# Oswestry, Hay-on-Wye and Berwick-upon-Tweed: Football fandom, nationalism and national identity across the Celtic borders
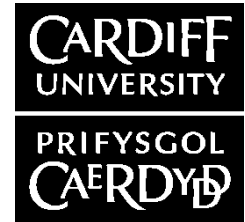
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This thesis is submitted to the School of Welsh, Cardiff University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of PhD.

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# ABSTRACT

Oswestry, Hay-on-Wye and Berwick-upon-Tweed: Football fandom, nationalism and national identity across the Celtic borders

Little research has been devoted to studying the interconnections between the ambiguous border identities along the so-called 'Celtic fringe' in the UK. It is important to explore whether, in the new context of the devolved Welsh and Scottish states, people resident in the border areas of Wales and Scotland will increasingly come to identify with the Welsh or Scottish "nation" and with its official "nationality". Using the sociological approach advocated by Robert K. Yin, this thesis draws on ethnographical research to explore the precise nature of the relationship between contemporary national identity, nationalism, borderlands and football fandom. It examines supporters in three border towns: Oswestry (Shropshire), Hay-on-Wye (Powys), and Berwick-upon-Tweed (Northumberland). Focus groups were conducted with match-going supporters of Welsh league champions The New Saints of Oswestry Town, Scottish League Two side Berwick Rangers and Hay St. Mary's Football Club, who compete in both the Herefordshire and Mid Wales leagues. Examining football fans' expressions of identity, this study discusses national sentiment and explores identity – local, regional and national – in the England-Wales and England-Scotland border regions from a theoretical and comparative perspective. A detailed and grounded study of national identity and nationalism amongst fans in the borderlands of Wales and Scotland will appeal to academics and students of sports history and with interests in ethnography, the sociology of sport, football fandom, debatable borderlands and contemporary national identities.

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# Chapter 1 – Introduction

The research seeks to investigate the use of football to create, maintain and project English, Welsh or Scottish national identity in the border towns of Oswestry (Shropshire), Hay-on-Wye (Powys), and Berwick-upon-Tweed (Northumberland). Specifically, the research explores the often complex relationship between support for a club and support for a national team which is often related to location.[1] This research addresses crucial issues around contemporary football and cross-border culture and examines layers of identity – local, regional, national – which are considered in relation to a detailed and grounded study of nationalism.

Contemporary 'Celtic' borderlands are a hotbed of contention, where identities are redefined and contested. These ambitious case studies investigate national sentiment in Berwick-upon-Tweed, Oswestry and Hay-on-Wye from a theoretical perspective and places the identities of Berwick Rangers Football Club, The New Saints of Oswestry Town Football Club and Hay St. Mary's Football Club supporters in the framework created by modern literature on national identity, nationalism and borderlands. It seems rational to assume that anyone who picks up this thesis does so because they are interested in understanding the often complex relationship between contemporary nationalism, national identity and football fandom in borderlands. After all, that is the title of the research, and my purpose in writing it is to explain my approach to national identity and present the socio-ethnographic evidence which has led me to understand it in the way I do. It must be made clear from the outset that while the study does address theoretical concerns, the main thrust of the research is its empirically rich case studies. For this purpose, it relies on diverse forms of historical, socio-ethnographic evidence to put established interpretations of collective identities in Berwick, Hay and Oswestry to the test. The historical evidence includes quantitative sources such as language and national identity statistics from the National Census 2011, but also includes qualitative sources such as focus groups and field notes.

How did I first become interested in nationalism, national identity, football fandom and borderlands? In truth, it is almost impossible to say. Despite being born in Lancashire to English parents, I was brought up in an ex-coal mining village in south Wales. My own response to the national identity question is 'English' first, 'Welsh' second and 'British' third. Although supporting English clubs in Wales is certainly not uncommon, asserting allegiance to the

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[1] Tom Gibbons, *English National Identity and Football Fan Culture: Who are ya?* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), p. 1.

England national team and cheering for the 'imagined community' in an England vs. Wales match in Cardiff certainly is.[2] The markers of birth and ancestry are crucial in the justification of my own English national identity and this personal example illustrates the context-dependent nature of the individual. We are all aware that to some people it seems self-evident that national identity is 'fixed, coherent and stable'.[3] As the sociologists McCrone and Bechhofer argue, 'for everyone there is a national identity whether they like it or not'.[4] Yet, in border towns on the margins of the 'nation', national identity is not static; it is, as sociolinguists Llamas and Watt, maintain, 'constantly shifting and being re-negotiated', making it far more complex to 'narrate'.[5]

The way in which TNS has been reported since 1999 and the tendency in the media to assume strong association between the club and national identity has served to encourage that belief. For me, having watched my local side Gwynfi United lose narrowly to Welsh Champions Total Network Solutions at home in the Welsh Cup during the 2001/02 season, TNS's glamorous televised European matches against English giants Manchester City in a UEFA Cup Qualifying round at the City of Manchester Stadium (now the Etihad) in August 2003 and two high profile matches against Liverpool in a Champions League Qualifying round in July 2005, acquired a special significance.[6] The amalgamation of Total Network Solution FC (TNS) with Oswestry Town to form The New Saints of Oswestry Town and Llansantffraid Football Club in June 2003 coincided with my own pre-season experience as a player with semi-professional Welsh First Division club Gwynfi United. The thesis, however, does not relate to my experiences as a football player, and nor is not simply a study about Welsh Premier League football. It is rather about fandom and national identity in the borderlands of Wales, England and Scotland.

My postgraduate research in the field of Modern Celtic Studies – an academic discipline that examines aspects of the history and culture of the Celtic peoples (Welsh, Scottish, Irish,

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[2] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 1st edn (London: Verso, 1983).

[3] David McCrone & Frank Bechhofer, 'The politics of national identity', in *Understanding National Identity,* ed. David McCrone & Frank Bechhofer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 120-140 (121).

[4] David McCrone & Frank Bechhofer, 'Introduction', in *National identity, Nationalism and Constitutional Change*, ed. David McCrone & Frank Bechhofer (Houndmills, Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 2.

[5] Carmen Llamas & Dominic Watt, 'Introduction', in *Language and Identities*, ed. Carmen Llamas & Dominic Watt (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 1-6 (p. 1).

[6] *Wales Online,* 5 May 2001 <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/sport/football/football-news/welsh-cup-1973877> [Accessed 24 April 2016]; *Home of football statistics and history,* 'Total Network Solutions vs. Manchester City' <http://www.11v11.com/matches/total-network-solutions-v-manchester-city-28-august-2003-24604/> [Accessed 24 April 2016]; The New Saints FC Website <http://www.tnsfc.co.uk/clubinfo/club-history/> [Accessed 24 April 2016].

Manx, Cornish and Breton) – in the mid-2000s marked the beginning of a keen held interest in an exploration of national identities in so-called 'debatable lands' (lands whose territorial identities are the subject of debate).[7] Sociological studies of Berwick-upon-Tweed (Northumberland) and Saltash (Cornwall) have given valuable insights into processes of national identification in border towns in which 'national' identities were ambiguous.[8] Yet, curiously Oswestry, a Shropshire market town on the border with Wales has not previously been identified as a case ripe for scholarly attention. Nor has attention been afforded to Hay-on-Wye (Powys), a village that boasts an international profile. Having sought to conduct explorative case studies in 'Celtic' border towns in the Scottish Borders and Welsh Marches and make a significant and original contribution to our understanding of contemporary debates on football, identity and nation in the UK, I was therefore pleased to be afforded the opportunity to commence my PhD by the School of Welsh at Cardiff University in January 2010. I am grateful not only to the School of Welsh but to The Sidney Perry Foundation, Glamorgan Further Education Trust Fund, Swansea Further Education Trust Fund and The Catherine Mackichan Trust, without whose financial support the PhD research would not have been conducted and this thesis never written.

The current investigation primarily applies a micro-sociological approach to examining identity formation in the English-Welsh and English-Scottish borderlands. This choice seemed most fertile for assessing fans' social interactions at matches on both sides of the national border. The micro-sociologic angle reveals the socio-ethnological framework within which the formation of national identity took place. In order to not lose sight of the comparative experience, however, one chapter focuses exclusively on drawing on related developments in other border settings. The comparative context highlights principal similarities and differences and creates a natural transition from the empirical analysis of the data to theoretical categorisation and interpretation.

The second chapter begins with an in-depth exposition of theoretical issues implicated in the links between football fandom, national identity, nationalism, nation, ethnicity, social identity, gender, class and language and delineates the theoretical framework in which the comparative study is embedded. For this purpose, the chapter discusses the central theories with

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[7] J.G. Kohl, *Travels in Scotland (1842)*; with introduction and notes by Ursula Cairns Smith and J.M.Y. Simpson (England: J.M.Y Simpson, 2012), p. 186.
[8] Kayleigh Milden, 'A Much Contested Border: The Dynamics of Cultural Memory Regarding the Cornish-Devon Border', *Association of Borderland Studies Annual Conference 2006* (Queen's University: Belfast, 25 June 2006), pp. 1-12; Richard Kiely and others, 'Debatable Land: National and Local Identity in a Border Town', *Sociological Research Online,* Vol. 5, No. 2 (2000) <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/5/2/kiely.html> [Accessed 14 April 2016].

a special focus of this sentiment in border towns. It follows the development of Oswestry, Hay and Berwick from Welsh and Scottish territories in the Middle Ages to contested borderlands in the age of nationalism from 1789 to the present. It also explores the histories of associated football clubs The New Saints, Hay St. Mary's and Berwick Rangers since their formation in the late nineteenth century. Thus, football is used as a means to examine the theoretical advances described in this section which provide a long-term perspective on approaches to the Celtic nations, the British nation state and cultural and linguistic conditions in modern borderlands. Detail of the extent to which identity is unique and undeniable, seen from a broad spectrum of perspectives, can thus be situated within the theoretical background provided in this first section.

Chapter three critically analyses appropriate models and methods. It delineates the chosen methodological approach which utilises Robert K. Yin's case study approach and employs the supporter inclusion criteria used by Joel Rookwood and Gary Rogers in their investigation into Cardiff City Football Club.[9] The method includes conducting focus group interviews with fans and developing a familiarity with the individual towns and the surrounding areas on both sides of the border. This marks the first step towards an 'outsider' to the debatable border communities immersing themselves with the cultural, political, economic and linguistic meanings that inhabitants attach to the border. Published sources such as newspapers, novels and historical and linguistic guides were also identified in order to assemble information on how fans were 'narrated' by the Welsh, English or Scottish 'other'. Understanding the nature and activities of the clubs and how they map onto the area sheds considerable light on identity construction in borderlands.

