I was more surprised by everybody rushing around, the numbers of people on the underground in the morning; you got squeezed in. There was this feeling that you were being pushed around everywhere, you didn't have any control over your life. The people themselves - I was surprised by the mixture, there were so many people from outside of Britain. I did have this image, a boyhood image of these people speaking with a very English accent and this sort of stuff, because I'd only been up once, twice on school trips and always to the city of London where people *do* wear bowler hats. So I had this sort of image of England, which is a bit stereotypical. Similar to English views of Wales, I would think. It didn't last long. Things dawn on you very quickly. It was the impersonality I think which was the biggest shock. Just rushing around, noise, smell, people seeming to be doing what the hell they liked. The sort of standards that were, no matter where you were, just threatening sometimes. In the first term [in university] I was in a sort of bed sit in east London, Mile End area. It really was - we had aeroplanes flying over all the time and there was always lights on in the streets, people moving about constantly. It was very, very different. At that time I wasn't thinking, I've got to go home, go home to visit, yes, but not 'I've got to get away from here', because it was interesting.  
(Chris, teacher, 40s)

Several respondents who moved to London during the 1930s and 1940s were surprised to find pubs and shops open on a Sunday, having come from a community in which the chapel was the only institution that operated on the Sabbath:

[...] what amazed me when I first came to London was to see so many shops open, and public houses, and people drinking outside on a Sunday. It was so, what ... word can I use for it ... well it really upset me to be quite honest, you know. I thought to myself, 'Well I come from the valleys', and I thought that life would be the same up here in London as what it would have been in the valleys, and one doesn't realise the transformation, the big transformation of coming from a homely country to an isolated [city] [...] because you were isolated up here, and it was very very difficult to get on.  
(Dafydd, dairy owner, 80s; moved to London in 1937)

Evan was also aware of the different position of women within London society at the end of the Second World War:

- Evan [...] and the other thing that used to amaze me [...] when I came to London, was to see mothers in pubs and the kids outside in the pushchair. You know, Saturday nights, or Sundays, drinking. I mean my mother never went to a pub, and this was London, and they're all inside doing *Knees Up Mother Brown*, and I couldn't believe this, I *could not* believe this, and mother and father would be *in the pub*, and the kids outside and drinking lemonade, you know?
- JS So was that different, because women ... would they have had much more freedom?
- Evan Well the war just ending then you see, and everybody had had a rough time in the war - '... let's go down the pub and get drunk', you know, 'We've come through the war', and kids outside the pub you know, drinking

lemonade, you know. And you didn't see that in Wales; you *did not*. The pubs weren't open in Wales on Sunday anyway, and my mother ... I don't think she'd ever been in a pub - oh! God - it wouldn't even be heard of in our village!

JS Why was that in particular? Was it just something that you grew up with?

Evan Well, you know, it just showed you how village life is so different to London life, say our village's life, a little place in west Wales ... a woman in a pub? My God - it wouldn't be heard of, you know? It was, I mean men sort of crept in and out of pubs, you know. It wasn't, because everybody went to chapel, didn't they? Oh dear me, you mustn't - 'Drinks, oh he drinks', and perhaps the bloke only had a pint of beer a week, but he drinks, he drinks you know, and half the chapel was looking at him [...]

(Evan, retired dairy owner, 70s; moved to London in 1945)

Dafydd was surprised at the divides in society after what he saw as the unity of life back home:

[...] the thing that amazed me was the fact that [...] down in our village, irrespective of what religion or what creed or what colour you were, you were all in the same class [at school]. You were all taught the same lesson, whether you were a Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Moslem or a Caribbean. We had a couple of Caribbeans, but I, he was called Darkie Smith, but I mean we did this because of his colour; they used to call him Darkie, but it was just a way of knowing and addressing him. It's no use telling him Smith, because there were half a dozen Smiths in our town anyway, or Joneses or Wyn. We always used to call them by their nicknames type of thing see [...]. But what startled me in London [...] was I couldn't understand why they had separate schools: they had a Catholic school, a Church of England School, and the ordinary elementary school, you know, the state school.

## Welsh Networks and The New Arrivals

The presence of Welsh friends or family in London was often crucial in helping newly arrived migrants negotiate London life, and in providing "social and financial assistance" (Boyd, 1989: 639). Pooley & Doherty (1991: 166) describe "the importance of kinship links in providing a support mechanism in a new community". Bartholomew (1991) found that in over 70% of the case studies she examined people had travelled into England alone, but over half were met at their destination, or had someone to stay with:

Many migrants from Wales moved from counties and communities with a long tradition of migration and emigration. The existence of networks of contacts and information is well documented in earlier studies of migration from Wales with the earlier waves of settlers and extended family contacts in the places of destination. Family gatherings brought distant relatives together and information was exchanged and support of various kinds given.

(1991: 182)

One of the key images of such support networks at work is the arrival of new migrants into Paddington or Euston station being met by friends and family, guided across the complex underground system, and helped with immediate accommodation and employment needs. This tradition of meeting migrants at key entrance points to London also mirrors the experience of other migratory groups to the British capital, some of whom are commonly thought of more readily as distinctive ethnic groups. Samuel Selvon's (1956) account of West Indian migration, *The Lonely Londoners*, opens with Moses, an established migrant, waiting at Waterloo station for the Boat Train, to meet a new arrival: "Because it look to Moses that he hardly have time to settle in the old Britain before all sorts of fellars start coming straight to his room in the Water [Bayswater in west London] when they land up in London from the West Indies, saying that so and so tell them that Moses is a good fellar to contact, that he would help them to get place to stay and work to do" (1956: 8). Later, Moses explains how he found a place to live "where he could meet the boys ... for this city powerfully lonely when you on your own" (1956: 41). Knowles (1997) suggests that in the case of the Welsh in London, the fact that migrants often stayed initially with relatives or friends (and made such arrangements before they left home) reinforced their dispersed geography as an ethnic group across London.

In her literary account of moving to London from North Wales, Clwyd (1987) describes how she was met at Paddington by two of the London Welsh, Derek and Gwenllian, and guided across the capital to Victoria. Many migrants already had relatives who were already living in the city, creating strong support networks. Dafydd explained: "[...] when I got up here I wasn't on my own. I was very fortunate that I had a

lot of relations up here ... And I remember we got to Paddington at about 11.30am. We decided to come from home by about 7.30am in the morning, and we got up there for about 11.30, and my sister and my brother were there to meet us". Carys spoke of a similar experience:

JS So do you remember stepping off the train at Paddington?

Carys Yes, my Aunt was meeting me, you know, and I thought Oh God where am I? sort of thing. She was a great help of course. I don't think I would have liked to come up just on my own you know, it would have been dreadful. She'd been up here for years and years; she had been nursing up here. And I made my home with her for a little while, you know, but it was nice to get a place of my own [ ...]

(Carys, 70s; moved to London in the 1940s)

When Gladys's uncle decided to move to London, he was able to stay with relatives until he was in a position to purchase his own business: "He stayed with us until he could get himself settled, and he bought a dairy in South England Road. That's how you went – from one to the other – just immigrants you could say, creeping in, like they are doing now really, isn't it?" That's how it started and the Welsh people helped the Welsh" (Gladys, retired dairy owner, 90s, moved to London in 1926). As Knowles (1997: 78) has pointed out, "If a young couple wanted to set up shop or join an existing operation they could turn to friends or relatives for loans to get started".

As a Welsh child growing up in London, Charles witnessed the arrival of new Welsh migrants. His family often took in young Welsh people, providing them with an initial place to stay and a valuable route into the city's economy through a network of contacts:

JS You said that your house was kind of a reception area for ...

Charles Oh yes, there was always somebody there. There was always somebody there, always. Or relations, you know ... Oh yes, it was a meeting place all right.

- JS And [...] young men and women that were arriving in London, they found some kind of, I guess ... not a hostel as such, but a...
- Charles Well, this is the type of thing. At least they were given accommodation free for a time until they managed to find something themselves. And sometimes it was a matter of days, and sometimes it was weeks, you know ... rough and ready. As I said, oh yes, it was a very open house. Nobody was ever turned away. On Sunday night it was always full up. Sunday was a very busy day, food wise. Oh yes.
- JS And you said your parents would often be able to suggest to someone who had just arrived, 'Oh go and see Mr Jones or Mr Smith and he'll fix you up with a job or he ...'
- Charles Oh yes, they knew people you see, the other Welsh people. One of my mother's friends used to come to our [chapel] and he was the deputy head of the *London Fire Brigade Salvage Corps*, you know, quite a big nob and I am sure he got a lot of people jobs. I don't know. There was another bloke [...] He had a big wholesale warehouse. Sometimes they were menial tasks, [...] sometimes they weren't. If they got the know-how, you know, people wanted to go into banks. So if they knew a bank manager, they'd go and see him and recommend him to head office or whatever, all that lot. It didn't guarantee them a job, but at least there was an opening there for them or somebody would help them ... Most of them succeeded in the end. They found their niche, but they needed an original fill-up to get them off the ground. Sometimes it wasn't much and sometimes it was quite a help.
- (Charles, retired bank employee, 80s)

Gladys also described the way in which her parents' home in London was used as a kind of reception centre for migrants from Cardiganshire during the 1920s and 1930s:

[...] they [the migrants] wanted to come to London, and we were a base. We were a REAL base, we were, for people coming up to London, to find jobs. [...] Four of them came up to us ... they all got jobs on the building trade. They didn't care what they were doing, as long as they were in employment. Two of them stayed with us ... the others of course – we could only keep them for a certain time. But in the end they had to look for digs. They found digs, and they would meet somebody in the chapel and they would get married or whatever [...]. So it was a rolling stone sort of thing. It just revolved all the time. They never went back – nobody ever went back once they came to London. Because they had money in their pockets and they started living again.

(Gladys, retired dairy owner, 90s; moved to London in 1926)

Though individual friends and relatives were therefore crucial in taking care of newly arrived migrants, it should be kept in mind that London Welsh institutions also offered an initial point of contact and support for people arriving in the city. The London Welsh Centre and the Welsh chapels (which Jones, E, 2001 describes as 'reception centres') were particularly important in this respect. I examine work of such societies in helping to anchor newly arrived migrants in Chapter 5.

## **Maintaining Contact With Back Home: Placement and Displacement**

Newly arrived migrants therefore often draw heavily upon the support of established networks of friends and family in the place to which they move. But as suggested earlier, connections with social networks back home are also often maintained. Pooley (1983) challenges the view that rural migration from Wales to London during the nineteenth century was characterised by one way, 'once and for all' journeys, and argues that close contact was often maintained with people and places left behind. In a similar vein, Bartholomew (1991) and Knowles (1997) both argue the connections between Welsh migrants and their families and communities back home could be immensely strong in Welsh migration processes.

Crucially, networks of family and friends connected London and Wales through continual, circular flows of people, advice, money and other goods. They operated across space and time, as well as within discrete geographical locations (Boyd, 1989).

As Boyd (1989: 643) argues:

families represent a social group geographically dispersed. They create kinship networks which exist across time and space, and are the conduits for information and assistance. ... Shadow households in the place of destination consist of persons whose commitments and obligations are to households in the sending area. ... Once begun, migration flows often become self-sustaining, reflecting the establishment of networks of information, assistance and obligations which develop between migrants in the host society and friends and relatives in the sending area.

Newly arrived migrants who drew heavily upon the support of established Welsh people in London might later act themselves as sources of advice and information.

Connections with back home were most strongly maintained by visits back home to Wales or, as Pooley (1983) suggests, through permanent return-migration. For David, Pontypridd remained his home thanks to regular visits back to the town:

I think I said at the very beginning, Pontypridd is still home. I still go home and I stay in Pontypridd. If there's a rugby match on, I will stay in Pontypridd with relatives, I will stay in Trefforest with school friends. [...] So the links with Pontypridd are still very very strong, through old school friends who are still there, and through relatives. I will stay with them whenever I go back there [...]. I still have that power of feeling for Pontypridd ... it's still home. I happen to have lived in Wembley for twenty years but home is still Pontypridd, and nothing will change.

(David, scientist, 50s; moved to London in the mid 1960s)

The tradition of visiting home happened most often during the summer, when families returned to stay with relatives for their annual holidays. Lucy, the daughter of Welsh parents who had migrated to London explained: "Yes [...] always holiday time, summer holiday, about July 21<sup>st</sup> or 22<sup>nd</sup>, we'd all go off to north Wales" (Lucy, 80s; born in London).

Fawcett & Arnold (1987) argue that a systems approach to the study of migration would suggest that "flows of people are part of, and often influenced by, flows of goods, services and information" (cited in Boyd, 1989: 640). Whilst people themselves often cemented networks connecting Wales and London, letters, for instance were a key medium in maintaining contact between disparate relatives:

Homesickness ... I don't know that I was particularly homesick. I mean all of my life we'd had this pattern of - there was no telephone, so I was never going to speak to my parents on the telephone. Every Sunday I wrote home, and they wrote to me. That was right through when I was in University, when I went to Spain, and when I was in London. They were always Sunday letters, mine fairly short, and not a lot of news in them, and theirs full of births, marriages and deaths really. But the fact was that the contact was always there.

(Angharad, retired television producer, 60s; moved to London in 1959)



Dafydd explained how it was impractical to travel back home to the Rhondda one Christmas; his long working hours, combined with the lengthy train journey meant that he would have had virtually no time with his family. On the one hand Dafydd was isolated from home. But conversely, he maintained connections with his family in Wales through functional networks:

- Dafydd [...] I used to take my laundry over to Johnny every Friday night, and he used to send it home to Mam. Mam did all the washing and ironing for me.
- JS So it was sent back on the train with your brother?
- Dafydd We used to put our washing in together, and send them home to my mother.
- JS When you say send them home ...
- Dafydd Yeah.
- JS What, when you went home to see her, or ...
- Dafydd No no, every week, send it every Saturday, send washing home, my shirts, and ...
- JS So on the train?
- Dafydd [...] well it was delivered by the Royal Mail wasn't it? It was mail.
- JS So you sent your clothes back ...
- Dafydd Yes, aye, yes, we used to send them home every week.
- JS So in a kind of a parcel ... like on the ...
- Dafydd Yes, yes, nothing wrong with that.
- (Dafydd, dairy owner, 80s; moved to London in 1937)

The study of networks is therefore important in understanding migration processes and decisions. To make sense of the experiences of those who migrate, we need to consider their relations with individuals who do not move - people in the place of origin, and in the migration destination. As Walter (1999: 312-313) suggests, "... those whose identity is defined by migration are necessarily placed relationally with those who define themselves as fixed". Particularly helpful in this respect is Brah's (1996) concept of 'Diaspora Space'. She describes how "the concept of Diaspora Space ... includes the entanglement of genealogies of dispersion with those of staying put" (1996: 181). And she states: "My central argument is that Diaspora Space as a conceptual category is 'inhabited' not only by those who have migrated and by their descendants but equally by those who are constructed and represented as indigenous" (1996: 181). It is important to

think of the relational connections that migrants make with more than one place, and the people that inhabit those multiple places. The ways in which respondents invested in Welsh networks both 'here' in London and 'there' in Wales, suggests that partly through migration, self-identities are constructed in terms of attachments to multiple sites. Lavinia & Swedenburg (1996: 14) suggest, that "'Diaspora' refers to the doubled relationship or dual loyalty that migrants, exiles and refugees have to places – their connections to the space they currently occupy and their continuing involvement with 'back home' ... Diasporic populations frequently occupy no singular cultural space but are enmeshed in circuits of social, economic and cultural ties encompassing both the mother country and the country of settlement (Rouse, 1991)". And Hall (1995) cited in Thrift & Pile (1995: 17) usefully describes "a multiple, shifting and often self-contradicting identity, a subject [...] [made up] across languages and cultures".

## **Conclusion**

The stories recounted above reinforce the idea of migration being a key life event. The decision to leave Wales was often a major one, and taken reluctantly out of a need to find meaningful employment. The strong sense of economic necessity that drove many people's migration was linked to highly ambivalent emotions – of anger, homesickness, desperation and hope. The image of Welsh people being forced out of their country through economic need, rather than choosing to live in London, is a powerful one, but it can easily mask the complex reasons that underlie migration decisions, as Bartholomew (1991) suggests. The attractive economic opportunities that London offered, or the prospect of joining friends who were planning to migrate could be just as important as economic hardship, even at times when other people were leaving

Wales because they felt they had no choice. Even where economic necessity was the key migration motivation, other factors (such as advice from relatives in London) could also shape the decision-making process.

The role of social networks in shaping migration from Wales to London during this period is striking, echoing the work of writers such as Boyd (1989). Established migrants in London were a key source of information on possible opportunities and prospects in London. They offered advice and practical support, such as accommodation to newly arrived migrants for whom life in London could be a major shock. Despite its relative closeness to Wales, London presented many differences in terms of its physical environment, and social and cultural habits. Whilst migrants drew heavily upon the support of established exiles already in London, they also often maintained close contact with family back home. In doing so they helped sustain Welsh networks that connected Wales and London, operating across time and space, and added to a constant circular flow of people, ideas, goods and money. Such networks provide good examples of the need to understand self-identities as worked out through multiple sites of attachment, and to view the connections between displacement and placement relationally.

In the following chapter I continue my exploration of the role of social networks in the lives of these migrants. The longer-term engagements that they have sought with Welsh life in the city are explored. Concentrating upon formal Welsh societies (such as the chapel and the London Welsh Centre), I consider both the appeal of such institutions to Welsh people living in London, and how the ways in which they construct collective forms of Welsh identity.

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<sup>i</sup> Although Llian uses the term 'dairy' here, her description of the business later in the interview suggests that it is more akin to a sandwich shop, and no bottling or delivery of milk took place.

<sup>ii</sup> Although Llian uses the term 'dairy' here, her description of the business later in the interview suggests that it is more akin to a sandwich shop, and no bottling or delivery of milk took place.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Making for the centre: Welsh Societies in London**

**1945 - 1980**

#### **Introduction**

The previous chapter demonstrated the ways in which social networks helped channel migration flows to London and supported newly-arrived migrants. Continuing the focus upon the same group of respondents (who moved to London in the period up to 1980<sup>i</sup>), I turn now to their longer term involvement with Welsh networks in the city<sup>ii</sup>. I concentrate here on more formal organisations, in particular the London Welsh Centre and the chapel/church network. The chapter is divided into three key sections.

Despite being well integrated into mainstream London life, many respondents saw themselves as part of a distinctive, self-contained ethnic Welsh community. Having reviewed previous studies that examined this paradox, the first section of the chapter explores the ways in which respondents negotiated membership of such a community, and their reasons for finding involvement with the London Welsh Centre and the chapel network appealing. The vibrant social life sustained by such organisations was a key attraction, but there are also other reasons that can be identified. The socio-cultural background of migrants, and their reasons for moving to London were important in drawing them to a close ethnic community. Secondly, the chapter examines how ‘traditional’ Welsh societies such as the chapel,

construct Welsh identities away from home. It considers how they have created forms of Welsh identity from multiple strands of belonging (such as religion, language and culture), weaving them together in a new context. The aim of such societies is to reconstruct identities that are ‘authentic’ reproductions of cultural forms back home in Wales. But I argue that the act of (re)producing Welsh spaces in London can also create identities that are different and distinctive because of their location outside of Wales. Welsh societies in London are not a simple replay of life back home, though they can be that as well. The third and final section of the chapter looks at the decline of the Welsh chapel and other traditional Welsh societies in the post-war period through the eyes of their members. The changing dynamics of migration from Wales are held up as one of the key reasons why membership of such societies has fallen in the post-war period. But I argue that certain social-demographic characteristics within the chapel congregations themselves have also played a part. I conclude by considering the response of the traditional societies in the face of such a decline during the post-war period.

### **Ethnicity and integration – Welsh community identity in London**

A number of historical studies demonstrate that in general terms, Welsh migrants in English cities have been well integrated into their host societies. Jones, E (1981, 1985) argues that the Welsh in London during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were well accepted by dominant society, and Jones, R (1981) makes similar arguments concerning the Liverpool Welsh. Research on the Irish in London (though on the twentieth century) indicates that they have experienced far higher levels of racism and discrimination than the Welsh, despite many other

similarities with the Welsh populations in England (Hickman, 1996; Walter, 1999). The geographical dispersal of Welsh populations living in London and Liverpool has been put forward as evidence of such integration and acceptance (Jones, R, 1981; Pooley, 1983). Discussing nineteenth century migration patterns, Knowles suggests: “Many factors could help explain the dispersal of Welsh-born migrants across London, including ... the relatively easy acceptance they enjoyed as one of the more desirable kinds of migrants, and the popularity of reputedly docile, respectable Welsh women as household domestics” (1997: 78). In Jones’s opinion: “From the very beginning of their story, there is *no* evidence that they [the Welsh] lived together or that they dominated any part of the city. ... This was in marked contradiction to the French, Netherland and German groups which were clustered and easily identifiable” (1985: 156; emphasis in original). Jones (1985) also stresses the integration of Welsh migrants within London’s economy, particularly their dominance of the dairy trade.

Despite such social and economic integration into host societies and a notably disparate geography, there is clear evidence to suggest that the Welsh in English migration destinations have maintained distinctive cultural identities. In discussing Welsh community identity in Liverpool, Pooley (1983: 298-302) states:

It is ... relevant to assess the extent to which the Welsh in Liverpool, although economically well integrated into urban life, sought to preserve elements of their own distinctive Welsh culture ... It is clear that although well assimilated into the economic structure of the towns in north-west England, the Welsh managed to live in two culture worlds, maintaining their links with rural Wales whilst at the same time being accepted by the host society.

Referring to the London Welsh of the nineteenth century Jones (1985: 157) argues that “However widely spread the Welshborn were they did get together – at least

some of them did – and maintained a lively community in the capital”. Like Pooley, Jones also suggests that whilst migrants may have inserted themselves into the economic life of London, they were able to hold onto a distinctive, separate cultural identity: “[Jewin Welsh Chapel] looks like the transference of a culture, almost untouched. Yet for six days a week, at least, these people were part of London’s busy retail trade. Booth said that although ‘English becomes the medium of business, Welsh remains the language of emotions’” (1985: 164). Knowles supports such observations and states: “Nonconformist chapels were the primary institutions that bound together the dispersed Welsh community in nineteenth century London” (1997: 83).

Before proceeding further, however, the suggestion that such Welsh communities have existed in large cities such as Liverpool and London needs to be qualified. Community is a key frame for collective identity as Jenkins (1996) has argued, but it is also a highly problematic term, with multiple and contested meanings (Owen, 1986). Clifford (1997: 19) flags up a key problematic that must be addressed: “Who determines where (and when) a community draws its lines, names its insiders and outsiders?” Partly because of the invisible, integrated and scattered nature of the Welsh in English cities such as London, there is a tendency to view visible, public institutions as the entire ethnic community. This can have the effect of marginalising or erasing the experiences of the majority of migrants that do not seek involvement with such organisations. Knowles (1997: 38) suggests: “At home in [nineteenth century] Wales it was possible to be a sinner and still be Welsh, and a member of the community, however scorned; in the city the community *was* its



organisations and networks ... Those who eased themselves out of the chapel's embrace left their Welshness behind them". In the case of the Liverpool Welsh Jones, R (1981: 36) argues that "To a significant extent chapel and community were synonymous." One of my own respondents stated: "In London there are two kinds of Welsh people; those who get involved, and those who become anglicised" (Malcolm, owner of a building contractors, 50s). It is important to remember that not all Welsh people who arrive in London each year become a part of a formal, readily identifiable Welsh community. Jones, E (1981, 1985) warns against reading off the experiences of those involved with official Welsh institutions as typical of a wider ethnic group. As Cohen (1997: 24) states: "Many members of a particular ethnic group may intend to and be able to merge into the crowd, lose their prior identity and achieve individualised forms of social mobility". The fact that the majority of Welsh people living in London are not involved in formal organisations and remain largely outside a visible community needs to be remembered. Such people's identities are just as valid as those individuals who wish to express them through public networks.

### **The Evocation of Community: Integration and Ethnicity**

Respondents who were involved with traditional Welsh societies in London often described themselves as belonging to a distinctive, self-contained community.

The term 'community' permeated many interview narratives:

[...] you had to make your friends up there [in London]. You had to make a life and in a way in the 1950s I think there were so many people having to go London to find jobs. [...] at least you'd made friends and started life within a closed community.  
(Charlotte, retired teacher, 60s)

[...] I think what helped me was probably the strong Welsh connection or community that was in London.  
(Mair, caretaker, 50s; moved to London in the 1960s)

[...] to go into the future, we have to see [the London Welsh Centre] as much more of a ... you know, as part of this total network of myriads [...]. It's a bit of a close community even now [...].  
(Caroline, 50s; born in London)

This was a community from which some respondents drew most of their social, cultural and spiritual needs. Although the chapel was ostensibly a religious institution, it provided a focus for a range of activities, strongly reminiscent of the centring of London Irish life around the Catholic Church in the 1950s (Walter, 1997). Griffiths (2001: 176) argues that a “diversity of activity beyond the spheres of formal worship [in the London Welsh chapel] dates back well into the nineteenth century”.

And he adds later:

time and time again in chapel reports and histories it is emphasised that the London causes have been so much more than places of worship, that they have offered from generation to generation a meeting place and a focus of social activity that, by reflecting something of Wales, recreated for those far from home an oasis of Welshness, a surrogate homeland.  
(2001: 182)

Talking of his father Dafydd (who moved to London in 1937), Peter explained that “[...] the chapel was the focus point of all [...] their life [...]” (Peter, dairy owner, 40s, born in London). Dafydd himself added: “[There were] over a hundred young people, and old people. And students as well you know ... like yourself. It was the heart of life then actually. And it was a wonderful experience because you met such a cross section of people” (Dafydd, dairy owner, 80s). The idea of focusing life around the chapel was expressed by many others. For Margaret also, the chapel was the centre of her entire social life:

JS        So really things have changed from the days when everybody used to [go to chapel] every day?

Margaret Oh yes ... it was a must thing. You know, you went. That's all there is, wasn't it? You went, you patronised everything. If it was in other chapels you went [too].

(Margaret, retired dairy owner, 80s; born in London)

William chose to use the analogy of a barn to describe the role of the chapel in people's lives: "Let's use the illustration of a barn. [...] If under that barn roof most of the requirements are found and you don't know what is outside, or you are unable to travel outside then you will use that central point" (William, retired, late 50s; born in London). This sense of basing oneself within a self-contained Welsh community is well expressed by Jones (1946) in his account of the Welsh Services Club during the Second World War: "... it was with profound satisfaction that we observed that the present generation of the youth of Wales, for whom the Club was founded, preferred the quiet serenity of this 'Home from Home' to the glamour and the thrill of the great city. They reached the warm hearth of Gray's Inn Road and only left it to meet the stern challenge of the time" (1946: 23-24).

But however appealing such a community might be, these respondents have not lived permanently within it. Most have become fully integrated into the economic life of London, live amongst other Londoners, and often positively embrace the city. A physical and psychological movement can be ascertained, whereby individuals return frequently to a Welsh community (perhaps every day) and then move back into mainstream London life. Mathew was born into a Welsh family living in London, but spent much of his childhood in Wales. His attachment to a collective form of Welshness in the city is clearly framed in terms of a community. For him, London is both a city which he actively engages with and embraces ('a great

metropolis'), and yet simultaneously an 'environment' that can be withdrawn from through returning regularly to a Welsh space:

You got that sense of community feeling, of being not isolated. [...] you were able to go back to your roots, enjoy that company, and then come back out again into the place where you're living, which is a great metropolis, and be able to take part in that as well. But it [the Welsh community] did give you a 'bolt hole' I suppose ... you know? You can feel very *hiraethus* [homesick], but once you're back with Welsh people ... speaking in Welsh [...] you seem to cross the bridge, don't you, and then you're okay. [...] It was something during the week, you know, that you really looked forward to really, because you had to be in an English environment through work, but you knew at the weekend you could go to a Welsh dance [...] in a Welsh Club, and you could go to a [church] service on Sunday.

(Mathew, retired company executive, late 60s)

George, who like Mathew had been born in London, also spoke of the psychological movement between a familiar, close(d) Welsh culture and day to day immersion with Londoners or 'cockneys': "In the chapel of course on a Sunday, your life changed then from being a sort of mixing with the Cockneys; you were more or less back in Wales for that Sunday" (George, Post Officer worker, 50s).

For Mathew, moving from an English speaking environment to a space in which Welsh becomes the medium of expression is shown to be important. Jones, E (1998: 230) suggests that for Welsh speaking migrants in late nineteenth and early twentieth century London, the chance escape from an English language environment was an important one: "... y mae'n debyg y byddai'n rhyddhad i lawer a ddefnyddiai'r Saesneg wrth eu gwaith i allu troi i'r Gymraeg yn y cartre, y capel neu'r cylch llenyddol agosaf" ("*... it's likely that it was an immense release for many who used English in their work to be able to revert back to Welsh at home, in chapel, or the local literary circle*"). Huw described how language was the primary reason for his decision to join a Welsh church in London:

Huw [...] I started going to the Welsh church fairly regularly, because I found that on my visits to Wrexham, I would meet somebody down town, and they would talk to me in Welsh, and I would be groping for a word, and I felt I [had][...] better do something, and keep up my Welsh.

JS So going to the Welsh church was really quite a conscious decision then?

Huw Oh yes, yes. And uh, I sort of, I like the Welsh language, and uh not a fanatic, but uh, you know, it's more or less what I've been used to.

(Huw, retired teacher, 70s; moved to London in 1949)

## **The Appeal of the Welsh Community**

As the comments by Mathew and Huw begin to suggest, the chapels and the London Welsh Centre (LWC) held a popular appeal for migrants during the early post-war decades. I want to focus now upon the reasons why respondents became involved with these institutions. The socio-cultural background of migrants, their migration motivations, and the vibrant social life offered by the chapels and the LWC are all important reasons. I start though, by considering the way in which the chapel in particular, offered newly arrived migrants a sense of stability in an unfamiliar and alien environment.

A number of respondents explicitly used the term 'anchorage' in describing their reasons for attending chapel when they first arrived in London. As Alun explained:

Chapel was part of our lives [at home] and that's basically when your taken ... I'm not saying you were frog-marched, but you haven't got much choice between the ages of five and fifteen. [...] It becomes part of your life and when you move away to a different part of the country, I think the first thing you do is to have a sort of anchorage. Keeping this similar sort of pattern to one's life. It's less of a shock [...].

(Alun, musician, 30s; moved to London in 1981)

And Mathew echoed these comments:

I found, Jeremy, that the establishment of a London Welsh club and church, and of course the choir as far as I was concerned for many years, was a very stabilising factor. [...] When I first came out of the army I was very, very unsettled, and I found it a great comfort ... I suppose comfort is the word, to have these organisations which sort of

planted your feet again in the same as you came from, you know, from Wales. I mean for many years my only language has been Welsh, and then coming up to London it all changed. But you know, you still have this longing, don't you ... this belonging, if you like, and those three things, they certainly sort of anchored me, you know?  
(Mathew, retired company executive, late 60s; born in London)

For Mair, the Welsh community in London had made the difference between being able to cope with living in the city, and returning home:

- Mair     Maybe but for that [community], but for the Welsh Club I would not have stayed.
- JS        So what was the difference that it made for you? Was it the sense of people ...
- Mair     Well yes, that sense of, well almost as though you hadn't left home. As if you were going to just a hall in your own home town, because everybody was Welsh. Of course a lot of the people that we did meet up with were not Welsh speaking. I mean I could speak Welsh, but it didn't matter. If you came from Wales you bonded immediately.

Tecwyn suggested that the chapel had allowed him and his wife to settle down in London when they first arrived: “fydden ni ddim wedi gallu setlo lawr o gwbl oni bai am Gray's Inn Road a [chapel] Jewin” (“*we wouldn't have been able to settle down at all if it hadn't been for Gray's Inn Road and Jewin chapel*”) [Tecwyn, retired dairy owner, 50s; moved to London in the 1950s].

The migration motivations considered in the previous chapter also had a bearing upon why interviewees had located themselves primarily within a Welsh community, rather than engaging more fully with the broader social and cultural life offered by London. If moving to London was about necessity or the need to find work which was the case for many people interviewed in the chapels, it was not driven by appeal of the wider attractions and opportunities existing in London. For such migrants, home was often left behind reluctantly, and Welsh culture in London

lessened this sense of loss. Hannerz's (1990: 242) notion of exile identity is particularly useful in this respect:

The exile ... shifted directly from one territorial culture to another, is often no real cosmopolitan ... for his involvement with a culture away from his homeland is something that has been forced upon him [sic]. At best life in another country is home plus safety, but often it is no home at all. He is surrounded by foreign culture but does not immerse himself in it.

And he goes on to state that:

Most ordinary labour migrants do not become cosmopolitans either. For them going away may be, ideally, home plus higher income; often the involvement with another culture is not a fringe benefit but a necessary cost, to be kept as low as possible. A surrogate home is again created with the help of compatriots, in whose circle one becomes encapsulated.  
(1990: 243).

George (a Welshman born in London) explained how he had met many Welsh people in London who practised this pseudo exile identity through a self enclosed Welsh community that was the mirror image of life back home: "There are some Welsh people up here, aren't there – they're still as Welsh as they were in Wales? You know, they're as Welsh as – nothing changes. I mean they're still living like they were in Wales, but in London – chapel, and keep to the Welsh community all the time, you know?" (George, Post Officer worker, 50s; born in London). Angharad (who lived in London during the 1950s) also suggested that during this period there were far less leisure attractions open on a Sunday in London than there are today (such as the cinema), and this coupled to the low income of many migrants made the chapel, and the activities at the London Welsh Centre more appealing. As Duffy (1995) has suggested in the case of Irish migration, when people moved through economic necessity they often planned to return home once it

was possible to do so, and this may be another reason why people in such a situation do not engage fully with a host culture.