Chapters four to six explore the nature of national identification in the English-Welsh and English-Scottish borderlands by discussing the context of results in three cultural communities. The analysis highlights the coexistence of various forms of identity within the individual clubs and communities through a micro-level examination of the fans of Berwick, Hay St. Mary's and TNS in a particular social context. New light is shed on how bilingualism amongst TNS supporters relates to identity marking. The case of Scots as a marker of local and national identity in North East England is also assessed from historical and contemporary angles. An exploration of linguistic behaviour in Berwick exemplifies the strategic use of Berwicker-Scots

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[9] Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Beverly Hills; London: Sage, 1984); Gary Rogers and Joel Rookwood, 'Cardiff City Football Club as a Vehicle to Promote Welsh National Identity', *Journal of Qualitative Research in Sports Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2007), pp. 57-68.

by fans to project a powerful 'Berwicker' identity. The ubiquitous notion of peripherality is also explored by contrasting the statuses and role of Berwick Rangers, TNS and Hay St. Mary's supporters through analysis of the varying use of personal identity markers of nationality.

Chapter seven puts border identities in Berwick, Hay and Oswestry into a comparative context and different threads of analysis are pulled together. The discussion examines the formation of national identities in cross-border cultural zones of conflict in Wales, England and Scotland. The notion of belonging to one regional or national group rather than another is further explored. This analysis serves to contrast identity formation in Berwick with two linguistically diverging cases east and west of the England-Wales border and thus enables us to determine the process of identity formation in contemporary English-Welsh and English-Scottish borderlands.

Chapter eight assesses the nature of national identity and views it from the broader perspective of identity formation on the margins of the 'nation'. In Berwick, Oswestry and Hay, the definitive national boundaries begin to blur, and the complexity and diversity of identity making and marking reveals several often competing layers of identity – local, regional, national and nation state – which appear side by side. This complex character of borderlands gives national identity and nationalism special relevance for ethno-sociological scholarly discussion.

One of the key strengths of this study lies in its use of an empirical approach in examining the concept of identity undertaken through the use of multiple data sources. This has reduced the risk of providing a single explanatory factor in a judgemental way which generalises identity formation in Berwick, Oswestry and Hay without supporting evidence. The aim in putting together this collection of cases is to highlight how border town settings invoke a variety of subjective and objective criteria which take many aspects of identity formation to their limits.

# Chapter 2 – Literature Review

## *Introduction*

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the theoretical approaches to identity in order to provide a framework for the analysis of three contemporary case studies in Berwick, Oswestry and Hay. In making sense of national identities in modern Britain, it is important first of all to gain an understanding of what we mean by the concept of *national identity*, and by some of its attendant terms such as *nation*, *nationalism*, *nationality* and *ethnicity*, and offer workable definitions. The need for such a framework which draws together insights from a variety of theorists and fields allows for a discussion of national identity and nationalism which enables researchers to articulate theoretical concepts and assumptions often merely left implied in modern scholarship. Given the extent of such scholarly research and the often changeable nature of identity my own definition of nationalism and national identity is deliberately left open ended.

## *Nationalism*

The rise of nationalism as a political philosophy is generally held to be a relatively modern phenomenon. In the work of Ernest Gellner, nationalism is presented as a consequence of western industrialization and the development of the modern state.[10] While Anthony D. Smith recognises that nationalism as a coherent and explicit philosophy dates from the eighteenth century, he rejects any notion that nations as units of political and social organisation are particularly modern. He argues that nations not only must be, 'founded on ethnic cores, if they are to endure; they must also have, or find, a living past into which successive social circles of the educated may re-enter and whose legends and landscapes can locate the nation and its direct future'.[11] Through a wide-ranging analysis based on historical sociology, Josep R. Llobera challenges the 'problems of modernist conception'.[12] Nationalism, he insists, is not simply a product of the modern era: there was clear evidence of recorded usages of the names, such as 'England' or 'France' (in their Latin vernacular forms), later appropriated by modern nations.

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[10] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983).

[11] Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 207.

[12] Josep R. Llobera, *The God of Modernity: The Development of Nationalism in Western Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 1994), p. 3.

Llobera has no argument with the idea that modern nationalism is a qualitatively new, historically recent phenomenon, and that the meaning of the 'nation' and related concepts changed radically with the advent of modernity. However, he rejects the approaches of authors such as Ernest Gellner and Eric Hobsbawn, who regard nationalism as a by-product of more fundamental developments such as industrialisation and capitalism. While Llobera is more sympathetic to Benedict Anderson's emphasis on the commercial development of printed materials as a crucially important factor in propagating the national idea, he does not accept the 'imagined community' thesis. Rather, Josep R. Llobera maintains, 'in the long run, the history of Western Europe is the history of the qualified failure of the so called nation-state'.[13] Although a precise definition has proven difficult, British historian John Wolffe asserts that nationalism, 'often taken to imply a more focused set of attitudes and actions,' can be defined as, 'the conscious and deliberate efforts, by political, economic, social or cultural means, to develop and assert a perceived national identity, generally through the sustaining or creation of a corresponding nation state'.[14] In other words, nationalism while a modern phenomenon in one sense is also ancient or timeless, inasmuch as it is a developed form of *ethnie* and ethnicity.[15]

For many decades the intense interest in scholarship of nationalism has dominated the study of European history. It has taken many different forms, with different scholars emphasising different causal factors or characteristics when explaining the rise of nationalism in general, or the rise of nationalist movements in certain states in particular. According to Benedict Anderson, the nation is 'an imagined community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign'.[16]

> It is *imagined* because members of even the smallest nation will never know, or meet most of their fellow members, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. Finally, it is imagined as *community* because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal

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[13] Josep Llobera, *Foundations of National Identity: From Catalonia to Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), p. 9.
[14] John Wolffe, *God and Greater Britain: Religion and National life in Britain and Ireland, 1843-1945* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 15.
[15] A term first coined by Anthony D. Smith in *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).
[16] Anderson, 1st edn, p. 15.

comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.[17]

Anderson's view of nationalism, or nationality, places the roots of 'nation' with that of religion or kindship because it is considered as destiny rather than choice. Such a position helps to provide an insight into the relationship between human suffering, sacrifice and even death. Other scholars such as Ernest Gellner and Tom Nairn, Michael Hechter and John Breuilly, stress economic change and the strains produced by uneven capitalist development, or the rise of politicized elites who use nationalist ideas as a means of strengthening their own claims to power. Anderson quotes a metaphor from Tom Nairn, 'nationalism is the pathology of modern developmental history… (the equivalent of infantilism for societies)'.[18] But Anderson disagrees with Nairn. However dismal nationalism's human sacrifices have been nations are the nearly universal imagined communities that constitute the modern world. Anderson asserts that European nationalism of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was largely language based. Since these nationalisms necessarily embraced all who spoke the mother tongue, they had to be libertarian unlike the New World nationalisms. One of the few criticisms of the first edition of *Imagined Communities* was its insistence that print capitalism represented the overriding factor in the birth of national consciousness. However, in the revised version Anderson stated, 'invented in only 1895, radio made it possible to bypass print and summon into being an aural representation of the imagined community where the printed page scarcely penetrated'.[19] Anderson raises large issues, none larger than why nationalism has inspired so many people to lay down their lives in its wars and revolutions. His survey persuasively argues that nationalism everywhere substituted new visions of secular glory for older religious and dynastic ambitions.

Modernist scholarship, which largely began in the aftermath of the Second World War, and is in part a reaction to what was seen as the grotesque misuse of nationalist ideas during the conflict challenged and dismissed the propositions of the perennialist school. Modernists argued that nations were not ancient or immemorial at all but were in fact relatively recent, both in Europe and in Africa and Asia. Moreover, the elements and characteristics of modern nations and nationalism could not and should not be read back into earlier, pre-modern collectivities, as

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[17] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn (London: Verso 1991), pp. 6-7.
[18] Anderson, rev. edn, p. 5.
[19] Anderson, rev. edn, p. 54.

this kind of 'retrospective nationalism' only served to distort our understanding of the quite different identities, communities and relations of the ancient and medieval worlds. Instead nations were the product of modernity, emerging through processes of modernisation such as industrialisation and democratisation, and could be traced no further back than the French Revolution. Insofar as they claimed any earlier heritage they did so through what Eric Hobsbawn has termed the 'invention of tradition', that is the creation of fictive pasts to legitimise modern political and cultural forms by reference to supposedly ancient origins. According to Hobsbawn:

> Modern nations and all their impedimenta generally claim to be the opposite of novel, namely rooted in the remotest antiquity, and the opposite of constructed, namely human communities so 'natural' as to require no definition other than self-assertion. Whatever the historic or other continuities embedded in the modern concept of 'France' and 'the French' – and which nobody would seek to deny – these very concepts themselves must include a constructed or 'invented' component. And just because so much of what subjectively makes up the modern 'nation' consists of such constructs and is associated with appropriate and, in general, fairly recent symbols or suitably tailored discourse (such as 'natural history'), the national phenomenon cannot be adequately investigated without careful attention to the 'invention of tradition'.[20]

One distinction that permeates the literature on nationalism is that between 'civic' and 'ethnic' or 'cultural' conceptions of 'nation'. Citrin and Sears argue that, 'the former category includes as a member of 'the circle of we', any legal member of the polity prepared to assume the obligations of citizenship and other forms of nationality'.[21] The terms 'nationality' and 'citizenship' refer to separate but related categories of recognised legal status. Nationality, on the other hand, is, in the UK at least, a question of birth. 'Nationality', the status of belonging to a nation, includes those 'who share a common ancestry and cultural heritage with the historically ethnic core'.[22] In order to consider the relationship between language and ethnicity, it is important to first comprehend how the concept of ethnicity is indeed, embedded among an 'ethnic group'. According to John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, in their introduction to the Oxford Reader on ethnicity, an ethnic group generally exhibits the following six main features:

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[20] Eric Hobsbawn and Terrence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, 1st paperback edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 14.
[21] Jack Citrin and David O. Sears, 'Balancing National and Ethnic Identities', in *Measuring Identity: A Guide for Social Scientists*, ed. Rawi Abdelal and others (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 145-174 (p. 154).
[22] Citrin and Sears, p. 154.

A common proper name, to identify and express the 'essence' of the community;

A myth of common ancestry that includes the idea of a common origin in time and place and that gives an ethnie a sense of fictive kinship;

Shared historical memories, or shared memories of a common past or pasts, including heroes, events and their commemoration;

One of more elements of common culture, which normally include religion, customs, or language;

A link with a homeland, not necessarily its physical occupation by that ethnie, only its symbolic attachment to ancestral land, as with diaspora peoples;

A sense of solidarity on the part of at least some sections of the ethnie's population.[23]

It is perfectly valid of Anthony D. Smith to mollify the caustic effect of modernist scholarship which concentrates on the 'invention' of national symbols or the 'imagination' of national communities, attempting to view these in a more positive and less condemnatory and cynical light. As Smith has pointed out in relation to Hobsbawn's argument over the 'invention of tradition', such inventions could only work within certain limits that were set by the culture or cultures of the public to whom they were to be presented. They could not diverge too greatly from such cultures or they would not be effective, and they often incorporated elements from present and past cultures. Likewise, in relation to Anderson's argument, Smith has suggested that we should not understand an 'imagined community' as a 'fabricated' or 'illusory' one, for it is evidently very real for many people, who feel their national attachment passionately. Smith's target is not so much Anderson himself, who accepts that whatever the artificiality of ethnic or national constructs they are none the less authentic facets of the human experience, but rather some of those who have taken Anderson's arguments to greater lengths. However, although sympathetic to Smith's argument that we should not, automatically, disparage national identity, equally it is difficult to escape the conclusion that it is an unstable, changing phenomenon, incorporating elements that can be fabricated, appropriated and transformed, chosen or dispensed with. National identity is thus provisional and pliable, far from (primordial) timeless and fixed.

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[23] John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, *Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

*National identity*

Peter Sahlins has described national identity as 'a socially constructed and continuous process of defining "friend" and "enemy", a logical extension of the process of maintaining boundaries between "us" and "them" within more local communities'.[24] However, as Alejandro I. Canales and Israel M. Armas have argued, 'the existence of an international border does not necessarily mean a sharp separation, but rather, by creating differences between the two sides, lays the basis for increased integration thanks to the complementarity that these differences make possible'.[25] 'Nationality' and 'national identity' can, I believe, be held to be essentially the same. They signify the national community (or communities) to which one belongs or with which one identifies. They do not (beyond the fact of identification) signify any particular level of political mobilisation. 'Nationalism' and 'nationalist', on the other hand, suggest a more active level of identification and support. Necessarily they mean different things in different contexts; they can be left-wing or right-wing, progressive or reactionary, secular or religious. 'Patriotism' is perhaps the most elusive term, as this certainly suggests something more dynamic and more strongly-held than 'national identity', but does not necessarily imply the degree of political change that is usually associated with 'nationalism'. The 'nation' is the wider national community with which we all identify: it may be coterminous with the state, in which case the term 'nation-state' is appropriate. As George W. White asserts, 'using the term *nation* as a synonym for such words as *country* and *state* as a politically organised territory shows that human identity is closely tied to place and territory. At a basic level, the nation-state ideal derives from the belief or assumption that human beings are fundamentally and naturally divided into social groupings known as nations'.[26] There may exist, of course, states that are not nations, or that cover more than one nation ('multinational states). Having provided a concise overview of some of the major theoretical concepts, I encounter a far more difficult set of questions: why does nationality tend to be so important to people? Why do national identities emerge (and fade)? How do the characteristics of national groups change over time (as they undoubtedly do)?

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[24] Sahlins, *Boundaries,* pp. 270-1.

[25] Alejandro I. Canales and Israel Montiel Armas, 'A world without borders? Mexican immigration, new boundaries and transnationalism in the United States', in *Migration without Borders: Essays on the Free Movement of People*, ed. Antoine Pécoud and Paul de Guchteneirep (Paris: UNESCO Publishing 2007), 221-242 (p. 233).

[26] George W. White, *Nation, State, and Territory: Origins, Evolutions, and Relationships*, 1st paperback edn (Lanham, Md.; Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), p. 3.

*Banal nationalism*

Before addressing the questions raised above, it seems advisable to examine the significance of the *Banal Nationalism* thesis. Billig is critical of orthodox theories and challenges Ernest Gellner's view that national identities are socially constructed. Billig presents instances in which national self-images of relatively recent epochs are wrongly taken to be primordial characteristics. He pays particular attention to a commonly neglected aspect of nationalism: its role in creating everyday representations of the 'nation' which builds up a shared sense of belonging. While traditional theorizing has tended to focus on extreme expressions of nationalism, Billig focuses on taken-for-granted forms of nationalism in everyday life, such as national songs, symbols on money, popular expressions and turns of phrase, sporting events, flag waving, and saluting. For example, as Billig puts it, 'only if people believe that they have national identities, and embrace all these forgotten reminders, will such homelands, and the world of national homelands, be reproduced'.[27] Not only does *Banal Nationalism* offer a critique of the contrast created between 'civic' and 'ethnic' nationalism, it also highlights that both 'civic' and 'ethnic' nationalism have the ability to become dangerously irrational. Ultimately, he asks why people do not forget their national identity and demonstrates that with nationalism continuing to be a major ideological force in the contemporary world, it is all the more important to recognise those signs of nationalism which are so familiar that they are easily overlooked.

*Ethnicity*

The critical debate on the concept of ethnicity deviates into two different approaches, namely the instrumental and primordial perspectives. As Diarmait Mac Giolla Chriost points out, the primordial view regards ethnicity as 'constitut[ing] a fundamental feature of society and that ethnic identity is natural and unalienable'.[28] In other words, ethnicity is defined by its 'cultural and biological heritage, and is territorially rooted'.[29] It is thus grounded in primordial ties and bounded by blood, race, language, region and custom which are fundamental to an individual's identity. However, instrumentalists argue that the primordial approach places too much emphasis

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[27] Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995), p. 8.
[28] Diarmait Mac Giolla Chriost, *Language, Identity and Conflict: A Comparative Study of Language in Ethnic Conflict in Europe and Euroasia* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 27.
[29] Mac Giolla Chriost, p. 27.

on the objective nature of ethnicity, which stresses that ethnicity is 'given' at birth. Furthermore, they claim that the primordial approach cannot explain the evolution of ethnic groups over time. To take two characteristics as examples, in the case of language, many have to change their language, and many never attach any emotional significance to their language. Or to take birthplace, millions of people migrate from their native places, and many choose to assimilate to their new society and lose any sense of emotional identification with their homelands. Paul R. Brass asserts that 'for those who do not migrate, one's place of birth' does not usually become politically significant, 'unless there is some perceived discrimination against the region and its people in larger society'.[30] This is because, 'even the fact of one's birth is subject to variation'.[31] Rather than acknowledging the validly of these arguments, instrumentalists emphasise that ethnicity of a group should be understood in terms of a relationship to other groups. Here 'ethnicity' is viewed as a social, political and cultural resource for different interest and status-groups. Joining 'ethnic' communities is seen as a way of maximising wealth, power and status.

Ethnicity is socially constructed, malleable and flexible, and to some extent 'voluntary'. It is not necessarily displayed at all times, but may be deployed only in certain contexts. It may also be subject to what some scholars call 'ethnic fade', whereby the maintenance of a separate ethnic identity becomes less and less useful or relevant as generations pass, and perhaps becomes symbolic more than anything else.[32] Anthony D. Smith, for example, argues that 'by fixing attention mainly on the great dimensions and 'fault lines' of religion, customs, language and institutions, we [thus] run the risk of treating ethnicity as something primordial and fixed'.[33] Ethnic identities should instead be seen as essentially situational and negotiated: developed and deployed in different ways in different situations. It should be noted that many of the features of an ethnic group may also be found within national groups, but there is no necessary congruence, 'especially since the era of nationalism has caused the line between the two to become even more blurred'.[34] As Wangler points out, 'the outstanding feature of national identity is "common interests" that do not compulsively have to refer to religion, ethnicity or race but rather rely on

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[30] Paul R. Brass, 'Elite Competition and Nation Formation' in *Ethnicity,* ed. John Hutchinson and A.D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 83-88 (p. 84).
[31] Brass, p. 84.
[32] A term used by Christine Kinealy, 'Economy and Society in Ireland', in *A Companion to Nineteenth Century Britain*, ed. Chris Williams (Malden, Mass.; Oxford: Blackwell 2004), pp. 489-503 (p. 501)
[33] Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, p. 211.
[34] Alexandra Wangler, *Rethinking history, reframing identity: memory, generations, and the dynamics of national identity in Poland* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2012), p. 49.

values and beliefs of the culture of the current location'.[35] The difference between ethnic identity and national identity may be that national identity tends to see its logical culmination in terms of identification with a distinct political unit, a state organisation, whereas ethnic identity does not presuppose any such outcome. National communities may include more than one ethnic group (such as in Spain and Britain) and ethnic groups may transcend national boundaries (such as the Catalans, Basques and Jews). There is no denying however, that many states have attempted to generate what have been seen as discourse of 'fictive ethnicity', in the words of Etienne Balibar:

> No nation possesses an ethnic base naturally, but as social formations are nationalized, the populations included within them, divided up among them or dominated by them are ethnicized – that is, represented in the past or in the future as if they formed a natural community, possessing of itself an identity of origins, culture and interests which transcend individuals and social conditions.[36]

*Nation*

'Nation' can mean one of two things; an ethnic nation, based on a common ethnicity, collective identity and culture; or a nation based on shared purpose, beliefs and common goals, usually founded on such principles as democracy and individualism. The concept of 'nation' is complex, not least because for most people in most nations, nationalism is a mixture of both these forms. In scholarly literature, nationalism is divided into two basic types: 'ethnic' and 'civic'. Ethnic nationalism is a form of nationalism wherein the 'nation' is defined in terms of 'ethnicity'. Anthony D. Smith uses the term 'ethnic nationalism' for Western views of a nation defined as its geographical territory as opposed to non-Western concepts of nationalism. To affirm this cliché of modernisation theory is to be blind to the particularistic pragmatics of nationalism at say, the Anglo-Scottish border. It is, moreover, to ignore the significance of the 'immigration' repertoire which presupposes that diversity can only arise from trans-national migration. The Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru – the Party of Wales, rarely refer to ethnicity in their nationalism. This is in contrast to ethnic nationalist political parties found elsewhere in Europe. The SNP and Plaid Cymru were the first political parties to field

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[35] Wangler, p. 50.

[36] Etienne Balibar, 'The Nation Form: History and Ideology', in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, ed. Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (London: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1991) <http://rebels-library.org/files/ambig_ident.pdf> [Accessed 16 April 2016], pp 86-106 (p. 96).

successfully elected candidates of an ethnic minority background, Bashir Ahmad in the Scottish Parliament, Mohammad Asghar in the Welsh Assembly; both are Muslims of Pakistani origin.

*Imagined communities*

Breaking from Ernest Gellner's, *Nations and Nationalism* published in the same year, Benedict Anderson points out that an 'imagined community' is different from an actual community as it is not based on everyday face-to-face interaction between its members. By this he did not mean that nations were mythical or artificial communities which did not really exist. To Anderson, nations are among the most real and powerful form of social group in the modern world. The concept of 'imagined community' points to the process by which a nation – and indeed any social group – comes into being. Although less dramatic, Anderson makes an important caveat, however, that in order for a nation to exist, the members of a national community must recognise their special and exclusive bond to each other. Along with the historical happenings that laid the path to the consciousness of nationalism, Anderson noted that the practice of print-capitalism facilitated the emergence of national communities in the nineteenth century. His argument is convincing, yet there were other rituals such as sport which were crucial in the creation of national identities in the UK. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, sport allowed the Celtic nations – Ireland, Scotland and Wales – to declare and perform their nationhood in the absence of a nation state and in the face of wider English domination. Eric Hobsbawm, thinking of Anderson's famous definition of nationalism and referring to football, expressed his thought succinctly, 'the imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of eleven named people'.[37] For Hobsbawn, football possessed the ability to capture the imagination and create both nationalistic and even chauvinistic attitudes to greater effect than any other cultural and political constructions. In other words, the individual, even the one who only cheers, became a symbol of the nation. Joseph Maguire has argued that, 'sport has become one of the greatest indicators and symbols of the imagined community' for it 'can become a significant symbol of how a people sees itself and how it wishes to be seen by others'.[38] Thus, through the analysis of football, this research examines the gradual emergence of

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[37] Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 143.
[38] Joseph Maguire (ed.), *Sport Worlds: A Sociological Perspective* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2002), pp. 137-8.

re-negotiated national identity along the Celtic borders. Although focusing on specific empirical examples, this investigation intends to illuminate processes which are occurring more widely.