The background of migrants was also important. Nearly all respondents who are members of congregations in London had come from a background of chapel attendance in Wales. Creuddyn, a Welsh minister in London explained: “[...] os dych chi wedi cael eich magu mewn capel Cymraeg yng Nghymru a [...] chi’n dod lan i Lunden, y peth cynta’ y bobl yn wneud [wrth gyrraedd yn Llundain] oedd mynd i gapel” (“[...] if you have been brought up in the chapel in Wales and you come up to London, the first thing that people did [when they arrived in London] was to come to chapel”) [Creuddyn, minister, 50s]. Will had spent some time in London without attending chapel regularly. But he suggested that his upbringing in Wales meant that later, when he began to worship again, this could only happen in a Welsh chapel:

Os dach chi wedi cael eich magu mewn cefndir Cymraeg ... wel cefndir, neu crefydd yn Gymraeg ynte, wel mae’n anodd iawn i weddio mewn unrhyw iaith arall. Ac oedd hwnna’n fy nenu fi’n ôl at y capel ynte. Iaith y nef ydy Cymraeg ac [os] mae hwnna’n wir ... dw i ddim yn gwybod ... [ond] mae o’n iaith addas i addoli.

*If you have been brought up with a Welsh background ... well background ... or at least religion in Welsh ... well it's hard to pray in any other language. And that was what attracted me back to the Welsh chapel. Welsh is the language of heaven ... I don't know whether that's true ... but it's a language very suited to worshipping in.*  
(Will, 50s; born in London but partly educated in Wales)

Angharad arrived in London in the 1950s: “you look for a Welsh chapel partly because you always went to chapel on a Sunday, and I’d gone right through my university life ... and secondly I associated chapel with a place to meet people socially” (Angharad, retired television producer, 60s; moved to London in 1959). And when asked about the meaning that his chapel in London had for him, George replied: “I can’t think of any sort of different way of life somehow. I’ve stuck to the



church you know, for my own beliefs. Not, not just because it's Welsh". Tecwyn told me that "[...] y peth cynta ar ôl i ni ddod lan i Llundan, aethon ni i 'whilio am gapel - i ni gael cwmni" ("*[...] the first thing we did after we came up to London was search for a chapel - to find some company*") (Tecwyn, retired dairy owner, 50s; moved to London in the 1950s). Edward explained how he had naturally 'gravitated' towards a Welsh chapel when he arrived in London: "[...] o'ch chi wedi cael eich magu mewn cefndir crefyddol yng Nghymru, a wedyn y peth cynta o'ch chi'n wneud wrth symud i [...] Llundain oedd mynd i chwilio am gapel Cymraeg" ("*[...] you had been brought up with a religious background in Wales, and then the first thing that you did when you moved to London was to find a Welsh chapel*") (Edward, retired engineer, 70s, moved to London in 1953).

The role of social networks connecting specific congregations in Wales and London is also of relevance here. When Welsh people left home (and their local chapel) the minister would often contact the chapel nearest to where the migrant would be living in London: "... My minister – when he heard that I was going to London, see, he had a conversation with my father, and he wrote a letter to the minister in Radnor Walk to say that I was in London [...] and we were, very very warm welcome there, and it was like home from home" (Dafydd, dairy owner, 80s, moved to London in 1937). A number of respondents had also been visited by the minister or elders from their local chapel in London soon after arrival in the city, both to check upon their personal welfare, and to encourage them to attend religious services and social activities: "Hector said that within a week of arriving in London, D.S Owen and four of the *blaenoriaid* [elders] from Jewin paid

them a visit. They had heard that a new Welsh family had arrived in London” (Hector, retired teacher, 60s, moved to London in 1954) (Research Diary, February 1999). Griffiths (2001: 162) describes how during the early twentieth century the Welsh Presbyterian Church in London was anxious to make contact with new migrants arriving in London:

[they] had sent a letter to the denomination’s chapels throughout Wales, urging them to notify the secretary of the Welsh Exiles in London of any of their congregation who might be about to move to the city, even supplying special forms for the purpose. There was concern that around 4,000 young Welsh people were migrating to London every year, but that only a thousand of these attached themselves to a church or chapel.

What the chapel seems to have been above all is a social institution, which brought people together (under the umbrella of a religious sense of Welshness). George - who was born into a Welsh family in London had attended chapel throughout his life:

George [...] you haven’t got the young people going to the churches now. You sometimes think [...] the Welsh chapels were strong in those days [the 1950s] because people just went there. They felt lonely or out of touch in London and it was a meeting place, you know, rather than going to church for the worship. You sometimes think it was just a social thing. I think today it’s more the spiritual thing [...].

JS So there’s fewer people, but they’re there for maybe, as you say, more spiritual reasons, rather than ....

George Yes a community thing, a social thing. Because well, in the fifties the chapels were full. I mean you couldn’t get a seat unless ... I remember going to Charring Cross Chapel in the 1950s and you had to go half an hour early to get a seat.

(George, Post Officer worker, 50s; born in London)

A key social event in the life of chapel members was the gathering of Welsh people to sing hymns at Hyde Park corner after chapel on a Sunday night: “Many well-established families held open evening on Sundays, while others turned to conviviality in their favourite coffee haunts – Fleming’s and Pritchard’s in Oxford Street – and from there to an impromptu *cymanfa ganu* at Speakers’ Corner in Hyde

Park” (Jones, E, 2001: 151). For Dafydd, the Sunday night spent there was the highlight of his week:

[...] the social life in chapel in those days [...] was very similar to what it was down home. You had your all day Sundays, right? And the only thing that I looked forward to on a Sunday was this; after chapel on a Sunday night we all used to go to Hyde Park Corner, to Welsh Corner, and it was noted in those days for its singing. You’d get about 500, 600, sometimes 1000 there, on a Sunday night. And old Tawe Griffiths was there for the conductor [...] and he said ‘What would you like to sing? - *Beth licwch ganu nawr ‘te - pwy emyn nawr ‘te?* [which hymn now?]. It was a wonderful atmosphere, and that’s where you met such a lot of your own friends from home.

Tony reinforced the idea that this was a social gathering in which singing became a marginal, optional activity:

The other part that used to be the culture of the London Welsh was after *capel*, after chapel on a Sunday night, you used to go up to Joe Lyon’s [café]. You used to go anyway - you wanted to go to have something to eat. But we always met up in Hyde Park Corner on Sunday night, and that was a social gathering. As far as singing was concerned ... it all depends how you felt. Because if you met all your friends there, there was no singing done, it was all talking, or making arrangements for the rest of the week [...]  
(Tony, self employed, late 50s; born in London)

To some extent, involvement with a Welsh chapel often went hand in hand with attendance at the London Welsh Centre; they were part of the same community.

A range of activities were located under its roof, as Charles explained:

There’d be different things going on. A literary society, a table tennis club. You know, you could go and play billiards I think. They had a billiards room. I didn’t play that. I used to go and play table tennis, but basically it was a Saturday night club. You know, to have a dance. A three piece band and all that lot. It was quite, you know, a good evening.  
(Charles, retired bank employee, 80s, born in London)

For Charles, the Saturday night dance was primarily a social event, full of other young Welsh people living London:

JS            What would the appeal of those dances be? Was it that there were lots of other young people there, or ...

Charles Oh yes, oh yes, all youngsters. What were we - late teens, early twenties?  
But you know, basically again you knew each other from the chapels. [...] that was a good social gathering.

The self-contained nature of this community is illustrated by the way in which respondents had often married within these Welsh societies. As Fflur explained, “The London Welsh club was the centre of everything. You went to the dance on a Saturday night which was the match maker society. It was like an escort club, and you also joined one of the choirs if you could” (Fflur, retired teacher, 60s, moved to London in 1955). Margaret for instance, had grown up in south London in the 1930s. Her parents had met through attendance at a Welsh chapel in south London which she herself had attended from the age of three. She later met her husband in the same chapel, thereby continuing a Welsh familial identity. Mathew met his wife through the dances at the London Welsh Centre:

I mean we used to have a dance at the London Welsh Club every Saturday night, and [...] that’s where I met my wife. [...] And not only me – there were lots of marriages that were set up at the London Welsh, you know? And in fact the choir that I [...] was a member of [...], a lot of the choir got married you know, and they used to call it the London Welsh Matrimonial Society.  
(Mathew, retired company executive, late 60s; born in London)

Fflur also noted that many marriages had been made through the Saturday night dance at the LWC and the Sunday night gathering in Hyde Park: “[Hyde Park Corner] seemed to be a meeting point, because one of my friends met her husband in the dance [at the London Welsh Centre] and the other friend met her husband at Hyde Park Corner.”

## The Construction of Collective Welsh Identity in London

As the previous section demonstrated, despite being ostensibly a religious institution, one of the key appeals of the chapel was its provision of social activities. Under the umbrella of a religious form of Welshness the chapel has staged many different activities (educational, cultural and social). The inherent connection (or ‘fusion’ as Davies, 1993 puts it) between Welsh identity and religion has been so strong in London that for generations Welsh cultural activities as a whole could be thought of as one aspect of the chapel. Many respondents viewed the chapel as the natural home and guardian of the Welsh language. As Griffiths (2001: 178) states, “the maintenance of the language, particularly among the young, born and bred in London, was a matter of great concern to the chapels from the late nineteenth century onwards”. Emma thought that the role of the chapel in supporting the Welsh language was especially so with regard to the children that attended:

[...] yn y gorffennol y Capel a'r Eglwys gadwodd yr Iaith Gymraeg. Mae yna fudiadau eraill heddiw on'd oes? Ond mewn lle fel Llundain, Birmingham a Manceinion dw i'n credu mai dyma lle mae'r capel yn bwysig os dyn ni am gadw'r iaith. Cadw'r plant i wybod Cymraeg ac am Gymru – ar wahan i grefydd.

*[...] in the past the chapel and the church preserved the Welsh language. There are other movements today, aren't there? But in a place like London, Birmingham and Manchester I think that it's the chapel that's important if we want to keep the language – making sure that the children still know Welsh and about Wales – quite apart from religion.*

(Emma, retired missionary, 80s, left Wales in 1939)

In undertaking this role, the chapel has woven together the cultural, linguistic and religious in complex ways. As Williams (1979) has argued in relation to Welsh identity, religion, language and Welshness need to be seen as intertwined. Creuddyn (a Welsh minister in London) described the knotting or weaving together of the cultural and linguistic in the work of the London Welsh chapels:

So pan mae bobl yn dod lan o Gymru, y *contact* cynta oedd y capel, yn y cyfnod yna, ac yn dilyn y Rhyfel - dod i gapel [...] ac addoli yn Gymraeg a Cymreictod yn rhan o'r un cwlwm felly ynde, wedi'u gwau i'w gilydd fel 'na. A dyna sydd wedi cadw'r capeli Cymraeg i fynd, oherwydd y berthynas arbennig yna.

*So when people came up from Wales, the first contact was the chapel, in that period, and then following the war – come to chapel [...] and worship in Welsh, and Welshness [was] part of the same knot therefore, woven together like that. And that is what has kept the Welsh chapel going, because of that special relationship.*  
(Creuddyn, minister, 50s)

For Mari, the religious aspect of the chapels was the primary one, but it was hard to exclude the role that the chapel had played in sustaining the Welsh language in London:

Mari Mi roedd yr eglwysi'n gyfrwng i gadw'r iaith Gymraeg yn fyw yn sicr yn Llundain ... mae hynny'n wir. Ond dw i wastad wedi dweud, mai nid prif ddiben yw cadw yr iaith Gymraeg; y ffydd yw'r peth pwysig.

JS Reit - so y crefydd yn gynta, yr iaith yn ...

Mari Yr iaith yn ail ... ond ar y llaw arall mae'r eglwysi Cymraeg wedi diogelu'r iaith hefyd.

JS So, falle mewn ffordd, mae iaith a chrefydd yn eitha anodd i'w gwahanu, achos ych chi'n mynd am y crefydd, a heb y crefydd nid capel yw e, ond mae'r capel wedi gwneud gwaith arbennig o dda o gadw y Cymry at ei gilydd

...

Mari Ydy, ydy.

Mari *The church was a medium for keeping the Welsh language alive in London, certainly ... that's true. But I've always said that the main purpose [of the church] isn't to preserve the Welsh language - the faith is the important thing.*

JS *Right, so the religion first, the language ...*

Mari *The language second. But on the other hand, the Welsh churches have safeguarded the language as well.*

JS *So, perhaps in a way, the language and religion are quite hard to separate, because you go for the religion, and without the religion it's not a chapel, but the chapel has a particularly good job of keeping the Welsh together ...*

Mari *Yes, yes.*

(Mari, mid 80s, born in London)

The Welsh Masonic Lodges in London also represent key sites where Welshness is intertwined with other social axes in complex ways. As Clifford (1997) argues, diaspora experiences are always gendered, and for Walter (1999: 313) “Gender is a key facet of the intersectionality that defines diaspora, as power

relations of class and gender cross cut those of ethnicity and ‘race’”. Quite apart from the exclusively-male nature of Masonry, Welsh language and culture interact with and impact upon Masonic identity in London Welsh lodges. Tony (a member of a Welsh lodge in London) explained that there is always a non-Masonic qualification for joining a particular lodge (across Britain as a whole). This could be having attended a certain school, for instance. In the case of the London Welsh lodges, this non-Masonic qualification is what gives the lodge its Welshness. Membership of the Cardiganshire lodge once required the applicant to have been born in the county or to have relations who were born there:

JS            So with the Cardiganshire Lodge [...] in the past, having those entry conditions [i.e. having to be from that county] in some ways, is that kind of quite unique among Masonic lodges?

Tony        No, it’s not unique [...]. There is a qualification other than being, wanting to be a Mason.

JS            So it’s the two combined?

Tony        The two combined, makes you a part of a lodge.

(Tony, late fifties, self employed; born in London)

In such a way, Welshness is substituted for membership of a school or profession. It is brought together with Masonic culture - joined to it. But in other ways, Welshness can sometimes cut across that Masonic culture:

I think the Welshness part of it was more important than the Masonic part of it, you know, in those days? And our lodge for instance had a tremendous number amount of London Welsh dairies, and it was a question of you know – it was a men’s club if you like – and it happened to be Masonic, but it was a way of getting them all together. And yes it was very much a Welshness part, hence the condition of getting in, you know – you had to be [from Carmarthenshire].

(Mathew, retired company executive, 60s, born in London)

Many of the Welsh lodges occasionally transgress central Masonic rules by conducting part of their proceedings through the medium of Welsh. Tony described how “It’s frowned upon by Grand Lodge that we sing in Welsh ... we’re not allowed

to – officially we're not allowed to do that. We're not officially allowed to sing in Welsh':

[...] we sing in Masonic meetings – you have an opening hymn, and a closing hymn. And normally - it is in the English lodges – it is the same hymn. But we have Welsh hymns, and that is something that when you bring other members – friends of yours into a meeting, you know, and ask them along to your meetings, that's one of things they always said – 'We couldn't get over the singing.'  
(Mathew)

*(Re)constructing Welsh identities in London*

The multiple constitution of such collective identities raises important theoretical issues. Welshness is formed of multiple strands of belonging, and as a total form can be interwoven or fused with other cultural forms such as Masonry. But the same kinds of statements could also be made in relation to Welsh chapels or Masonic lodges in Wales. A key question might then become to what extent London Welsh societies are merely reproducing cultural forms in Wales through these interweavings, or if in fact they produce distinctive, different identities in London. In answering such a question, one of the important tenets of diaspora theory is of some assistance. Barkan & Shelton (1998: 3) state that "Diasporic cultures evolve that are both unlike the home cultures and inseparable from them". The national culture produced in diasporic contexts can be very different from the 'original' that the diaspora seeks to reproduce, but it is always connected in some way to the homeland. Hall (1995) (cited and Thrift & Pile, 1995: 10) argues that:

They [diasporic people] speak from the in-between of different cultures, always unsettling the assumptions of one culture from the perspectives of another, and thus finding ways of being both the same as and different from the others amongst which they live. Of course such people bear the marks of the particular cultures, languages, histories and traditions which 'formed' them, but they do not occupy them as if they were pure, untouched by other influences, or provide a source of fixed identities to which they never fully return.



Brah (1996: 47) suggests that in the working out of Asian identity in Britain during the post-war period, cultural forms were produced that could not simply be the replication of 'home'. Such forms had to make sense within a new set of contexts: "These relations are not a straightforward replay of social relations in the sub-continent. Rather, they are mediated via cultural, political, and economic dimensions as they are forged in Britain." And later Brah poses the following question: "How and in what ways is a group inserted within the social relations of class, gender, racism, sexuality, or other axes of differentiation in the country to which it migrates?" (Brah, 1996: 182). To quote Clifford again; "Whatever their ideologies of purity, diasporic cultural forms can never, in practice, be exclusively nationalist. They are deployed in transnational networks built from the multiple attachments and they encode the practices of accommodation as well as resistance to, host countries and their norms" (1997: 251).

In terms of geography there a number of ways in which this London Welsh community can be differentiated from the culture in Wales that it seeks to reproduce. The increasingly dispersed demographic nature of the Welsh in the city means that most chapels serve a scattered population rather than more delimited parishes as might be the case in Wales. Speaking of Capel Jewin, Francis-Jones (1984: 100) states: "Every Sunday, familiar faces converged from all parts of London, from Hackney in the east, from Kensington in the west, from Hampstead, Highgate and Barnet to the North. That was a big parish for one pastor." Creuddyn – one of the Welsh ministers working in London today, suggested that his colleagues in Wales appreciated how different his parish in London was from their own:

- JS Ydy'r gweinidogion yng Nghymru'n synnu pan maen nhw'n siarad â chi am eich gwaith, bod chi'n cwrdd â Gymry [...] ym mhob rhan o Lundain?
- C Wel y gweinidogion, maen nhw'n gwybod am eglwysi Llundain, [...] a maen nhw'n gwybod gymaint o gylch sydd gen i yn ein gweinidogaeth [...] a maen nhw'n gwybod bod 'na dipyn o deithio. Y fi yw'r gweinidog [Cymraeg] sydd â'r cylch mwya, mae'n siwr [...] Mae fy nghylch i'n eitha mawr, ydy, ydy.
- JS *Are the ministers in Wales surprised when they talk to you about your work, and that you meet Welsh people [...] from all parts of London?*
- C *Well the ministers, they know about the London churches, [...] and they know about the large parish I have [...] and they know that I have to do quite a lot of travelling. I'm the [Welsh] minister with the biggest parish, I'm sure [...] My parish is quite big, yes, yes.*

Not only do such chapels serve Welsh people from all parts of London, but each chapel also typically has members from all parts of Wales. The variety of Welsh accents in Radnor Walk chapel was noted by Jones, J.E (1959: 23): “Er fod acen wahanol eu bro i’w dal yn llafar aml un, nid oedd hynny yn rhwystro eu cwmniaeth diddan” (“*Although many retained their local accents, this did not detract them from being good companions to each other*”). For Francis (1924: 92-93) the delocalisation of Welsh identity in London was a positive characteristic which had united a divided nation:

London’s best gift to the Welsh has, perhaps, always been its power of welding Northmen and Southerners into one solid race. No other English city had this unifying influence to the same degree ... A mystic unity is achieved that eludes us in the rivalry of the towns of North and South. Here under some strange impulse of cohesion, we realise that the whole is greater than the part. ... This much at least the London Welshmen have achieved – they do not damn one another *geographically*.  
(emphasis in original)

For Anwen (who had moved to London during the 1980s to work in the public sector) “If you live in Wales, whether you come from north or south is important. In England it just matters that you’re Welsh” (Anwen, 30s) (Research diary, February 1999).

Anwen's comments here imply a legitimisation of Welsh identity in London.

A number of other respondents reinforced the idea that Welsh life in London – the forms of Welshness produced and reproduced there, needed to be valued and included in any view of Welsh culture as a whole. For Mari, this meant problematising the bounded, sealed conceptualisation of Wales, by literally reconfiguring its geography:

... [Dw] i wedi sylweddoli [...] bod llawer iawn o Gymry sydd wedi'u magu yng Nghymru ddim wedi cael cystal cefndir Cymraeg ac ydw i wedi cael [...]. Oedden ni'n arfer deud ers talwm – 'Roedd 'na dair sir ar ddeg yng Nghymru', ac oedden ni'n deud bod Llundain yn sir ychwanegol i Gymru. [...] oedd 'na fwy o fywyd Cymraeg i'w gael yn Llundain pan o'n i'n ifanc nag oedd yng Nghymru o ran hynny.

*[...] I have realised that lots of Welsh people who were raised in Wales didn't have as good a Welsh upbringing as I have had [...]. We always used to say – 'There are thirteen counties in Wales', and we used to say that London was an additional county of Wales. [...] There was more Welsh life on offer in London when I was young than there was in Wales for that matter.*

(Mari, mid 80s; born in London)

Mari's stance here demands the inclusion of London as a constituent part of Welsh life. And her evocation of a satellite Welsh county has a pleasing feel to it, as though it is mutating the rounded, bordered shape of Wales. This kind of validation of London Welsh culture was also put forward by Huw, through focusing upon one of the key symbolic sites of the nation – its capital: "One thing that I did find [...] - in London there are plenty of Welsh interests. Living in London is almost as good as living in a Welsh town, because of the various societies, functions going on. And you could almost say that London is the capital of Wales" (Huw, retired teacher, 70s, moved to London in 1949).

What also seems to be happening in such discourses is the idea that Welsh culture in London (outside of Wales) is somehow stronger or better than that of the master copy which it seeks to replicate (*‘Welsh people who were raised in Wales didn’t have as good a Welsh upbringing as I have’*) (Mari, mid 80s; born in London). The famous Welsh proverb ‘Gorau Cymro – Cymro oddi cartre’ (The Best Welshman is the exile’), is clearly being invoked here (Thorne, 1993). Angela, for instance, who had lived in London throughout her life explained that “We celebrated St. David’s Day more than the people back in Wales” (Angela, 70s, member of Welsh dairy family) And Keith drew explicitly upon the ‘exile proverb’ to talk in the same terms as Mari, of London as a county of Wales:

Wy’n gwed mae Cymro ma’s o Gymru yn fwy o Gymro yn ei galon na Cymro yng Nghymru. [...] Wel mae pobl yn gofyn ambell waith pam nagw i’n byw yng Nghymru a fi’n gwed *‘I live in Wales’s largest county – London’* – tafod yn *cheek*, ti’ mod? Ond ‘na fe; mae lot o pethe ‘ach yn Llundain, a fel wedes i o’r blaen, y Cymro ma’s o Gymru yn Gymro rhonc. [...] Pan ych chi ynddo rhywbeth *‘You take it for granted’*. [...] Mae Cymru’n bwysig iawn i ni. Ffaith bod ni ddim yn byw ‘na ddim yn wahaniaeth.

*I say that a Welshman outside of Wales is more of a Welshman in his heart than a Welshman in Wales. [...] People ask me occasionally why I don’t live in Wales, and I say ‘I live in Wales’ largest county – London’ – tongue in cheek you know? But that’s it; there are a lot of things in London, and like I said before, the Welshman outside of Wales is a Welshman through and through. [...] When you are inside something ‘You take it for granted’. [...] Wales is very important to us. The fact we don’t live there doesn’t make any difference.*  
(Keith, 50s)

Such comments strike a strong resonance with the way in which past generations of Welsh migrants living in London had helped to bring about a revival of eighteenth century Welsh national life from their position in the city (Morgan, 1986). Tecwyn and Llian also drew explicitly upon the notion that Welsh people outside of Wales possessed stronger or more passionate identities than people in Wales itself:

Tecwyn [...] maen nhw’n gwed o hyd, bod Cymry oddi cartre yn fwy o Gymro ynde fe?

Llian Wel mae un peth yn siwr – o'n ni ddim yn mynd i'r Eisteddfod Genedlaethol am wythnos pan o'n ni'n byw yng Nghymru, ac wedi 'ny [nawr] mae rhaid mynd, ers ... wel blynydde nawr, ynte fe?

Tecwyn [...] they still say that the Welsh away from home are more Welsh don't they?

Llian Well one thing is for sure – we didn't use to go to the National Eisteddfod for a week when we lived in Wales, and then [now] we have to go ... well for years now.

(Tecwyn and Llian, retired dairy owners, 50s; moved to London in the 1950s)

Henry - one of the Welsh ministers suggested that “[...] pan dych chi tu allan i'ch gwlad dych chi'n wneud mwy o ymdrech efalle i gynnal pethe ac i barhau pethe” (“[...] when you are outside of your country you make more of an effort perhaps to keep things and to keep things going”) (Henry, minister, 70s, born in London).

An example of how respondents perceived their own Welsh community to be stronger (in a certain sense) than that in Wales was in terms of the social life of the chapels. The social conversation after the religious service is one of the most important aspects of attendance at chapel. This is partly because many of those present do not meet each other, or perhaps many other Welsh people during the week. Griffiths (2001: 176-182) argues that the heightened importance attached to social activities within the London Welsh chapels stemmed both from the fact this was a community away from home, and because that community was highly dispersed:

The fact of their congregations being scattered has tended to emphasise the importance of the chapel as a meeting place for Welsh people. ... This unique contribution to social life has characterised the chapels and churches of the Welsh in London throughout their existence, and has made them distinct from the chapels and churches in Wales which have served smaller and more closely knit communities.

What happens at the end of a Welsh chapel service in London is very different to that in Wales:

A pan o'n i'n mynd yna [i'r capel], oedd 'na growd reit dda, ac wrth gwrs o'n i'n *slipo* mewn i'r *back* a wedyn o'n i'n *straight* ma's ynte fe, fel o'n i'n wneud yng Nghymru. 'Na un agwedd o bethe dw i 'di ffeindio'n hollol wahaniaeth. Lawr yng Nghymru y bobl yn gadael y capel ar unwaith. Dyn nhw ddim yn aros ar ôl, ond lan yma yn Llundun mae'r bobl yn aros ar ôl. Wy'n meddwl y rheswm am hynny yw lawr yng Nghymru maen nhw gyd yn dod o'r un ardal - maen nhw'n gweld ei gilydd, a siarad a'i gilydd, dair, bedair bump gwaith yr wythnos [...] Lan yn Llundun yma, mae'r aelodau falle ar wasgar, a dyn nhw ddim yn gweld ei gilydd, dyn nhw ddim falle'n siarad Cymraeg o, os nad yn nhw ar y ffôn, o un Sul i'r llall efalle.

*And when I went there [to chapel], there was a really good crowd, and of course I slipped in at the back and then I was straight out [at the end], as I used to do in Wales. That's one aspect of things that I have found completely different here. Down in Wales people leave the chapel straight away, they don't wait about afterwards, but up here in London people do stay afterwards. I think the reason for that is that down in Wales they all come from the same area – they see each other, and speak to each other – three, four, five times a week. Up in London, the members are scattered about, and they don't see each other, they don't perhaps speak Welsh, if they don't speak on the phone, from one Sunday to another.*  
(Creuddyn, Welsh minister, 50s, born in London).

[...] dw i'n gwybod gyda'r gymdeithas nawr, a'r Cwrdd nos Fawrth, mae'r pobl ar ddiwedd y noswaith - mae rhai'n mynd gartre am bod y tywydd yn ddiflas, a mae'n ddealladwy, ond mae rhai'n aros ar ôl, hyd yn oed yn y tywydd diflas. Wy'n credu 'y hunan fod maen nhw'n gweud bod Cymro'n well Gymro oddi cartre – maen nhw'n gweud 'na. Maen nhw'n sylweddoli falle faint maen nhw'n, Cymru falle yn cyfrif iddyn nhw, am bod nhw o gartre.

*[...] I know that with the socialising now, and the Tuesday night meeting, the people at the end of the evening – some go home because the weather is bad, and that's understandable, but some stay afterwards, even if the weather is bad. I think myself that's because they say that a Welshman outside Wales is a better Welshman; they say that. They realise perhaps how much Wales means to them, because they're away from home.*  
(Merfyn, retired police officer, 60s; moved to London in the 1950s)

The example of socialising at the end of a chapel service is a very small one and to some extent it can be seen that it exists precisely because of the lack of a constant, co-present Welsh community. But nevertheless Merfyn's comments suggest that people feel a greater need to come together - that they value their identities more, because of their location outside of Wales. And Keith's comments highlight the

geographical nature of these sentiments: “When you are *inside* something ‘You take it for granted’. ... Wales is very important to us. The fact we don’t live there doesn’t make any difference”.

There are also other ways in which Welsh societies and organisations in London construct identities that are not simply a ‘replay’ of life back home (Brah, 1996). The London Welsh Male Voice Choir (LWMVC), based at the LWC, exists in part to enable Welsh people away from home to sing in a Welsh choir. In comparing the LWMVC to choirs in Wales, its conductor described how “I think we’re similar but different.” The location of the choir in London has allowed it to some extent to become an ambassador for Welsh culture and male voice singing. This is partly because many foreign tourists listen to the choir each year (at their weekly rehearsals and in private cabarets in central London hotels). The LWMVC’s position in London has meant that it often gains publicity in this way. Haydn James, the conductor, was keen to emphasise the importance of its geographical location: “[...] I think the advantage of being this side of the Severn Bridge should never be underestimated. [...] I think London has a lot to offer an organisation like the London Welsh [Male Voice Choir], whilst the London Welsh hopefully has a lot to offer London. [...] I certainly don’t underestimate the strength of being Welsh in London.” Rather than simply serving a London Welsh audience, the choir has undertaken many international tours, thereby promoting Welsh culture around the world:

[...] We’ve taken choral music from the London Welsh to the community. Not only in this country – and really I mean the length and breadth of England. We’ve also involved Scottish and Irish choirs through the Thousand Voices [concert], and we’ve now taken our type of music abroad. [...] Many choirs tour, so this isn’t unique, but it doesn’t

diminish the fact that we are all taking our music to a number of different countries. The choir has been to Switzerland, Germany, Scandinavia, America, Canada, Hungary and the Channel Islands.

The LWMVC has taken a particular form of male voice singing and introduced it to a choirs in many countries including Canada, South Africa, Australia, Germany and America:

We met with the Boston Saengerfeste Chorus just last week in Boston [USA]. The type of music we do is quite unique there. For whatever reasons, they don't sing the great opera choruses, they don't sing the anvil chorus and the gypsy chorus. And I don't know why because it's been in our repertoire for a hundred years; and yet traditionally American choirs don't sing that kind of music. [...] so we've broadened their repertoire, such that they're now quite unique in their own areas.  
(Haydn James, conductor of LWMV Choir)

In a similar way, the London branch of Plaid Cymru does not exist simply as a way of allowing members to recreate a Welsh political identity in London. Plaid Cymru in London is actively involved in the party's activities, and gives assistance to branches in Wales itself, especially during elections. At election times the London branch also deals with the Westminster-based media, while Plaid's central office in Cardiff concentrates upon communicating with Welsh journalists (Interview with Chris, London branch member, August 1999).

### **A Culture of Decline**

At the beginning of the post-war period the network of chapels and churches and the London Welsh Centre sat at the heart of the city's Welsh community. Attendance at concerts and religious services was high. Chapels such as Y Tabernacl in King's Cross and Capel Jewin in the Barbican had individual memberships of over 1000 (Owen, W, 1989; Jones, 1943). As has been demonstrated, these institutions drew large numbers of young people who were attracted by the vibrant social life that



was sustained by them. During the post-war period, many of these societies have witnessed an absolute reduction in their membership levels. But this decline has also been about a loss of centrality in London Welsh life. From being the organisation around which much of Welsh life was focused and controlled, the chapels have become marginalised and no longer hold the power to define Welsh identity in the city. The decline of traditional institutions such as the chapel/church is therefore important because it marks a shift in the nature of Welsh life in London. The detailed membership statistics collated by such institutions also means that the processes in question can be charted with some certainty. In the following section I focus primarily upon the chapel network.

Whilst the shrinking of the chapel network can be plotted with a high degree of certainty, the reasons behind its post-war decline are more elusive. There are however, a number of explanations put forward by the community itself in an attempt to rationalise and make sense of what has happened to these institutions, and to some extent their hypotheses can be linked to academic studies of Welsh ethnicity in English cities. Two issues demand particular scrutiny. Firstly the changing quantity and characteristics of migration from Wales during the post-war period. And secondly some of the demographic and generational characteristics of those families involved with a chapel or other society. I deal with each in turn.

### *Migration From Wales*

As was suggested in Chapter 3, the statistical information with which to track levels of migration from Wales to London is limited. But, drawing upon census

evidence Jones, E (1985, 2001) argues that in the post-war period migration from Wales to the city has reduced, and that the fall in chapel and church membership can to some extent be linked to the fact that there are less Welsh people moving to London. Jones's thesis (see also Jones, E, 1981) is that the chapel has often been used a temporary stepping-stone into London life. He suggests that throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century people were constantly leaving the chapel, but crucially were replaced by newly arrived Welsh migrants so that the number of members was maintained (or at certain times increased). In the decades following the Second World War, members have continued to leave the chapel once they have become established in the city, but the supply of new members has diminished to the extent that all chapels and churches have witnessed an actual decline in members.

The reduction in migrants from Wales was frequently put forward by chapel members as the primary reason behind falling attendances. For Sophie, migration to London could be painted as a tidal flow that had been reversed in recent years: “[...] the numbers of Welsh people in London are going down drastically, aren't they? People are going back to Wales, and not coming up as they used to. There used to be more people coming up than there were going back, and now it's the other way round. It's the ebb and the flow – or the flow and the ebb<sup>iii</sup> (Sophie, chemist, 50s, member of central London chapel). The perception that the stream of migrants from Wales had 'dried up', so to speak, was a very common one. The historical account of Capel y Lôn, for example, states:

Yn ystod y chwedegau, ac yn enwedig y saithdegau, ni ddaeth cymaint o bobl o Gymru i edrych am waith yn ardal Slough a'r cyffyniau. Aros dros dro oedd hanes y rhai a ddaeth, cyn iddynt ddychwelyd i Gymru, lle 'roedd y posibilrwydd o gael gwaith wedi gwella dipyn.