## *Language and identities*

Anthony D. Smith argues forcefully that the most common shred and distinctive traits are those of language and religion, 'but customs, institutions, laws, folklore, architecture, dress, food, music and the arts, may augment the differences or take their place'.[39] As Peter Sahlins has noted, the example of Cerdanya, a valley in the eastern Pyrenees divided between Spain and France in 1659, shows the extent to which, 'language became the essential element in the definition of *national identity* and how much such claims were political constructions, bear little relationship to the experiences of peasants and others who established and maintained their local and national identities'.[40] In Cerdanya, national identity found expression within the continuity of Catalan culture and ethnicity and of shared bonds of resistance to the centralising states.[41] Among the Scottish, language long ceased to play a differentiating and unifying role, once Scots had become the language of Lowland Scotland.[42] Instead, legislation and separate legal, educational, and religious institutions like the Presbyterian Church ('Kirk') formed the social bastion for a continuing Scottish sense of ethnic identity. There are, according to Anthony D. Smith, 'examples [which] could be multiplied to show that language, long held to be the main, if not sole, differentiating mark of ethnicity, is often irrelevant or divisive in the sense of the ethnic community'.[43] Yet, as Michael Lynch point out, although Scots Gaelic, Scots and Scottish English are distinctive, they are associated as Scottish with a shared identity.[44] Data from the 2011 Census have revealed that in Wales, however, the Welsh language may not be as important in choosing national identity. Thus, the English-speaking Welsh in the valleys of South Wales may feel as ethnically Welsh as their Welsh-speaking compatriots in north-western Wales. In

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[39] Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, p. 26.

[40] Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 268.

[41] Sahlins, *Boundaries*, pp. 268-76.

[42] The Scots Language (not to be confused with Scottish Gaelic) is a West Germanic language spoken in the lowlands of Scotland, Ireland and some parts of England, such as Cumbria and Berwick-upon-Tweed, by more than 1.5 million people. It shares many similarities with Danish, French, English, German and Norwegian.

[43] Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, p. 27.

[44] ESRC Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity, The University of Manchester (November 2014) <http://www.ethnicity.ac.uk/medialibrary/briefings/dynamicsofdiversity/code-census-briefing-national-identity-wales.pdf> [Accessed 24 July 2016], pp. 1-4 (p. 3).

Merthyr Tydfil for example, 77% of people who described their ethnicity as 'White British' in the Census also described their national identity as 'Welsh only', yet Merthyr enumerated the second lowest number of Welsh speakers amongst all Local Authorities (8.9%).[45]

The recognition of the connection between language with identity – national, ethnic and religious on a global scale, but operating no less crucially on more local levels – is not a recent revelation, nor is it restricted to academic discourse. We can trace examples of the explicit description of the association of language with group and individual identities back to antiquity. In one of the most famous passages in his *Histories*, Herodotus has the Athenians explain to the Spartans why they would never submit to Persia, 'again there is the Greek nation – the community of blood and language, temples and ritual, and our common customs; if Athens were to betray all this, it would not be well done'.[46] Jonathan Hall reassesses the contentious issue of language, 'it is clear that the Hellenic tongue is not based on any empirically derived observations referring to the isoglosses that separate the myriad of local Greek dialects from the non-Greek languages. It is rather an abstract reification that assumes the prior existence of an 'imagined community' defined according to modern criteria'.[47] Yet, while this view may seem uncontroversial, it has been challenged by George Hinge who argues that, 'even if it is impossible to draw an unambiguous line between language and dialect, there can be no doubt that Classical Greece encompassed a linguistic community which included a range of mutually intelligible dialects'.[48] Yet, Hinge asserts that if sociolinguists are to detect a bundle of dialects between 'nations' it is a clear sign that the two differ, or once differed, in their ethnic identities.[49]

The area of Britain which straddles the Scottish/English Border, can in many ways almost be regarded a cultural entity separate from both England and Scotland. As Adam Aiken's explanation illustrates, 'because of the separation of the kingdoms since early times, many of the characteristics of Scots extend only to the border. What appears to be the most numerous bundles of dialect isoglosses in the English-speaking world runs along this border, effectively turning

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[45] Michael Lynch (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 504–509.

[46] Herodotus; translated by Aubrey De Sélincourt and John Marincola, *The Histories* (London: Penguin, 2003), 8.144.2.

[47] Jonathan M. Hall, *Ethnic identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 191-2.

[48] George Hinge, 'Language and Race: Theocritus and the Koine Identity of Ptolemaic Egypt', <http://www.glossa.dk/lingu/langu.html> [Accessed 1 February 2011].

[49] Hinge, 'Language and Race'.

Scotland into a dialect island'.[50] Dialect leads to the belief that Berwick-upon-Tweed, the northernmost town in England, situated 2.5 miles (4 kilometres) from the border between England and Scotland is Scottish, as to most people south of the national border in England the local Berwick dialect (which has elements of Lowland Scots and the North East English accent) sounds Scottish, although most Scotsman would point toward a Northumbrian/Geordie influence. Much of the current research on the phonology of Scottish English is concerned with the phonetic and phonological features of Scottish English on the English/Scottish border. Llamas, for example, found that accents are diverging in Berwick with 'more younger Berwick residents believing themselves to be strongly English than younger Carlisle speakers, however, though fewer Berwickers than Carlisle residents believe themselves to have a strongly English accent'.[51] Forensic Speech Scientist Dominic Watt suggests that it is devolution that is causing residents in Berwick to lose their Scottish accents. This is because fewer younger people are using Scots pronunciations and are losing their Scottish trill, as 'they feel that Scotland has turned its back on them…and it's fashionable to be Geordie'.[52] Watt asserts that while older residents retain the Berwick English sound, the city of Newcastle continues to drive linguistic changes amongst residents in their late teens and early twenties who 'go in search of a Geordie speaking pattern'.[53]

Stephen May's *Language and Minority Rights* addresses arguments about ethnicity and nationalism, social and political theory, education, law, and history as well as the sociology of language and sociolinguistics. A wealth of examples drawn from communities world-wide illustrates his points. May provides a detailed examination of the scholarly debates on ethnicity, and focuses on the divergence between 'primordial' and 'situational' views. May presents, with the help of Anthony D. Smith's notion of *ethnie*, a compromise solution, and largely adopts a situational view, arguing 'language is a contingent marker of ethnic identity'.[54] May identifies the failure of a situational view of ethnicity to account for the key role that language plays in the

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[50] A. J. Aiken, 'Scots', in *The Oxford Companion to the English Language*, ed. Tom McArthur (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 893-899 (p. 895).

[51] Carmen Llamas, 'Convergence and Divergence across a National Border', in *Language and Identities*, ed. Carmen Llamas and Dominic Watt (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 227-236 (p. 232-233).

[52] Dominic Watt interview with *The Herald,* 26 August 2004 <http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/12420398.Berwick_looks_to_south_for_sense_of_identity_Losing_its_Scottish_accent/> [Accessed 23 August 2016].

[53] *The Herald,* 26 August 2004.

[54] Stephen May, *Language and Minority Rights: Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Politics of Languages* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), p. 10.

ethnic and national claims of many minority groups. Thus, May argues that ethnicity is both constructed and contingent, encompassing social, political, and cultural forms of life.

After defining nation, nationalism, state and nation state, Stephen May's debates on nationalism are also shown to have polarized around essentialist and constructivist positions. While May broadly concurs with the constructivist position, he points out its failure to account for the influence of ethnicity and nationalism in the modern world. According to May, 'the emphasis on cultural and linguistic homogeneity associated with the rise of political nationalism is predicted on the notion of nation-state congruence'.[55] The implication here is that primordial accounts which 'naturalise' nationhood, claiming that it is based on pre-existing ethnicity and/or language, and which list its stable contents, are as inaccurate as most modernist theories which have tried to explain nations as results of certain datable developments like industrialisation (Gellner) or print capitalism (Anderson). In Spain, for example, Catalan nationalism was founded on an identity from the distinctiveness of Catalan language and culture: the 'nation' became Catalonia, and it became politicized.[56] May takes the middle ground by acknowledging 'not only the 'legal-political' dimensions of nationalism but also the 'cultural-historical' ones'.[57] May contends that the purely constructivist position's rejection of any link between ethnicity and nationalism fuses the nation and the state, and fails to explore adequately the differential power relations that result in the representation of the dominant ethnic group's language and culture as the civic culture of the nation-state, and the marginalization of the languages and cultures of minority groups. We should then be mindful of the pluralist dilemma, whereby we are concerned with the difficulty of reconciling social cohesion on the one hand, and recognising and incorporating ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity within the nation state on the other.[58]

### *National Identity and the Invention of Tradition in the Celtic Fringe*

John Haywood maintains that, 'by the end of the seventeenth century…although there were still peoples who spoke Celtic languages, they themselves did not know [Celtic] as the term

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[55] Stephen May, 'Uncommon Languages: The Challenges and Possibilities of Minority Language Rights', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, Vol. 25, No. 5 (2000), pp. 366-385 (p. 370).
[56] Sahlins, *Boundaries,* p. 287.
[57] May, *Language and Minority Rights*, p. 11.
[58] Stephen May, 'Language and Educational Rights for Indigenous Peoples', *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (1998), pp. 272-296 (p. 273).

had yet been coined.'[59] Considerable growth of antiquarian interest in the 'Celtic fringe' – Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Cornwall, the Isle of Man and Brittany – came during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in which there was, 'a movement to revive or invent traditions in the interest of local self-assertion'.[60] In Wales, Iolo Morganwg (born Edward Williams) developed his own bardic alphabet and began to produce manuscripts that proved Welsh or Celtic druidic traditions had survived the Roman conquest and later barbaric rule of King Edward I of England.[61] As Gwyneth Tyson Roberts has noted, 'outward and visible signs of Welshness [such as the Eisteddfod] were presented as examples of a cultural distinctiveness that was entirely compatible with the demands of loyalty to the Great British state'.[62] At the end of the nineteenth century, Cornwall's Celtic revivalists also achieved some success, mainly through the efforts of Henry Jenner, who became the leader of the Cornish language movement.[63] Shelley Trower points out that, 'genealogical descent from the ancient Britons was crucial to Jenner's claims, for the Celtic nationality of the Cornish'.[64] It was around this time, Desmond Keenan writes that, 'efforts to invent a 'Gaelic' or 'Celtic identity' were increasing in Ireland.[65] Although archaeologists were, by the end of the twentieth century, forced to admit that Ireland did not possess a 'Celtic' racial past, the island's Goidelic Celtic language, Irish Gaelic, similar to Scottish Gaelic and Manx, had historically been spoken in Ireland.[66] Mick Moloney accepts that, 'there are clearly cultural connections between the peoples of Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Brittany', but questions whether, 'the whole concept of Pan-Celtic identity [is] largely amplified, if not entirely invented by cultural nationalists such as the great Breton musician Alan Strivell.'[67]

James MacPherson's *Poems of Ossian*, published in 1760, which popularised ancient Celtic myths in Scotland, certainly represents, according to Hugh Trevor-Roper a 'retrospective

[59] John Haywood, *The Celts: Bronze Age to New Age*, 2nd edition (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2014), p. 179.

[60] Marion Gibson and others, *Mysticism, Myth and Celtic Identity* (London; New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 4.

[61] *Wales History,* 9 March 2011 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/waleshistory/2011/03/iolo_morganwg_scholar_antiquarian_forger.html> [Accessed 10 August 2016].

[62] Gwyneth Tyson Roberts, ''Under the Hatches': English Parliamentary Commissioners' Views of the People and Language of Mid-nineteenth-Century Wales', in *The Expansion of England: Race, Ethnicity and Cultural History*, ed. Bill Schwarz (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 171-231 (p. 174).

[63] Mari Jones and Ishtla Singh, *Exploring Language Change* (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 139.

[64] Shelley Trower, *Rocks of Nation: The Imagination of Celtic Cornwall* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), p. 183.

[65] Desmond Keenan, *Ireland 1850-1920* (United States: Xlibris, 2005), p. 241.

[66] Diarmuid O'Neill (ed.), *Rebuilding the Celtic Languages: Reversing Language Shift in the Celtic Countries* (Talybont, Ceredigion: Y Lolfa, 2005).

[67] Mick Moloney, 'Re-Imagining Irish Music and Dance', in *Re-Imagining Ireland*, ed. Andrew Higgins Wyndham (Charlottesville; London: University of Virginia Press, 2006), pp. 123-144 (p. 125).

invention'.[68] He asserts that Highland culture and dress – the kilt, tartan, clans and bagpipes – 'used to ascribe great antiquity', and celebrate a distinctive Scottish national identity, '[are also] in fact largely modern'.[69] Marion Gibson's *Mysticism, Myth and Celtic Identity*, builds on such notions of invented and retrospective traditions and myths of the nation in the Celtic nations and, 'considers how aspects of the past are reinterpreted or reimagined in a variety of ways to give coherence to desired national groupings, or groups aspiring to nationhood and its 'defence''.[70] Yet, as Amy Hale has pointed out, 'the controversy over what can and cannot be legitimately labelled 'Celtic' is [still] raging…with many Celtic scholars defining 'authentic Celticity' (both ancient and modern) by the linguistic criterion; they argue that a person or group must speak (or have access to) a Celtic language in order to qualify (or have qualified) as a Celt'.[71] This has led David Harvey et al. to argue however, that 'though traditional territorial or linguistic interpretations of Celticity are still important, they are being supplemented by alternative versions [of Celtic identity], ones that are categorised by notions of hybridity and contestation'.[72]

### *Sport and National Identity in the Celtic Fringe*

The relationship between sport and national identity is a complex, ambiguous and multi-faceted phenomenon, with a number of cultural reference points employed in its construction. As Martin Johnes puts it, 'it would be difficult to deny sport's place in the inventing, maintaining and projecting of the idea of Welsh national identity in and outside of Wales' blurred borders, even if the Wales that sport has projected has varied according to the time, place and context'.[73] Football has often served as a key definer of identity, with local clubs providing opportunities for the affirmation and expression of identifications on various levels.[74] Thereby, football can be

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[68] Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland', in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 15-42 (p. 15).

[69] Trevor-Roper, 'The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland', p. 15.

[70] Gibson, p. ii.

[71] Amy Hale, 'Whose Celtic Cornwall? The Ethnic Cornish meet Celtic Spirituality', in *Celtic Geographies: Old Culture: New Times*, ed. David Harvey and others (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 157-172 (p. 157).

[72] David Harvey and others, 'Timing and Spacing Celtic Geographies', in *Celtic Geographies: Old Culture: New Times*, ed. David Harvey and others (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 1-18 (p. 3).

[73] Martin Johnes, '"Every day when I wake up I thank the Lord I'm Welsh": Sport and National Identity in Post-War Wales', in Adrian Smith and Dilwyn Porter (eds.) *Sport and National Identity in the Post-War World* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 52-68 (p. 52).

[74] Martin Johnes and Ian Garland, '"The New Craze": Football and Society in North-East Wales, c.1870-1890', *Welsh History Review*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (December, 2004), pp. 278-304.

used to define already established boundaries, assist in the creation of social identities and serve as contested space by opposed groups. There is a need for an in-depth focus of Welsh Premier League and Scottish Professional Football League clubs in this respect, at supporter, owner, and management and/or media levels. In addition, subsequent work should also examine the intra-club focus, facilitating a discussion of any negative connotations this identity is perceived to have, and whether a proportion of the fan-base do not want to indulge in national stereotypes and clichés that, 'Welsh identity is hating England on the sporting field'.[75] Finally, there is potential for linkages to other 'Celtic' nations with a strong regional identity, which is often manifested in the context of inter-club and inter-city rivalry. An examination of these issues would further the understanding of the extent to which border football clubs construct and promote nationalism.[76] Attention will need to be paid, however, to ensure that the distinct sentiments and traditions of Welsh border towns are not marginalized by the rise of a new, essentialist version of Welsh national identity.[77] Local or regional support of a team, however, is based not just on its sporting achievements, but on what it represents. As Liz Crolley and David Hand point out, at the start of the twentieth century, 'football emerged as a sport as Catalunya was embracing symbols of national identity [and] FC Barcelona quickly became that symbol'.[78] However, as Jimmy Burns argues, 'FC Barcelona's projection as a Catalan team developed in opposition to the team that established itself as the undisputed local rival: Espanyol'.[79] Today, FC Barcelona, one of the world's most successful teams, remain 'a bastion of Catalan identity', a symbol of its unique language and national culture, hence the motto *'Més que un club'* ('More than a club').[80] Yet, this dominance is largely because Espanyol, 'traditionally play a quiet second fiddle to Barca'.[81]

In *Globalizing Cricket: Englishness, Empire and Identity*, Dominic Malcolm declares, 'reflecting their different histories, the sporting cultures of each of the Celtic nations varies

[75] Rogers and Rookwood, 'Cardiff City Football Club', p. 60.
[76] Rogers and Rookwood, pp. 57-68.
[77] R. Merfyn Jones, 'Beyond Identity? The Reconstruction of the Welsh', *Contemporary Wales*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (1992), pp. 330-57.
[78] Liz Crolley and David Hand, 'Nations within states – One nation, one team, one image: Catalunya and the Basque Country in Spain', in *Football and European Identity: Historical Narratives through the Press* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 117-148 (p.119).
[79] Jimmy Burns, *Barca: A People's Passion* (London, Bloomsbury, 2011), p. 85.
[80] Damien Simonis, *Barcelona Encounter* (Hong Kong: Lonely Planet Publications, 2009), p. 174.
[81] Simonis, p. 174.

considerably'.[82] As Hobsbawn argues in his seminal essay, 'mass-producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914, 'the rise of [organised] sport provided new expressions of nationalism through the choice or invention of nationally specific sports'.[83] While this has been the preserve of the 'principal Celtic cultures' of Wales, Scotland and Ireland, the Isle of Man, Cornwall, Brittany and Galicia (Spain) have, however, in the words of Philip Dine been, 'relegated to the periphery of this Celtic sporting centre', and, '[continue to] await their sports historians and sociologists'.[84]

Matthew P. Llewellyn maintains that during the late nineteenth century football and rugby union offered the 'Celtic fringe' – who he defined as Wales, Scotland and Ireland – 'an avenue for reaffirming and revelling in their own distinct national identities'.[85] In the late nineteenth century, for example, football became a significant sporting representation of Scottish national identity. Beating the 'auld enemy' England, in the annual British Home Championship fixture (which endured from its inception in 1884 season until its demise one hundred years later) became something of an obsession, representing what Adrian Smith and Dilwyn Porter have described as, 'a visible and cultural marker of [Scottish] nationalism'.[86] Yet as Malcolm points out, Scotland is, 'characterised by the conjoining of [its] sectarian communities which otherwise deeply divided the nation and its football clubs in particular'.[87] In 2011, for example, Neil Lennon, the Northern Irish Catholic manager of Glasgow Celtic Football Club, was sent a parcel bomb in the post and was, according to Alex Law, 'the victim of a sustained campaign of physical attacks and death threats', which included an assault in May 2011 by a Hearts fan who called him a 'fenian bastard'.[88] As Law notes, sectarian divisions in Northern Ireland and Scotland largely dictate that Catholics support Celtic and Protestants support Rangers; thus a

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[82] Dominic Malcolm, 'Cricket and the Celtic Nations', in *Globalizing Cricket: Englishness, Empire and Identity*, by Dominic Malcolm (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 89-105 (p. 91).
[83] Eric Hobsbawn, 'Mass-producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914', in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger, 1st paperback edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 263-308 (pp. 300-301).
[84] Philip Dine, 'Sporting Assimilation and Cultural Confusion in Brittany', in *Sport in the Making of Celtic Cultures*, ed. Grant Jarvie (London; New York: Leicester University Press, 1999), pp. 112-130 (p.112).
[85] Matthew P. Llewellyn, *Rule Britannia: Nationalism, Identity and the Modern Olympic Games* (London: Routledge, 2012), p. 34.
[86] Adrian Smith and Dilwyn Porter, 'Introduction, in Adrian Smith and Dilwyn Porter (eds.) *Sport and National Identity in the Post-War World* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 1-9 (p. 6).
[87] Malcolm, 'Cricket and the Celtic Nations', p. 91.
[88] *BBC News*, 30 August 2011 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh-east-fife-14718038> [Accessed 11 August 2016]; Alex Law, 'Sectarianism, Criminalisation and the Civilising Process in Scotland', in *Crime, Justice and Society in Scotland*, ed. Hazel Croall and others (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 99-114 (p. 100).