*In the 1960s and especially the 1970s fewer people came from Wales to look for work in Slough and the surrounding areas. Those who did come stayed in London temporarily before returning to Wales, where the possibility of finding work had improved.*  
(Capel y Lôn, Slough, 1998: 25)

Such statements clearly suggest that migration from Wales has reduced, meaning that Welsh institutions have to sustain their numbers from an ever-decreasing pool of potential members. But there are other discourses coming through strongly here. The falling levels of migration are connected to the belief that economic life in Wales has improved. People no longer have to come to London to ‘find work’:

Dwi'n credu os ydych chi'n edrych ar y rhif, dyw bobl ddim yn dod o Gymru. Dydy'r bobl ifanc ddim yn dod i fyny i chwilio am waith.

*I think that if you look at the number, people are not coming from Wales. The young people are not coming up to look for work.*  
(Emma, retired missionary, 80s; left Wales in 1939)

There was really only one person there [at the LWC] of my own age, who was the son of one of the members [of the Cardiganshire Society]. Very interestingly, he was going to Cardiff the following day to start a new job with the BBC. It was remarked by some people that this was symbolic. Welsh people are no longer coming to London as they once did - there are more opportunities in Wales. Most people had come up from Wales in the past because there were no jobs there.  
(Research Diary, October, 1998)

The fall in migration was also frequently connected to the changing socio-cultural background of migrants:

[...] wedi'r chwedegau gyrraedd fe ddechreuodd pethe dirywio yn raddol ac erbyn y nawdegau maen nhw wedi gwneud hynny i raddau brawychus iawn. A mae rheswm syml ... does 'na ddim pobl yn dod o Gymru bellach – o leia' pobl sydd â chefnidir capel neu eglwys [...].

*[...] when the 1960s arrived things started to decline gradually and by the 1990s they have continued to decline to an alarming degree. And there's a simple reason ... there aren't people coming from Wales anymore – at least not people who come from a chapel or church background.*

(Henry, minister, 70s; born in London)

Lucy [...] the congregation was getting less and less.

JS Why do you think that's happened?

Lucy Well people aren't coming to London.

JS So you think it's just the fact that there are less people coming to London each year?

Lucy Oh absolutely. And if they do come to London they're not interested in going to church.

(Lucy, 80s; born in London)

Another possible reason for the fall in attendance at these institutions therefore is that today's migrants reflect social and cultural trends in Wales itself, an argument that Jones, E (2001) find plausible. If chapel attendance is declining in Wales, then migrants as a whole are less likely to have attended chapel before they left home: "The Welsh [in London] have retreated ... significantly in social habits and organisation. This, of course, is a reflection of the social changes that have taken place in Wales itself, where diminished congregations have led to the closure of hundreds of chapels" (Jones, E, 2001: 155). Davies (1993: 642) argues that "religious decline is one of the most striking aspects of the history of Wales in the period after the Second World War." He suggests that this era was marked by the splitting of the fusion of religion and nationality in the minds of Welsh people: "By the 1970s the majority of the middle class had ceased to attend a place of worship and a new phenomenon had arisen – Welsh people, wholly conscious of their Welshness, who were professed non-believers" (1993: 642-643). As Owen, W (1989) has argued, the migrants arriving in London reflect the spiritual condition of the society they leave. Today, far fewer people attend the chapel in Wales and it does not have the same centrality to community life in many areas as it once did. There is a sense therefore that the lack of young people in the Welsh chapel in London is almost to be expected:

Mae 'na ddirywiad mawr yng nghapeli Cymru, ac os yw'r dirywiad yna yng Nghymru, mae'n mynd i fod yn ddirywiad yn Llundain hefyd, felly ynde. Os nad yn nhw [yr ymfudwyr] yn mynd i gapel yng Nghymru, â'n nhw ddim i gapel yn Llundain chwaith.

*There's a big decline in the chapels in Wales, and if there's a decline in Wales, there's going to be a decline in London as well. If they [migrants] don't go to chapel in Wales, they won't go to a chapel in London either.*

(Creuddyn, Welsh Minister, 50s; born in London)

Gwaetha'r modd, braidd 's neb newydd, 's neb ifanc yn dod i'r capel o gwbl nawr, y pobl sydd wedi dod lan i'r lle. Ond 'na fe - os nad yn nhw'n mynd i'r capel yng Nghymru mae'n siwr so nhw'n mynd i fynd i'r capel yn Llundun ynte fe? Ond nhw sy'n colli ma's, maen nhw'n colli ffrindiau, y gymdeithas.

*It's a great pity that almost no one new, no young people come to chapel now, from those people coming up to London. But there you have it – if they don't go to chapel in Wales, they're not going to come to chapel in London, are they? But it's them that misses out, they lose out on making friends, the society.*

(Tecwyn, retired dairy owner, 50s; moved to London in the 1950s)

[...] does dim cymaint o ymlyniad wrth y capeli yng Nghymru ac y bu, ac wedyn mae llawer iawn o'r rhai sy'n dod i Lundain heddiw ddim yn mynychu'r eglwysi ... yn anffodus.

*[...] the chapels in Wales don't have as much of a following as they used to, and then many of those who come to London don't attend churches ... unfortunately.*

(Mari, 80s; born in London)

Respondents also pointed to the increased amount of leisure time available to migrants during the post-war period, with which the chapel had to compete. Francis-Jones (1984: 108-109) suggests that the lives of dairy families became easier, and increased time for recreation became available: "The time had come when life was easier for Welsh dairymen ... The dairy rounds had been reduced to one morning round only. After the years of long hours, a dairyman could now take an afternoon for a game of golf or half a day's fishing. Paradoxically, with increased leisure, Sunday attendance at Chapel decreased ...". Merfyn felt that the amount of leisure activities available in London had increased:

[...] yn y deugain mlynedd diwetha mae'r cwbl wedi mynd lawr [...] – y cwbl. Dw i ddim yn gwybod pam. Ti' mod, mae'r *television* wedi dod mewn – mae gymaint o bethe eraill yn mynd ymlân [...].

*[...] in the last forty years everything has gone down [...] – everything. You know, the television has come into being and there are so many other things going on [...].*  
(Merfyn, retired police officer, 60s, moved to London in the 1950s)

George also thought that the television was important in making the chapel less attractive: “You didn’t have ... I mean you didn’t have all the leisure and entertainment then [in the 1950s], did you? I mean people – what did they have? We didn’t have television until the late fifties. So you didn’t have ... Just your interests were the chapels, and of course they took part in the Eisteddfods and the singing and all that. And that kept them busy and that was their social life” (George, Post Officer worker, 50s; born in London). Angharad felt that not only was there more to do on a Sunday in London, but that a new generation of migrants was more aware of what lay beyond the chapel:

Angharad I went to [a welsh] church and I met a whole lot of people with whom I then shared a lot of my life in London. I don’t think that will happen today. I can’t imagine this generation of young people making chapel their first stop on a Sunday in London.

JS Is that because they don’t make chapel their first stop in Wales, d’you think?

Angharad [laughs] Partly, yes, partly that. But I think partly too, because they would be much more aware than we were perhaps, of what London has to offer – you know, cinemas and things that were open. I don’t think that cinemas were open in those days. You know, I mean even London in those days did observe the Sabbath in a way. And there wouldn’t be anywhere else to go. There’d be very little to do other than go in parks and things – those would be closed, a lot of them. And as I recall cinemas were closed ... I can’t be certain about that, but my memory of it was that the cinemas were closed. So the chapel was a good place to meet people. Pubs were certainly closed ... so you weren’t going to a pub. Now these days, all those places are open for ‘young twenties’ to meet other ‘young twenties’.

(Angharad, retired television producer, 60s, moved to London in 1959)

### *Changes within the Welsh community in London*

The quantity and quality of migration from Wales (especially in terms of the socio-cultural background of new migrants) are clearly important factors in the post-

war development of traditional Welsh institutions in London. But the dynamics of the chapel community itself (of those families already involved with the chapel) are also of relevance. Most of the respondents interviewed within traditional societies were either first or second generation migrants. Social events in the 1950s such as the Saturday night Dance at the LWC and the gathering at Hyde Park Corner were shown to help sustain a distinctive ethnic community through marriages, for instance. But there is clear evidence that the following generation has stepped outside this community.

Work by Merfyn Jones (1981) on the Welsh in Liverpool and Emrys Jones (1985) in relation to their presence in London suggests that in the early twentieth century assimilation often took place very rapidly in the second and third generations:

There was relatively little danger of losing the first generation immigrant. Often-ill-at ease with the English language and unfamiliar with urban ways the first generation immigrant welcomed the care and community offered by the chapel. The danger arose with the second and third generations, who had no difficulty with the English language, nor with English ways. The dangers of assimilation were enormous ... Assimilation could therefore be rapid and devastating, and the vigour of Welsh institutions depended in large measure, on the influx of new immigrants, many of them effectively monoglot Welsh-speakers.  
(1981: 38-39)

David (1991: 61) argues that "... the Welsh are natural assimilators. I reckon, after much observation, that the Welsh assimilate with a host community more readily than any other nationality". Ellis (1971: 83) also noted that the Welsh in London displayed a rapid tendency to assimilation:

Ceir yr un stori drosodd a throsodd; y Cymro [sic] ieuanc yn dyfod i Lundain ac yn llwyddo mewn busnes, yn dal â'i ddiddordeb yn y cefndir y'i magwyd ynddo, yn cyfranu at yr achos yn haelionus ond y cysylltiad yn darfod yn ôl pob tebyg gyda'i genhedlaeth ef.

*The same story is repeated again and again; the young Welshman who comes to London and succeeds in business still retains his interest in the background he was born into, contributing generously to his chapel, but more than likely the connection ends with his generation.*

A clear theme that emerged in interviews with Welsh families in London was that the children of migrants had drifted away from the Welsh community, or at the very least did not base their lives around it to the same extent as their parents. They may have been taken along to chapel as children by their parents, but gradually such formal involvement in Welsh life in London had faded. Peter, whose father came up to London in the 1930s was taken to chapel each Sunday and learnt Welsh there. Although he and his children have attended chapel in the past, he no longer goes, and has lost much of his Welsh: “The Reverend John Davies ... three times every Sunday sorted us out. [...] it was funny really because we did originally, I think we done originally, but it just kind of faded and away, and next thing you know, you don’t know very much at all.” He went on to say that:

Peter I’m second generation, and I never go to any societies. I go to London Welsh Rugby and that’s it. I don’t go to - I haven’t been to Gray’s Inn Road ... I can’t remember the last time I went to Gray’s Inn Road - what twenty five years ago dad?

Dafydd Yeah, when there was the Eisteddfod [laughs].

Peter The Eisteddfod, you know. When I was a little boy I got forced down there - it just, no one goes anymore. [...] although we’re Welsh blooded - I means my wife’s English, [but] the children have got Welsh names [...] We’ve got another life now. I mean, these societies, are all I’m afraid to say, dad’s age or a little bit younger [...].

(Peter, diary owner, 40s; born in London; Dafydd, dairy owner, 80s; moved to London in 1937)

Fflur, who had migrated to London during the 1950s described how “Both [my children] have married English people. My son is Welsh - he says he’s Welsh, but he’s only Welsh through rugby” (Fflur, retired teacher, 60s). Evan connected his



own experiences with what he saw as the wider social changes within the Welsh community in London:

[...] people are not coming up now. And the children of children who were born here ... they're more like the London scene now. They haven't got the village thing in them. [...] There's no youngsters going to chapel. Whereas, if you go back fifty years, all the dairy people are there; their sons and daughters all went to chapel. It was the in thing, wasn't it? But their children now don't want to know about chapel. My children never went to chapel ... Sad really, isn't it?  
(Evan, retired dairy owner, 70s; moved to London in 1945)

Anna's father had moved from the Swansea area to London, whilst her mother and grandmother were Welsh and had been born in London. Like Peter, Anna was brought up in the Welsh chapel in London. She describes a lessening of Welshness through the generations:

She was brought up in London near Surbiton. Her mother and grandmother are London Welsh. ... Anna was brought up in Welsh from birth until the time she went to playgroup. At that time her speech was a mixture of Welsh and English (in the same sentence). The chapel lost its appeal. She and other people her age left when they were in their early teens. The chapel didn't really cater for teenagers. ... She says she is less Welsh than her mother for instance.  
(Anna, student doctor, 20s; born in London) (Research Diary, February 1999)

The chapels and the London Welsh Centre also appear to have suffered from the geographical movement of existing members in one of two directions. As Griffiths (2001: 182) suggests "A whole generation which had migrated to London during the 1920s and 1930s reached the age of retirement, and many decided to return to Wales, thus depleting the London congregations". In a chapel such as Lewisham where the membership has fallen to around twenty, the loss of two or three families back to Wales has left a vacuum which cannot be filled without a new generation of migrants looking for involvement in Welsh religious life in the city.

For Merfyn, one of the members at the chapel, the loss of families and young people was particularly felt:

A dyn ni wedi colli rhyw dri teulu - aethon nhw yn ôl i Gymru. Dwy deulu yn ôl i Gymru, a mae'r lleill [y plant] wedi trifio, wedi gadael gartre. Does 'da ni ddim plant - oedd 'da ni rhyw wyth neu naw o blant rhai blynydde yn ôl, a dawnus hefyd. Maen nhw gyd wedi mynd yn ôl i Gymru. A does 'na neb ifanc yn y capel [...]

*We have lost three families – they went back to Wales. Two families have are back in Wales, and the others [the children] have moved, they have left home. There are no children – we used to have eight or nine children years ago, and they were bright too. They have all gone back to Wales. And there are no young people in the chapel now [...]*  
(Merfyn, retired police officer, 60s; moved to London in the 1950s)

A lot of people are going back to Wales. People of our generation are going back to Wales.  
(Fflur, retired teacher, 60s; moved to London in 1955)

This sense of loss is equally palpable in the history of Capel y Lôn in Slough:

Ar ôl ymddeol aeth nifer o aelodau yn ôl i Gymru a gwelsom eu heisiau yn fawr – pobl fel Dennis Evans ... a'r wraig Hetty. ... Colli pobl fel hyn oedd enmill Eglwysi Cymru fel yn y dyddiau gynt colled Cymru oedd ein hennill ni..

*When they reached retirement a number of members went back to Wales and we missed them very much – people like Dennis Evans ... and his wife Hetty. ... Losing people like this was a bonus for the churches in Wales, just as in days gone by their loss was our gain.*

Will (a member of a Presbyterian chapel in north east London) connected together increased levels of return migration and the spiritual background of current migrants as the key explanations for the rapid decline in membership in his congregation:

Mae 'na ddwy beth wedi digwydd [...]. Peth cynta' ydy bod lot o'r teuluoedd a oedd wedi symud o Gymru yn y tridegau ac yn ystod yr Ail Ryfel neu *just* ar ôl yr Ail Ryfel Byd wedi dechre symud yn ôl yn y saithdegau. Dyna un peth a oedd wedi gwagu'r capeli Cymraeg. Yr ail beth wrth gwrs, oedd y cyflwr ysbrydol yn y Wlad yn gyfangwbl, ynte - y gostyngiad yn y nifer oedd yn [...] mynychu'r capel. [...] [roedd] yr un peth yn digwydd yn y capeli Cymry Llundain, ag yng Nghymru. Y ddau beth efo'i gilydd wrth gwrs sydd wedi effeithio'n anferth arnon ni ynte.

*Two things have happened [...]. The first thing is that a lot of the families that moved up from Wales in the 1930s and during the Second World War or just after the War started to move back during the 1970s. That's one thing that has emptied the Welsh chapels. The second thing of course was the spiritual condition in the Country [i.e. Wales] as a whole - The reduction in the number of people who were [...] attending chapels. [...] the same thing was happening to London Welsh chapels as was occurring in Wales. Those two things together have had an enormous effect upon us, you see.*  
(Will, teacher, 50s)

Another pattern within the chapel community that has developed during the post-war period is the movement of members who once lived in central London out to the suburbs and commuter towns surrounding the city (Jones, E, 2001; Griffiths, 2001). It has already been demonstrated that many chapels (even before the Second World War) drew their members from all parts of London, rather than a local, delimited parish. As Jenkins (1987) argues, the movement of Welsh people outwards from the centre of the city was manifested by the founding of chapels in the new suburbs of Harrow and Slough in the 1930s. According to Thomas (1998: 6): “*daeth tyrfa o Gymru yn y tri-degau i weithio a byw yn Slough – yn wir enw un o strydoedd gyferbyn â'r hen gapel yw 'Carmarthen Road'*” (“*in the 1930s many people came from Wales to live and work in Slough – indeed the name of one of streets near the old chapel is 'Carmarthen Road'*”). But in the post-war period this phenomena has become more pronounced with movement to more distant locations, significantly undermining the membership of chapels in the city centre. David (1991: 62) suggests that this movement of the Welsh during the post-war period is a classic example of their identity as an ‘immigrant group’: “the Welsh like other immigrants, moved out of inner London when they could, to more salubrious places on the margins of London. The number of Welsh in inner London in 1951 was 59, 000. By 1961 it was down to 48, 500, by 1981 27, 600 and by 1991 it is likely to be less than 20, 000”. Jones, E (2001: 135) suggests that “Outer London [in the post-war period]

was now the prosperous area, predominantly made up of desirable residential locations. By 1991 this is where the majority of the Welsh-born were found". This very much echoes Merfyn Jones's (1981) account of the Welsh in Liverpool in the early part of the twentieth century, for he states that "In common with other successful immigrant groups, success was associated with a geographical move away from the overcrowded city centres" (1981: 35). In describing the history of Wilton Square chapel in Islington, Ellis (1971: 32) suggested that its eventual closure came about partly because of the migration of the Welsh in London further and further away from the central area of the city: "nid yw'r capel yno mwyach. Ac y mae llawer o'r Cymry y byddai eu rhagflaenwyr yn byw yn yr ardaloedd hyn wedi symud ymhellach o ganol y ddinas" (*"the chapel is no longer there. And many of the Welsh people whose predecessors would have lived in these areas have moved further from the city centre"*).

Respondents from within the chapel and church network had frequently made one or several outward moves from the centre of London upon reaching retirement age. This movement was one which Huw expressed very clearly: "After the last war the Welsh were further out all the time. As the more prosperous moved into the more pleasant sort of Surrey and Kent suburbs, you see, the chapels didn't move out with them". As Jones, E (2001: 160) argues, in the late twentieth century "so few institutions have met the challenge of changing conditions, particularly the increasing dispersion of the community ...". Huw added:

I think a lot of it is people moving out. Now we've got people who come to the Welsh church, who will come to a special service [...] - a lady from Chelmsford in Essex, a couple in Broxbourne in Hertfordshire. So we've got quite a lot of people who will come to special services, like the Carol service, our anniversary, Harvest, but they're

really too far out for the regular Sunday services. You have to draw the line there - the regular Sunday services - they're people within a range of about twelve miles [...].  
(Huw, retired teacher, 70s; moved to London in 1949)

The historical account of Capel y Lôn in Slough also points to the fact that chapel members have moved well beyond the geographical limits of London. Interestingly it links this geographical shift in membership to issues of class and age:

Ar y cychwyn daeth llawer o'r aelodau o gymoedd diwydiannol y de, gweithwyr yn edrych am waith ac yn eu mysg ambell i berson proffesiynol. 'Roedd y mwyafrif o'r aelodau yn byw yn Slough ac yn medru mynd i'r capel drwy gerdded neu ddal bws a llawer ohonynt yn perthyn i deuluoedd ifanc. Heddiw mae'r patrwm yn hollol wahanol, nid oes un o'r aelodau yn byw yn Slough, a mae pawb yn gorfod dod i'r addoldy mewn car, rhai yn moduro ugain neu hyd yn oed deugain o filltiroedd un ffordd, er mwyn addoli yn Gymraeg. Gydag ychydig o eithriadau, mae'r aelodau i gyd yn perthyn i'r dosbarth proffesiynol a hefyd yn eu chwech neu saith degau o ran oedran.

*At the start many of our members came from the industrial valleys of south Wales, workers looking for work, and in their midst, a few professional people. The majority of the members lived in Slough and could reach the chapel on foot or by bus, and many of them were members of young families. Today the pattern is completely different. Not one member lives in Slough, and everyone has to come to the chapel by car, some travelling ten or even forty miles each way, for the sake of worshipping in Welsh. With a few exceptions, all of the members belong to the professional class, and are in their sixties or seventies.*

(Capel y Lôn, 1998: 43)

Charles, a member of Y Tabernacl in King's Cross since his early childhood perceived that before the Second World War most members had lived within about five miles of the chapel, whereas now, people like himself had moved out of London to towns in areas such as Essex:

[...] you see in those days [...] most people lived within five miles, at the most. Some people lived farther. But *now* you see, nobody lives near the chapel. Like me, I mean I live out here, but in those days they were surrounded in chapels. London was developing. I mean the outer suburbs, places like Finchley and Hampstead were sort of beginning to develop and they were what ... three to five miles away. But most people lived in inner London in those days or [at least] most of the dairies were. That's where most of your people came from, apart from the young people, who worked in banks and other jobs [...].

(Charles, retired bank employee, 80s; born in London)

William described how he represented part of the movement of the Welsh outwards from the central area of London during the post-war period, suggesting that moving outwards could also be about moving upwards: “the London Welsh people who inhabited the inner London – the city if you like, found that they moved away to suburbia. I represent that example, where once my children arrived and they arrived in ’63, I looked for better education. In order to achieve that I moved from the business, where I used to live above the premises, out to suburbia” (William, retired, late 50s; born in London). Like William, Evan and Imogen had also owned a dairy in south London. On reaching retirement they moved from the inner suburbs to Harrow in north west London: “In the car we discussed how dairymen often moved into areas like Harrow when they retired. Evan said that when they were living in Brixton they had come up to Harrow, and had remarked that they thought they would never be able to afford to live in an area like this” (Evan, 70s; moved to London in 1945; Imogen, 60s, retired dairy owner; moved to London in the late 1950s) (Research Diary, August 1998).

### *Responding to Decline*

The London Welsh Association has undertaken certain changes to encourage young people to use its centre, and is arranging more social events designed to appeal to this generation. But I want to focus here upon the response of the chapel to the stagnation of its membership, which has become particularly serious

during the last twenty years. As has been argued, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Welsh cultural life was to a large extent located within the sphere of the chapel - Welsh culture was seen to be inherently religious (Davies, 1993). What has happened during the post-war period in London is akin to Davies's (1993) description of the separation of religion and national identity in Wales itself. The decline in membership levels has meant that social and cultural events within the chapels have largely disappeared, leaving the core activity of the weekly Sunday service. The social and cultural have been peeled away from the religious. As new cultural and social Welsh societies have gained symbolic power in London, the chapel has been marginalised and now operates as a primarily religious institution. Emma (a member at Wood Green Chapel in north London) explained that: "Roedd yna gymdeithas gryf iawn yn Wood Green. Ond fel roedd y bobl ifanc yn lleihau roedd y gymdeithas yn mynd lawr. [...] Ond bu'r gymdeithas grefyddol erioed farw – mae honno'n dal i fynd" (*"There was a very strong society in Wood Green. But as the number of young people fell, the society went down [...] But the religious society has never died – that's still going"*) (Emma, retired missionary, 80s; left Wales in 1939). Tony and Sophie suggested that a similar 'slimming down' of the activities in their chapel had taken place:

Sophie That's another thing we had until ... oh less than ten years ago I reckon – a drama, we used a to do a play each year.

JS So really in more recent years, you've sort of come down to just having the two services on a Sunday. And your cultural society, so the kind of social activities, are really the things that have suffered most I guess, with the young people not being there [Sophie – That's right] and you've sort of concentrated on ...

Tony You don't have enough members there you see. You can't have a table tennis team if you haven't got enough members for it of course. It's very sad.

(Sophie, chemist, 50s; moved to London in the 1950s;

Tony, late fifties, self employed; born in London)

Despite the inability to sustain such activities, the personal ties and commitment towards individual chapels remains immensely strong for many members. Though some amalgamation of the churches and chapels across the city has taken place (and there is a call for one or two central churches to be formed to replace all of the present congregations) interviewees expressed a strong desire to keep their own chapel open:

JS            If Dewi Sant closes where would you go?

Lucy        I'd die as well. It can't close without a fight from the people.  
(Lucy, 80s; born in London)

[...] my chapel means a lot to me, because I mean, as I say, I've been there 86 years. I was christened there six weeks after I was born and I've been there ever since.  
(Margaret, 80s, retired dairy owner; born in London)

Where congregation members have moved away from the centre of London, they often continue to worship in the same chapel. According to Griffiths (2001: 172) "It has been a characteristic of London chapels that people have generally retained their loyalty to their first association, in spite of moving to a different area and perhaps much close to another chapel":

Sophie    I mean a chapel building doesn't mean as much to me as maybe it does to Tony. Because that's the only chapel he's ever known.

Tony       Well you see, I've got Clapham Junction and Walham Green between here and Harrow.

Sophie    Yes but you were brought up in Harrow.

Tony       I was brought up there, yes. And I mean as long as Harrow stays open I will be Harrow.

Henry (a minister in one of the Welsh chapels) described the situation with Biblical metaphors:

Ydy, mae e wedi cyrraedd y man falle, lle yn yr Hen Destament, lle mae'r genedl yn mynd i wlad arall ac yn cartrefu yno, ac yn codi pebell yno, a bod yr amser yn dod i wneud i ffordd â'r pebell, neu, fel dwi'n deud, i fynd i'r canol. Y drafferth ydy pe bai ni'n gwneud hynny, ac yn mynd i rywle cyfleus megis Castle Street - cyfleus yn



ddaearyddol, dydy'r bobl sydd wedi bod yn ffyddlon trwy eu hoes, yn y capeli, dyn nhw ddim yn debygol o fynd yno, i wneud y fath daith. Ac hefyd mae meddwl am ddechre rhywle arall ar ôl trigain mlynedd, saith deg o flynyddoedd mewn capeli ... wel mae'n ormod falle.

*Yes, it's reached the point perhaps, where in the Old Testament, the nation moves to another country and settles there, and raises a tent there. And the time comes to do away with the tent, or as I say, to go to the centre. The trouble is that if we were to do that, and go to somewhere convenient like Castle Street - geographically convenient, people who have been faithful to the chapels throughout their life, they're not likely to go there, to make that kind of journey. And also thinking about starting somewhere else after 60 years, seventy years in a chapel ... well it's too much perhaps.*  
(Henry, minister, 70s; born in London)

David (1991) is particularly scathing of this situation:

Within ten years most of them will face collapse. The only solution, some argue, is merger – even merging all the chapels – they encompass some 1300 members in all – into one central place. Already moves to combine have begun. King's Cross recently asked the big Baptist chapel, Castle Street in the West End, to consider sharing a Minister between them. Castle Street replied no, but that if King's Cross members wished to come to Castle Street they could, in other words, merger deals are for all the others, not for us. The London Welsh chapels and churches would much prefer to hang separately than hang together.  
(1991: 61)

As Sophie suggested “Now, where we should be getting back together we're not – you know, we're all fragmented, and we're all going to go down together”. Evan put it thus:

Evan [...] it's going down all the time, really [...] and it's got to come that you're going to have one big chapel in London ... but they don't want it. They still want to be Paddington, Ealing, Boro' - you know? They want to be individual - amazing really. It's like Pontmelyn [in Wales] is, you know? Two chapels in Pontmelyn and a church - is there a need of it? You wouldn't think so would you - little village like that. And there's six in one, and six in the other one. Now wouldn't it be nice if they got together ... but they won't - will they? But that's ...

JS So it's not, it's divided in some ways then, it's not ...

Evan Yes, yeah, funny isn't it, you know? And if you ask people in Harrow now, 'Are you prepared to sell up Harrow and have a church in King's Cross in the middle?' – 'Oh no, we're not joining with them - we're Harrow' - funny isn't it? You know? All individuals, but they've got no minister now - they've got no ministers coming up, you see. But uh, they've got to face reality within the next few years. And after the generation that goes to chapel now, there's no more.

As the chapels and the London Welsh Centre ‘lose ground’ in this way and new societies begin to gain cultural legitimacy in the city, a widening gulf is developing between these two worlds. Many chapel respondents had very little idea about what kinds of identities a new generation of Welsh people in London are carving out for themselves at the end of the twentieth century:

- JS            So what do you think the young people today are doing instead of going to church and chapel on a Sunday?
- Lucy        They go out and enjoy themselves or else they’re studying – I don’t know dear.

Mari, for instance asked:

A chi’n sôn am y Noson o Hwyl. Beth, ga’ i ofyn yw eu hadwaith nhw at y capeli? [...] Ychydig iawn dw i’n gwybod am y grwpiau newydd yna i ddweud y gwir wrthoch chi, ‘te. A dw i ddim yn nabod nhw! Yn naturiol dw i ddim yr un genhedlaeth â nhw.

*And you mentioned the Noson o Hwyl. What may I ask, is their attitude towards the chapels? [...] I don’t know about those new groups to tell you the truth. I don’t know them! Naturally I am not of the same generation as them.*  
(Mari, mid 80s; born in London)

Keith explained that the London Welsh Centre, the Rugby Club and the chapels were the key centres of Welshness in London: “Mae ‘na *groups* bach – un o’r enw SWS – mae un o’r enw Gwl@d. Maen nhw’n *groups* bach a weddol newydd, ond yn bwysig” (“*There are small groups – one called SWS – one called Gwl@d. They are small groups and quite new, but important*” (Keith, 50s). In actual fact SWS is now the largest Welsh society in London with a membership of well over 1000, and roughly equal to the sum total of the members in all of the London Welsh churches and chapels. For Creuddyn also, societies such as Gwl@d and SWS were largely unknown to him:

JS [...] beth yw'ch agwedd chi tuag at y rhwydweithiau newydd sydd wedi datblygu ym mywyd Cymry Llundain yn ddiweddar?  
Creuddyn A chyfeirio at beth?  
JS Wy'n meddwl am bethe fel SWS, y Noson o Hwyl, pethe fel Gwl@d ac yn y blaen.  
Creuddyn Wy 'di clywed am y gymdeithas SWS, ond dw i ddim wedi bod yno felly. Dw i ddim yn gwybod beth arall ych chi'n cyfeirio ato. [...] O'n i ddim wedi clywed amdany'n nhw.

JS [...] *what's your attitude towards the new networks that have developed in London Welsh life recently?*  
Creuddyn *To what are you referring?*  
JS *I'm thinking of things like SWS, y Noson o Hwyl, things like Gwl@d and so on.*  
Creuddyn *I have heard about the SWS society, but I haven't been there. I don't know what else you're referring to. [...] I hadn't heard about them.*  
(Creuddyn, 50s, Welsh minister in London; born in London)

For Tecwyn, young Welsh people in London today had interests that were incompatible with his own generation, and each group needed to have its own society:

Sa i'n meddwl bod ein oedran ni a'r ieunctorid yn gallu cael cymdeithas efo'n gilydd. Mae rhaid cael rhywbeth yn hollol wahanol i'r ieunctorid, a rhywbeth hollol wahanol i ni – fel 'na wy'n deall ef.

*I don't think that our age group and the youngsters can have the same society. The youngsters have to have something completely different, and we have to have something completely different – that's the way I see it.*  
(Tecwyn, retired dairy owner, 50s; moved to London in the 1950s)

And he added; “Mae'n anodd gweud beth mae'r bobl ifanc yn ymofyn” (“*It's difficult to know what the young people want*”).

## Conclusion

These respondents describe being integrated and accepted into mainstream London life. Scattered around the city they are largely invisible as an ethnic group. But despite such integration and dispersion, many such migrants have chosen to base their social and cultural lives primarily within a distinctive Welsh community that is

constituted through particular geographical forms. Institutions such as the chapel and the London Welsh Centre provide Welsh spaces, but as was demonstrated, members of these societies have not lived permanently within them. Rather, their lives are characterised by a constant psychological and physical movement between working in a busy metropolis, and the cultural haven of the chapel and London Welsh Centre. These institutions are very much 'fixed' spaces in the city, solid points of reference which their members can use as 'anchors' in their otherwise metropolitan lives. The appeal of such organisations was to a large degree linked to the vibrant social life that they maintained. But I also demonstrated that other factors were important in drawing people to this community; the migration motivations and socio-cultural background of migrants, and the anchorage that belonging to a chapel, for instance, could bring.

These traditional societies construct Welsh identities through weaving together multiple strands of belonging such as language, culture, class and religion. Whilst such identities can seek to authentically reproduce cultural forms in Wales, they are not always identical to them. The emphasis upon social activities within the chapels is a good example of this. In the reproduction of Welsh culture in London a difference is produced. Something specific to London is added (what Jones, E, 2001 calls a 'London twist' on Welsh culture). The legitimisation of Welsh life in London challenges a bounded view of culture existing neatly within national borders, and calls for the city's Welsh identity to be included in a view of Wales as a nation.

The decline of the chapel and other traditional societies in London during the post-war period is important because it underlines large scale changes in the nature of Welsh life in the city. The movement of chapel members away from central London, and the differing attitudes of second and third generation migrants are to some extent responsible for the loss of membership at the LWC and in the chapels. But what is perhaps even more important is the lack of new members drawn from the migrants currently moving to London. Although the flow of migration from Wales may be smaller than that during the 1930s (for instance), it has not stopped, and many thousands of young Welsh people still move to London each year. Traditional societies have lost members, but they have also lost their centrality as new Welsh social networks emerge in London that are redefining Welsh identities. The experiences and identities of migrants moving to the city in the 1990s are a largely unknown arena to the chapel community, suggesting that this is a fragmented field of identities, and not a homogenous, unified ethnicity. In the following chapter I examine the migration experiences and the collective forms of identity being constructed by members of a new generation of migrants who have moved to London during the 1980s and 1990s.

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<sup>i</sup> The experiences of interviewees born to Welsh parents in London are also included.

<sup>ii</sup> I am extremely grateful to Charlotte Davies and Stephanie Jones for their comments in relation to exploring why migrants choose to become involved with Welsh societies in London. In particular their suggestion that Hannerz's work might provide a useful way of examining this issue was very helpful.

<sup>iii</sup> Interestingly, the title of the chapter in Jones, E (2001) that focuses upon the twentieth century is titled 'Flow and Ebb'.