Northern Irishman managing Celtic was viewed as a 'betrayal'.[89] Nevertheless, although sectarianism continues to be linked most strongly with football in Glasgow, *Education Scotland* argues that violent manifestations, verbal abuse, harassment and discrimination are, 'found in the Central Belt and throughout Scotland, in homes, in the workplace and in other social settings'.[90]

Popular interest in the Gaelic games – football and hurling – championed in late nineteenth-century Ireland as an act of resistance an expression of Irishness notably marked a rejection of British sports and highlighted the, 'coalescence of political and cultural nationalism'.[91] In contrast, by the late nineteenth century, rugby union offered the Welsh an avenue to define, construct and affirm their own distinct Welsh national identity.[92] On match day, 'Welshness' took on added significance, with, 'two of the defining elements of Welsh national culture, choral singing and rugby skills, came together in unison'.[93] A keen sense of a perceived 'Anglo-Saxon', English oppression of the more tribal 'Celtic' nations has often been expressed on the rugby field.[94] One of the most notable examples of continued 'Anglo-Celtic' tension was evident in the pre-match speech made by Welsh rugby captain, Phil Bennet, in 1977:

> Look what these bastards have done to Wales. They've taken our coal, our water, our steel. They buy our homes and live in them for a fortnight every year. What have they given us? Absolutely nothing. We've been exploited, raped, controlled and punished by the English - and that's who you are playing this afternoon. The English.[95]

Former Welsh rugby international Adam Jones, believes this match, 'represented a class war: working class Welsh boys against public-school-educated Englishmen'.[96] Although he accepts, that, 'the [class] boundaries have blurred over the years', he draws attention to the continued rivalry and tension, 'as a Welshman you always want to beat England more than any

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[89] Law, 'Sectarianism, Criminalisation and the Civilising Process in Scotland', p. 100.
[90] *Education Scotland*
<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inclusionandequalities/equalities/challengingsectarianism/about/scottishissue.asp> [Accessed 14 August 2016].
[91] Malcolm, 'Cricket and the Celtic Nations', p. 91.
[92] Llewellyn, *Rule Britannia*, p. 34.
[93] Joseph Maguire and Jason Tuck, 'Global Sports and Patriotic Games: Rugby Union and National Identity in a United Sporting Kingdom since 1945', in *Sporting Nationalisms: identity, Ethnicity, Immigration and Assimilation*, 2nd edn, ed. Mike Cronin and David Mayall (London; Taylor and Francis, 2005), pp. 105-128 (p. 123).
[94] Maguire and Tuck, p. 123.
[95] *The Telegraph*, 9 March 2006
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/rugbyunion/international/scotland/2333404/Actions-speaks-louder-than-words-for-White.html> [Accessed 11 August 2016].
[96] Adam Jones, *Bomb: My Autobiography* (London: Headline, 2015).

other side. It's part of your DNA, and has been reinforced since birth – through your parents, the media, your sense of history and, to an extent, your education'.[97] As Gareth Williams argues, 'what the history of rugby in all the Celtic countries demonstrates, is a clear relationship between sporting prowess and the assertion of national identity, of the persistence of Celtic difference'.[98]

*Sport, Class and Gender*

Alan Tomlinson and Lincoln Allison have written that, class and gender acted as, 'central influences upon the making of… the British and… expressions of British identity [in Victorian and early twentieth century Britain] and to revised and reworked notions of identity in contemporary Britain identity. Soccer in particular became a central source for the expression of urban, regional and national identity'.[99] However, 'class' is a label that has generally fallen out of fashion in recent years, particularly with the decline of Marxist explanatory frameworks, but it retains a certain utility that alternative labels such as 'socio-economic group' do not possess. Despite the fashion for writing 'class' out of historical, sociological and ethnographic research, there can be little doubt that, particularly in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the Western world one's class was often a fundamental and defining feature of one's identity. Football in Scotland, for example, represented a cornerstone of male working class culture with religious and sectarian identities that were vital to the growth of Glasgow Celtic and Glasgow Rangers associated with particular occupations in Scotland. As social historian Annmarie Hughes points out in her book *Gender and Political Identities in Scotland, 1919-1939*, 'Celtic drew their support principally from unskilled Catholic workers… [while] Rangers' support was drawn from skilled Protestant workers'.[100] The historical links and traditional and religious make up of supporters has led them to being held as important emblems of identity. In his 1997 book *The Old Firm: Sectarianism, Sport and Society in Scotland* Bill Murray examined Rangers and Celtic from the end of the nineteenth to the end of the twentieth centuries. Perceptions of

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[97] Adam Jones, *Bomb*.
[98] Gareth Williams, 'Rugby', in *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia, Vol. 1,* ed. John T. Koch (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-SCLIO), pp. 1543-1546 (p. 1546).
[99] *Pembroke College Cambridge* <http://www.pem.cam.ac.uk/international-programmes/pembroke-kings-programme/academics/courses/the-british-and-their-sports-class-gender-and-identity/> [Accessed 2 August 2016].
[100] Annmarie Hughes, *Gender and Political Identities in Scotland, 1919-1939* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p. 148.

sectarianism in Scotland remain strong with football identified as a contributing factor.[101] The abhorrent nature and extent of the bigotry is highlighted by Scottish League Two club East Stirlingshire FC reporting its own fans for sectarian abuse.[102] Thus, a contemporary investigation of sectarianism in Scottish league football certainly deserves significant sociological attention.

Gender classifications are universal and pervasive. We are in many ways defined by our gender. However, at the same time, the very universality and all-encompassing nature of gender differences makes it a less cohesive and potent base for collective identification and mobilization. Of course there are feminist movements that have sought to unite all women on the basis of their shared gender identity, but these have never been very successful, only uniting some women, even if they have occasionally transcends the borders of states and nations. Yet nationalism often makes ideological and symbolic uses of women. Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davies assert that women are central to the creation and reproduction of ethnic and national projects, and list five major dimensions of their activity and presence. Women are seen as:

1. Biological reproducers of members of ethnic collectivities;
2. Reproducers of the boundaries of ethnic/national groups;
3. Participating centrally in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity and as transmitters of its culture;
4. Signifiers of ethnic/national differences – as a focus and symbol in ideological discourses used in construction, reproduction and transformation of ethnic/national categories;
5. Participants in national, economic, political and military struggles.[103]

Nationalist symbols and narratives proclaim the need for men to defend both the 'motherland' and the nation's women who symbolise and express its 'innocence' and 'purity'. Women are often constructed as the symbolic bearers of the collectivity's identity and honour, symbolising the spirit of the collectivity, whether it is 'Mother Russia' or 'La Patrie'. Many nationalist ideologies have emphasized the different roles of the sexes in national education, the supportive, nurturing function of women and the heroic, military role of men. Such

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[101] Bill Murray, *The Old Firm: Sectarianism, Sport and Society in Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd, 1997).

[102] *The Daily Record*, 7 October 2009 <http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/sport/football/exclusive-east-stirlingshire-owner-reports-1038536> [Accessed 3 February 2016].

[103] Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davies, *Women, Nation, State* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 6-11.

considerations led Enloe to argue that nationalism has largely emanated from masculinised memory, with many women displaying more international commitments and less militarism.[104] Furthermore, Sylvia Walby has pointed out that identity politics tends to harden ethnic and gender boundaries and homogenise and naturalise categorise and group differences.[105] This tends to freeze power differences between and within minorities, often to the disadvantage of women.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, organised sport compelled men to adhere to traditional notions of masculinity and open hostility towards women and homosexuals.[106] Although Fiona Gill has examined the management of feminist identities in a women's rugby team in Berwick, little research has gone into examining the relationship between female football fandom and national identity in contemporary Wales and Scotland.[107] Even when the opinions of women have been voiced, they are largely ignored. As sports sociologists Vic Duke and Liz Crolley have maintained, 'many female fans are unwilling to promote any changes in football that might disturb the present gender balance'.[108] This suggests that some people, mainly men, continue to find it difficult to understand how a female football supporter can feel the same level of 'allegiance' as a male. However, Carrie Dunn's book *Female football fan - Community, identity and sexism*, has begun to address the gender imbalance and has revealed some unique features of the female football fan experience and negotiations of identity in the male dominated world of professional football.[109] In *Inclusive Masculinity: The Changing Nature of Masculinities*, Eric Anderson, has shown that there is also an increasingly positive relationship between gay male athletes and sport and that heterosexual men's masculinity is becoming softer and more inclusive.[110] Ellis Cashmore and Jamie Cleland also found that contrary to assumptions, 'there is evidence of rapidly decreasing homophobia within the culture of football

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[104] Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist sense of International Politics* (London: Pandora, 1989), p. 44.

[105] Sylvia Walby, 'Woman and nation', *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, Vol. 33, No. 1-2 (1992), pp. 81-100 (p. 92-3).

[106] Ellis Cashmore and Jamie Cleland, 'Fans, homophobia and masculinities in association football: evidence of a more inclusive environment', in *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol 63, Issue 3 (2012), pp. 370-387 (p. 370).

[107] Fiona Gill, 'Negotiating "Normal": the Management of Feminine Identities in Rural Britain', *Sociological Research Online*, Volume 12, Issue 1 (January 2007) < http://www.socresonline.org.uk/12/1/gill.html> [Accessed 1 may 2015].

[108] Vik Duke and Liz Crolley, *Football, Nationality, and the State* (Harlow: Longman, 1996), p. 140.

[109] Carrie Dunn, *Female football fans - Community, identity and sexism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

[110] Eric Anderson, *Inclusive Masculinity: The Changing Nature of Masculinities* (New York; London: Routledge, 2009).

fandom'.[111] Having extensively examined association football fan message boards, Cleland revealed, for example, that a majority of football supporters challenge orthodox views towards homosexuality, '[thus] demonstrating more inclusivity through the rejection of posts that they feel have pernicious homophobic intent'.[112] Cleland, Magraph and Kian's analysis of thirty-five prominent football fan online message boards, in response to former Germany international, Thomas Hitzlsperger's decision to publicly come out as gay in January 2014, concluded that just 2% of the comments contained 'pernicious homophobic intent', which represented a significant decrease in 'cultural homophobia', present when footballer Justin Fashanu came out in 1990'.[113]

## *Sport and Social Identity*

Richard Jenkins asserts that, 'all human identities are, by definition, social identities'.[114] According to H. Tajfel social identity can be defined as, 'that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from knowledge of membership in a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership'.[115] Dietz-Uhler and Lanter stress the point that, 'the level of identification… can range from quite weak to extremely strong'.[116] Yet, as Jenkins points out, 'much writing about identity…pays insufficient attention to how identification works or is done, to process and reflexivity, to the social construction of identity in interaction and institutionally'.[117] He acknowledges that C. Wright Mills' *The Sociological Imagination* 'offers a view that still commands considerable support' as it focusses on the notions of consciousness, craft and commitment.[118] Mills forwarded the notion that, 'perhaps the most fruitful distinction with which the sociological imagination works is between 'the personal

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[111] Cashmore and Cleland, 'Fans, homophobia and masculinities in association football', p. 370.

[112] Jamie Cleland, 'Discussing homosexuality on association football fan message boards: A changing cultural context', in *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (March 2015), pp. 125-140 (p. 125).

[113] Jamie Cleland, Rory Magraph and Edward Kian, 'The Internet as a Site of Decreasing Cultural Homophobia in Association Football An Online Response by Fans to the Coming Out of Thomas Hitzlsperger', in *Men and Masculinities*, forthcoming (2017), pp. 1-21 (p. 1).

[114] Richard Jenkins, *Social Identity*, 3rd edition (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 17.

[115] H. Tajfel, *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (London: Academic Press, 1978), p. 3.

[116] Beth Dietz-Uhler and Jason R. Lanter, 'The Consequences of Sports Fan identification', in *Sports Mania: Essays on Fandom and the Media in the 21st Century*, ed. Lawrence W. Hugenberg, Paul M. Haridakis and Adam C. Earnheardt (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co, 2008), pp. 103-113 (p. 106).

[117] Jenkins, *Social Identity*, p. 17.

[118] Jenkins, p. 38.

troubles of the milieu' and 'the public issues of social structure''.[119] Yet, Jenkins asserts that 'there is nothing collectivist' about the sociological imagination because 'the individual is placed at the heart of the enterprise (although not more so than the collective'.[120] Even though Mills' writing appeared over fifty years ago, it has continued to influence 'a generation of sociologists', working in the field of sports sociology such as 'Grant Jarvie, Joe MacGuire, John Williams and Chris Rojek'.[121] As Richardson noted, within contemporary society the sociological imagination provides a way to 'give voice to silenced people, to present them as historical actors by telling their collective story'.[122] This is because identity is intrinsically comparative and identities are constituted by reaching out to otherness, through comparison and contrast, by 'playing the vis-a-vis'.[123] Thus, as John Loy and Douglas Booth concluded, 'any substantial sociological study of everyday life, especially sport, requires a strong sociological imagination. This in turn demands an adequate consideration of historical, cultural, structural, critical and corporeal sensibilities'.[124]

*Ethnicity, Sport and Identity in the Celtic Borderlands*

In *My Sporting Heroes*, Jason Mohammad one of Wales' most recognised sports presenters identified former Wales football manager Mark Hughes, former Manchester United and Wales winger Ryan Giggs, eleven time Paralympic wheel chair racing gold medallist Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson, former World Light Heavyweight Champion boxer Joe Calzaghe, former Wales rugby international Ieuan Evans and current Wales rugby captain Sam Warburton.[125] As Barrie Houlihan and Iain Linsey point out, despite producing national heroes in a number of sports such as Tommy Farr (boxing), who lost to Joe Louis at the Yankee Stadium, New York, in August 1937, and John Charles (football) who played for Leeds United, Juventus,

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[119] C. Wright Mills, *Sociological Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 8.

[120] Jenkins, p. 38

[121] Chris Rojek, 'The Field of Play in Sport and Leisure Studies', in *Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process: Critique and Counter Critique*, ed. Eric Dunning and Chris Rojek (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp. 1-35 (p. 31); See for example, Grant Jarvie, *Sport, Culture and Society* (London: Routledge, 2011).

[122] Laurel Richardson, *Fields of Play: Constructing an Academic Life* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1997), p. 15.

[123] James Boon, *Other tribes, other scribes*: symbolic anthropology in the comparative study of cultures, histories, religions and texts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 26.

[124] John Loy and Douglas Booth, 'Consciousness, Craft, Commitment: The Sociological Imagination of C. Wright Millis', in *Sport and Modern Social Theorists* ed. R. Giulianotti (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 65-80 (p. 71).

[125] Jason Mohammad, *My Sporting Heroes* (Abercynon: Accent Press Ltd, 2015).

Cardiff City and Wales during the 1950s and 1960s, 'it is rugby that has the strongest claim to be the sport over the years but which has also give the country its most potent defining moments'.[126]

Various sporting heroes and heroines may have contributed to the continued existence of a Welsh national identity, but many of them had differing notions of what Wales was, or should be. Nevertheless, they all have experienced a sense of belonging to the idea of nation or 'imagined community' called Wales. The results contribute to a growing body of literature on sport and nationalism in both the historical and sociological fields of sport. There is also a vast body of literature on nationality. It is perhaps time for the two respective bodies of literature to merge, and in this sense this research addresses research questions that provide a focus for work in this area: what is the place of sport in the construction of 'imagined communities?' How important is ethnicity in the making of the 'nation?' Is sport a symbolic representation of the idea of *banal nationalism*? What can sport tell us about changing perceptions of national identity? Does sport undermine boundaries? Understanding the interplay of local and national forms of representation, within the inherently limited context of sport, lies at the core of any complete understanding of how identity is formed in a border area. As Malcolm Anderson has argued:

> Contemporary frontiers are not just simply lines on maps, the unproblematic gives of political life, where one jurisdiction or political authority ends and another begins; they are central to understanding political life. Examining the justifications of frontiers raises critical, often dramatic questions concerning citizenship, identity, political loyalty, exclusion, inclusion and of the ends of the state.[127]

The frontier, border, or boundary has a crucial role in defining the identity of individuals and societies enclosed by it, being a marker of identity. Equally, it is not legitimating of but legitimised by human action, being historically, socially and politically contingent and constructed, and with the potential to exist in a shifting, dynamic relationship with the society or state that lies within.[128] Whereas human geographers and political scientists have increasingly argued for the declining relevance and greater 'permeability' of frontiers under the impact of

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[126] Barrie Houlihan and Iain Lindsey, *Sport Policy in Britain* (New York; London: Routledge, 2013), p. 87.

[127] Malcolm Anderson, *Frontiers: Territory and State Formation in the Modern World* (Cambridge: Polity Press; Blackwell Publishers, 1996), p. 1.

[128] Anthony P. Cohen, 'Boundaries and Boundary-Consciousness: Politicizing Cultural Identity', in *The Frontiers of Europe*, ed. Malcom Anderson and Eberhard Bort (London: Pinter, 1998), pp. 22-35; David Newman and Anssi Paasi, 'Fences and Neighbours in the Post-modern World: Boundary Narratives in Political Geography', *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 22. No. 2 (1998), pp. 186-207.

processes and globalisation, a contrary trend may also be observed as decentralization and devolution in Western Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Bloc have both led to the formation of 'sub-national' or 'national' frontiers, and to the weakening of the distinctions between them, with regional boundaries becoming comparable to international frontiers. It is important to explore whether, in the context of the devolved 'Celtic' nations, people in the Welsh and Scottish borderlands will increasingly come to identify with that state and with its 'official' nationality. As in other areas, the creation of a national political framework may act to force individuals and groups into opposing categories, defined by their identification with that framework as distinct from that comparable with the broader 'multi-national' state.[129] This is likely to lead to an explicit restatement of the relative impermeability of boundaries, geographical and cultural, and to the generation of stronger forms of 'contestant enmity' between the 'Welsh', 'Scottish' and the 'English'.[130] 'Nestedness' (of Welsh, Scottish, Irish and British identities) may be eroded.

Neither history nor contemporary Welsh or Scottish politics endorse Febvre's suggestion that the border 'is the projection on the ground of the external outlines of a nation fully conscious of itself'.[131] More suggestive is the notion of blurred, obscure or 'fuzzy borders'. Rather than continue to write off the political consciousness and expression of Hay, Oswestry and Berwick as 'not really Welsh or English' it is important to enhance the understanding of changing manifestations of local, national identity and processes of identity formation. Although the 'Three Wales model' continues to be popular amongst political scientists and journalists, it may be doubted whether it allows the level of analytical sophistication necessary to achieve a full understanding of the often complex traditions and attitudes held in the very varied parts of Wales lumped together under its headings.[132] By using a simplistic and mono-dimensional label such as 'British Wales' the model does not follow for a full comprehension of the evolving and often layered nature of national identity in these areas, which are much more complex than a single attachment to the (necessarily fluid and unstable) notion of Britain. More seriously, it contributes to an entrenched and fundamentally mistaken view that the inhabitants of these areas do not identify with Wales, and obscures the existence of divergent Welsh national identifications. As

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[129] Marianne Heiberg, *The Making of the Basque Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 110-1.
[130] R. Cohen, *Frontiers of Identity: The British and the Others* (Harlow, 1994), pp. 194-5.
[131] Lucien Febvre, 'Frontiere: The Word and the Concept', in *A New Kind of History from the Writings of Febvre*, ed. Peter Burke (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), pp. 208-218 (p. 212).
[132] Laura McAllister, 'The Welsh Devolution Referendum: Definitely, Maybe?' *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (1998), pp. 149-65.

Sahlins noted, often orthodox explanations of coherent national identities deny the role of local communities and social groups in shaping their own national identities.[133] But, as Bustamente has argued, if the border 'represents an option to resort to ascriptions of national differentiation', then it is an option that may be taken up without wholesale abandonment of local interests or a local identity.[134] Identities may have been and may still be constructed differently on the border.

Until recently, research into the socio-historical role of sport in the Welsh Marches and Scottish Borders has been insufficient to allow us to address these issues with complete confidence. The seminal work of Alan M. Klein in *Baseball on the Border: A Tale of Two Laredos*, constitutes the most widely regarded study of the social significance of sport in the construction of border identities. Klein's emphasis on cross-border institutions and structures and the legal and physical effects of borders provides a valuable framework for research in borderlands.[135] Broadly speaking, we can contend that sport may be used to fulfil a plethora of functions: to define more sharply the already established boundaries of political communities; to assist in the creation of new social identities; to serve as potentially contested space by opposed groups. The recent and continuing transformation of football is especially striking in this regard for there in microcosm the outlines of new kinds of 'national communities' can begin to be seen.

The early work of the anthropologist Frederick Barth, whose counterintuitive view developed from studies showing that when individuals or families crossed ethnic boundaries (which may or may not coincide with political boundaries), they often changed identity, continues to inform most critics of postmodernism. Barth, for example argues that 'categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information, but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories'.[136] Furthermore, with regard to the locality, community, and beyond, Barth accentuates that group categories will most often endure even when individual members move across 'boundaries' or share an identity with people in more than one group. Ethnicity is viewed as a set of delineated

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[133] Sahlins, *Boundaries,* p. 8.

[134] Jorge A. Bustamante, 'The Mexico – U.S. Border: A Line of Paradox', in *Identities in North America: The Search for Community*, ed. R. L. Earle and J. D. Wirth (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 180-194 (p. 181).

[135] Alan M. Klein, *Baseball on the Border*: *A Tale of Two Laredos* (Princeton, N.J.; Chichester: Princeton University Press, 1997).

[136] Fredrik Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Bergen; London: Universitets Forlaget, 1969), p. 9.

boundaries between neighbouring groups, and individuals are primarily concerned with maintaining these boundaries in order to explain one's identity, often in a relative, comparative manner.[137] As C. Richard King has argued, ethnicity has proven fundamental to sport as it refers to the use of cultural characteristics, including language, nationality, and custom, to make sense of others and create social groups. King has noted, 'the relationships between ethnicity and sport afford keen insights into the formation of identity, community, and society'.[138] 'Boundaries' and 'borders' continue to play an integral role in ethnic group formation, even while generating conflict between groups. It is important therefore, to examine how fans' of border clubs express, manipulate and negotiate their identities, and challenge the way that they are defined by others.