## Chapter 6

### New migrations - New identities

#### Introduction

The decline of ‘traditional’ institutions such as the chapel and the London Welsh Centre during recent decades could be perceived as signalling the demise of the Welsh community in the city, and the retreat of collective, organised exile life *per se*. Indeed, David (1991: 59) has stated: “The fact is that *all* London Welsh institutions are losing ground ...” [emphasis in original]. But during the 1990s when sections of London Welsh life (such as the chapel network) were certainly ‘losing ground’, new Welsh societies have been growing in the city. Their emergence problematises the notion of a homogenous, unified Welsh community that is either doing well, or is on a collective downward slide. As Hall and Du Gay (1996) have suggested, the internal divisions and the multiple construction of identities need always to be held in view. According to Clifford, the ‘cross cutting structures’ of identities should be examined, something which Gray (2000: 74) makes explicit in her study of Irish life in contemporary London: “Irishness in London in the 1980s, as in any other decade, was internally differentiated in relation to religion, class, generation, region of Ireland, gender, sexuality, and many other factors.” A new generation of networks (such as SWS and London events organised by Gwl@d) is redefining Welsh life, constructing spaces of Welshness that are fluid and informal, mobile and de-centred; spaces in which new kinds of identities can be expressed.

Contrasting identities are being worked out at different points within the Welsh community in London.

The fact that such networks appeal to (and are responding to the presence of) a new generation of Welsh people in London therefore emphasises the internally fragmented character of Welsh ethnicity in the city. In this chapter I suggest that generation and class are some of the clearest lines of internal fragmentation within the Welsh as an ethnic group in London. I examine how the experiences and identities of individual respondents who have arrived in London during the last twenty years contain a number of important contrasts to those of interviewees who had migrated in previous decades (and whose lives were explored in Chapters 4 and 5).

I begin this chapter by exploring the migration experiences of the group of respondents who have moved to London during the last twenty years. The predominantly middle class background of migrants, their reasons for moving to London, and the ways in which these two issues are interconnected are explored. I argue that in contrast to the migration narratives explored in Chapter 4, moving to London for this new generation of respondents is more closely linked to issues of career, lifestyle and identity. I am particularly interested in the idea that migrating away from Wales had allowed people to negotiate or even strengthen their feelings of being Welsh through such displacement.

I then consider two key concepts that might help frame the ways in which respondents described their identities – notions of cosmopolitanism and individualisation respectively. Drawing upon work by Gray (2000) and Hannerz (1990) I argue that interviewees actively embraced cultural diversity and difference in London. Within this context, involvement in Welsh life becomes one part of their identities, rather than the primary, controlling element. Utilising Gans's (1979) thesis regarding symbolic ethnicity I outline how respondents frequently expressed a more individualised Welsh identity (than older respondents), an identity that is not primarily negotiated through involvement with formal Welsh organisations. Such people in London are often seeking more informal involvement with Welsh life – an engagement that does not necessitate long term, regular commitment. It needs to be flexible, and left open, something that can be slotted in among the many other activities for which time has to be found.

Having set out these ideas I turn my focus to the growth of new social Welsh networks that have created spaces where such individualised and cosmopolitan identities can be worked out. I consider first the ways in which they are constructing new versions of Welshness. They have de-formalised the character of Welsh life in London, replacing concerts and meetings with open, flexible social evenings which members can use as a cultural resource, dipping into them to nourish their cultural identities. And such networks are characterised by distinctive geographies that mark them out from more traditional Welsh societies in London. Within London they are frequently de-centred and mobile, establishing a fluid and fleeting presence in different spaces around the city. In particular, the use of Internet



and e-mail technologies is subordinating the place of physical concrete centres. But they are also networks that stretch beyond London, and have multiple connections within the Welsh Diaspora. In the latter part of the chapter I build upon my discussion of cosmopolitan and individualised identities by examining how interviewees actually use these new networks, and the spaces of Welshness that they have created.

The final argument put forward in the chapter is that despite the many contrasts these new networks display in relation to older forms of collective Welsh life, there are nevertheless a number of continuities. Groups such as SWS carry on important aspects of the work of 'traditional' Welsh societies, most particularly the task of bringing Welsh speaking people together in London within a social context. And their informal, de-centred existence also draws strong parallels with an earlier period of Welsh life - the cultural societies of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **New Migrations**

The migration experiences of respondents who had moved to London during the last twenty years contained many contrasts to those of longer established interviewees. Of particular note was their socio-economic positioning, and the reasons underpinning their migration to London. Almost without exception, this subgroup of 'new migrants' was made up of people from a middle class background who were working in professional careers, such as banking, public relations, consultancy, or the media. And they were highly educated, having attended university in nearly all cases. Their migration to London was often tied to following

a particular, chosen career. And moving to London was also frequently connected to issues of lifestyle and identity. The existence of and the migration motivations of this socio-economic group has been examined by a number of academic studies. Boyle, *et al* (1998: 209-210) for instance discuss “the service class, the professional and managerial fraction of the middle class, typically associated with high levels of academic and other qualifications.” They argue that migration within this group can often be conceptualised as ‘spiralism’, whereby workers move in the hope of economic betterment, with “geographical mobility overlapping with (upward) social mobility”. The migration of British workers to the south east of England is given as an example of such a process.

In the case of the Irish in London, the changing class dynamics of migration and the factors underpinning people’s decision to leave Ireland have been well documented. A number of writers (Duffy, 1995; Gray, 2000; Walter, 1997) suggest that the 1980s marked a ‘new wave’ of migration to Britain, concentrated upon London and the south east of England. During this decade, there was an increase in migration by middle class workers employed in the managerial and professional sectors (Walter, 1997). Gray (2000: 66-67) suggests that “more emigrants were in professional or managerial work than in the past”. And Duffy (1995) points to the fact that these ‘new migrants’ arrived in London with high levels of education. It is Walter’s contention however, that some polarisation occurred, with longer established traditions of working class migration to England (in occupations such as nursing and building) continuing alongside the new wave of middle class migrants.

Of particular importance is the suggestion by Gray (2000) and Duffy (1995) that this new wave or generation of migration is underpinned by different motivations to more traditional working class emigration from Ireland. Gray (2000: 69) for instance, drawing upon work by Hanlon (1991), states that “some middle class professionals, i.e. those in demand by the multinational corporations of these cities [such as London], leave Ireland because their career paths and personal aspirations require international experience, whereas the working classes emigrate out of necessity in times of economic hardship.” The importance of lifestyle issues in driving migration decisions is also highlighted: “Shuttleworth’s survey of Irish graduates between 1983 and 1986 suggests that cultural, personal and familial motives unrelated to the labour market, were highly significant factors in the decision to emigrate. The leading factor was ‘lifestyle’ referring, in this case, to adventure and the chance to escape the restrictions of life in Ireland” (Gray, 2000: 69). Duffy (1995: 36) talks of the importance of “The liberation and anonymity of the big city ... exile is often juxtaposed with escape.” My own research in London suggests that there are strong similarities between the experiences of Irish and Welsh migrants in the city during the last twenty years. Highly educated, middle class workers in managerial, professional occupations were strongly represented among the more recently arrived migrants who I interviewed and their motivations for leaving Wales contrasted strongly with longer established respondents who had been part of previous generations of migration to London. As Maria, who had moved to London during the 1980s, and was now working in banking, told me: “Many of the people coming up to London today are professionals, or people leaving university

- they have different interests to the migrants of yesterday” (Research Diary, September, 1999).

Economic factors were advanced by interviewees as being of some importance in their reasons for moving away from Wales. In general terms however, migration for these respondents is being undertaken within the context of a much greater degree of choice than for previous generations. As Jones, E (2001: 204) suggests, “In theory, there is no longer a compulsion for so many to leave Wales for London ...”. None of the people who I interviewed expressed a sense in which they had been forced out of Wales, or had had to move to London simply to find work. Moving away from Wales was linked more to the kinds of career ambitions that individual people held. For all the improvements in the Welsh economy during the post-war period (Davies, 1993; Jones, E, 2001), many respondents felt that they needed to move to a metropolitan or ‘international’ city such as London, where greater possibilities existed. Ben, who had left Wales to study at university explained that “In London there were more jobs and possibilities” (Ben, 20s; moved to London in the mid 1990) (Research Diary, May, 1999). Adam felt that having obtained a well paid job in London, he could not feasibly return to Wales in the short term: “Yng Nghymru pe byddai fe fod reit ar lefel uchaf mewn cyngor er enghraifft, na fyddai ennill chwarter beth mae e'n ennill yn Llundain” (“In Wales if he was at the very top of the pay scale in a council for instance, he wouldn't be able to earn a quarter of what he can in London”) (Adam, working in public relations; arrived in London in the mid 1990s ) (Research Diary,

May, 1999). It was also the case that many people who had arrived in London during the 1980s and 1990s had undertaken much more complex migrations than previous generations of respondents. They had perhaps moved several times since graduating from university before coming to London, each time moving up the career ladder. In a number of cases interviewees had spent time abroad in cities such as Sydney or New York following their chosen career.

For migrants intent upon finding well paid, managerial or professional positions, London offered greater employment possibilities, higher status jobs, and more attractive salary and promotion opportunities. In a number of cases, people wanted to pursue particular careers, and London was where they needed to be in order to maximise their chance of doing so. Kate, for instance had left south Wales in 1990 and studied at university in England. She explained that “I came to London because of my job really. I finished in college and I got a graphic design job in London. I mean I suppose I always wanted to come to London. I applied for jobs in London, just because that’s where all the good graphics jobs are” (Kate, graphic designer, 20s). Her friend Jo had also moved to London for reasons linked to her career:

JS        And could either of you really ... [have] stayed in Cardiff?

Kate      We could have done, but then I think we would have been quite pigeon-holed.

Jo        I think that just like anybody else, the main reason for coming to London is for the advancement of their career.

(Jo, working in Public Relations, 20s; moved to London in the early 1990s)

Jane had also been attracted to London because it was the best place in which to further her career: “Des i lawr ar ôl gorfffen yn y coleg, achos fi’n gweithio yn y byd celf cyfoes. Dyma’r lle gorau i fod achos mae sut gymaint o’r *galleries* yn Llundain,

so wy ‘di bod ‘ma [...] ers canol yr wythdegau” (*“I came here after I finished college, because I work in contemporary art. This is the best place to be because there are so many galleries in London. So I’ve been here [...] since the mid 1980s”*) (Jane, 30s).

### **Travelling Identities**

Although career or educational aspirations were often important factors in the decision to leave Wales, the connections between migration and identity in the experiences of this group of respondents also need to be highlighted. As Bartholomew (1991) has argued, even where economic motivations are the key impetus for migration, there may be many other issues that underpin the move away from home that are more closely linked to issues of personal lifestyle and identity. For the Welsh people that I interviewed, leaving home was often very closely tied to the negotiation of self-identity. Moving away from home allowed the chance to gain a greater, broader perspective on what it meant to be Welsh and the relationship people had with Wales. A number of respondents articulated a kind of liberation from their displacement in which being outside of their home country had allowed them to strengthen their Welsh identity, and consciously develop it with a greater sense of freedom.

The way in which these respondents expressed such identities echoes the theoretical links that many academic scholars have been making between travel, migration and the constitution of the self. Thrift and Pile (1995: 22) for instance describe “the forging of new subject positions and subjectivities out of ideas of

movement and travel”. And Clifford is concerned with placing travel at the heart of cultural identities, offering “a view of human location as constituted by displacement as much as stasis” (1997: 2). This way of thinking and theorising is important. For it challenges the idea that identities are organic, singular entities, exclusively defined within bounded spaces, most often the nation state. Mac Éinrí (2000: 2) argues that “Diasporic identities, transnational and subversive in character, challenge the security of identities defined, but also limited by national boundaries”. And Nash (1999: unpaginated) describes “the critical shift away from ideas of cultural origins and stable identities to cultural movement and hybrid, relational, contingent ... and fluid identities”. This more inclusive, relational identity is constructed through attachment to multiple locations (Gray 2000). As Clifford (1997: 9) suggests, “Contemporary articulations of ‘diaspora’ [may be] seen as potential subversions of nationality – ways of sustaining connections with more than one place while practising nonabsolutist forms of citizenship”. Robertson, *et al* (1994: 2) feel that “the travelling narrative is always a narrative of space and difference. It may not broaden the mind but it prods at it. It provokes new concepts, new ways of seeing and being, or at the very least, when the old ways of seeing and being have been stubbornly imported into foreign territory, subjects them to strain and fatigue”.

Eleri, who had chosen to take a job in London during the early 1980s explained that “**She decided to come up ... to broaden her horizons**” (Eleri, teacher, 30s) (Research Diary, February, 1999). And Heulwen, who had grown up in Carmarthenshire, made a more conscious decision not to stay in Wales:

Ar un adeg o'n i moyn mynd mor bell â phosib o Gymru [...] o'n i'n benderyfynol i beidio mynd i brifysgol Cymraeg. [...] Byddai i 'di meddwl a bwyti Aber' falle, ond o'n i ddim moyn mynd mewn i *enclave* Cymraeg, o'n i ddim moyn 'neud 'ny'. O'n i moyn cwrdd â pobl o lot o wahanol cefndir, wahanol gwledydd. O'n i moyn cymysgu, o'n i moyn cymryd y cyfleoedd [...] o'n i moyn mynd yn bellach.

*At one time, I wanted to go as far as possible from Wales [...] I was determined not to go to a Welsh university. [...] I would have thought of Aber' perhaps, but I didn't want to go into a Welsh enclave – I didn't want to do that. I wanted to meet people from lots of different backgrounds, different countries. I wanted to mix, I wanted to take opportunities [...] I wanted to go further.*

(Heulwen, working with social services, 20s; moved to London in the early 1990s)

Dewi also spoke of the need to create distance from Wales when he chose university courses: “[...] Un peth o'n i ddim moyn bod yw rhywun bydde ddim wedi cael eu siawns i mynd tu allan i Gymru er mwyn fel bod nhw wir yn gallu gweld bod nhw'n Cymry a bod 'da nhw profiad o pethe eraill [...]” (“[...] *One thing I didn't want to be was someone who hadn't had a chance to go out of Wales, to see that they were Welsh, and that they had experience of other things [...]*”) (Dewi, engineer, 30s; moved to London in 1992).

For many people, their geographical location outside of Wales had strengthened their feelings of being Welsh. Shils (1978: 405) has noted that

there is much sentiment about the place where one originated but it becomes articulate usually after departure from that place. As long as one remains fixed, there is little articulate expression of attachment to a place of origin. Perhaps no awareness of attachment arises until there is an actual or threatened displacement. Generalised appreciation of attachment to a place of past location occurs only after the loss of the object itself.

Marc explained that “[...] y pellach bant ych chi, y fwy ych chi'n gwerthfawrogi'r Cymraeg a gweud y gwir” (“[...] *the further away you are, the more you value the Welsh language, to tell you the truth*”). He added that “Mae milltiroedd yn rhoi perspectif lot gwell i ti [...]”. Dw i'n teimlo'n lot fwy o Gymro ers i mi adael Cymru



– lot lot fwy [...]. Dw i'n meddwl bod e'n beth iach y dyddiau 'ma i fod yn Gymro tu allan i Gymru" (“[...] *Distance gives you a much better perspective [...]. I feel a lot more Welsh since I left Wales – a lot lot more [...]. I think that it's a healthy thing these days to be a Welsh person outside of Wales*”) (Marc, actor, 30s; moved to London in the 1990s). These kinds of feelings were echoed by a number of other respondents when asked about what it meant to be Welsh outside of Wales. Adam came originally from north Wales and had worked in various parts of England before taking up a post with a consultancy firm in London: “*Mae ei hunaniaeth yn bwysig ofnadwy tra ei fod e wedi bod allan o Gymru*” (“*His identity has been extremely important whilst he has been outside of Wales*”) (Adam, working in public relations, 20s; arrived in London in the mid 1990s) (Research Diary, May 1999). Ben who had moved from south Wales to study at university in England before finding employment in London “*talked about the way in which leaving home/Wales makes you see your identity more clearly. It makes you realise/appreciate your heritage more*” (Ben, 20s; moved to London in the mid 1990s) (Research Diary, May, 1999).

For Heulwen, moving away from Wales had brought about important changes in the way she thought about and practised her identity:

[...] yn y brifysgol 'wnes i newid mewn ffordd ynglyn â siarad Cymraeg. Yn yr wythnos cynta cwrddais i â ferch o Hwlfordd a daethon ni'n ffrindiau mawr, Am y tro cynta *really* pan gwrddais â hi, daethon ni ymlaen yn dda iawn, a [dyna'r] tro cynta i fi siarad â rhywun a dewis siarad 'da rhywun yr un oedran â fi yn Gymraeg. So f'na wnes i dechre newid mewn ffordd. [...] O'n i'n dechre wneud dewisiadau i fi fy hun, o'n i'n dewis i fi fy hun, o'n i'n dewis i siarad Cymraeg 'da rhywun, yn hytrach na mam neu dad yn weud, neu athrawes neu beth bynnag.

*[...] in university I changed in relation to speaking Welsh. In the first week there I met a girl from Haverfordwest, and we became really good friends. For the first time really, when I met her, I chose to speak to someone the same age as me, in Welsh. So there I changed in a way [...]. I was starting to make decisions for me myself, I was choosing for me myself, I was choosing to speak Welsh with someone, rather than mum or dad telling me to, or a teacher, or whatever.*

(Heulwen, working with social services, 20s; moved to London in the early 1990s)

Since arriving in London, she has strengthened her command of the Welsh language

in a way that she would not have done had she stayed in Wales:

*[...] fel pethe Cymraeg, oedd yn dod yn fwy rhywbeth o'n i really moyn wneud, ac i wneud a pethe, oedd â diddordeb 'da fi, a cymryd mwy o diddordeb mewn cerddoriaeth Cymraeg. O'n i byth 'di wneud 'ny o blaen [...]. So ie 'na pryd des i really cael diddordeb a'r dwy flynedd diwetha dechre darllen mwy yn y Gymraeg, er o'n i'n siarad Cymraeg [...]. Mae 'y Nghymraeg i wedi gwella - wy'n far mwy, far mwy, lot mwy cyfforddus yn siarad. Mae geirfa fi'n well [...] ac am y tro cynta erioed, ers i fi gadael yr ysgol, ble oedd rhaid [...] i fi darllen nofelau Cymraeg ar gyfer y Lefel O, o'n i'n dewis darllen hefyd. So fi'n credu dwi ddim yn gwbod os byddai i wedi wneud 'na, so os 'swn i 'di sefyll gartre, dwi ddim yn credu byddai i wedi, bydda i'n siarad sut gymaint o Gymraeg. Ti mod, dw i ddim yn credu.*

*Like Welsh things – they became things that I really wanted to do, that became of interest to me, and I took far more interest in Welsh music. I had never done that before. [...] So yes, that's when I really got interested, and the last two years I've started to read more Welsh, although I was already speaking Welsh. [...] My Welsh has improved – I'm far more, a lot more comfortable speaking it. My vocabulary is better, and for the first time ever, since I left school where I had to [...] read Welsh novels for O Level, I have begun to choose to read. So I don't think that I would have done that if I had stayed at home – I don't think I would have spoken so much Welsh. You know, I don't think so.*

What Heulwen, and a number of other respondents articulated was the feeling that in London they could express their identities (on a number of fronts) with a greater sense of freedom – 'on their own terms'. Gwawr had grown up in a Welsh speaking family in the north of England and had been bullied at the local English school for speaking Welsh. She talked about the way in which she had been able to reclaim her identity in London:

*Because for so long I would not speak Welsh and I think part of my progress when I came to London was to try and re-identify with my cultural background, my Welsh cultural background and the feeling that I had lost a bit of my jigsaw by re-learning Welsh. So that has been a lot of my experience of being Welsh in London, the learning*

of my language in a foreign land to a certain extent. So it has been interesting, an interesting one.

(Gwawr, therapist, 30s; moved to London in the early 1990s)

Marc, for instance felt that “[...] be’ sydd gennyf fi yn fan hyn dw i ddim yn cael yng Nghymru ydy rhyddid i fod pwy ydw i a rhyddid i fehafio fel dw i’n lico behafio. [...] Ella i fod yn Gymro a bod yn fi fy hun heb gael ‘y marnu gan neb arall” (“[...] *what I have here that I don’t have in Wales is the freedom to be who I want and the freedom to behave as I want to behave. [...] I can be Welsh and be me myself without being judged by anyone else*”) (Marc, actor, 30s; moved to London in the 1990s). Heulwen also stated a belief that she could be more herself in London than back home in Wales: “[...] wy’n credu galla i bod mwy fi fy hun yn Llundain mewn ffordd, na byddai i os o’n i di mynd yn ôl gartre, yn enwedig yn ôl i Lanelli. Galla i byth dychmygu symud yn ôl i Lanelli” (“[...] *I think that I am able to be more me myself in London, in a way, than I would if I had gone back home, especially back to Llanelli. I couldn’t ever imagine moving back to Llanelli*”) (Heulwen, working with social services, 20s; moved to London in the early 1990s).

For a number of gay respondents - especially those from small rural communities, moving to London had meant that they could be both Welsh and ‘out’ more easily, a situation that mirrors the experience of homosexual people in Ireland according to Gray (2000: 68): “The socio-political climate of Ireland, north and south, has ... been a factor in gay and lesbian emigration.” Bell & Valentine (1995) suggest that ‘coming out’ in metropolitan centres may be easier than doing so in many rural areas. The anonymity and heterogeneity of such spaces, and the more developed lesbian and gay social networks in large cities are implicated in this.

James had originally come from north Wales, and after spending time working in France had returned to Britain, finding work in London. Having explained that his choice of London was partly because of the lack of opportunities within his chosen career in Wales, he went on to express the reasons why many of his gay friends had moved to the city:

James        [...] there is a lot of Welsh gay people up here. The vast majority of people I know are gay. It's because - I don't mean to shock you now, it's because they don't feel happy going home to Wales.

JS            So it is [as] if London offers them some kind of liberation maybe, the freedom to ...

James        Especially Welsh speaking people from small communities ... You know I have got friends, very good friends who have moved back to Wales and now are thinking of moving back here, because they honestly have no ... On that Friday when there was that bomb [in a pub in Soho], they had nobody to talk to about it. They phoned here ... they didn't have any support. Whereas up here you do have support structures.

(James, teacher, 20s; moved to London in the late 1980s)

As Knopp (1995) states, "The density and cultural complexity of cities ... has led to frequent portrayals of sexual diversity and freedom as peculiarly urban phenomena. As a result, minority sexual subcultures, and the communities and social movements sometimes associated with these, have tended to be more institutionally developed in cities than elsewhere".

### **Cosmopolitan Identities – the Consumption of Diversity and Difference**

The ability to freely express and develop a personal sense of identity in London that these respondents spoke of was partly attributed to living in a large metropolitan centre. A big city offered feelings of anonymity, and the acceptance of different ways of living. For such migrants, the cultural diversity and difference that could be engaged with in a major international city such as London had often acted either as a shaping factor in their migration decisions, or at the very least an attractive

lifestyle that they had to some extent bought into upon arrival. As I go on to suggest, this marks a change in emphasis from the experiences of previous generations of migrants, and it has important implications in terms of the kind of involvement that people seek with Welsh life in London. It is Hannerz's (1990: 239-240) contention that such engagement with the 'other' – with different cultures, is linked to issues of identity and the self. The consumption and identity practices of this sub group of 'new' migrants might usefully be conceptualised in terms of Hannerz's notion of cosmopolitan identity that engages with cultural difference: "... Cosmopolitanism in a stricter sense includes a stance toward diversity itself, toward the coexistence of cultures in the individual experience ... The cosmopolitan's surrender to the alien culture implies personal autonomy vis-à-vis the culture where he originated. He has his obvious competence with regard to it, but he can choose to disengage from it. He possesses it, it does not possess him." As Gray (2000: 76) states in relation to members of the new wave of middle class London Irish that she interviewed: "Most of those who took part in my research articulated a cosmopolitan sense of identity in London, which related to what they described as their exposure to and experience of diverse cultures and identities."

The concept of a cosmopolitan identity resonates with two other studies that have considered the interconnections between place, identity and globalisation, focusing upon middle class consumption practices in London. Cook & Crang (1996: 131) for instance, examined what they term the "local globalisation of culinary culture" in the city. Their concern was with how London had become the meeting point of a collection of world cuisines, to which different kinds of knowledges could

be attached. They describe “how globally extensive networks and flows of foods, people and culinary knowledge are being articulated ... in a fashioning of London as a cosmopolitan metropolis” (Cook and Crang, 1996: 132). May (1996) conducted an ethnographic study that looked at the appeal of Stoke Newington (an area in north London) to what he terms “cultural class residents” (1996: 194). He argues that “many of the area’s middle class residents have been drawn to Stoke Newington in search of diversity and difference” (1996: 205). However, a key theme that runs through May’s analysis is that the consumption of such cultural diversity should not necessarily be equated with a more progressive sense of place. He suggests that his respondents were to some extent holding on to traditional, place-bounded identities in their engagement with different cultures. The opportunity to engage with ‘different cultures’ and language was one thing that made living in a major city appeal to Dewi. He contrasted the range of activities, foods and languages which he could sample in London, with the much more limited leisure life that he inhabited when he returned to his home in mid Wales. When asked what appealed about London, he said:

Wy’n credu beth sy’n apelio yw’r *contrast*. Wedwch bo’ fi’n ôl yn y pentre. Wel beth yn ni’n wneud, yn ni’n mynd lawr i’r tafarn, yn ni’n cwrdd â ffrindiau, ond fydd na ddim [cyfle] ‘da fi wneud pethe fel siarad Ffrangeg, fydda i ddim yn cael siawns i mynd i weld y theatr, ddim siawns ‘da fi mynd i ryw *restaurant*, *Thai Restaurant*, neu ryw *Afghan restaurant* [...] ddim siawns ‘da fi mynd i ryw *galleries*, neu, *displays*. Oherwydd bod *exhibitions* i gael wedwch, er enghraifft yn Llundain, yn Earls Court neu Wembley. Wel wy’n jyst popo lawr yr heol os oes diddordeb ‘da fi - mae cymaint o pethe yn digwydd yn enwedig yn Llundain, fel allwch chi ddychmygu, [...] chi’mod dysgu dawnsio’r Salsa, ni’n cwrdd lan â dynion Sbaenwyr, y Mecsicanwyr a bwyta bwyd fel *Mexican restaurant* [...] mae cymaint o *tapas bars*[...]. Chi ddim yn cael nhw yn ôl adref, so achos ni ‘na un o’r rhesymau pam wy’n [...] gwerthfawrogi dinasoedd [...].

*I think what appeals is the contrast. Say now that I'm back in my home village. What we do is to go to the pub, we meet our friends, but we can't do things like learn French, or go to the theatre. I don't have the chance to go to a Thai Restaurant or an Afghan Restaurant [...] or to go to galleries or displays. Because there are exhibitions for instance, in London, in Earls Court or Wembley. I just pop down the road if I'm interested – there are so many things happening, especially in London, as you can*

*imagine [...] you know, learning to do Salsa dancing, we meet Spanish people, Mexican people and eat food like in a Mexican Restaurant [...] there are so many tapas bars [...]. You don't get those back home, so because of that, that's one of the reasons why I [...] value cities [...].*  
(Dewi, engineer, 30s; moved to London in 1992)

The sense of diversity and choice of leisure activities was also something which Heulwen discussed: “Fi’n lico’r egni, dw i’n lico’r ffaith bod hi’n fisi. Fi’n lico’r ffaith bod ‘na lot o ddewis [...]. Wy’n lico cadw i fynd, wneud lot o wahanol pethe” (“*I like the energy, I like the fact that it’s busy [here]. I like the fact there’s lots of choice [...]. I like to keep going, to do lots of different things*”) (Heulwen, working with social services, 20s; moved to London in the early 1990s).

## **Identity and Organisations**

As suggested in Chapter 5, many older respondents defined their Welsh identity in London primarily through membership of community organisations, such as the London Welsh Centre or a chapel. More recently arrived migrants spoke of identities that were on the whole more individualised and less anchored through involvement in formal institutions. In conceptualising how such an identity might function, Gans’s (1979) thesis concerning ‘symbolic ethnicity’ is extremely helpful. Although his analysis might now appear somewhat dated (especially in relation to studying a new generation of migration taking place from the 1980s onwards), and notwithstanding his focus on third generation ethnic Americans rather than actual migrants, the theoretical framework he puts forward makes a number of important points about how such individualised identities might interact with formal, organised ethnic organisations. Gans believed that a rise in interest in ethnicity in late 1970s America had been mistaken for an actual revival among American ethnic groups. He

argued that among third and fourth generations of such groups “acculturation and assimilation ... continue[d]to take place” (1979: 1) According to Gans, new forms of ethnic behaviour were emerging that were more personalised and less defined through membership of ethnic organisations. In this scenario, symbols took the place of cultural practices, hence the notion of ‘symbolic ethnicity’: “Since ethnic identity needs are neither intense nor frequent in this generation ... ethnics do not need either ethnic cultures or organisations; instead they resort to the use of ethnic symbols” (Gans: 1979: 1). He goes on to state:

Symbolic ethnicity ... does not require functioning groups or networks; feelings of identity can be developed by allegiances to symbolic groups that never meet, or to collectivities that meet only occasionally, and exist as groups only for a handful of officers that keep them going ... Symbolic Ethnicity does not need a practised culture, even if the symbols are borrowed from it. To be sure, symbolic culture is as much culture as practised culture, but the latter persists only to supply symbols to the former. (1979: 12)

One of the most interesting aspects of Gans’s paper is his thoughts on how those people practising ‘symbolic ethnicity’ continue to have some involvement with ethnic organisations. He surmises that engagement with organised, formal life becomes more occasional (membership of “collectivities that only meet occasionally”), and has to be fitted in among many other activities; it must not demand excessive or inflexible commitment: “Most people look for easy and intermittent ways of expressing their identity, for ways that do not conflict with other ways of life. As a result, they refrain from ethnic behaviour that requires an arduous or time consuming commitment, either to a culture that must be practised constantly, or to organisations that demand active membership” (Gans, 1979: 8).



For the group of middle class, professional migrants that I interviewed in London at the end of the 1990s, the ways in which they negotiated their identities displayed strong traits of both cosmopolitanism and individualisation. Their personal Welsh identities are not expressed *primarily* through membership of a community: “Some thoughts about tonight. Completely different sense of Welshness - defined through the individual and through language, rather than through the institution” (Research Diary, October, 1998). It is a relativised, de-centred engagement, one point of a wider set of references in understanding who they are (Gray, 2000). This is not to say that being Welsh is any less important, but it is practised in different ways in which identity is not so closely connected with formal institutions or societies. On the whole, involvement with organised Welsh life is less intense and has to be informal, occasional and flexible enough to be slotted in to a life that is full of many other activities (Gans, 1979). Simultaneously, ‘traditional’ Welsh societies such as the chapel and the London Welsh Centre are ‘losing ground’. Their activities have been premised upon exactly the kind of involvement that today’s migrants are rejecting or at the very least find uncomfortable - an all-encompassing community that is the primary focus of people’s lives, and long term commitment, with regular attendance at formal meetings and concerts. But this should not be misinterpreted as the decline or demise of all Welsh societies or collective Welsh life in the city. A new set of social Welsh networks is growing in London, that meets the identity needs of contemporary Welsh migrants very closely. These new networks create spaces where new ways of being Welsh can be worked out. And both in terms of how they operate, and the

ways in which people use them, they provide a clear example of cosmopolitan, individualised Welsh identities in practice.

### **New networks**

The growth of a number of new social networks should not be seen as marking an absolute break with the past, or as being the only area of Welsh life in London that is currently developing. The London Welsh Rugby club, for instance, which is one of the longest established Welsh organisations in London is highly popular and both its sporting and social events are extremely well supported. During the 1990s a number of networks have been established in London that are more firmly located within the 'business' set, such as *Wales in London* and The Saint David's Club. Yet essentially these are also best described as social networks, albeit for a particular section of the Welsh community. I concentrate here upon three social networks that have a broader appeal among middle class, professional Welsh people, and which provide good examples of the shifting nature of Welsh life in London. I consider first the way in which these networks construct highly informal, de-centred spaces of Welshness, before turning to examine how my respondents use such spaces in order to work out their own senses of identity.

The largest and most prominent of the three networks is SWS, which in Welsh means 'kiss', and is an acronym for the full title of 'Social, Welsh and Sexy'. Founded by Stifyn Pari (a high profile Welsh media figure) in 1995, it organises bi-monthly social events in London pubs and clubs. While such evenings are frequented by Welsh media figures and other famous individuals such as Ffion

Hague (who once worked in the Welsh Office and is married to the ex-Conservative leader William Hague), there is also a very wide cross section of people in the society, including many Welsh professionals. In describing the membership of SWS Stifyn Pari said that “Mae genna i’r *mailing list* neisa yn Llundain o ran Cymreictdod achos mae genna i pawb a phopeth arno fo ti’n gwbod – y *top nobs* i gyd, a pobl cyffredin yn wneud *jobs*, ti mod. Mae ‘na beilot, mae ‘na tacsii *drivers*, mae ‘na *psychologists*, mae ‘na lot o athrawon [...]” (“*I have the nicest mailing list in London as far as Welshness is concerned, because it contains everyone and everything, you know – all the top nobs, and people doing jobs, you know. There’s a pilot, there are taxi drivers, there are psychologists, there are a lot of teachers [...]*”). Since its inaugural meeting of about 40 people, SWS now boasts a membership of well over a thousand, and has established itself in New York and other major cities abroad<sup>1</sup>.

Gwl@d is a particularly interesting network in that it is not specifically based in London. Gwl@d runs an Internet site which is concerned with Welsh rugby, and includes news about fixtures, teams and results, sells rugby clothing, and has a chat page. ‘Gwlad’ is the Welsh term for country or nation, and the use of Internet ‘@’ signifies a combination of traditional patriotism and new technology. Its social activities in London started as a kind of spin off, resulting from an e-mail sent to the chat board in March 1999. For several years the fact that many members lived in London (including one of the organisers) was not widely known. The e-mail invited Gwl@ders to a St. David’s Day celebration in a city centre pub:

*Gwl@d’s web-site was started in September 1997. Dai moved to London in 1996. He and a couple of friends thought about organising a club/society, but it never took off. This year one of them sent an e-mail to Gwl@d’s web-site inviting any Welsh people in London to celebrate St. David’s Day in the*

Lord Moon of the Mall, for some Welsh bonding, a beer up and a sing up. He said 'Just turn up'. It's a Wetherspoon's pub and they were meant to be doing Welsh beer and lamb burgers, but there were none there when they arrived. About 40-50 people turned up that night.  
(Research Diary, September 1999)

Since then Gwl@d has grown significantly, and now holds regular social evenings in pubs in London, as well as a weekly rugby practice in Regents Park. In a similar vein to SWS, Gwl@d's in New York have set up their own social activities, playing rugby in Central Park.

The third network is that of y Noson o Hwyl (a Night of Fun) organised by the London Cell (or branch) of Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg (The Welsh Language Society). Y Noson o Hwyl is essentially a pub crawl conducted in the medium of Welsh that takes place once a month, centred upon a different area of London each time that it meets (see figure 6.1). Every other month the pub crawl ends at the London Welsh Centre in Gray's Inn Road. Cymdeithas yr Iaith holds its main meetings in a pub in north London and also organises a Cylch Darllen (or reading group). A smaller and less public society is Y Gymdeithas Hoywon (The Gay Society) which allows gay Welsh men and women to socialise mainly through the medium of Welsh, and again is based around social evenings in bars rather than more formal meetings.

The key purpose of groups such as SWS and y Noson o Hwyl is to allow Welsh people in London to meet within a social context, and to some extent therefore, they are perpetuating the work of more traditional London Welsh societies. Though the chapel, for instance, is a primarily religious institution, Chapter 5

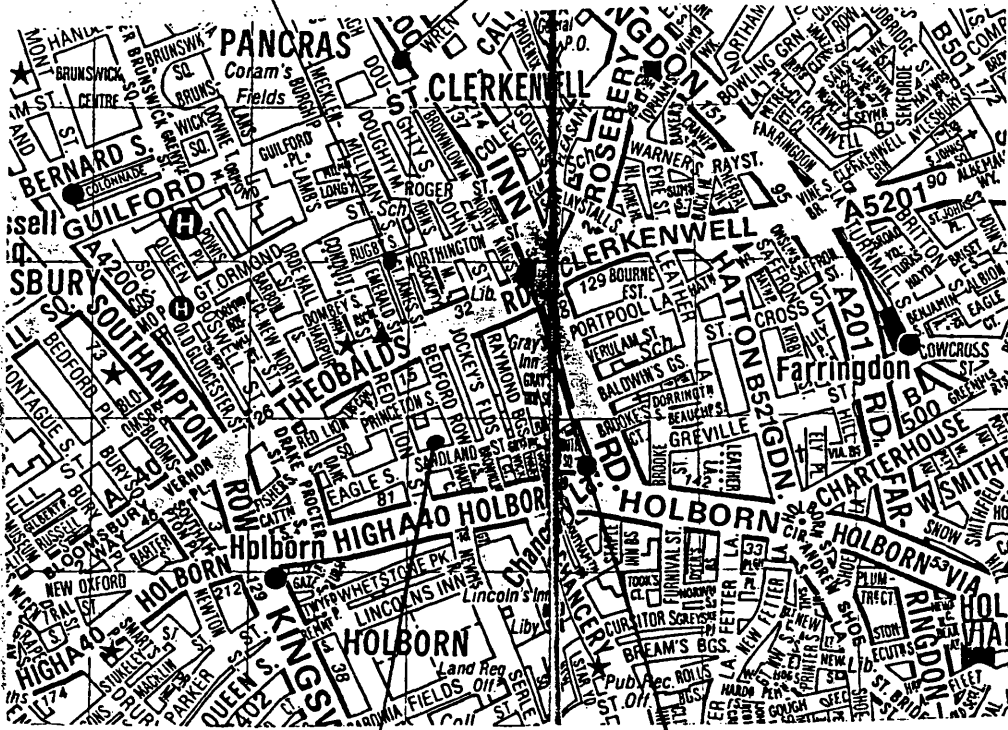
# DYDD LLYWELYN

(11/12/1998)

CANOLFAN CYMRY LLUNDAIN

"RUGBY TAVERN"  
\* 21:00

\* 22:00



"YORKSHIRE GREY"  
\* 20:00

"THREE CUPS"  
\* 19:00

\* 19:00

6.1: A route guide for a Noson o Hwyl

demonstrated that one of its key roles (and indeed appeals) has been to provide a place in which Welsh people can meet socially. One of the main differences however in the work of new social networks, is that organising social events is their primary or exclusive function, rather than forming part of a wider range of activities. The ‘social’ has been promoted and ‘skimmed off’ from other aspects of collective Welsh life, such as the educational or religious. Though SWS and Cymdeithas yr Iaith have undertaken some campaigning work and also helped support fundraising projects at the London Welsh School, there are generally few longer-term ambitions amongst those running these societies that stretch beyond social evenings. James, who is involved with Cymdeithas yr Iaith in London explained that “It is more of a social thing now, Cymdeithas” (James, teacher, 20s; moved to London in the late 1980s). Eric, another member, suggested this was partly because the political agenda being pursued by the society back home did not have the same meaning for a branch outside of Wales: “We can’t go round sort of trying to persuade shops to have bilingual signs in London – it doesn’t really mean anything” (Eric; surveyor, 40s; moved to London in 1979). He felt that the key role for Cymdeithas in London was to allow people to socialise in the Welsh language:

Yes it is largely a social thing. There are no two ways about it, it is largely social. The [London] Cymdeithas yr Iaith isn’t really like the Cymdeithas yr Iaith in Wales, from the point of view that we don’t really have any political agenda. That said, we have had. I went on a demonstration outside Marks and Sparks once in Baker Street about their policy of not being bilingual at the time. They changed shortly after that – I am sure that was totally down to us! I think we see as our mission statement giving people an opportunity to socialise through the Welsh language.

An informalisation in London Welsh life is taking place as these societies grow. Formal, structured events such as meetings, concerts and lectures are being replaced by social evenings, parties and pub crawls. There is no set programme, no

agenda, no fixed beginning or end. Noson o Hwyl pub crawls are unpredictable events that take on different forms as they move around London; new people arrive part way through; others leave early, or break away from the main group; people get left behind as others drink more quickly. At the end of the evening the event can be continued at a participant's flat. The meanings that are inscribed upon these events by the organisers are limited and open. They are not about providing entertainment but rather creating a space in which people can entertain themselves, and define the evening in their own way. Stifyn Pari explained in relation to SWS that “[Does] ‘na ddim *structure* iddo fo. Achos [...] dw i ddim yn Dduw, so pam ddylwn i *structuro* be’ ddylai pobl wneud yn eu noson Cymreig, Cymraeg nhw yn Llundain [...]?’” (*“There is no structure to it. Because [...] I’m not God, so why should I structure what people should do with their Welsh language or culture evening in London [...]?”*). He described SWS as a kind of platform which people could use to do whatever they wanted – “SWS ydy’r bobl” (*“SWS is the people”*):

Yr unig beth dw i’n wneud ydy heirio ystafell, a mae pobl yn diddanu eu hunain. Mae pobl yn *minglo* ac yn ffeindio cariadon, ffeindio *flats*, ffeindio ffrindiau, ffeindio bob math o beth. Ond dw i jyst yn creu’r platform ar gyfer iddyn nhw wneud beth lican nhw.

*The only thing that I do is hire the room, and people entertain themselves. People mingle and find partners, find flats, find friends, find all kinds of things. But I just create the platform for them to do whatever they want.*

The informal, social character of such societies was stressed by a number of people who attended them. Eleri said of SWS that “**it was just a chance for people to meet and have a drink**” (Eleri, teacher, 30s; moved to London in the early 1980s) (Research Diary, February, 1999), and Ben employed almost exactly the same phrase to describe y Noson o Hwyl: “**Mae’n jyst siawns i bobl gael peint, a dod i**

nabod ei gilydd” (“*It’s just a chance for people to have a pint and to get to know each other*”) (Ben, 20s; moved to London in the mid 1990s) (Research Diary, January 1999). Gary, who was a regular member of Gwl@d explained that it was informal, pointing to how evident this was after I had been to one of their social nights – “*You saw it for yourself*” (Gary, 20s; moved to London in 1996) (Research Diary, September, 1999). A research participant who had been involved with the Gay Society told me: “The idea was purely and simply to give people who are gay and Welsh speaking a social thing to get together [...]”.

The way in which social networks such as y Noson o Hwyl and SWS are organised also contrasts strongly with the formal management structures and committees of many of the older Welsh societies. As Hetherington & Law (2000: 127) suggest, “Networks are complex arrangements of space with no clear centre or dependence upon hierarchical relations of difference”. The running of the social networks often falls to a small group of individuals as part of flexible, loosely structured committees. Describing the running of y Noson o Hwyl, one of the key organisers explained that:

[... ] mae’r cwbl yn answyddogol chi’mod? ‘S neb yn gweud wrthaf i ‘Reit John gwneud hwn’, chi’mod? Mae fi ac Alun S yw’r rhan fwyaf *really*, ond mae pobl eraill yn jyst pitcho mewn â pethe hefyd, so ‘na ni. Jyst esgus i gwrdd lan *really*. Wy’n gwerthfawrogi’r cyfle [...] i siarad bach o Gymraeg, wel unwaith y mis yntefe.

[...] and the whole things is unofficial, you know. No one says to me ‘Right John do this’, you know? Me and Alun S are the main part of it really, but other people just pitch in with things as well, so there we are. Just an excuse to meet up. I appreciate the chance [...] to speak a bit of Welsh once a month.  
(Dewi, engineer, 30s; moved to London in 1992)

And according to Stifyn Pari, SWS has a very similar structure:



JS A oes pwyllgor yn dal i fod?  
SP Na. Wel mae 'na bobl dw i'n ffonio, mae 'na bobl sy'n fwy gweithgar na'i gilydd - mae 'na bobl sydd ddim ar y pwllgor sy'n weithgar, mae 'na bobl sydd ar y pwyllgor sy'n weithgar, ond dw i jyst yn defnyddio pwy bynnag sy'n ffres ar y pryd ac yn barod i roi eu hegri nhw. Achos fi sy'n wneud y penderfyniadau yn y diwedd *anyway* [...]. So na dw i ddim yn, dwn i ddim am bwyllgorau dim mwy.

JS *And is there still a committee?*  
SP *No. Well there are people I phone, and there are people who are more active than others - there are people who are not on the committee who are active, there are people on the committee who are active, but I just use whoever is fresh at the time and ready to give their energy. Because it's me who makes the decision in the end anyway [...]. So no I don't, I don't know about committees anymore.*

The shift towards more informal collective Welsh identities in London during the 1990s has been manifested partly through new geographies. There is a move towards a wider, multifaceted network of social groups that replaces the concentration of Welsh life around the chapel and the London Welsh Centre. Once again it is possible to trace strong parallels with the changing terrain of Irish life in London. Gray (2000: 71) describes “an expansion of points of reference for the Irish in London and a de-centring of the Catholic Church as the main focus for the Irish community.” This de-centring of Welsh life also operates at the level of individual societies as well. It is precisely those institutions which have a formal central base, that focus their activities around a building, that are suffering the most acute reduction in membership levels. For members of London Welsh chapels and the London Welsh Centre, the appeal of such institutions is not only the range of activities that are brought under one roof, but also the building within which they take place. The most successful of Welsh societies in London at the end of the 1990s have no centre or building around which their events are concentrated. SWS – which is the largest Welsh society in London, is run from a garden conservatory in east

London. Along with y Noson o Hwyl it is mobile, meets in different places, establishing a fleeting presence. Caroline - a member at the London Welsh Centre, suggested that this lack of attachment to a building, of looking into a centre, could not be more different to the ideas of previous generations of Welsh people in London:

[...] the interesting thing about SWS is that they meet I believe, in hotels and places around London. [...] Before we [at the LWC] had this premises [...] the hoteliers had always played a large part, and one specific one used to give rooms. Because in the early part of the century, in the early newspapers they said 'You know, we haven't got a home'. Someone wrote as a homeless tramp - 'Alright, we have a community that works through the chapels, but we have no home', *[signed] from a homeless tramp*. And then the hoteliers, the particular hotelier gave rooms for the use of a sort of club room, once a week, but they still wanted a home, until finally this gentleman up here [points to a portrait] sort of gave this [land] to the community. And this was to be [...] a National Centre for Wales [...]. The thing about SWS [is that] whereas people were bewailing the fact that they had no centre and that they were meeting in hotels, the reverse is happening now. We have the centre, but because I think the location is not so good they want be in the West End, they're now back to meeting in the hotels [...] so that's been a bit of a turnabout.

(Caroline, 50s; born in London)

One potential disadvantage of not operating from a central fixed place is that social networks do not have a building in London to provide a visible presence in the city, or from which to disseminate information to actual or potential members. In fact, no London Welsh organisation has constructed any kind of building during the last thirty years. The London Welsh Centre and the still extensive scattering of Welsh chapels across the city are much more prominent in the capital's streets, even when they are no longer being used for Welsh activities. The Charing Cross chapel in central London, for example, is now a night club (see figure 3.5), but retains Welsh inscriptions upon its walls. The new social networks are clearly communicating very well to the contemporary generation of Welsh migrants, however. The use of Internet and e-mail technologies has to some extent allowed the

move away from central bases in London, and is crucial to the operation of a number of networks, such as Gwl@d. They might be thought of as what Mitchell (1995) terms 'virtual communities': "Today as telepresence augments and sometimes substitutes for physical presence, and as more and more business and social interactions shift into cyberspace, we are finding that accessibility depends even less on propinquity, and community has come increasingly unglued from geography. Our network connections are becoming as important to us as our bodily locations" (1995: 166).

To some extent these new technologies are employed to sustain connections between Welsh people within London, creating an electronic ethnic group in the city. The kind of person that events such as y Noson o Hwyl or SWS attract, frequently have access to e-mail and the Internet in the workplace. Once having decided to find out about what Welsh events were happening in London, many research participants described how they started by searching the Internet for Welsh 'sites' in London:

Several people ... told me that they had found out about this event [y Noson o Hwyl] through the Internet.  
(Research Diary, August, 1998)

One person told me that everyone had found out about Gwl@d because one of their friends had told them to look at the web site.  
(Research Diary, September, 1999)

The networks publicise their existence via such homepages, which in the case of Gwl@d is the key focus of its activities. But they are also able to communicate more narrowly to their members/participants via e-mail lists. Such lists are an extremely effective and easy way of binding together a disparate group of

Welsh people in the city. News about a group's activities can be communicated quickly, and events can be arranged or altered at short notice. There are at least five or six such mailing lists in existence, including those managed by Gwl@d, SWS, y Noson o Hwyl, and Dyddiadur Llundain (London Diary). Dyddiadur Llundain provides a comprehensive list of Welsh events taking place in London and lists the contact details for nearly every Welsh organisation and society in the city. It is becoming one of the key centres for Welsh life in London, but it is based in cyberspace rather than in a building. It highlights the relativised role of the London Welsh Centre, which is no longer the only place which people in the city can refer to for information on Welsh life. Mailing lists can also be used by individual members (who may also have their own personal set of addresses for friends, etc) to communicate more personal news, such as the birth of a baby, or to ask for help in finding accommodation for a person they know coming up to London. It is exactly this kind of role that chapel once performed, and has re-emerged in these electronic networks.

To a certain extent therefore, the Internet and e-mail are being harnessed to sustain quite traditional kinds of community within London. But they are also often creating 'online' communities that stretch beyond London or that operate in multiple and de-centred locations. Gwl@d's web site, for instance, though managed by someone living in London, is not focused exclusively upon any one geographical location. People from many different countries interact with the web site (including those in Wales). The social activities that Gwl@d organises take place in many locations, such as New York, Sydney and London. Launched in London, SWS has

also gained an international character, having established a branch in New York. The Welsh identities being constructed by societies such as SWS are not always constituted by an inevitable attachment or primary reference back to Wales. Indeed, especially in the case of Gwl@d, multiple connections between Welsh people around the world (which includes those in Wales as one point of reference among many) may be just as important. Clifford (1997: 250) has suggested that for diasporas: “decentred, lateral connections may be as important as those formed around a teleology of origin/return.” And Brah (1996: 190) states that “diasporas are composite formations with members of a single diaspora likely to be spread across several different parts of the world ... The concept of diaspora specifies a matrix of economic, political and cultural inter-relationships between the various components of a dispersed group.” To some extent, therefore, these networks are constructing diasporic identities in and through London, at the same time as sustaining a more traditional kind of community.

### **Dipping in – dipping out: individual engagement with new social networks**

As was suggested earlier, for the individuals who have migrated to London during the 1980s and 1990s, their identity - their sense of being Welsh, was extremely important to them. But the ways in which they expressed and practised this identity through membership of organised, collective Welsh life were very different to those of previous generations of migrants, and displayed clear signs of what Hannerz describes as a cosmopolitan identity. Attracted to London by career opportunities and lifestyle choices, they were often very keen to actively engage with the diverse experiences that living in the city offered during their initial years of

living there, rather than basing their leisure time primarily around a Welsh community. When they began to seek involvement with a Welsh network, this was one aspect of their lives, rather than the dominant one; it was fitted in amongst their many other commitments and interests. As Gans (1979) suggests in relation to the individualisation of identity, people seek an occasional, informal engagement with Welsh networks that does not require long term, time consuming commitment or interfere with other aspects of life.

A number of these respondents described how they had spent several years in London before making the decision to join a Welsh society, or find events where they could meet other Welsh people. The lack of a sense of urgency contrasted very much with the experiences of older respondents, for whom seeking involvement with a Welsh community had been an early priority when they arrived in London. As Tecwyn stated: “Y peth cynta’ ar ôl i ni ddod i Lunden, aethon i ‘whilo am gapel” (*“The first thing we did when we came to London was to look for a chapel”*) (Tecwyn, retired dairy owner, 50s; moved to London in the 1950s). Eleri (who had come to London in the early 1990s) explained how she had not become involved in Welsh life for some time after arriving in the city. For her, moving to London was partly about seeing what kind of different cultural experiences could be bought into. And she suggested that many young people coming to London today shared this experience – they were looking for ‘something different’:

Mae rhaid i fi gyfaddef, wnes i ddim troi yn y byd Cymraeg a Chymreig rhyw lawer i ddechrau, a rwy'n credu bod hynny'n duedd cyffredin ym myd pobl ifanc sy'n dod i Lundain. Dy'n nhw [pobl ifanc heddiw] ddim am ddilyn bywyd Cymreig – maen nhw'n chwilio am rywbeth gwahanol. Ro'n i'n barod i weld beth arall oedd ar gael yma.

*I have to admit, I didn't get involved in Welsh life that much at the start, and I think that it is a common tendency among young people who come to London. They [young people] don't want to follow Welsh life – they are looking for something different. I was ready to see what other things were here.*

(Eleri, teacher, 30s; moved to London in the early 1980s)

Maria had also spent some years in London before becoming involved with Welsh societies. It was her view that contemporary migrants were coming to London to gain distance from life back home, to experience a different kind of culture. In such a move, immediate immersion in a Welsh community in London defeated the whole object of migration; at least in the short term, Welsh life is left behind, and mentally located in Wales:

[...] y peth ydy, mae rhywun yn dod i Lunden i ddod i ffwrdd. Mae'r byd Cymraeg adre mewn ffordd yr adeg hynny. [...] am ryw bum mlynedd do'n i ddim wedi bod yn rhan, do'n i ddim wedi bod yn agos i'r capeli Cymraeg, do'n i ddim [...] wedi bod yn mynd [...] nid pum mlynedd falle, tair, rhyw bedair falle [ar ôl cyrraedd yn Llundain].

*[...] the thing is, one comes to London to come away. The world of Welsh things is back home in a way, at that time. [...] for some five years I hadn't been part of, I hadn't been near a chapel; I didn't go for five, three, some four years perhaps [after arriving in London].*

(Maria, working for a bank, 30s; moved to London in the late 1980s)

Many respondents described how their eventual decision to seek out other Welsh people in London or join a formal society was triggered by a major life event. For Gwawr this was the end of a relationship that made her think reflexively about the kind of life she wanted:

And then when I came here [...] it was quite an interesting process, because for the first two years that I was in London I did not make any Welsh connections what so ever [...]. Then at the end of two years I realised this was really not the kind of life I wanted [...] - [I] decided I really had to do something about my social life, and where I was going to be most socially comfortable was finding people with the same background as me, the same cultural background. So that is how I started getting involved.

(Gwawr, therapist, 30s; moved to London in the early 1990s)

For Adam, the breaking up of a long term relationship had also been an impetus for making a purposeful effort to socialise with other Welsh people in London:

Symudodd e i Lundain. Daeth e gyda'i gariad. Saesnes oedd hi. Dyna un o'r rhesymau pam nad oedd e'n mynd ma's i chwilio am Gymry. Falle bydde hi'n teimlo'n annifyr, peidio ffitio i mewn pe byddai hi fod mewn sefyllfa lle oedd pobl yn siarad Cymraeg. Ar ôl dwy flynedd gwahanon nhw. Gwnaeth e benderfynu chwilio am Gymry.

*He moved to London. He came with his partner. She was English. That's one of the reasons why he didn't go out to find Welsh people. Perhaps she would have felt uneasy, wouldn't have fitted in, if she was to find herself in a situation where people were speaking Welsh. After two years they separated. He decided to find other Welsh people.*

(Adam, working in public relations, 20s; arrived in London in the mid 1990s)  
(Research Diary, September, 1999)

In Eric's case, a good friend had died, and his funeral became a defining moment:

[...] it was the first time in my adult life that I had been to something entirely in Welsh. It had a dramatic effect on me and I suppose like a lot of Welsh people that live outside of Wales, I said to myself 'I would like to learn Welsh at some stage of my life', and I actually decided that rather than just sort of *thinking*, 'I will [actually] *learn* Welsh'; that was the time I decided I would actually do it. One thing leads to another and through that I met some other good friends who are still very good friends and I suppose I got more into the organised side of Welsh life in London.

(Eric, surveyor, 40s; moved to London in 1979)

Such turning points had therefore led people to think in highly reflexive ways about their own identities, the kinds of lives they wanted to lead, and to re-evaluate how being involved in some kind of Welsh community was important to them. As Cohen (1997) suggests in relation to diasporas, return can be a symbolic as well as a physical journey.

For Maria and Eleri, the decision to become involved in Welsh life in London has developed to the point that it is now the main focus of their lives. But for the majority of people, although their engagement with Welsh life was important,



it was one aspect of their lives, rather than the dominant one. This was a characteristic that I had begun to see clearly from an early stage in the fieldwork: “This morning I spoke to Kate ... She has lots of guests at the moment - some of them from America. Her network of friends is not primarily based around Welsh people ...” (Kate, graphic designer, 20s; moved to London in the 1990s) (Research diary, August 1998). As Gwawr suggested:

I think maybe a big difference that I pick up from people who are a generation above me in their fifties and sixties [...] is that they did see themselves as a community. Maybe they were less engaged in London culture and more engaged in Welsh culture and I think that the balance has shifted in that most younger Welsh people in London now have a spread of friends and a spread of social life and they do not orientate themselves always back to London Welsh people or Welsh people.  
(Gwawr, therapist, 30s; moved to London in the early 1990s)

Emma, who had been born in London and had attended a Welsh chapel in London for over seventy years also spoke of a shift in the nature of London Welsh life which was manifested in the changing attitudes of young migrants moving to the city:

Wy'n credu bod bywyd heddiw mor wahanol, ddim yr un mor glos ag oedd e yn y gorffennol. Dydy bobl – roedden nhw'n gorfod chwilio am eu hadloniant os mynnwch chi, yng nghymdeithas y Capel. Yno oedd o, ond dyw e ddim bellach. Mae nhw [y bobl ifanc heddiw] yn gallu'i cael e y tu allan.

*I think that life today is so different, and not as close as it was in the past. People [...] used to have to look for their entertainment if you like, in the society of the chapel. That was where it was based, but it's not like that any more. They [young people today] are able to find it outside.*  
(Emma, retired missionary, 80s, left Wales in 1939)

For Dafydd (who had arrived in London in the 1930s) his membership of the Welsh chapel filled his life outside of work:

You went to chapel all day Sunday. You had Cwrdd Gweddi [Prayer Meeting] on Monday night, and you always had somewhere to go, didn't you then? And then on Tuesday night - we used to have something down there on Tuesday night, and then Wednesday night was Young People's Skills – you know? [...] you had somewhere to go practically every night of the week – it was very fulfilling.

(Dafydd, dairy owner, 80s; moved to London in 1937)

But for more recent migrants, their weekly lives are filled with much more diverse activities: “Eleri said that one night of the week she goes scuba diving, another night she is at ballet classes - each night is taken up with different activities - compare this with Dafydd who said that every night was filled with chapel activities” (Eleri, teacher, 30s; moved to London in the early 1980s) (Research Diary, October 1998). As Dewi explained about the way in which people involved themselves with Cymdeithas yr Iaith’s Noson o Hwyl:

Mae lot o bobl yn Llundon, maen nhw’n wneud lot o pethe bach mewn ffordd i ryw raddau. Falle mae diddordeb ‘da nhw [mewn] chwarae *squash*, a maen nhw’n wneud hwnna unwaith yr wythnos; efallai mae diddordeb ‘da nhw yn y dawnsio Salsa, a maen nhw’n wneud hwnna unwaith yr wythnos; so efallai maen nhw’n ymddiddori yn bach o [...] Cymdeithas yr Iaith.

*There are a lot of people in London - they do a lot of little things to some extent. Perhaps they have an interest in playing squash, and they do that once a week; perhaps they are interested in Salsa dancing, and they do that once a week; so perhaps they take an interest in a bit of [...] Cymdeithas yr Iaith.*  
(Dewi, engineer, 30s; moved to London in 1992)

Gwawr suggested that today, Welsh people in London did not wish to attend formal events in London; they needed to have flexible, informal gatherings that they could easily fit into their pressured daily lives:

JS            Would you say, I mean the impression I got from the younger people, I guess sort of my age, in their twenties and early thirties, the impression I get from nearly all of them is that they do not really want to go along to a concert or to something maybe very specific. They just want to go and socialise and meet.

Gwawr        Yes, they want to go to a pub and get pissed. They have got no interest in going along to a male voice choir. I mean we all go and we all think the music is beautiful and we all go and listen, but it is not a big part of our social calendar. It is an event every now and again in our social calendar. What young Welsh people want to do, and the not so young people I would say, anybody up to sort of the age of 45, they just want to meet in groups, have a good chat with people who are from a similar cultural

background and probably speak the same language and have the same view of the world and have the same sense of humour. They don't want to go along to a more formal, go to a concert and go home with the husband or the wife, because that is not our lifestyle. All of us who are in London, or the vast majority, are working in some form of profession. We are working very hard, we work extremely long hours and we do not have the leeway to schedule in formal, formalised events.

(Gwawr, therapist, 30s; moved to London in the early 1990s)

Gwawr gave her own reasons for finding the London Welsh Rugby Club attractive:

“It is a very easy place to be. You can sit in the corner and have a natter, you can be up by the bar, you can leave whenever you like. It is not a formalised event and therefore you can go along and be whoever you would like, have a chat with people and then disappear”. Kate, who is a member of SWS, felt a sense in which those people who only turned up occasionally to such events had become anglicised, only returning to their Welshness when it suited them - “I mean all those people will walk out of SWS and probably not think about it until the next month and they probably have very anglicised lifestyles” (Kate, graphic designer, 20s; moved to London in the 1990s).

### *Moving Away From the Networks.*

Many of the people who attended events organised by the recently founded Welsh networks in London described the process by which they used them as a way of developing a more personalised network of friends. As this happened, the need to attend fixed, pre-arranged social evenings diminished, as they could socialise among their own individual networks of friends. In such a way, official, organised social evenings such as SWS provide the starting point for a myriad of highly informal networks that take on a life of their own. As Heulwen explained:

[...] eleni dw i ddim yn credu fi 'di bod i Noson o Hwyl. Dw i ddim yn mynd i cyfarfodydd cell [Cymdeithas yr Iaith] rhagor [...]. Mae pobl wy 'di cwrdd â nhw, fi'n tueddu ffonio nhw lan, ar wahân [...]. Os o'n i moyn gweld Frank, neu 'swn i moyn gweld Bob, neu pwy bynnag, galla i ffonio nhw lan, a trefnu mynd mas am *drink* neu rywbeth. [...] Os o'n i moyn mynd i weld ffilm gallen ni fynd i weld ffilm, neu band neu pryd o fwyd - gallen ni nweud 'na *anyway*.

*[...] this year, I don't think that I've been to a Noson o Hwyl. I don't go to branch meetings [of Cymdeithas yr Iaith] any more [...]. I tend to phone people that I have met of my own accord. [...] If I wanted to see Frank or Bob, or whoever, I can give them a call and arrange to go for a drink or something. [...] if I wanted to go and see a film, we could go and see a film, or a band, or have a meal – we could do that anyway.*  
(Heulwen, working with social services, 20s; moved to London in the early 1990s)

One of the organisers of y Noson o Hwyl also acknowledged the way in which people would gradually drift away from the group: “Mae lot o bobl yn dal yn Llundon; [dw i] wedi cwrdd â amryw ar Noson o Hwyl - dod am gwpl o misoedd, a chi 'mod ac wedyn [...] maen nhw dechrau cael ffrindie eu hunen [...]” (“*A lot of people are still in London. I've met quite a few people at the Noson o Hwyl – people who come from a few months, and you know, then [...] they start making their own friends ...*”) (Dewi, engineer, 30s; moved to London in 1992). Adam also described the way in which he was beginning to move away from the formal structures of organised events towards his own network of friends: “Mae e'n dechrau cwrdd â phobl y tu fas i'r rhwydweithiau ffurfiol pwrpasol a gwneud ffrindiau - cymdeithasu y tu hwnt i'r rhwydweithiau wedi'u trefnu” (“*He is starting to meet people outside of the formal purposeful networks and to make friends - socialising beyond the organised networks*”) (Adam, working in public relations, 20s; arrived in London in the mid 1990s) (Research Diary, May 1999).

From this discussion about the way in which respondents had tended to move away from formal social Welsh networks, some broader points about Welsh life in London can be made, drawing upon Emrys Jones's (2001) discussion of the Welsh chapels in London. Jones examines the membership records for Y Tabernacl in King's Cross. At first sight the membership statistics indicate a stable institution up until the Second World War, and then a dramatic decline in members. Yet by plotting the number of people joining and leaving the chapel each year, he argues that the constant, high membership of the 1930s and 1940s hides a much more dynamic picture: "The congregation is not as stable as the first graph [plotting the total number of members] suggests, but is rather a balance between 'arrivals' and 'departures'" (2001: 196). Many people only attended chapel for a short time after arriving in London. But up until the Second World War there was a constant stream of new members that maintained membership levels:

The apparent solidity of the main graph hides a very dynamic situation. ... one cannot escape the conclusion that for a considerable number of newcomers membership was transitory; it was often no more than a year or two. ... To many the chapel was a reception centre, a transit camp. This function is easily hidden by the constant flow of newcomers. ... the chapels had been a temporary touchstone for thousands of newcomers from Wales, part of the process of assimilation that eventually accounted for the great majority.  
(2001: 196-197)

As Jones suggests, this tendency to use formal ethnic networks as an initial point of contact before moving away, indicates the ease with which Welsh migrants are able to become part of the city at the same time as maintaining their own sense of Welsh identity. It also underlines the need to avoid simplistically depicting the chapels as somehow static institutions, compared to somehow inherently vibrant new social networks. Despite the many differences, there are strong similarities between the

chapel (in *its* heyday) and the new spaces of Welshness emerging in London at the end of the 1990s.

## **Conclusion**

The developments that have taken place in Welsh life during the 1990s raise important issues about the way in which identity at both the individual and group level should be conceptualised. The notion of a homogenous, unified Welsh community in London is problematised by the emergence of new kinds of migration, and by new identities. The presence of increasing numbers of middle class, managerial migrants in London highlights how Welshness is cut across by generation and class, as well as by a number of other social axes, such as sexuality. At the end of the twentieth century migration is more about developing a career path, experiencing the diversity of life in an international city, or gaining a greater perspective on life back home. The changing motivation for migration to London has important implications for the ways in which young Welsh people express their identities, and how they buy into a form of Welsh community in the city. If migration from Wales is no longer made from a reluctant necessity but rather the positive attributes of life in London, Welsh life in the metropolis is not attractive in the same way. It no longer acts as a compensation or a substitute for what has been left behind. As Welsh people actively embrace and engage with the multiple experiences and activities opened up by living in London, involvement with Welsh life in the city is relativised. It is often still important, but it is one of a number of leisure time pursuits that is slotted into life. Increasingly, identity is centred more around the individual than the societies of which an individual is a member. What is

needed to sustain such an identity is a kind of cultural resource that can be dipped into at regular, sometimes occasional intervals. The social networks established during the 1990s meet this need very successfully, creating open, informal spaces that people can use in their own personal ways, and without the need to make time consuming, long term commitments. De-centred, mobile networks are making Welsh identities anew, in and through London.

These networks represent a shift in Welsh life, away from the centralised, 'fixed' spaces of the traditional institutions (such as the chapel) that they are beginning to eclipse. They are both sustaining traditional senses of community, but simultaneously creating networks that have multiple attachments rather than being exclusively rooted in one location. Such networks work in and through London, and incorporate connections with Wales as one point in a wider set of references. Simultaneously these networks are extremely similar to the cultural societies that dominated Welsh life during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (the period immediately before the Welsh chapel became the defining Welsh institution). Though the Cymmrodorion and Gwyneddigion pursued charitable work and played a part in the national life of Wales, Jones, E (2001: 69) suggests that it is important not to forget their 'social purpose': "The Cymmrodorion was meant to be a centre of fellowship and conviviality, and it certainly did this with gusto. It was a club, very much in the spirit of the tavern and coffee house society that flourished in London, in addition to having the serious aim of rescuing the nation's literary heritage". The forms of Welshness constructed by these cultural societies can be compared to those being produced by Welsh social networks at the turn of the twenty first century.

The geography of the Welsh cultural societies of the eighteenth and the social networks of the twenty first century also display strong similarities. Both sets of groups are based around the informal spaces of public houses, night clubs and coffee houses, of ‘events’ as much as ‘meetings’. In both cases, these events are fluid and mobile, moving around the city, and without a fixed formal base. Jones, E (2001) maps out the different public houses in which the Cymmrodorion, Gwyneddigion and Cymreigyddion met during the eighteenth century. It is not dissimilar to the maps issues by today’s Noson o Hwyl that plot out the routes of their monthly pub crawls (see figure 6.1). As Jones (1985: 159) notes: “A Welsh cultural renaissance was flowering in the city [in the eighteenth century], and tavern and coffee house society was at its peak. The meeting places were all in the centre of London, though they changed very frequently – I tend to think of the Cymreigyddion, in particular, as staggering from inn to inn – and represented a blend of literary and musical learning with conviviality.” Far from being in decline, the emergence of new social networks of Welshness in London in the 1990s suggests a kind of return to an earlier period of Welsh life. In their work to promote affairs in Wales, the cultural societies are also to some extent being replicated. SWS, a society that has done much to raise the profile of Wales and the Welsh around the world was inspired from and launched in London. As it has migrated to New York, there have been requests to establish a branch in Wales.

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<sup>i</sup> On 1<sup>st</sup> March SWS will launch a new branch in Wales. It demonstrates the way in which Welsh societies in London can be more than simply a ‘replay’ of life in Wales. As in earlier periods of Welsh life, the development of SWS illustrates how Welsh societies inspired from and founded in London are later ‘transplanted’ to Wales.



## **Chapter 7**

### **Language, geography and identity:**

#### **Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain**

##### **Introduction**

Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain (The London Welsh School) was founded in 1958 with the aim of providing children in London with a Welsh medium education. It was, and remains the only Welsh medium school outside the borders of Wales. For those who campaigned to establish the school in the 1950s, and for the many parents and supporters who have worked to keep Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain open during the subsequent forty years, it is an immensely important institution that allows children in London to be educated within a totally Welsh environment. In this chapter I examine some of the meanings that are attached to the school, most particularly by parents and the children who are educated there, and the production and reproduction through the generations, of London Welsh identities. I suggest that the multiple identities worked out in the school have a wider significance beyond the London Welsh community. They highlight some of the complex interrelations between language, identity and education. And the geographical location of Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain has come to define the ambiguous ways in which the Welsh as an ethnic group are conceptualised and categorised in England.

I begin by examining some of the broader theoretical connections between identity, language and education, and discuss the need to study children as social actors,

who actively construct their own identities and the world around them in particular ways. Having mapped out the history of the school, I draw out several themes from what is a large and complex field of identities. The first of these surrounds the motivations that individual parents have for sending their children to the school, which is often a decision underpinned by significant personal meaning. Though language is the key impetus for the existence of the school, the parents' decision to educate their children there is often related to other issues such as educational standards, the small size of the school, and a strong sense of 'village school' community. Secondly, whilst Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain might appear to mirror Welsh schools in Wales very closely through authentically recreating 'home' culture in London, I argue that there are certain aspects of its identity that are different because of its geographical location in England. As a Welsh school outside Wales/in England it has been unable to secure funding from local or central government, and has therefore been forced to become a private, self funded institution. The parents of children at the school represent a 'village community' that has developed to some extent through the struggles to finance its running costs, rather than simply because it is a Welsh school. The question of how the school is funded is a key issue that has a wider significance, because it defines the ambiguous, transgressive identity of the Welsh as a group in England. Due to its location outside the Welsh nation, Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain has been denied funding from Wales. Yet the school's inability to gain funding from government bodies in London reflects the reluctance to recognise the Welsh as an ethnic group when they are outside the nation of Wales, yet still within the British nation state. The third section of the chapter examines the lived identities of the children at the school. Far from being passive recipients of language and culture, the pupils actively renegotiate the linguistic norms and meanings that adults attach to Ysgol

Gymraeg Llundain. The pupils use language in creative ways to construct their own personal identities. Welsh and English are both connected and mixed together in their everyday lives, and held apart through being linked to particular spaces in the city. Though the children articulated strongly felt Welsh identities, they were often worked out primarily in London, rather than referring back to Wales as a hegemonic, symbolic space. Wales can be seen as one relational location in what are multiply constructed identities. The group discussions held with pupils in the school indicate that they perceived Wales – both in terms of its society and spaces - through a series of juxtapositions with their experiences of life in London. Before going on to explore these identities, it is necessary to first return to some of the wider theoretical links between identity, language and education.

### **Identity, Language and Education**

The complex interconnections between identity, language and education have been mapped out from within a number of disciplines, including Geography, Education Studies and various forms of Socio-Linguistics. Language and education, rather than being neutral entities, are often entwined in the construction and contestation of identities at a variety of scales, taking on symbolic and strategic qualities. The role of language in the rise of the nation as the dominant geopolitical entity in Europe, for instance, has been well documented by Anderson (1991). He suggests that the selection of particular ‘print languages’ that could bind together the inhabitants of a territory into a single identity “laid the basis for national consciousness” (Anderson, 1991: 44). Curtis (1986) and Gruffudd (1995) have demonstrated that in the case of Wales, language has often been at the heart of both what national identity is taken to mean, and the

contestation of multiple versions of nationality. Colin Williams (1991) has explored the relationship between large nation states and minority languages such as Welsh (in Britain) and French (in Quebec) drawing out comparisons between these linguistic communities. He suggests that the formation of large nation states in Europe involved nationalising space, and the creation of uniformed, homogenous national cultures tied to bounded geographical territories. The attempt to create unified nation states placed great pressure upon minority cultures: “Attempts by minorities to resist assimilation were deemed to be expressions of primordial sentiments and a spurning of the individual’s opportunity to advance within the liberalising framework of the new, open society, where rationalism displaced parochialism” (1991: 6). Williams (1991: 7) describes “the attempts of linguistic minorities to maintain control of their historic territories and so thereby guarantee some degree of success in reproducing their cultures, ideologies and interests in the face of enormous assimilatory pressures from majority cultures”. The nation state often also sought control over the physical space and resources of its land.

As Heller (1999: 18) has argued, nations have frequently sought to reproduce particular forms of national identity (including the linguistic) through the educational system: “Schools are important sites of social and cultural reproduction, and over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have come under state control in order to achieve state agendas.” Edwards (1985: 118) suggests that “Education has often been perceived as the central pillar in group-identity maintenance, providing an essential support for linguistic nationalism and ethnic revival.” Macey (1999) discusses the links between education and ethnicity, and touches upon the debates about the operation of Muslim schools in Britain. Taking the example of Wales once again, the campaign to

open Welsh medium schools from around the 1930s highlights both how debates about nationality and language have been framed within the context of the educational system, and the way in which schools and children are endowed with a national, symbolic significance that extends beyond something purely educational in nature (Griffiths, 1997). Griffiths (1997) indicates that the campaign to establish Welsh medium schools was predicated upon a belief that the future survival of Welsh national culture was linked to the strength of the Welsh language, and that the school was a key site through which this could be achieved. As Baker (1993: 9) states; “The development of bilingual education in Wales is not a purely educationally derived phenomenon. It does not develop from the simple arguments about the educational virtues of bilingual education. Rather, such growth is both an action and reaction in the general growth of consciousness about the virtues of preserving an indigenous language and culture.”

The importance of language in the constitution of self identity has also been much explored, and Norton (2000) suggests that it is an area of growing academic interest. One particular strand of research into linguistic identities has focused upon how people experience being bilingual and actively use the languages which they speak as strategic cultural resources. Zentella (1997) for instance, studied the identities of Puerto Rican children in New York, and their experiences of ‘growing up bilingual’. She argued for the importance of tracing the links between bilingualism and community identity, and considered “how bilinguals use language(s) to ‘construct and display multiple identities’” (1997: 13). Heller’s (1999) study of a French medium secondary school in a mainly English speaking area of Canada explored the ways in which the school constructed particular linguistic norms for its pupils, most particularly through

trying to create a monolingual French environment. Heller suggests that because the school is located outside of the main French speaking areas of Canada, it cannot base such linguistic norms around references to a particular geographical territory, as might be the case in Quebec. She examined how children with different linguistic identities actively renegotiated such norms. For those pupils who had been brought up as French speaking, the school's emphasis upon a formalised version of the language could marginalise their own more vernacular speech. And those children whose first language was not French subverted the ideals of the school by speaking English, especially within private spaces not subject to the direct supervision of teachers.

Heller's concern with the ways in which children actively renegotiate adult norms and cultural forms, strikes a strong chord with work by Gill Valentine and Sarah Holloway, which has outlined the changing attitudes of researchers in the social sciences towards children and childhood. Writing from the perspective of Human Geography, Valentine (1997: 67) suggests that "in both everyday life and academic research there is a tendency to ignore children's own experiences and own understandings of the world". Holloway and Valentine (2000) describe how a "new social studies of childhood" is challenging the idea of childhood as a natural, biological state, towards a view of it as a social construction that varies across time and space. They argue that the specificity of children's experiences needs to be acknowledged. Children are not simply 'mini adults', but might see the world and construct their identities in particular ways that are different from adults. Of central importance is their argument that children should be seen as social actors, who actively construct their identities as 'beings', rather than passive 'becomings' whose identities are imposed upon them by adults: "[New social studies of

childhood] study children as social actors, as beings in their own right rather than as pre-adult becomings ... children are active beings whose agency is important in the creation of their own life worlds” (Holloway and Valentine, 2000: 5-6).” Prout and James (1990, cited in Holloway and Valentine, 2000: 6) state that “Children are and must be seen as active in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and of societies in which they live. Children are not just passive subjects of social structures and processes”. Holloway and Valentine (2000) argue that geography as a discipline has an important contribution to make in new approaches to the study of children, not least because of the variations in how childhood is socially constructed both temporally and spatially. They also highlight the importance of examining the particular spaces in which children’s lives take place, advocating a “focus on those everyday spaces in and through which children’s identities and lives are made and (re)made” (Holloway and Valentine, 2000: 2). The school, for instance is a site in which adults control children but where, as Heller indicates, children can renegotiate the controls and norms imposed upon them. It is therefore a key site in the production and negotiation of a range of identities, produced by adults and by children, caught up with notions of the national, the self, of education and language. In the following sections I attempt to tease out some of these identities as they are worked out in Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain.

### **The Historical Development of Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain**

In August 1955 a letter appeared in *Y Ddinas* (a forerunner of the current day *London Welshman* newspaper) inviting the parents of children in London to bring them to Welsh language classes that were being held at the London Welsh Centre on Saturday mornings. As the children got to grips with the language, their parents filled the time by

chatting to each other in the Centre's lounge, and it was during these conversations that the idea of founding a daily Welsh school in London was first floated (Edwards, 1999<sup>i</sup>; Roberts, 1971). Jones, E (2001: 156) suggests that "it was a reflection of the considerable movement in Wales to set up Welsh-medium schools in anglicized areas". A committee was formed, chaired by Meredith Edwards (a Welsh actor who starred in the film *A Run For Your Money*) and discussions were held with the London Welsh churches and Welsh Association, resulting in the calling of a public meeting in April of 1957, attended by over 300 people. It voted to approach the London County Council (LCC) with a view to seeking their assistance in forming a Welsh school in the city (Roberts, 1971). The council authorities, however, were less than enthusiastic in their response, because, according to Roberts (1971: unpaginated): "[it was] not satisfied that the expenditure of public money involved would be reasonable'. Another excuse that that Education Authority gave at this time was - if a school for Welsh children was allowed, then other nations would be likely to ask for the same advantages!" [my translation].

A series of further meetings were held with the council, lead by Sir David Hughes Parry and Dr Jenkin Alban - both prominent Welshmen in the city. Meanwhile other supporters began the task of travelling around London and calling upon Welsh families who had children and might be interested in attending the school. Roberts (1971) suggests that non-Welsh speaking parents were often more supportive of the venture than those who were proficient in the language because they were keen for their children to learn the language they themselves had lost (or never had). Eventually the delegation from the proposed school and members of the Council came to an agreement



whereby they would permit a Welsh class to be established with a dedicated teacher as part of an existing school. There were however a number of conditions which had to be met (Roberts, 1971): firstly that there must be at least 30 pupils, all aged between 5 and 7 years of age; secondly that the children must be able to travel to the school without great difficulty; thirdly, lessons in the new classroom were to be administered through the medium of Welsh; and finally, the class was required to remain a part of whichever school agreed to provide it with accommodation. After much effort, 34 pupils were recruited for the start of the first term, and the Welsh headmistress of Hungerford Road School in Islington agreed to allow the Welsh class to use an empty room which was located in the school grounds away from the main building. As Roberts (1971, unpaginated) recalls “The important morning arrived with much expectation - the 8th September 1958. I don’t think that any school has ever received so much attention - the pressmen were dotted around the place as well as the BBC and ITA television companies - the children became stars overnight” [my translation]. This intermittent attention on the part of the media has continued since its founding, suggesting that a Welsh school in London has some kind of newsworthy novelty factor.

Roberts (1971) describes how a number of hurdles were overcome in the early years of the school. The task of transporting children to the school from all parts of London was made much easier when one of its supporters supplied a minibus to bring pupils from south London across to Hungerford Road. A parent offered to collect children in north London, and another offered transport from the Fulham area. A second, more fundamental problem arose when a number of children at the school approached their seventh birthday (the upper age limit for pupils set by the LCC). Many parents

were keen for their children to remain in the Welsh school further into their primary schooling, but the council refused to allow this (Roberts, 1971). Some consideration was given to creating a school under the auspices of the London Welsh Presbyterian churches (which would make it eligible for state funding), but it was decided not to proceed with such a plan (Edwards, 1999). After much discussion the decision was made to establish a private school (which would therefore have to be self-financing) so that the wishes of parents could be fulfilled. A class for the children over the age of seven was established in the church hall at Eglwys Dewi Sant in Paddington in September 1961. Shortly afterwards the school moved once again, this time to the old Sunday School rooms in Willesden Green Welsh chapel, a home that it occupied continuously until the end of the summer term in 2000. When the chapel itself closed, Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain was again forced to find alternative accommodation, and eventually agreement was reached for it to occupy a vacant building at Stonebridge Park School in Harlesden. To some extent, therefore, history was repeating itself.

Since the establishment of the private school, its management has been lodged with a board of governors, and another of trustees. The work of the school is supported both by 'The Friends of the London Welsh School' (founded in 1963), and by an active Parents and Teachers Association (PTA). Parents pay termly tuition fees of £525, "but from the beginning no child was debarred from entry on financial grounds and the resulting shortfall has had to be made up with an unrelenting programme of fund-raising" (Edwards, 1999: unpaginated). At the time that research was carried out in 1999, the school was still resident in Willesden Green. The number of pupils had been increasing for some time, and in total there were 16 full time students, and another 16 who attend

the school through a form of 'day release' from their local schools on Fridays. This had been recently started, and was made possible because of the standardised nature of the National Curriculum (Edwards, 1999). The school itself has two classes, each of which bring together several year groups. In addition, two other groups use the school building. The first of these is the Cylch Chwarae (mothers and toddlers group) which meets on Monday mornings. Secondly the Ysgol Feithrin (nursery school) is held three days per week.

### **Backgrounds and Motivations: The stories of Parents at Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain**

The stories of the parents at Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain are particularly important because all of them have made a conscious decision to send their children to the school - the desire to offer their children a Welsh medium education is what gives the school its meaning. The parents are very much involved in sustaining the school in its day to day life, as well as its long-term future. What underpins the decision making process of these parents is therefore of some relevance in researching the life of the school. The background of the parents varies a great deal, but it is possible to outline a number of patterns. A questionnaire was distributed to parents to ascertain their reasons for having chosen the school, key information about their family's use of language at home, as well as a number of other salient issues. Of the ten people who responded, seven said that they used a mixture of Welsh and English at home, two people suggested that only English was used, and one person described Welsh as being the only language spoken in their home. Most of the children therefore come from families where only one parent speaks Welsh. For some children, the Welsh language environment of school complements the Welsh speaking lives that they lead at home. For others, however, the

school is the only place in which they regularly speak or learn Welsh. Informal conversation with parents and the taped discussions with the children suggested that in those families where only one parent spoke Welsh, this was far more likely to be the mother. Many of the mothers had moved from Wales during the early 1980s, often meeting English partners in the city. At an early stage during my fieldwork at the school I noted that “The parents that I spoke to all seemed to have been in London since the 1980s. They came up here after leaving college, met English husbands, and had children, for which several of them had given up their careers” (Research Diary, January, 1999). I did not come into contact with any families where the children had a Welsh or Welsh speaking father married to an English woman. It is difficult, and beyond the scope of the present study to suggest why there are more Welsh and Welsh speaking women than men in London who have decided to educate their children through the medium of Welsh. Denise, one of the parents at the school suggested that for women, the language that they spoke to their children might be more important than for fathers, and she also felt greater legitimacy:

Wy'n credu bod amser bod y fam yn siarad Cymraeg, yn aml iawn maen nhw'n mwy penderfynol ambyti cadw'r iaith. Ond wy'n credu bod e'n llawer mwy anodd i'r tadau sy'n siarad Cymraeg ti mod, achos os edrychi di yn yr ysgol, y mamau sy'n siarad Cymraeg fwya – mae ambell i eithriad, ond y mamau sy'n mynd â'u plant drwy'r ysgol, dim y tadau.

*I think that when the mother speaks Welsh very often they are more determined about keeping the language. But I think that it's a lot harder for the fathers who speak Welsh, you know, because if you look in the school, it's the mothers who are Welsh speaking on the whole – there are some exceptions, but it's the mothers who take their children to the school, not the fathers.*

(Denise, working in public relations, 30s; moved to London in the early 1980s)

One of the key issues explored with parents at the school addressed why people had chosen to send their children to Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain. In the questionnaire this

was put as a direct question: “Pam penderfynnoch chi ddanfon eich plant i Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain?” (“Could you say something about your reasons for sending your children to the London Welsh School?”). For nearly all of the parents, language (the chance for their children to learn Welsh, or to be educated through it) was the key reason that they put forward. Some of the parents’ answers from the questionnaire are reproduced in table 7.1. Manon had moved to London in the late 1970s to study at university, and had met her English husband whilst living there. When asked about her motivations for sending her children to the Welsh school she said: “O’n i’n teimlo bod angen cael yr Ysgol Gymraeg er mwyn cadw’r iaith a mae’n bwysig iawn i fi bod y plant yn cadw’r iaith” (“*I felt that the Welsh School was essential for [him] to keep the language, and it’s very important to me that the children keep the language*”) (Manon, 30s).

#### 7.1 The Importance of a Welsh medium education at Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain

[...] eisiau i’r plant gwybod rhywfaint o’r iaith.  
*[...] I wanted the children to have at least some grasp of the language.*

Babi yn dri mis oed - eisiau iddi ddysgu Cymraeg [...]  
*My baby is three months old - I want her to learn Welsh [...]*

Dysgu Cymraeg.  
*To learn Welsh.*

Bilingual education

Iddyn nhw gael siarad a deall yr iaith ac i gyfathrebu gyda phlant eraill yn yr iaith.  
*For them to be able to understand the language and to communicate with other children in the language.*

I roi cyfle iddo glywed yr iaith Gymraeg a chymdeithasu yn Gymraeg.  
*To give him the opportunity to hear Welsh and socialise in Welsh.*

A keenly felt aim of a number of parents was that Welsh should be something natural which infused all of the school’s activities and that the children soaked up, rather

than the language being artificially forced upon them. Denise, another parent, had moved to London in the early 1980s, and she too had met an English husband. For her “yn yr ysgol, ti mod, mae’r iaith Gymraeg yn rhywbeth naturiol” (“*in the school, you know, the Welsh language is something natural*”) (Denise, working in public relations, 30s). A key focus of this concern was the issue of which language the children spoke in the playground when they were not under the direct supervision of the teachers. For Pys’s mother, the whole aim of the school was undermined when the children reverted to English in the playground at lunchtime: “Mae rhai o’r plant yn troi at Saesneg yn y buarth - mae hi’n gwneud iddi deimlo’n wallgof i raddau” (“*Some of the children turn to English in the playground - it makes her mad to some extent*”) (Jane, working in art gallery, 30s; moved to London in the 1980s) (Research Diary, January, 1999). Louise however, pointed to the fact that much less English was spoken by the children in the school than had been the case in the past, when she herself had been a pupil at the school. For her, the fact that Welsh was today spoken by the children at playtime indicated how Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain was succeeding in its attempt to make Welsh something all embracing and natural in the minds of the pupils:

Beth sy’n rhoi lot o lawenydd i mi’r dyddiau ‘ma, yn yr Ysgol Gymraeg heddi - Cymraeg yw iaith naturiol y plant ym mhopeth. Wy’n credu bod y rhieni a’r athrawes yn yr Ysgol yn [...] ceisio cael Cymraeg i suddo mewn i ymwybyddiaeth y plant. [...] Wy’n gweld e’n neis iawn bod y plant ddim yn cael eu gorfodi gan neb. Maen nhw wedi gweld e’n naturiol i siarad Cymraeg gyda’u gilydd trwy’r amser.

*What gives me a lot of pleasure these days is that in the Welsh School - Welsh is the natural language of the children in everything. I think that the parents and the teacher are [...] trying to get Welsh to sink into the consciousness of the children. [...] I think it’s really nice that the children aren’t forced by anyone. They have seen that it’s natural to speak Welsh with each other all the time.*

(Louise, researcher, 40s; born in London)

The Welsh language was therefore a key reason for nearly all parents in their decision to choose Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain, and it appealed not as something that was necessarily explicitly ‘taught’ but more as a kind of constant background to the children’s education and which would colour the activities that they took part in. But a number of other qualities linked to the school were also put forward by the parents that had shaped their decision. In analysing the meanings that parents attached to the school there is a need to avoid essentialising the linguistic and of ignoring how it is connected to other social axes that go towards defining Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain. As Hall and Du Gay (1996: 4) argue, identity is “never singular, but multiply constructed”. Baker (1983) has suggested the reasons why parents send their children to a particular school may often be complex and multiple, rather than entirely stimulated by a single issue.

For Manon, the Welsh medium education that her children had received had given them access to wider cultural traditions that replicated the values inherent in her own schooling as a child. Though language had been the principal reason why she and her husband had originally been attracted to Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain, since becoming involved with the school the cultural education that the children received there had become extremely important:

Mae’n rhaid i fi weud o’n i heb sylweddoli cyn hela’r plant, mor bwysig byddai cael y diwylliant Cymraeg o’r ysgol. Er enghraifft mae’r plant yn dysgu caneuon o’n i’n cofio dysgu yn yr ysgol; maen nhw’n dysgu darnau bach o’r Beibl Gymraeg a phethe fel ‘ny a canu emynau Cymraeg, a jyst popeth i wneud â’r diwylliant. Bydden i ddim wedi meddwl oedd e’n mor bwysig. [...] Wy’n gwerthfawrogi’r ochr ‘ny’n fawr iawn achos wy’n teimlo bydd y plant yn teimlo’n fwy Cymraeg wedi cael y diwylliant yn ogystal â’r iaith.

*I have to say that I hadn’t realised before I sent the children, how important the Welsh culture that comes from being at the school would be. For example, the children learn songs that I remember learning in school. They learn parts of the Welsh Bible and things like that, and just everything to do with the culture. I wouldn’t have thought that it was so important. [...] I value that side very much, because I feel that the children will feel more Welsh having had the culture as well as the language.*

(Manon, 30s; moved to London in the 1970s)

But in many of the parents' narratives, aspects of the school which were less closely linked to its linguistic identity were also put forward as being important in their decision making processes. Dylan is the English father of two pupils and spends considerable amounts of time in the school helping with lunch-time supervision and cleaning duties. Whilst echoing Manon's reference to the wider culture that surrounded the language, he explained how many families had to travel a considerable distance to reach the school, and suggested that the Welsh language in isolation was not enough to justify the effort of travelling each day. In his view there were other factors which made the school attractive:

[...] the lengths that they go to [to bring their children to the school] are not justified entirely by the language. Obviously the culture that surrounds it is important, but I think also the school itself has special qualities over and above the Welsh language. Although obviously that's the catalyst to it all, it has qualities over and above [the language] that it's developed over the years [...] all the things which stack up over and above the Welsh language itself.  
(Dylan, house husband, 30s; born in London)

One of these 'special qualities' which was put across most strongly was the feeling that Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain achieved high educational standards. Some parents such as Louise explicitly connected language and education, arguing that being bilingual and receiving a bilingual education could have a positive effect on the ability of children to learn:

Chi 'mod, mae safon yr addysg yn yr Ysgol Gymraeg mor dda, chi 'mod? Mae'r plant byti dwy, tair blynedd ymlaen o ran eu cyfoedion, chi 'mod, mewn ysgolion lleol Saesneg [...] - yn hawdd, pan maen nhw'n darllen a sgwennu. Maen nhw'n wastad wneud yn dda yn y SATS a wy'n siwr bod e'n, wel rhan o'r rheswm, os nad yn gyfangwbl, oherwydd maen nhw'n medru dwy iaith.

*You know, the standard of education in the Welsh School is so good, you know? The children are perhaps two, three years ahead of their peers, you know, in local English schools [...] - easily, in terms of reading and writing. They always do well in the SATS and*



*I'm sure that it's well, perhaps part of the reason if not entirely, because they speak two languages.*

(Louise, researcher, 40s; born in London)

But Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain as an individual school was also perceived as achieving high educational standards in comparison with other local schools that parents might have considered. A number of parents implicitly suggested that the fact that the school taught through the medium of Welsh would not in itself have been enough, and had they found standards to be low, they may have opted to send their son or daughter to another school. For Denise “Mae safon y dysgu’n bwysicach na dim [...]” (“*The standard of teaching is more important than anything [...]*”) (Denise, working in public relations, 30s; moved to London in the early 1980s). Respondents to the questionnaire who had written about the language as being important in sending their children to the school often included comments such as “Ysgol dda” (“*Good school*”) or “Safon uchel o addysg” (“*High standard of education*”). Jane expressed very clearly how she and her husband had balanced the educational and the linguistic in choosing Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain:

[...] ar ôl gweld yr ysgol a'r awyrgylch a'r safon – mae'r safon addysg yn uchel iawn. Mae'n lot well na beth 'sai hi'n medru cael yn yr ysgolion lleol. So oedd hwnna wedi helpu ni i penderfynnu cymaint â'r iaith *really*.

[...] *having seen the school and the atmosphere and the standard – the standard of the education is very high. It's a lot better than she would get in the local schools. So that helped us to decide as much as the language really.*

(Jane, working in art gallery, 30s; moved to London in the 1980s)

A number of reasons were put forward for the high educational standards that the school achieved. The teachers received particular praise for the way in which they displayed a strong sense of commitment, and how they treated the children from day to day. But the small size of the school was also highlighted as being important. In the view of both

parents and staff, it allowed the children to work in small classes, and for the teachers to know each child as an individual:

Y sylw unigol maen nhw'n gallu cael fan hyn - dw i'n meddwl dyna ydy'r fantais fwya dw i'n siwr, achos wyt ti yn nabod y plant, ti'n gwbod be' 'dy cryfderau nhw, a'u gwendidau nhw. Ti'n gwbod os dyn nhw ddim yn cael diwrnod rhy dda, ti'n gwbod?

*The attention they are able to have here - I think that is the biggest advantage I'm sure, because you know the children, you know their strengths and their weaknesses. You know if they're not having such a good day, you know?*  
(Member of Staff)

Fi'n credu bod e'n lot fwy pwysig ti 'mod, fod nhw jyst deg yn y dosbarth [...], mae Siân yn wych [...]. [Mae] hi'n gallu clywed nhw'n darllen lot mwy aml na basen nhw mewn ti mod, dosbarth gyda tri deg yn dosbarth.

*I think that it's a lot more important, you know, that there are just ten in the class [...], Siân is great [...]. She is able to hear them reading a lot more often than they would be able to in a class of thirty.*  
(Jane, working in art gallery, 30s; moved to London in the 1980s)

Dylan, a father, also spoke of the belief that the small size of the Welsh school allowed his children to gain much more individual attention from the teachers: "I'm convinced that both my boys are getting as good a Welsh language education in London as they would in Wales – even in a Welsh speaking part of Wales where they would be surrounded by Welsh to a greater extent outside school. They would no doubt be in a much larger class getting far less individual attention [...]" (Dylan, house husband, 30s; born in London).

The small size and intimacy of the school has to some extent enabled the creation of a strong sense of community. As the head teacher explained: "Mae cymuned - dyna'n union ydy hi 'de [yr ysgol] - cymuned, achos mae hyd yn oed 'mywyd cymdeithasol i rwan yn ymwneud [â'r Ysgol]" (*A community – that's exactly what it [the school] is – a community. Because even my social life revolves around [the school]*”).

The atmosphere or ethos of the school was mentioned by many parents. A sense of community is encapsulated in the idea that Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain feels like a village school. For Jane “Mae fel ysgol bach y wlad yng nghanol Llundain” (“*It’s like a little village school in the middle of London*”). And Denise described “yr awyrgylch, y teimlad bod e fel ysgol fach y pentre” (“*the atmosphere, the feeling that it’s like a little village school*”). As Gruffudd (1994) argues, notions of rurality have played an important part in discourses of Welsh national identity and nationalism involving “an idealization of the rural population and of rural areas as sustaining ‘national’ characteristics” (1994: 70). The fact that issues of language, educational standards and relationships between staff and pupils figure in the parents’ stories in this way, is not perhaps significant in itself. In any school, such subjects might be of relevance. Indeed, the evocation of Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain as a village school, where Welsh is the natural medium of the children’s everyday lives suggests that rural Welsh culture back home has been authentically recreated in the heart of London – that this is the mirror image of life back home in Wales. But as Barkan and Shelton (1998: 3) suggest, diasporic cultures outside the homeland can form communities that both replicate and differ from the national cultures that they recreate: “Diasporic cultures evolve that are both unlike the home culture and inseparable from them.” In the following section I suggest that there are a number of aspects of Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain which are very different from comparable schools ‘back home’ and stem directly from its geographical location in London.

## A Question of Location

One of the most positive sentiments that was expressed by parents interviewed at the school echoed strongly with respondents involved in other areas of Welsh life (see for instance Chapter 6). It was the belief that the importance of being and speaking Welsh had become stronger since they had been living outside Wales. For Jane, being in London had strengthened her feelings about the language (a sentiment echoed by several respondents throughout this study), and of passing it on to her children: “pan wyt ti i ffwrdd o Gymru, ti siwr o fod yn teimlo’n fwy gryf ambyti pethe fel ‘na nag efalla fydde ti os wyt ti dal i fod yn Caerdydd [...]” (“*when you are outside of Wales, you probably feel more strongly about things like that than perhaps you would do if you were still in Cardiff [...]*”) (Jane, working in art gallery, 30s; moved to London in the 1980s). The implication of such a statement is that her own identity was caught up in the decision to send her children to Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain. Many other people that were interviewed suggested (explicitly and implicitly) that the decision to educate their children at the school had involved a heightened personal meaning, or was driven by a greater commitment than might otherwise be expected.

A good example of this sentiment is the effort that many parents have to make in order to bring their children to the school. Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain serves the whole of London, and in recent years has not offered school transport, so mothers, fathers, or their nanny, must bring the children to school each day, and collect them again at the end of the afternoon. While there is a nucleus of families who live in close proximity to the school, a much larger number reside significant distances away, including some whose children attend the school on Fridays as part of the ‘Day Release’ Scheme. One family

for instance, travels 57 miles to bring their child to Willesden Green. The dispersed nature of the school's population is a reflection of the more general geography of the Welsh in London (Jones, 1985; Knowles, 1997). And it highlights the problems that are inherent in creating a single, central institution for an ethnic group that is not concentrated in a particular area or region of the city. For Jane, the significant amount of time involved in bringing her daughter to the school each day was justified by the meaning that the school and its values had for her, and she seemed to suggest implicitly that she would not have made such an effort otherwise: "O'n i'n meddwl mae yn werth yr ymdrech achos mae'n cymryd ni dros hanner awr i ddod yma pob dydd - o'n i'n meddwl, mae'n werth yr ymdrech i ddod" (*"I thought that it was worth the effort, because it takes us over half an hour to come here every day – I thought that it was the effort to come"*). Drawing upon similar notions of rurality to Jane, Manon suggested that the fact that different families were scattered across London, and that people had to travel long distances to reach the school, had to some extent reinforced a sense of community: "Mae'n rhoi sens o cymuned mawr i rieni sy' 'ma – mae fel byw mewn pentre bach yng Nghymru. Ond wrth gwrs ni gyd wedi dosbarthu dros Lundain i gyd a ni'n dod man hyn er mwyn ffurfio pentre bach" (*"It gives parents a real sense of community – it's like living in a little village in Wales. But of course we are all spread out over London and we all come here in order to form a little village"*) (Manon, 30s; moved to London in the 1970s).

The considerable distances that many parents travel each day is seen as worth the effort involved therefore, and in a rather circular fashion, of increasing the value and sense of community that they place upon the school. But it is ironic, perhaps, that the

private status which has been forced upon the school is the one of the most important factors in creating a strong sense of community. As has already been noted, parents make an annual contribution towards the cost of their children's education of about £1500 (though no child is ever turned away because of the inability of their parents to contribute the full amount). Edwards (1999) suggests that this contribution still leaves a major shortfall in the cost of running the school, met to a large degree by the fundraising efforts of the parents. Many parents volunteer to supervise the children at lunchtimes, and also clean the school building each day. Dylan explained that "many parents wouldn't necessarily want the degree of involvement in their kids' education and in the running of their [...] school, which is absolutely essential if you're running a school on a shoe string in terms of money and manpower, probably more significantly manpower, because that's where the parents have to step in and do things" (Dylan, house husband, 30s; born in London). The parents therefore spend a great deal of time in the school, and know the children very well. Dylan for instance suggested that his presence in the school allowed him to keep in much better touch about the work his son was doing, and to talk to his teacher at regular intervals about his progress, rather than simply meeting her at an annual consultation evening:

Most of us would send our children to the local school around the corner – children written off for so many hours a day, and it's a kind of black box until you go along at the end of the year and have a chat with the teachers, or whatever. [...] unless your child is very very good or very very bad you'll probably not get too much feedback, and it's sort of the opposite here. You have the formality of a parent-teacher meeting at the end of each academic year, but in effect there can be no surprises in that report or in that meeting because the contact is daily.

Through the PTA and the 'Friends of the London Welsh School' group, many parents invest large amounts of time in organising fundraising activities. Again, to a certain extent this is no different from other schools. But parents typically undertake a great

deal of work in this respect compared to most primary schools, due to the amount of money which is constantly needed to keep Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain running. Edwards (1999), for instance describes the various projects that the parents have invested heavily in throughout the school's life. The founding of a business to provide catering for social events in London, and the setting up of a removals firm were both undertaken mostly by parents who gave their time for free, allowing all the profits to be ploughed into the school's finances. In the case of Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain the parents raise money for basic essentials, such as the teachers' wages, rather than what might have been seen as 'extras'. As Jane explained:

O'n i'n siarad â ffrind [...] sy'n gweithio mewn ysgol gyfun [yng Nghymru] [...] a wedodd hi bod ni'n codi – yr ysgol fach ni'n codi fwy o arian na mae'r ysgol gyfun 'na, a wy ddim yn gwybod faint o blant sy'n mynd i'r ysgol 'na – dros mil, a ni'n codi fwy o arian na nhw, a mae llai nag ugain llawn amser yn yr ysgol yma!

*I was speaking to a friend [...] who works in a comprehensive school [in Wales] [...] and she said that we – our little school, raises more money than that comprehensive school, and I don't know how many children go to that school – over a thousand, and we raise more money than them, and there are less than twenty full time children in our school!*

The sense of community in the school therefore, has to some extent been formed through the necessity of being self-funding. The private status of the school, brought about by the reluctance of local and national government to pay for its operation is one which highlights two wider issues about how the Welsh in London are, and should be conceptualised. The Welsh Office and the National Assembly have been reluctant to provide permanent funding for the school (though some money has been made available, especially via the Welsh Language Board, and the Welsh Assembly recently made a grant to help fund the school for several years) primarily because of its location outside of Wales, and to some extent its private status. Yet those bodies in London that have responsibility for funding schools are also either unable or unwilling to cover its costs.

The Department of Education (in England) cannot fund Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain because the school does not follow the English National Curriculum at all age levels. And continuing the attitude of local government in London when the school was first founded, Brent Council (within whose territory the school is located) does not consider the Welsh as an ethnic group (Woodward: 2000). For government bodies in both Wales and London, the school is ‘out of place’ – it does not fit the conceptual categories that exist (Cresswell, 1996).

As a Welsh school outside of Wales, Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain is transgressive (Cresswell, 1996), in that it problematises the location of culture and language within the bounded territory of national space. It challenges the exclusive location of Welsh life within Wales itself. As Clifford (1997) argues “positive articulations of diaspora identity reach outside the normative territory and temporality (myth/history) of the nation state.” But if the school is denied legitimacy because of its geographical location exterior to the nation, in London the school finds itself in a liminal space, neither accepted as same or different. The Welsh are not considered as an ethnic group - as having a claim to another nation; they are seen as British, within their own nation state. The rejection of the status of the Welsh as an ethnic group in London by the education authorities was something that certain parents felt extremely strongly about, in Louise’s case in particular:

Wy’n gobeithio y byddwn ni cael rhyw help o’r llywodraeth i achub yr ysgol, ceisio cael mwy o gynghorwyr Llundainig i weld bod ni’n bodoli, bod ni yn gymuned ethnig. Mae’n *ironic* iawn; pan sefydlodd y *London County Council* y dosbarth ‘ma yn Hungerford Road, wedon nhw ‘Wel mae rhaid i chi gynnal dosbarth o dri deg o blant trwy’r amser [...]. Cofiwch, chi mod, os yn ni’n dechre rhoi i chi, bydd pawb o’r lleiafrifoedd eisiau’r un peth’, a diawl maen nhw’n cael e hefyd y dyddiau ‘ma, a’r Cymry sydd ar eu colled yn fwy wy’n credu. A felly ni’n ceisio dod â’r argyfwng Ysgol Gymraeg i sylw Ken Livingstone a Paul Boating. Wel maen nhw’n aelodau seneddeol yn Brent, a chi mod, os maen nhw’n mor pybur dros lleiafrifoedd eraill, allan nhw fod cystal pybur dros y Gymraeg, a falle bydd hynny’n helpu.



*I hope that we will get some help from the government to save the school, to try and get more London councillors to see that we do exist, that we are an ethnic community. It's very ironic; when the London County council set up the Welsh class in Hungerford Road they said 'Well you have to maintain thirty children in the class at all times [...]. Remember, you know, if we start giving to you, all of the ethnic minorities will want the same thing', and by devil they're getting it these days, and much to the loss of the Welsh I think. And so we're trying to bring the Welsh School's crisis to the attention of Ken Livingstone and Paul Boast. Well, they're members of Parliament in Brent, and if they're so concerned about other minorities, they can be just as concerned about the Welsh, and perhaps that will help.*  
(Louise, researcher, 40s; born in London)

The school's existence and its desperate need for public money highlights the ambiguous nature of what we are to call the Welsh, how we are to think of them when they are outside of Wales (the nation), yet inside the nation state (Britain). It is what Cohen (1994: 7) has described as a 'fuzzy frontier': "What do I mean here by 'fuzzy'? I suggest that ambiguity often characterises the boundaries between an English and a British identity (the internal frontier)". A number of similar issues are raised in work that has examined Irish ethnicity in England, in particular work by Walter (1999) and Hickman (1996). Hickman suggests that in English popular discourse the Irish have often been the subject of particular kinds of stereotypes, and of general forms of discrimination. Yet in official discourses of race and ethnicity there has been an attempt to deny Irish identity, and incorporate it within the structure of Britishness. Walter (1997: 7) argues that "Irish invisibility ... reflects a paradox. On the one hand, Irish people are strongly identified as different and inferior, but on the other hand, they are too much 'the same' for their separate identity to be recognised." To illustrate her thesis Hickman (1996) points to the fact that whilst Irish citizens are not subject to immigration controls at British borders, individual Irish people have often been subject to discriminatory searches at times of heightened terrorist activity on the British mainland. She suggests that the denial of Irish ethnicity in Britain has been partly linked to the way in which race and racism in the UK have tended to operate along the lines of colour. From the point of view of the

authorities in London, a Welsh school in the city is somehow ‘out of place’, in the wrong place, but it does not represent a difference that is fully recognised. It could be argued that to some extent Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain has come to define the ambiguous position of the Welsh in London as an ethnic group because both in its everyday work and in its attempts to gain funding it has come into contact with the state (which none of the other institutions studied have had to do in this way), and does not always fit into the conceptual categories it is asked to occupy.

### **Children’s geographies – identity, language and geography**

The parents and staff whose narratives were explored above, therefore have well defined ideas about what the school means to them, and the ways in which they wish the pupils at the school to relate to the Welsh language and culture. But the children are not merely passive recipients of such meanings and norms; they re-work them in creative ways to construct their own senses of self. Five taped interviews were conducted with the older children in the school (class 2<sup>ii</sup>), about the ways in which they understood their identities, focusing upon issues of language and geography. The children expressed positive sentiments about their ability to speak Welsh and their bilingual identities. But they used language in creative ways, mixing Welsh and English at certain times, and yet also maintaining distance between them through identifying each with particular spatial contexts. For the children, being Welsh was an identity that was multiply located, and which imagined Wales in particular ways.

### *'Growing up Bilingual'*

The ability to speak Welsh, and the fact that the children were bilingual was seen in a generally very positive way, and the pupils therefore conformed to the meanings that their parents had attached to the Welsh school. But pupils such as Dai not only reproduced such meanings, but had actively negotiated them and could articulate subtle reasons for their embracing of bilingualism. Dai is eight years old, and comes from a family with a Welsh speaking mother and monolingual English father. His description of being bilingual was an extremely positive, even enthusiastic one: “Ie, mae’n cwbl *cool*, *definitely*, mae wir, *cool*, *cool yn y byd!*” (“*Yeah, it’s completely cool, definitely, it’s the coolest thing in the world!*”). For him the ability to speak two languages was something natural and ‘everyday’ in nature: “Mae’n jyst fel peth *extra*, fel gwybod yr iaith Cymraeg. Wy jyst yn gwybod Saesneg, ond yr unig peth yw chi’n gwybod Cymraeg, so mae’n jyst fel un iaith *extra*” (“*It’s just something extra, knowing Welsh. I just know English, but the only thing is that you know Welsh, so it’s just like one extra language*”). In putting forward this view of being bilingual, Dai therefore aligned himself with the aim of the parents. But his own identity as a bilingual speaker was derived partly through reference to the experiences of his friends outside the school who came from other ethnic groups in the city, and the idea that speaking two language was a common subjectivity in a multilingual London: “Pryd dw i’n mynd i ffrindiau fi, dw i’n dweud ‘Dw i’n gallu siarad Cymraeg’, a wedyn mae lot o ffrindiau fi’n gallu siarad iaith arall hefyd - *Norwegian*, neu lot o bethe” (“*When I go to see my friends, I say ‘I can speak Welsh’, and then a lot of my friends are able to speak another language as well – Norwegian or a lot of things*”). Being bilingual was therefore described as a normal and positive experience. To some extent the children linked their embracing of

being able to speak two languages to the practical advantages that it offered them in everyday life. Peter had come to school without any knowledge of Welsh, and his parents did not speak the language at home. But he rapidly gained fluency in Welsh, and valued the fact that he had access to two sets of vocabulary, which increased his linguistic powers. One language could be used to find out words in the other for instance: “Wel, os chi ‘di anghofio gair a chi *just* yn siarad Saesneg bydd chi’n deud ‘Mum, what’s that, that word?’, ond os ych chi’n siarad Cymraeg chi’n gallu deud ‘O Mam, be ‘dy ‘*aeroplane*’ yn Gymraeg?’” (“*Well, if you forget a word, and you only speak English you have to say ‘Mum, what’s that word, that word?’, but if you speak Welsh, you can say ‘Oh, Mum, what is ‘aeroplane’ in Welsh?’*”). Another boy in the class also described how using the two languages in this way could be helpful: “ [Mae’n] [...] eitha hawdd achos chi fel yn deud, yn lle deud ‘Dw i eisio sglodion i bwyd heddiw’, chi’n deud ‘Fi eisiau *chips* i bwyd heddiw’ neu rywbeth fel chi’n gallu *mix*, fel cymysgu nhw fel ‘ny” (“*It’s [...] quite easy because you like, instead of saying ‘I want chips to eat today’, you say ‘I want sglodion to eat today’, or something like, you can mix, like mix them like that*”). Elizabeth, who was one of the younger pupils in the class had one Welsh speaking and one monolingual English parent. She explained that being able to speak two languages meant that secrets could be kept from her father, who did not speak Welsh: “Mae’n dda i siarad dau iaith achos os chi’n siarad Cymraeg a Dad chi ddim yn siarad Saesneg ... Dad chi ddim deall dim byd ych chi’n gweud” (“*It’s good to speak two languages because if you speak Welsh and your Dad doesn’t speak Welsh ... your dad doesn’t understand anything you say*”).

The ability to mix Welsh and English was an issue about which the children held highly ambivalent positions. In certain ways they found the ability to mix the two languages useful and empowering, and they were very used to switching between Welsh and English when necessary. But they also held the view that the two languages should be held apart and kept separate because of the danger that a dilution of linguistic purity might take place, in which Welsh and English became excessively mixed into a hybrid language. In relation to the mixing of individual English words into Welsh speech Dai said that “Os ych chi’n deud e gormod chi fel yn dechre deud e fel gair Cymraeg so chi fel yn newid e mewn i gair Cymraeg” (“*If you say it too much you begin to say it as a Welsh word, so you change it into a Welsh word*”). And in more general terms, the children could envisage the fusing of English and Welsh in the future if people continued to mix the languages beyond what was reasonable:

Child 1 Falle bydd ni gyda rhyw iaith, falle bydd gyda ni fel iaith ...  
 Child 2 Saesmeg  
 Child 3 Wenglish neu rywbeth.  
 Child 2 Saesmeg.

*Child1 Perhaps there will be some language, maybe we will have a language like ...*  
*Child2 Saesmeg [a mixture of Saesneg/English and Cymraeg/Welsh]*  
*Child 3 Wenglish or something.*  
*Child 2 Saesmeg.*

The idea that English and Welsh should be kept apart was linked to the fact that the children connected the use of the languages to particular contexts. Rather than constantly switching between linguistic codes, Welsh and English were used in different spaces of their day to day lives, and it was to a large extent through this geography that the pupils made sense of their bilingualism. Whereas English was all around them in London, speaking Welsh was understood through a much more limited geography. The Welsh language for them was constituted through its use within specific, delimited sites

in the city, of which the school and the home were of crucial importance (echoing the discussion of community in Chapter 5), though not all of the children spoke Welsh in the familial sphere. When I asked the group to imagine that they were showing a newly arrived Welsh person in London where to find ‘Welsh spaces’ they concentrated upon institutions:

JS Beth yw'r pethe Cymraeg alla i fynd iddyn nhw yn Llundan?  
Hazel Clwb Cymraeg yn Gray's Inn Road?  
JS Iawn 'te. Clwb Cymraeg. Beth sy'n digwydd yn y Clwb Cymraeg yn Gray's Inn Road?  
Hazel Mae 'na bar yno, a chi'n gallu siarad efo pobl, siarad Cymraeg.  
JS Iawn 'te. Pethe Cymraeg?  
Jon Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain.  
Dai [...] mae tri, mae lot o Ysgol Sul, neu os ych chi eisiau mynd i'r capel neu rywbeth.

*JS What are the Welsh [language] things that I can go to in London?*  
*Hazel The Welsh Club in Gray's Inn Road?*  
*JS OK then. The Welsh Club. What happens at the Welsh Club in Gray's Inn Road?*  
*Hazel There's a bar there, and you can speak to people, speak Welsh.*  
*JS OK then. Welsh things?*  
*Jon Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain .*  
*Dai [...] there are three, there are a lot of Sunday Schools, or if you want to go to a chapel or something.*

The understanding of the language as being located within specific, mostly institutional sites, was also linked to the idea that the children used Welsh primarily with people that they knew. There was often a sense of surprise when they met Welsh people who they were unfamiliar with outside the language's ‘normal’ spaces. Denise (a parent at the school) recited an occasion when such an event had taken place:

Cofio cwrdd â rhywun - o'n i'n gwbod oedd hi'n siarad Cymraeg, yn y stryd, a oedd Siân [fy merch] gyda fi, a o'n i'n siarad â hi. Eithon ni mewn i'r car a wedodd Siân wrtha i; ‘Pam o't ti'n siarad Cymraeg gyda'r ddynes ‘na yn y stryd Mam?’ [Chwerthin]. Oedd hi'n meddwl dim ond gartre yn ni'n siarad Cymraeg neu yn yr ysgol.

*I remember meeting someone – I knew that she spoke Welsh, in the street, and Siân [my daughter] was with me, and I was speaking to her. We got into the car and Siân said to me; ‘Why did you speak to that woman in Welsh on the street Mam?’ [laughter]. She thought that it was only at home that we speak Welsh or in the school.*

For Siân therefore, speaking Welsh was associated with people known to her, and within the specific sites of school and home. One of the boys from the group explained in his own terms, how meeting a Welsh speaking person ‘by chance’ in the street was a strange experience that problematised the mostly bounded geography of their own language use: “Unwaith o’n ni wedi mynd i canol Llundain a ni wedi clywed pobl yn siarad Cymraeg - o’n i ‘Ooh, maen nhw’n siarad Cymraeg!’ Mae e wir wir yn od os chi’n gweld rhywun [yn siarad Cymraeg] chi ddim yn gwybod” (“Once we had gone into central London and we heard people speaking Welsh – I said ‘Ooh, they’re speaking Welsh!’. It’s really, really odd if you see someone [speaking Welsh] that you don’t know”). Another pupil described how meeting other Welsh children was even more of a shock, because for him, the Welsh school in London was the key spatial context of his encounters with other children who shared his linguistic identity: “Chi fel arfer jyst yn gweld pobol hen neu pobol fel sy’n *grown-up* sy’n siarad Cymraeg [y tu fas i’r ysgol]. Chi byth yn gweld plant neu basen nhw wedi dod i’r ysgol yma” (“As a rule you just see old people, or grown-ups speaking Welsh [outside the school]. You never see children, or they would have come to this school”). Speaking Welsh outside the school was almost always by arrangement, rather than happening by chance: “A chi fel arfer ddim yn gweld pobol sy’n dod i’r ysgol jyst yn cerdded ar y stryd - fel arfer chi jyst yn *arrango* gweld nhw” (“And you don’t as a rule see people who come to the school just walking down the street – as a rule you just arrange to see them”).

The use of Welsh and English within partially differentiated contexts was therefore a key way in which the children made sense of their ability to speak two languages in their everyday lives. The distinct geography that their use of English

and Welsh displayed was to some extent mapped out for them because the linguistic character of the spaces in which they spoke Welsh was defined by parents or teachers. But in the narratives of the older children especially, there was a clear sense in which they were beginning to make active choices about the language they used in certain contexts. This was likely in situations where they were able to control and define the meanings of activities (such as playing with their friends outside of school). To a certain extent this can be seen to come back to the issue of linguistic context. The children mix with Welsh speaking friends at school, and some of them also meet in the evenings and at weekends. But because on the whole, the pupils are scattered across a wide area of London, and due to the fact that the children live in communities where they are not surrounded by other Welsh speakers, most of them have predominantly English speaking friends outside of school. Because of the dispersed nature of the students and the location of Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain in one area of London, they do not tend to socialise with the same children outside of school as they do within it. For many of the children therefore, Welsh was the language that they spoke at school, and English was their main medium with friends they saw in their own time. The pupils knew that whilst in school they had to speak Welsh, but expressed the belief that outside of this space they could choose which language they used, even where their friends might be Welsh speakers. As one of the boys stated: “Ie, os chi ddim yn yr Ysgol chi’n gallu dewis pryd hynny [...]” (“*If you’re not in school you can choose then [...]*”). Another pupil understood that speaking English in school was not allowed, but in his own leisure time it was far more acceptable: “Fel arfer os chi’n mynd i ty ffrind, ti, achos fel yn yr Ysgol chi’n gorfod siarad Cymraeg - chi ddim yn cael



siarad Saesneg. Ond os fel chi yn ty ffrind, chi'n gallu siarad Saesneg a Cymraeg, so mae'n iawn siarad Saesneg achos dyw e ddim yn drwg" (*"As a rule, if you go to a friend's house, you, because like in the School you have to speak Welsh – you're not allowed to speak English. But if you are like in a friend's house, you can speak English and Welsh, so it's OK to speak English because it's not naughty"*).

### **Geography and Identity**

Whilst the children therefore renegotiated some of the linguistic norms that their parents and the teachers had attached to language, they nevertheless embraced the general idea of being bilingual in London, and expressed a strong Welsh identity that saw the ability to speak Welsh as a positive attribute. As has been suggested, their use of Welsh in London worked through a particular set of geographies in which certain spaces were associated with using or hearing the language. But wider notions of the geographical also threaded through their understandings of being Welsh. In contrast to their Welsh parents who had moved from Wales, the children's identities were primarily located in London which is where they had grown up, and had learnt what it meant to be and speak Welsh. The discussions held with the children from class 2 explored both the role of Wales as a symbolic space in the construction of their feelings of being Welsh, and the ways in which they imagined the country from their geographical location in London.

For all of the children, London was home, and it was primarily to the city that the children attached their Welsh identities:

JS So, ych chi'n wahanol i blant eraill sy'n siarad Cymraeg, achos ych chi ddim, ych chi ddim wedi byw yng Nghymru o gwbl?  
 Pawb Na, byth, byth.  
 JS Iawn, so mae, ble mae'ch cartref chi - yn Llundun neu yng Nghymru?  
 Pawb Llundain.

JS *So you're different to other Welsh children who speak Welsh, because you've never, you've never lived in Wales at all?*  
 All *No, never, never.*  
 JS *OK, so where is your home – in London or in Wales?*  
 All *London.*

Being Welsh and Welsh speaking was not always understood in terms of referring back to Wales therefore. Through the way in which pupils such as Dai and Jon located the Welsh language in London, they problematised an essential Welsh identity rooted and bounded within the national space of Wales, what Brah (1996) calls a 'deterritorialisation'. Such an identity stretches beyond the neat borders of the nation, echoing what Clifford (1997: 251) has described as "identification outside the national time/space":

JS Ych chi'n meddwl falle, ych chi ddim yn colli Cymru, achos bo' chi wastad trwy'r amser wedi byw yn Llundun?  
 Dai Ie, achos wel ych chi dal yn gallu siarad Cymraeg yn Llundain hefyd.  
 Jon Wel ych chi'n gallu siarad Cymraeg unrhywle chi eisiau - os ych chi'n Cymraeg chi'n gallu fel siarad Cymraeg unrhywle - Awstralia hyd yn oed.  
 Aled *Dim Welsh nots.*  
 JS So mewn un synnwyr, mewn un sens yr iaith sy'n bwysig i chi ...  
 Dai Dim y lle.  
 JS Reit.  
 Dai Dim ble dych chi.

JS *Do you think perhaps that you don't miss Wales because you've always lived in London?*  
 Dai *Yes, because you can still speak Welsh in London.*  
 Jon *Well you can speak Welsh anywhere you want to - if you're Welsh you can speak Welsh anywhere - even in Australia.*  
 Aled *No Welsh nots.*  
 JS *So in one sense, in one sense it's the language that's important to you ...*  
 Dai *Not the place.*  
 JS *Right.*  
 Dai *Not where you are.*

London therefore was the key arena within which the pupils worked out their sense of being and speaking Welsh, problematising the notion of locating language and culture exclusively within the national boundaries of Wales. But as their comments above regarding the ‘international’ reach of the language suggest, they did not merely substitute one bounded identity (negotiated in London) for one based around Wales. Wales was one reference point in a series of multiple attachments that contributed towards the children’s understanding of their own identities. As Gray (2000: 78) suggests in relation to the Irish in London, a multiply located identity might be developed which problematises a bounded essentialised sense of Irishness: “The adoption of a hybrid identity such as ‘London-Irish’ or ‘Irish in London’ disrupts the hegemony of both a territorially based Irishness and a nationally defined identity”.

The fact that the children’s identities were negotiated primarily within London did not mean that Wales played no part in their lives, and it was a place that they related to in complex ways, as they described their own senses of self. The two key ways in which the group related to Wales focused around firstly the people, and secondly the landscapes that they had had contact with on visits to the country. The rather ambivalent relationship that the group expressed towards Welsh speakers in Wales for instance, reaffirms the idea that Wales as a territory is one relational attachment in their identities, rather than their only point of reference. Returning to the issue of mixing languages, some members of the group felt that children in the Principality (especially from urban areas) were likely to make less effort in terms of keeping the two languages separate:

Child 1    Fi’n meddwl bod ni yn siarad Cymraeg yn well achos o’n ni ‘di mynd i’r lle ‘ma a oedd plant Caerdydd yna a um, oedd nhw ddim, o’n nhw jyst yn deud ‘ie’ mewn pob brawddeg. Oedden nhw’n deud rhywbeth yn Saesneg neu’n siarad Cymraeg a Saesneg yn yr un brawddeg ...

Child 2 Dau gair yn Saesneg - o'n ni jyst yn deud fel tua un gair [Saesneg] mewn paragraff neu rywbeth.

Child1 *I think that we speak Welsh better, because we had been to this place and there were some children from Cardiff there, and they were just saying 'yeah' in every sentence. They were saying something in English, or speaking Welsh and English in the same sentence ...*

Child2 *Two words in English – we were just saying maybe one [English] word in each paragraph or something.*

The children suggested that they spoke better Welsh than some of their peers in Wales itself, making strong connections with many adults who had expressed the sense in which their identities had become stronger living outside of Wales. They felt that people in Wales did not need to make an effort to speak Welsh because it was a language that was all around them anyway: “Maen nhw fel yn meddwl ‘Oh, ni mewn Cymru, mae dim ots os yn ni ddim gwybod Cymraeg achos hwn ydy lle Cymraeg’, so mae nhw ‘O mae’n *fine* i siarad Saesneg yn yr un frawddeg [...]” (“*They think that ‘Oh, we’re in Wales, it doesn’t matter if we don’t speak Welsh because this is a Welsh place’, so they say ‘Oh it’s fine to speak English in the same sentence [as Welsh] [...]*”). On the one hand, there was a sense in which the children at Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain were much more likely to use English because it was the language that dominated their lives outside the bounded spaces where they tended to speak Welsh. But on the other hand they felt that they made more of an effort to use the language because of their situation outside of Wales: “Ni mewn Llundain, ni misio, colli Cymraeg. Os ni jyst yn siarad Saesneg yn Llundain bydd ‘na ddim Cymraeg yn Llundain, mae wir yn *boring*’” (“*We’re in London, we miss Wales. If we just speak English in London there won’t be any Welsh in London, and it would be really boring*”).

The way in which the group imagined Wales through a particular set of landscapes was extremely striking, and was frequently operated in terms of a set of binary oppositions with their daily lives in London. London as a cosmopolitan, dirty, modern city was frequently juxtaposed with Wales as a rural, peaceful landscape filled with mountains and sea shores. These comparisons were often value judgements that further emphasise that although Wales was a place that they enjoyed visiting, London was the children's home. The most positive sentiment expressed about life in London related to the range of leisure activities that the group was able to undertake, and the number of shops that were located in the city:

Mae llawer o pethau i wneud yma.  
*There are lots of things to do here.*

Chi'n gallu fel prynu unrhywbeth yma yn Llundun [...].  
*You can buy anything here in London [...].*

Mae Llundun fel jyst loads o siopau.  
*In London there are just loads of shops.*

And the ability to travel around the city to visit these spaces of consumption or leisure also appealed to them, as Hazel explained: “Fel, dw i jyst yn gorfod dal y bws sydd gyferbyn â ty ni, ac wedyn ych chi yna” (“*Like, I just have to catch the bus which is opposite my house, and then you're there*”).

Whilst the busy, urban atmosphere was one that the children bought into - particularly through the range of activities that it offered, it was often linked to certain socio-environmental problems that characterised this urbanity. In describing such problems the children articulated clear moral geographies. They painted the city as a

dirty place, in which people's attitude to smoking and dropping rubbish in public spaces was a major problem. Helen described how "mae pobl yn smocio llawer, so mae'n cweit budr" ("*people smoke a lot, so it's quite dirty*"). And Jon said that "dw i ddim yn hoffi [pobl] yn rhoi sbwriel lawr llawr" ("*I don't like people dropping rubbish on the ground*"). Graffiti and burglary were also mentioned as significant problems in London. The rurality that the children experienced in Wales was often described in positive terms, as it contrasted with the claustrophobic and polluted environment that they encountered at home: "Dw i'n hoffi Cymru achos mae [hi] mor neis ac wy'n hoffi'r mynyddau a pethau [...]. Yn Llundain mae 'na ty y tu ol ty, ac yn Cymru mae 'na parciau tu ol y tai a ceffylau a'r mor a pethe" ("*I like Wales because it's so nice, and I like the mountains and things. In London there is house behind house, and in Wales there are parks behind the houses and horses and the sea and things*"). But the quiet, quaint character of much of Wales was also seen negatively, in that it offered a lack of activities compared with life in London: "[Mae] jyst cwpl o *post offices* yn rai llefydd a cwpl o tai ... Yn Llundain mae lot o *museums*, uh, lot o pethe fel 'na" ("*There are just a couple of post offices in some places and a couple of houses ... In London there are lots of museums, uh, a lot of things like that*"). Dai also drew upon an image of Wales as rural and empty: "Mae fel yn lle bach [...] chi'n gwbod, a mae gwir yn boring" ("*It's like a small place [...] you know, and it's really boring*").

The children's attitude towards life in Wales was however, highly contextualised. They explained that each year in July they undertook an annual visit to Llangrannog (The Urdd's or Welsh Youth Association's residential centre) in rural mid Wales, an event which they looked forward to. Within this context they found the

prospect of spending a week in the countryside highly appealing because of the range of outside and adventure activities they could undertake:

- Dai [...] mae lot o pethe chi'n gallu mynd i, *go karts*, sgio ...  
Hazel Pryd dych chi'n dreifio i mewn, mae'n fel jyst lle bach, ac wedyn ti'n dechre mynd rownd, ac *infestigato*, mae'n anferthol.  
Dai *Cool!*
- Dai [...] *there are a lot of things you can go to – go karts, skiing ...*  
Hazel *When you arrive there, it's just like a small place, and then you start going around, and investigating, and its huge.*  
Dai *Cool!*

It was also true that when the group was asked about life in the urban areas of Wales, they could foresee being happy living in a major city such as Cardiff. The perception of Wales as a space of rurality appeared to be underpinned by the context in which the children usually went there. Wales was a place that was 'visited' for holidays, where they stayed with grandparents, creating the dominant idea of Wales as a space of leisure.

Time spent in Wales was nearly always linked to being on holiday:

- JS A pan ewch chi yn ol i Gymru [...] beth byddwch chi'n wneud, i ble byddwch chi'n mynd?  
Dai Wel, fel arfer chi'n mynd ar eich gwyliau chi, a chi jyst yn mwynhau eich hunan.
- JS *And when you go back to Wales [...] what do you do, where do you go?*  
Dai *Well, usually, you go on your holidays, and you just enjoy yourself.*

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to outline how the meanings attached to Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain can be viewed from a number of different perspectives. For the founders of the school and the subsequent generations of staff, parents and supporters, it is an institution that is endowed with significant meaning. Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain allows children to be educated through the medium of Welsh in London, and of all the many Welsh institutions located in London, Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain is one of the most

successful and powerful in maintaining Welsh cultural and linguistic traditions in the city. But Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain should not be caricatured, or its meaning oversimplified to that of a small island of rural Welshness in the midst of urban London. A range of complex and differing identities are worked out in and across the school that are multiply constituted. Language is the key symbol of Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain – what gives it its meaning and identity. But language only means something in the life of the school (and the motivations of the parents, for instance) when the way in which it is interwoven with and around notions of education, class, community and culture is considered. The school derives its central meaning from language, but as this chapter has shown, its existence cannot be reduced to it. The multifaceted meanings attached to the school's existence are not merely 'soaked up' by the children who are educated there. They actively negotiate linguistic and cultural norms. In constructing their own senses of identity, the children creatively use language, mixing and holding Welsh and English apart, and making sense of their linguistic realities through senses of geography.

Both in terms of collective and individual identity, Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain is important because it symbolises some of the key issues that surround how we are to think about being Welsh, and constructing Welshness in London. These discussions link into wider theoretical debates about how identities are conceptualised. The London Welsh School problematises locating culture or language exclusively within a single, bounded space (Clifford, 1997). The children at the school, who articulate a strong sense of being and speaking Welsh, do not ground this identity automatically back to a nation; Wales becomes one point in an identity that is multiply located. The school, and the identities



that are worked out within it, spoil the picture of neat separate cultures, and the lines drawn around them.

The issue of who funds Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain could be seen as a matter that concerns only those involved with the school, but I would argue that it symbolises the ambiguous, uncertain identity of the Welsh in London/England. In one sense, they are most certainly outside the nation, and therefore denied the financial legitimacy afforded to identical schools in Wales. Yet in England there is a reluctance to accept a population of British people as sufficiently different or displaced as an 'ethnic group'. Far from being an anomaly, Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain is perhaps symbolic of how the Welsh in London confuse and transgress the seemingly stable categories of national identity.

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<sup>i</sup> A journal article based upon this lecture is about to be published in the *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*. I am very grateful to Eleanor Edwards (now Delaney) for allowing me to have a copy of her lecture transcript.

<sup>ii</sup> Pseudonyms have been used for the children taking part in the interviews as for all adult interviewees. However, due to the large number of pupils taking part in some of the interviews, it has not been possible to identify all interviewees.

# Chapter 8

## Conclusion

### Introduction

In this thesis a number of questions about identity, migration and diaspora have been developed. As the Introduction made clear, academic texts concerned with such issues offer a way of structuring the thesis; a conceptual framework (or what Brah, 1996 calls a conceptual grid) that can be used to make sense of things, to identify the key issues. At the same time, I have also attempted a more implicit project of interweaving theoretical and ethnographic (empirical) material through the Chapters. My aim in doing so was to gradually build up a series of issues in successive chapters (such as the multiple attachments of identity), and to highlight the richness of the stories of the research participants. In this Conclusion I return to the conceptual framework put forward in the Introduction, and restate in explicit terms the key theoretical issues arising from the thesis. I attempt to draw together some of the theoretical strands that have been woven through the chapters.

Two questions in particular are addressed in the following pages. Firstly, why is studying the Welsh in London theoretically relevant; and what kinds of wider issues about the self, the nation, and so on are highlighted in this study? Secondly, I examine how helpful the theoretical literatures concerned with identity, migration and diaspora can be in understanding Welsh identities in London. In particular I argue that the theoretical framework offered by diaspora needs to be re-evaluated because of the way in which Clifford (1994, 1997) among others has warned against appropriating such work too widely, and beyond what can meaningfully be called diasporic groups. In order to explore these issues the Conclusion is structured into three main sections that

broadly reflect the most important theoretical terrains explored in the thesis. The first section examines the construction of self-identity and is particularly concerned with the notions of travel and multiple attachments put forward by diaspora theory. The second part of the Conclusion considers the construction of collective Welsh identities in London. The analysis here is focused upon the contested, multiple and fragmented nature of Welsh life in London. It problematises the notion of a bounded national identity. The third and final section to some extent goes beyond the original aims of the thesis, as set out in the Introduction. It considers how the Welsh as a collective group in London should be conceptualised. The ambiguous, unstable and shifting identity of the Welsh in the city suggests less that they are somehow a 'unique' group, but points more to the instability and contested nature of identity *per se*.

## **I The Construction of Self Identity**

The interrelationship between self-identity and different forms of movement has been a central theme of the thesis. The act of migration for instance, can have important consequences for the identity of the migrant, or migratory processes can be driven by issues linked to identity and lifestyle. Another way of approaching the interface between identity and migration is to consider how notions of movement/travel can be used to fashion progressive conceptualisations of identity in more general terms.

### *The Importance of Identity in the Experience of Migration*

In both Chapters 4 and 6, the physical act of migration was explored. Of particular concern were both the motivations driving migration from Wales, and the experience of moving to London. The decision to leave home, the journey itself, and the arrival in London were shown to be capable of inducing what White (1995) describes as a shift in identity. Sarup (1994: 98) supports such a view, stating that "identity is changed by the journey, our subjectivity is

recomposed ... Exile can be deadening but it can also be creative". As Bartholomew (1990) argues, the motivations underpinning migration decisions are often complex and multi-faceted, even when harsh economic conditions in the area of emigration might suggest otherwise. Halfacree and Boyle (1993) echo these thoughts and suggest that the decision to migrate needs to be seen within the wider context of the biography of the individual. The migration experiences explored in Chapters 4 and 6 clearly indicate that for some respondents such as Dafydd, leaving Wales was about economic necessity and was linked to feelings of loss, resentment, homesickness and ambivalence – a situation akin to that of exile (Hannerz, 1990). In the experiences of such migrants, a Welsh community in London helped lessen such sentiments, and allowed them to maintain their identities and cultural traditions. But as Cohen (1997) argues in relation to the Jewish Diaspora, some migrants can and do leave home because of reasons linked to identity and lifestyle. For the new generation of Welsh migrants whose lives were explored in Chapter 6, migration was more likely to be about personal choice, about renegotiating or even strengthening personal senses of being Welsh, through moving away from Wales. For these respondents, London offered the opportunity to engage with the cultural diversity and difference offered by a large metropolitan city, the forging of cosmopolitan as opposed to a pseudo exile identity (Hannerz, 1990). As Barkan and Shelton (1998: 11) state: "From a certain perspective, the experience of displacement and exile can be interpreted as embittering, frustrating, and morbid. From another standpoint, the challenge of fusing or living between different worlds, languages, cultures and identities is a rich experience".

*Travel, Migration and Displacement in the Conceptualisation of the Self*

The experience of physical migration can therefore have important consequences for the identity of the migrant. The other way in which the migration-identity 'interface' has been approached in the thesis is through exploring how notions of travel, displacement and migration

can be used as theoretical tools to conceptualise identity in more general terms. For Thrift and Pile (1995: 22) it is “the forging of new subject positions and subjectivities out of ideas of movement and travel”. The emphasis upon travel in the construction of self-identity is one of the key appeals of diaspora theory as I have used it here. It assists us in moving away from thinking of the self as rooted, unified, bounded, organic, and fixed: “Travelling can ... turn out to be a process whereby the self loses its fixed boundaries – a disturbing yet potentially empowering practice of difference” (Minh-ha, 1994: 23). Thinking of identity in terms of movement and travel helps achieve an anti-essentialist view of the self (Hall and Du Gay, 1996)<sup>i</sup>. Self-identity needs to be seen as a social process, always being made, and never finally finished (Sarup, 1994). A sense of movement in the formation of identity challenges the idea of identity as a bounded entity (Sibley, 1997).

As was suggested above, physical migration can be an important aspect of the way in which a person’s self-identity develops or changes. But writers such as Clifford (1997) are interested in thinking about travel as a “spectrum of human experiences” in which physical movement is but one level (1997: 3). To quote Robertson, *et al* (1994: 2): “A minimal definition of travel would involve a movement from one place to another – between geographical locations or cultural experiences – but we can expand this common-sense definition to look at how movement functions psychically and metaphorically”. In Chapter 5 the shuttling of respondents such as Mathew and George between a Welsh community and dominant London society was described as both a physical and psychological movement. And in Chapter 6, Cohen’s suggestion that ‘return’ could be both symbolic as well as a physical movement was drawn upon to consider the way in which certain interviewees such as Gwawr had spent several years in London before deciding to engage with Welsh life in the city. My own complex movements as a researcher are also important in this respect. My constant shuttling between Swansea and London constituted an important physical movement that took me into and out of the ‘field’. Yet as I suggested in

Chapter 2, I also occupied shifting psychological positions of closeness to and distance from those I researched.

Another appeal of diaspora theory leads on closely from the notion of travel and movement. It is the idea that identities are constructed through attachments to multiple spaces. As Brah (1996: 194) states, “The concept of diaspora signals ... processes of multi locationality across geographical, cultural and psychic boundaries”. This tenet of diaspora theory is important because as Mac Éinrí (2000) suggests, it challenges an idea of a bounded, unitary, monological conception of the self (Thrift and Pile, 1995). Crucially, as Clifford (1994, 1997) argues, the concept of multi-locationality in the construction of self-identity challenges (or is at least in tension with) the claims of the nation state, which locates cultural identity within distinct, pure national spaces (Nash, 1999). In discussing diasporic identity, Nash (1999: unpaginated) describes “a reconceptualisation of identity and culture in an attempt to challenge the nation state’s homogenising and exclusive language of pure and primordial cultures assigned to politically differentiated spaces”. Drawing upon Clifford’s work, Cohen (1997: 135) describes this aspect of diasporas in clear terms: “The cultural forms of diasporas, Clifford (1994) insists, can never be exclusively nationalist. Nation-states are about welding the locals to a single place, gathering peoples and integrating ethnic minorities. Diasporas, by contrast, imply multiple attachments. They accommodate to, but also resist the norms and claims of nationalists”.

In the thesis I have attempted to use this framework to show how people’s Welsh identities do not have to be exclusively or even primarily located in Wales. For certain respondents who had migrated to London, life in the city had allowed them to re-negotiate or strengthen what it meant to be Welsh (the experiences of Heulwen or Tecwyn and Llian for instance). Such an identity was certainly articulated though making connections back to Wales,

but it could only make sense through simultaneously anchoring it in London. The children whose experiences were discussed in Chapter 7 described London Welsh identities that were worked out primarily through their everyday life in the city. In such narratives, Wales was a relativised, de-centred space in the construction of a Welsh identity. A focus upon multiple attachments also opens up the possibility of considering how Welsh people in London might make lateral connections with other co-ethnic migrants in different parts of the Welsh Diaspora, as well as their families and friends in Wales (Clifford, 1994, 1997).

Diaspora theory is therefore concerned with thinking about identity through travel and migration, and in terms of multiple spatial attachments. But as Clifford (1997) indicates, it is also about viewing travel (displacement) and location (placement) relationally. The migrant negotiates his or her identity through movement, but simultaneously through attachment to multiple homes. In viewing displacement and placement in a relational way, Brah's (1996) concept of diaspora space is particularly important (see also Walter, 1999). Diaspora space connects together both those who migrate, and those who stay put: "My central argument is that diaspora space as a conceptual category is 'inhabited' not only by those who have migrated and by their descendants but equally by those who are constructed and represented as indigenous. ... the concept of diaspora space ... includes the entanglement of the genealogies of dispersion with those of 'staying put'" (1996: 181). Chapter 4 of the thesis in particular, drew upon the framework of diaspora space to consider the complex connections between people in Wales, migrants making the journey, and established Welsh people living in London. It was argued for instance, that Welsh migrants in the metropolis sustained close connections with 'back home', and could channel future migration flows, as well as being a key source of information and assistance for friends and family newly arrived in the city (Boyd, 1989). The multiple flows of people, money, animals (and even laundry) that have connected particular spaces in Wales and London chimes strongly with Massey's (1991a)

'global sense of place' and Clifford's (1997:246) discussion of diasporic networks: "Separate places become effectively a single community 'through the continuous circulation of people, money, goods and information'".

Linked to its emphasis upon the construction of identity through attachment to multiple spaces is diaspora's insistence that the self is constituted through multiple *social* axes/attachments. Diasporic discourse affirms the multiplicity of identity, and is alive to the dangers of reifying or focusing too closely upon one axis of the self. Cohen (1997: 129) has "suggested that the old essentialisms, such as the Marxist idea that social identity could be reduced to class identity are now redundant". Writers such as Brah (1996), Clifford (1997) and Walter (1999) argue that diasporas are gendered forms of migration, and that we need to be sensitive to that fact that gender (as well as class, sexuality and generation) can cut across ethnicity and culture. For Walter (1999: 313) "gender is a key facet of the intersectionality that defines the concept of diaspora, as power relations of class and gender crosscut those of ethnicity and 'race'". And Brah (1996: 10) underlines "the importance of understanding the intersections between 'race', gender, class, sexuality, [and] ethnicity". What comes through clearly from the work of such writers is that identity is always constructed through difference - "a conception of identity which lives through, not despite difference" (Cohen, 1997: 138). Especially during the early stages of my research in London I was perhaps apt to privilege respondents' sense of being Welsh and to push aside the many other axes of people's identities that were important to them. I learnt, for instance, that respondents' experiences of being Welsh in London were sometimes highly gendered or classed. It was tempting at times to view y Noson o Hwyl as an inherently progressive, inclusive space of Welshness (which in some ways it is). Yet one female respondent described the way in which she felt this was a predominantly masculine space that she occupied in a marginal ambivalent way. Interviewing gay Welsh respondents in London also brought home to me that sexuality and



Welshness (for example) were not simply pieces of people's identities that fitted neatly together. They interacted in complex ways, and were reassembled according to the social context in which respondents found themselves (Goffman, 1969). My reading of diaspora theory has helped to bring the multiple construction and intersectionality of such identities back into sharper focus.

## **II The Construction of Collective Welsh Identities in London**

The second key theme that has been developed in the thesis is the construction of collective Welsh identities in London. As I suggested in Chapter 2, to some extent there was a creative tension throughout my fieldwork between focusing upon the lived identities of individual Welsh people, or the more institutional forms of Welshness constructed by organisations in London. I want to argue here that two key theoretical issues stem from my consideration of collective Welsh identities in London; firstly the multiple, fragmented nature of identity. Secondly, how national identity is re-produced away from home, and the implications this can have for the ways in which we conceptualise the nation.

### *The Multiple Construction of Welsh Identities*

One of the key themes developed in Chapters 5-7 was the way in which Welsh organisations in London construct forms of Welshness that have multiple attachments. Language or national/ethnic culture may be seen as the defining marker of identity for such groups; but the linguistic and cultural are frequently interwoven with other social axes, such as gender, sexuality, religion and community. The multiple construction of these identities, and the way in which their different constituents intersect needs to be held in view (Brah, 1996; Cohen, 1997). In Chapter 5 I demonstrated that the chapel, though ostensibly a religious institution, can be seen to weave together language, religion and culture in complex ways. In Chapter 7, the multiple meanings of the Welsh School were explored. The Welsh language is what gives this school its purpose and

without it would have no meaning. But the linguistic identity of the school only makes sense when it is viewed in relation to the cultural values, educational standards, and the sense of village community that are attached to Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain by many of the parents.

Each individual institution therefore constructs forms of Welshness from multiple social constituents, which are interwoven to create powerful senses of belonging. We need also to think about Welshness in London in terms of multiple, fragmented and contested identities. Various groups are advancing contrasting Welsh identities from different points within the overall ethnic group. There is no homogenous community, and no single essential Welsh identity in London, only multiple identities. Gender, sexuality, class and generation which can be woven *into* a Welsh identity can also cut across a stable unified sense of Welshness. Chapters 5 and 6 together highlighted the ways in which class and generation form unstable boundaries between different arenas of organised Welsh life in London – how they problematise any notion of a single essential community. ‘New’ Welsh societies such as SWS and y Noson o Hwyl are constructing forms of identity that are very different to more traditional Welsh institutions such as the chapel. And their reconfiguration of what it means to be Welsh in London is achieved in part through the geographical. De-centred, mobile, fluid spaces are created that work through electronic networks, and which make lateral connections with other parts of the Welsh Diaspora as much as with Wales. Again, diaspora theory is useful in thinking through collective Welsh identities for it challenges the idea that there can ever be a single, pure, essentialised ethnic identity. For Cohen (1997) ethnic groups are criss-crossed by class. And Brah (1996: 184) states that “as such all diasporas are differentiated, heterogeneous, contested spaces, even as they are implicated in the construction of a common ‘we’.

The multiple construction of Welsh identities in London is therefore theoretically interesting. But these are comments that could equally be made about Welsh life within the borders of Wales itself, or even more generally; surely all identities are multiple and contested? The question that the thesis has tried to keep hold of is how these London Welsh identities 'compare' with life back home. Are some of the key lines of fragmentations highlighted and some of the major constituents of these identities unique to the London Welsh or do they indicate that Welsh identity in the city is reproducing the same kinds of contestations and multiplicities found in Wales itself? Are Welsh societies in London attempting to create a perfect replica or mirror image of Welshness as it is played out in Wales? Or can we see them as trying to create a different London Welsh identity that is distinctive from equivalent cultural forms back home?

I would argue that most if not all of the Welsh societies studied seek to construct Welsh spaces that mirror life back home and allow their members to maintain cultural traditions practised before leaving Wales. Yet the very act of re-creating Welsh culture in London produces something that is slightly different and distinctive. For Habermas (cited in Bhabha, 1996: 54) "the culture which develops on the new soil must be bafflingly alike and different from the parent culture". Alluding to this paradox, Barkan and Shelton (1998: 3) argue that "diasporic cultures evolve that are both unlike the home culture and inseparable from them". And in a similar vein, Clifford (1994: 317) states that "diaspora cultures work to maintain community, selectively preserving and recovering traditions, 'customising' and 'versioning' them in novel, hybrid, and often antagonistic situations". The cultural forms that diasporas reconstruct in the migration destination have to replicate life back home. But they also need to be flexible and to adapt to the social, political and economic relations in the 'new country' (Brah, 1996; James and Harries, 1993). As Jones, E (2001: 202) argues

There can be two views of the phenomenon of the London Welsh community. One is to think of it as the transference of Welsh culture to a new environment; the other as the reassemblage of different elements of Welsh culture into a rather new mixture. As usual, either explanation probably involves a touch of the other. ... On the whole, the idea of a cultural mix of selected Welsh elements, without necessarily recreating the whole is a better explanation of the Welsh communities in London.

What I have argued in this thesis is that a number of institutions in London are constructing 'London Welsh' identities. These societies aim to reproduce authentic Welsh identities in London, but are able to adapt them so that they make sense in the city. The chapel has maintained a sense of local Welsh community for congregations that are scattered across the whole of London, and who in turn come from all parts of Wales. Chapter 5 demonstrated that the everyday life of the chapel was given a London 'twist' (Jones, E, 2001). Small details such as the heightened importance attached to socialising at the end of religious services indicate how cultural forms transported from Wales have been maintained and yet slightly adjusted to meet the needs of a Welsh congregation in London. In Chapter 7 I argued that Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain is an institution driven by the desire to offer a traditional Welsh education in the city. But in doing so the school has had to insert itself into the economic and political relations of London. It has had to find innovative and different ways to be the same as other schools in Wales. The ultimate desire of the parents is that in the lives of their children the Welsh School in London should feel like any other Welsh school. But the immense efforts to achieve this environment marks the school as different to its counterparts back home. These London Welsh identities can only be understood in terms of their attachments to Wales *and* London. They cannot be contained or bounded within any one space.

But if Welsh societies in London are concerned with authentically transferring Welsh culture from Wales, they are also about doing other things. There are many kinds of connections between Wales and London and they have different trajectories. The (London) Welsh Book Club and the Cymmrodorion (for example) can be seen as societies that have served a Welsh population

away from home who seek to maintain their cultural traditions. But equally, such societies were founded for the whole of Wales, and this from a geographical location outside of the nation. In the 1990s as much as in the 1790s, Welsh networks are being developed in London first, and are then reproduced in Wales.

Clifford (1994, 1997) suggests that diaspora theory is in tension with the spatial claims of nation states, and the way in which they locate national culture exclusively within a single, bounded territory. For Mac Éinrí (2000: 2) “diasporic identities, transnational and subversive in character, challenge the security of identities defined, but also limited, by national boundaries”. But as well as offering such a critique of the nation state, diaspora theory also opens up new ways of conceptualising national identity. The nation is reconfigured in multiple, more open, and less contained ways (Bhabha, 1996). National identity comes to include those people living in spaces outside the nation state itself. Mac Éinrí argues that in the 1990s the term ‘diaspora’ entered Irish public discourse: “it signified a new willingness to embrace a more inclusive and less territorially bounded notion of Irishness than heretofore” (2000: 4). Basch, *et al.* (cited in Cohen, 1997: 136) also argue that diasporas provide a way of thinking about national identity that can embrace those outside the nation: “[it is a] new conception of the nation-state [which] includes as citizens those who live physically dispersed within the boundaries of many other states, but who remain socially, politically and culturally and often economically part of the nation-state of their ancestors”. This new geography or ‘deterritorialisation’ of national identity (what Cohen describes as ‘nations unbound’) allows us to see London Welsh life as a constitutive, integral part of Welsh life (Brah, 1996). Several of the interviewees (in particular Mari and Keith) who described London Welsh culture as somehow stronger than in Wales itself, drew explicitly upon this kind of diasporic geography of the nation. The idea put forward by interviewees such as Mari that London is a Welsh county can be seen as a call to view Welsh life in the city as a constitutive part of national

life. And it challenges a bounded view of Wales, redrawing it to include multiple sites of Welsh identity.

### **III Defining the Welsh as a group in London – spaces of ambiguity**

The main focus of this thesis has been upon the construction of self-identity and the way in which societies and institutions within London Welsh life construct particular, contested forms of Welshness. Drawing upon the experiences of a small group of people, I have been interested in the meanings that they attach to being Welsh away from home, both in terms of their own personal identities, and the way in which they create collective forms of Welsh culture in the city. I have tried to avoid generalising out from these stories to speak of all Welsh people in London. While it has sometimes been appropriate (in Chapter 3 for instance), the thesis has not primarily intended to achieve a comprehensive overview of the Welsh in London, or to find some definitive, representative Welsh identity in London. It has been far more a partial and strategic exercise that has examined certain identities, whilst recognising that other equally valid identities have been left out of the picture.

And yet throughout the research I have found myself coming back to the question of how the Welsh in London as collective group should be conceptualised. Quite often this happened as a result of an interview with an individual respondent who seemed to suggest that they occupied multiple (and contradictory) subject positionings – Welsh, British, ethnic, native, migrant, same, other, minority, majority, and so on. In particular, Chapter 7 was concerned with how Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain might be seen as a motif of the Welsh in London in this sense. The school occupies different categories of identity simultaneously (British, ethnic, minority, majority), and resists exclusive definition within any one of these categories. I have already demonstrated in this Conclusion that diaspora theory provides an effective way of thinking through London Welsh

identity. But this still leaves the issue of whether we can think of the Welsh in London as a diasporic (or ethnic) group.

On the one hand, the Welsh in London must be a diasporic group. They have migrated from one nation to another. Added to this, they form one trajectory of a radiating migration from the homeland to destinations around the globe. In the stories of many respondents, London was a distant and different space, a foreign territory that was beyond the everyday experiences of most people (for Evan, London was akin to Bangkok). This is a group that maintains strong ties with the homeland through networks of people, goods, letters, and so on. The Welsh in London have a distinctive language and national culture that marks them out from the majority English speaking London population. The institutions that help to sustain a large ethnic community can be seen clearly in the streets of the city - chapels, cultural centres, and the more informal gatherings of Welsh people (in Hyde Park Corner for instance). The experiences of Welsh people in London can draw strong parallels with what are more readily thought of as diasporic or ethnic groups. Selvon's (1956) account of migration from the Caribbean is a good example of this.

But it is possible to turn many of these statements around, and to argue that to call Welsh life in London diasporic is meaningless. Though they are Welsh, these people are also British and share the same nationality as the people in the place to which they migrate. The Welsh population in London speaks English, some as a first language. Not all of the ethnic group speak Welsh. The move to London is a relatively short one (never more than a couple of hundred miles), and it does not take the migrant outside the nation state, nor across any international border. Pooley (1983) suggests that the movement of Welsh people to London during the nineteenth century shared many common characteristics with migration from parts of England to the city. Or to quote Jones, E (2001: 1): "in almost every respect, the Welsh migrant seemed no different from those who came

from other parts of the United Kingdom. They shared the same colour of skin; poverty was a common characteristic; religion was no bar". As King, *et al* (1995) point out, there is a great deal of difference between moving from rural Wales to London, and the journeys of those migrants who travel half way around the world by plane or boat. The contrasting scales and experiences of such travel need to be kept in view. Whilst there are clear similarities between the Welsh in London and other groups more commonly labelled as 'ethnic' (Jones, E, 1981, 1985) there are also many contrasts. Rather than being clustered in any particular area of London, the Welsh are scattered across the city. They are fully integrated into London life, and accepted by society. They do not suffer the same level or kind of discrimination or racism experienced by many ethnic groups in the city. With no particular distinctive dress or economic occupation in the city today, the Welsh are largely invisible and indistinguishable from the rest of the population. As has been argued above, Welsh organisations in London do not exist simply to serve an ethnic community (a people away from home). London is a key centre of Welsh life, and these societies can (especially historically) be seen as being at the heart of national Welsh life, leading and inspiring cultural processes back home. Welsh people in London are living in a city that both governs Wales politically, and which was effectively the capital of Wales until the advent of Cardiff as a major metropolitan centre. Can these people really be described as diasporic or as an ethnic group?

The answer, I think, is that there is no need to try to tie down the nature of London Welsh identities in such a way. As Brah (1996: 189) suggests, both individuals and groups can position themselves in different, context specific ways: "the fixing of collectivities along any singular axis is called seriously into question. In other words, 'minorities' are positioned in relation not only to 'majorities' but also with respect to one another, and vice versa. Moreover, individual subjects may occupy 'minority' and 'majority' positions simultaneously, and this has important implications for the formation of subjectivity". Rather than trying to rigidly define and pin down



the identity of the Welsh in London (and that of each individual Welsh person), it might be more profitable to hold onto their ambiguity, their multiple positions, their constant shiftings. Instead of being the problem, this ambiguity is what is really interesting and really relevant. Another reason for holding on to the instability of Welsh ethnic identity in London is that it points to the fluid and contested nature of national identity (Young, 1995). If there is something ambiguous and confusing about the nature of the Welsh as an ethnic group in England, this might be linked to the identity of Wales itself, and its location within Britain.

Walter (1997) argues in relation to British and Irish identity that notions of nation/nation state are unstable and contested entities. Cohen's (1994) discussion about the instability of British identity is particularly helpful here, especially his use of the concept of the 'fuzzy frontier'. A key argument to come out of his analysis is that the British identity is constructed upon a series of differentiations: "My starting point is that a complex national and social identity is continuously constructed and reshaped in its (often antipathetic) interaction with outsiders, strangers, foreigners and aliens – the 'others'. You know who you are, only by knowing who you are not" (1994: 10). However, he suggests that the western Celtic fringe of Britain represents a series of liminal spaces that are neither wholly part of British identity, nor placed exclusively outside of it: "I suggest that ambiguity often characterises the boundaries between an English and a British identity (the internal frontier), and between British and supranational identities" (Cohen, 1994: 7). And he adds; "The shape and edges of British identity are thus historically changing, often vague, and to a degree, malleable – an aspect of the British identity I have called a 'fuzzy frontier'" (1994: 35). The borders between England and Wales, England/Britain and Ireland might be seen as both internal and external at the same time. The indeterminacy of such borders means that certain groups within British society can be thought of as both 'same' and different', as outsiders and insiders.

Within Britain, Wales can be viewed in a number of ways. Set alongside England and Scotland, Wales is most definitely a nation. But as Gruffudd (1995) and Davies (1993) argue, official British discourse has often thought of Wales as a region of the British nation, undermining its claims to be a separate entity from England. The advent of devolution demonstrates the way in which the political connections and power linking different parts of Britain are not however set in stone, and are constantly in process (Osmond, 1988). In terms of English national identity, the Welsh are clearly positioned as ‘other’, as different; and yet within the realm of British nationality, they are insiders, and thought of as ‘same’. As Jones, E (2001: 1) states in relation to historical flows of Welsh migrants to London, “they were strangers, but not total strangers; foreigners, but not different enough to warrant being treated very differently from the hosts”. Added to this is the suggestion by writers such as Young (1995) and Nairn (1997) that there is often a slippage in the use of England/Englishness and Britain/Britishness. Young (1995) for instance, argues that Britishness is in reality a politically correct means of extending English domination throughout Britain.

To make this point a little clearer, I want to draw once again upon the case of Irish identities in London. Cohen (1994) suggests that the Irish occupy a liminal position in relation to Britain. The ambiguous place of Irish identity in Britain/England is explored in some depth by Hickman and Walter. Walter (1999) describes the position of the Irish in Britain as one of ‘ambiguity’ in which they are located both as insiders and outsiders – simultaneously within and without of the colonial centre. They have at various points in time been labelled as ‘Other’ and inferior to the English/British, and suffered from stereotyping and racism (Hickman, 1996). Such discourses have for instance spoken of the Irish as a nation ruled by emotional instincts compared to the ‘rational’ nature of British society (Hickman, 1996). Yet Hickman (1996) and Walter (1997, 1999) outline how simultaneously the identity of the Irish as a distinct ethnic group in

Britain has been denied; Irishness has been incorporated within a centralised British identity. For Walter (1999: 319) “Irish invisibility in Britain thus reflects a paradox. On the one hand, Irish people are strongly identified as different and inferior, but on the other hand, they are too much ‘the same’ for their separate identity to be recognised” (Walter, 1999: 319). Both Hickman and Walter suggest that (at least historically) the incorporation of the Irish into a centralised British identity and the denial of their separate identity can be attributed to Britain’s desire to create an homogenous white identity: “The Irish exclusion from debates about racism and ethnic minorities was due to the dominance in Britain of a paradigm of racism that was primarily designed to explain patterns of racism and discrimination experienced by migrants from Britain’s ex colonies in Africa, the Caribbean and the Indian sub continent. The main premise of this paradigm was that racism was about colour” (Hickman, 1996: 32). The Irish have therefore been a largely invisible minority group and left outside debates surrounding race, ethnicity and racism because they are (mostly) white.

A point that has been made throughout the thesis is that there are many similarities between the experiences of the Irish and Welsh in London. Academic studies of Irish migration to London offer an important framework for this thesis, partly because of the lack of comparable scholarly accounts of Welsh life in the city, and due to the way in which they employ notions of diaspora. In attempting to find a theoretical framework for considering who the Welsh in London might be, there is much to be learnt from the studies by Walter, Hickman and Cohen. If the idea of the Welsh as an ethnic group in London appears anomalous and ambiguous, then this is as much because it points to the unstable nature of British identity. A distinctive Welsh nationality worked out in London might also undermine or at least create a tension in the notion of a homogenous British identity. The example of Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain is a very clear example of this situation. As a Welsh school in England it is marked out as different. Yet there is a sense in which this

difference is not fully recognised or legitimated. Rather than being seen as part of an autonomous ethnic community, the school seems to be represented in official and media discourses as an isolated institution, and as an anomaly which is transgressive and out of place.

### **Identity and Migration - Some Final Thoughts**

The instability of identity is one of the key themes to have come out of this thesis. The contested, fluid multiple nature of the self, the group and the nation have been shown to be inherent aspects of their constitution rather than problems that need to be resolved in order to produce neat, fixed compartmentalised identities. As I came to write this conclusion in the summer of 2001, the media was preoccupied with two debates that seemed very relevant to the issues that I was trying to tie together in the thesis. The first concerned the entry of immigrants (mainly asylum seekers) into the UK and their dispersal to different parts of the country. Pictures of ‘desperate’ illegal immigrants crossing the Channel on lidos, or repeatedly trying to board London-bound trains in Calais were shown on television. *The Daily Express* spoke of asylum being ‘out of control’. An asylum seeker in Glasgow died, and another suffered serious injuries when they were attacked. Protests took place against such treatment, and questions were raised about the government’s dispersal policy. Meanwhile, some local residents were interviewed who resented the ‘favourable’ treatment that asylum seekers received.

Simultaneously, a bitter debate gathered pace in Wales concerning the Welsh language. On one side, English in-migration to rural Wales was cited as endangering Welsh speaking communities, as the number of people speaking the language diminished and the rise in house prices forced people to move away from their local areas. In particular, Plaid Cymru came in for much criticism from certain campaigners regarding its inability to prioritise the plight of the language over a more inclusive political view of Wales. A new campaign group called Cymuned

(or ‘Community’) was formed with the intention of defending Welsh speaking communities, which it was argued, Plaid had neglected. Those who raised concerns about immigration in this way were accused of being racist, and anti-English, and of opposing an inclusive sense of Welsh nationality in which everyone was welcome, whatever their ethnicity or linguistic identity.

What struck me as I watched and listened to such debates was that they were intimately concerned with the interconnections between identity and migration. In both cases, migrants were being discussed in terms of how they would affect (positively or negatively) the identity of ‘rooted’ people living in Wales, England or Glasgow. To borrow a phrase from Brah, these two debates involved “the entanglement of genealogies of dispersion [of travel] with those of ‘staying put’” (1996: 181). The balance of power relations involved in these two forms of migration are of course very different. English people (including myself) have moved to Wales largely from choice; it is argued that in-migration to parts of west and north Wales has increased house prices to the extent that young local people cannot afford to buy properties in their local area (the purchase of second homes is a particularly sensitive issue in this respect). Conversely, the asylum seekers arriving in Britain are relatively powerless, and are frequently travelling to Britain because of political persecution or poverty. Interestingly these two stories were not connected by the media, even though they touched upon the same kinds of issues. As the stories unfolded on television and in the newspapers it seemed to me that the interrelationships between identity and migration occupy an ever more important place in today’s society. The debates surrounding English in-migration to Wales also raised the question of how Welsh identity should be ‘located’ geographically. Rural north west Wales was depicted as being a strategic Welsh-speaking landscape, which was being altered by migration from elsewhere. These kinds of arguments link the language to spaces within the territory of Wales; they suggest that Welsh identities worked out in Cardiganshire or Gwynedd might be more important than those being produced in London or

Birmingham. What diaspora theory might offer is a way of making more positive connections between migrancy and identity, between placement and displacement, between 'us' and 'them'. I hope that through exploring Welsh identities in London and their relevance to life in Wales, I have made a small contribution to drawing out those positive connections.

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<sup>i</sup> I am thinking here of diaspora theory specifically as opposed to diasporic processes more generally. One of the key points that Mitchell (1997) makes is that diasporic populations do not always construct anti-essentialist, progressive forms of identity.

# Appendix 1

## Index to adult respondents referred to in the Thesis

Adam, working in public relations; arrived in London in the mid 1990s

Alun, musician, 30s; moved to London in 1981

Angela, 70s, member of Welsh dairy family

Angharad, retired television producer, 60s; moved to London in 1959

Anna, student doctor, 20s; born in London

Anwen, working in public sector, 30s; moved to London in the 1980s

Ben, 20s; moved to London in the mid 1990s

Caroline, 50s; born in London

Carys, 70s; moved to London in the 1940s

Charles, retired bank employee, 80s; born in London

Charlotte, retired teacher, 60s

Chris, 40s, teacher; moved to London, in 1979

Creuddyn, minister, 50s; born in London

Dafydd, dairy owner, 80s; moved to London in 1937

David, scientist, 50s; moved to London in the mid 1960s

Denise, working in public relations, 30s; moved to London in the early 1980s

Dewi, engineer, 30s; moved to London in 1992

Dylan, house husband, 30s, born in London

Edward, retired engineer, 70s; moved to London in 1953

Eleri, teacher, 30s; moved to London in the early 1980s.

Emma, retired missionary, 80s; left Wales in 1939

Eric, surveyor, 40s; moved to London in 1979)

Evan, retired dairy owner, 70s; moved to London in 1945

Fflur, retired teacher, 60s; moved to London in 1955

Gary, 20s; moved to London in 1996

George, Post Officer worker, 50s; born in London

Gladys, retired dairy owner, 90s; moved to London in 1926.

Gwawr, therapist, 30s; moved to London in the early 1990s

Hector, retired teacher, 60s; moved to London in 1954

Henry, minister, 70s; born in London

Heulwen, working with social services, 20s; moved to London in the early 1990s

Huw, retired teacher, 70s; moved to London in 1949

Imogen, 60s, retired dairy owner; moved to London in the late 1950s

James, teacher, 20s; moved to London in the late 1980s

Jane, working in art gallery, 30s; moved to London in the 1980s

Jo, working in Public Relations, 20s; moved to London in the early 1990s

Kate, graphic designer, 20s



Keith, 50s

Llian, retired dairy owner, 50s; moved to London in the 1950s

Louise, researcher, 40s; born in London

Lucy, 80s; born in London

Mair, caretaker, 50s; moved to London in the 1960s

Malcolm, owner of a building contractors, 50s; moved to London in the 1940s/1950s

Manon, 30s; moved to London in the 1970s

Marc, actor, 30s; moved to London in the 1990s

Margaret, retired dairy owner, 80s; born in London

Mari, mid 80s; born in London

Maria, 30s, working for bank; moved to London in the late 1980s

Mathew, retired company executive, late 60s; born in London

Merfyn, retired police officer, 60s; moved to London in the 1950s

Peter, dairy owner, 40s

Sophie, chemist, 50s

Tecwyn, retired dairy owner, 50s; moved to London in the 1950s

Tony, late fifties, self employed; born in London

Will, 50s; born in London but partly educated in Wales

William, retired, late 50s; born in London

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## Internet Resources

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[www.anoeth.demon.co.uk/digwyddiadur.html](http://www.anoeth.demon.co.uk/digwyddiadur.html)

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