From the above discussion, we see that in reality, both ethnicity and language are objectively defined ideas. Ethnicity is often subjectively interpreted by a group, and is thus a means to fight for the social interest of group members. For May, the modernist rejection of ethnicity represents an, 'overemphasis on the political and civic elements of nationalism at the expense of its cultural dimensions, enables a dominant 'nation' within a state to normalise their own ethnicity as hegemonic and their ethnic concerns as universal and civic ones'.[139] Language plays a very important role in the social life, and limits speakers of different languages into different social circles. On the other hand, the ambiguity in defining a 'language' can, at times be exploited to the benefit of the beholder in a given context. These factors support the claim that language is closely related to ethnic identity and the concepts of nation or nationality. As Carmen Llamas has argued, 'the often debatable borderlands which exist at the margins of the nation (i.e. the England and Scotland borderlands) are where these connections may be strongest or weakest'.[140] This according to Llamas is because debatable lands tend to be much more aware of who they are and who they are not. How then do people living in debatable lands along the Anglo-Welsh and Anglo-Scottish border 'do' identity? Even if a border is no longer contested, does simply living on a salient and one time shifting border impact on peoples' sense of identity?

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[137] C. Richard King, 'Sport and Ethnicity', in *Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Sociology* (Malden, Mass.; Oxford: Blackwell, 2007) ed. George Ritzer <http://philosociology.com/UPLOADS/_PHILOSOCIOLOGY.ir_Blackwell%20Encyclopedia%20of%20Sociology_George%20Ritzer.pdf> [Accessed 18 April 2016], pp. 4689-4692.

[138] Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, p. 15.

[139] May, *Language and Minority Rights*, p. 77.

[140] Llamas, 'Convergence and Divergence across a National Border', in *Language and Identities*, ed. Carmen Llamas and Dominic Watt (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 227-236 (p. 227).

*A brief history of Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland*

Berwick-upon-Tweed, a town of 12,043, which sits in the most sparsely populated county of Northumberland in the North East of England, with a population of 316,300, is 'inextricably tied up with the struggle for the Anglo-Scottish frontier'.[141] Founded during the time of the Kingdom of Northumbria, the town changed hands between England and Scotland more than 13 times between 1147 and 1482.[142] One of the most brutal sackings was by King Edward I of England in 1296, which set the precedent for a bitter border conflict in the Scottish Wars of Independence.[143] In the 13th century Berwick was one of the wealthiest trading ports in Scotland and was home to a mint, producing Scottish coinage. Such was the town's strategic importance that on 23 August 1305, after his execution and quartering, Edward I ordered the left arm of Scottish patriot, William Wallace be displayed in the town.[144] In 1482 Berwick was captured for the last time by Richard, Duke of Gloucester (the future King Richard III), although it was not officially merged into England.[145] Until the Reform Act of 1885, Berwick retained a considerable degree of independence with the status of a 'Free Burgh'.[146] As a county in its own right, separate to Northumberland, Berwick also continued to be mentioned separately in Acts of Parliament and its status meant that the Crimean War (1853-56) was declared in the name of 'Great Britain, Ireland and Berwick-upon Tweed'.[147] The claim that Berwick is still at war with Russia is one which endures and this is based upon the widely held belief that when the Treaty of Paris was signed 'Berwick' was omitted. However, earlier legislation lays this myth to rest. The Wales and Berwick Act 1746 deemed that where the expression 'England' was used in an Act of Parliament, 'this should be taken to include the dominion of Wales and the town of Berwick'.[148]

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[141] Quoted on *England's North East* <http://www.englandsnortheast.co.uk/BerwickuponTweed.html> [Accessed 25 July 2016].

[142] Alistair Moffat, *The Borders: A History of the Borders from the Earliest Times* (Selkirk: Deerpark Press), p. 262.

[143] Michael Prestwich, 'The Scottish Wars', in *Edward I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 469-516 (p. 474).

[144] John Selby Watson, *Sir William Wallace, the Scottish hero: a narrative of his life and actions* (London: Saunders, Otley and Co., 1861), p. 359.

[145] Kristie Dean, *The World of Richard III* (Stroud: Amberley, 2015).

[146] Ian Crofton, *Walking the Border: A Journey between Scotland and England* (Edinburgh: Birlinn Limited, 2015).

[147] Clark McGinn, 'Blood on the borders' in *The Ultimate Guide to Being Scottish,* rev. edn by Clark McGinn (Edinburgh: Luath Press 2013), pp. 128-141 (p. 133).

[148] Tony Wright, 'The Shape of British Politics', in *The British Political Process: An Introduction*, ed. Tony Wright (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 1-28 (p. 19).

Scottish political interest clearly remains strong in the town as demonstrated by the failed Scottish National Party bid to stand in Berwick at the General Election in May 2015.[149] This followed previous demands by SNP's Christine Grahame for Berwick to 'return to the fold'.[150] Yet, the English influence upon the area is also very significant. Its position marginally south of the Scottish border contributes to a sense of complexity surrounding identity with many people who live in Berwick-upon-Tweed feeling that the town should in fact be in Scotland. Some residents suggest that better public services such as hospital treatment exist north of the border.[151] Similarly, restaurants in the town sell haggis dishes alongside roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, while a small side street gift shop provides ginger wig hats and embroidered Scottish badges sold beside flags of St. George and the British Union Jack. A sign outside one shop in the town centre exalts: 'Proudly serving Scotland for over 60 Years', alongside a Scottish flag. Within a sports shop the issue appears clear cut: England national football team shirts are on sale with no sight of Scotland dark blue shirts. It is understandable that people who live in Berwick have mixed emotions to the location of the town. The people equally have the choice of commuting to Newcastle and Edinburgh, equidistant (45 minutes) from the centre via train.

Almost every public house in Berwick has a popular English pub name such as 'The Queens Head' or the 'The Red Lion', yet inside there is often a Scottish and English flag on display side by side.[152] At Shielfield Park, the home of Berwick Rangers, there is a small club shop selling scarves, programmes and merchandise to the left of the turnstile entrance area. An indication towards the English/Scottish heritage of the town exists inside where the visitor is able to purchase a Berwick scarf with either a Scottish or English flag on it. On asking the shop assistant the visitor will also discover that the scarves with the St. George cross and words 'Dream Team' displayed is the top seller amongst fans. Around the ground, younger Berwick fans wearing England shirts and club scarves are often visible. This would point towards a newer generation of fan who associate themselves nationalistically more with England than Scotland.

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[149] *The Journal*, 2 January 2015 <http://www.thejournal.co.uk/north-east-analysis/analysis-news/failed-snp-bid-stand-berwick-8376579> [Accessed 24 July2016].

[150] *BBC News*, 10 February 2008 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/south_of_scotland/7237802.stm> [Accessed 24 July 2016].

[151] *BBC News*, 8 October 2004 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/tyne/3727046.stm> [Accessed 29 August 2015].

[152] *The Daily Mail,* 14 April 2011 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/moslive/article-1374494/Red-Lion-White-Hart-Most-popular-pub-names-England.html> [Accessed 24 July 2016].

Officially formed in 1881, though recent research indicates that the club was formed at a meeting held on 7 July 1884, after a New Year's Day friendly match played in the town between a team of mill workers from Dunbar, East Lothian and railway clerks from Newcastle-upon-Tyne,[153] Berwick Rangers are a unique team in Scottish Football because they play in England and have done throughout their tumultuous 132-year history. Berwick experienced some early success on the pitch, and became the most successful club in the area. The club's original crest was the same as the one used by Berwick town council. The club associated with the town because most of those affiliated with the club in the first decade were locals who, by and large, did not want to get wrapped up in the political issues of Berwick-upon-Tweed, Berwickshire and Scotland. Soon however, Berwick also became associated with the Scottish Borders. Club Secretary, Dennis McCleary, states that within fifteen years of its existence, the club developed into a major force in suggesting 'that politics and sport could be a part of the same cultural identity'. The club itself, emphasises its longstanding association with Scotland, and is known as 'The Borderers'. Here, the club's literature constructs the Scottish Borders as an extension of Berwick: outward looking and vibrant, a modern place. Similarly, the literature constructs associational football as a constituent part of modernity.[154] The notion follows that as Berwick, and thus Scotland became increasingly modern, football (specifically Berwick Rangers Football Club) became an increasingly important part of the Scottish Borderers' experience of modernity.

Hence, from its early days, many viewed Berwick Rangers as a Scottish rather than an English club. In 1898, Berwick took further steps to link itself to Scotland, switching to the Scottish Borders League, where the club cruised to the league championship in their first season, heavily beating Selkirk, Hawick and Peebles Rovers. However, Berwick returned to English football a year later before again turning their loyalties north and gaining membership of the East of Scotland League (EoSFL), which included teams from Edinburgh and the east of Scotland area, such as Dundee Football Club. With it came membership of the Scottish Football Association (SFA). Berwick dominated the East of Scotland League winning the championship numerous times, and after the demise of the Eastern League the club played the Border Amateur

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[153] Berwick Rangers Supporters' Trust <http://www.berwickrangers.org/sample-page/berwick-rangers-fc/> [Accessed 1 August 2015].

[154] Tony Langmack, *Berwick Rangers: A Sporting Miracle! 1881-1981* (Berwick-upon-Tweed: Tweeddale, 1981).

and Border Senior leagues before becoming a founding member of a second incarnation of the East of Scotland Football League, formed in 1923/24. During the following years Berwick qualified for the Scottish FA Cup on nine occasions; won the East of Scotland League twice; ESFA Qualifying Cup five times; ESFA Consolation Cup twice; Border Cup twice; King Cup twice and in 1947/48 they won the SFA Qualifying Cup South when they beat Stranraer 3-2.[155]

In 1951/2 Berwick finally became a senior club with Scottish Football League status and became known as cup giant-killers with victories over several leading clubs, including Ayr United and Dundee on their way to a Scottish Cup Quarter-Final tie against Rangers in 1953/54, where they lost 4-0 in front of a 60,000 crowd.[156] In 1954 aided by the gate receipts from the Quarter Final tie at Ibrox, Berwick made their final move to the 'new' Shielfield Park, built entirely by their supporters.[157] The club's ambitions gained momentum and the demise of the C Division gave Berwick a step up to the second tier of the Scottish League in 1955/56. In 1963/64 the club reached the semi-final of the Scottish League Cup only to be beaten 3-1 by Rangers, a team with which they were soon to become renowned. The club's finest moment came on 28 January 1967 when they beat Rangers 1-0 at home in a Scottish Cup tie in front of a record 13,283 fans.[158] In a competition not noted for its giant-killing tradition, this result is still regarded by many as the greatest ever Scottish Cup shock. Berwick were paired with Hibernian in the following round but lost 1–0 in front of almost 30,000. In 1979 the club won their first ever league honour, taking the Scottish Second Division championship to earn promotion to the First Division. The club survived for two seasons before being relegated remaining at this level until 1997 when they were relegated to the Scottish Third Division. However, Berwick regained promotion in May 2000, and under the stewardship of Paul Smith, took both Rangers and Hearts to replays in the Scottish Cup. Berwick now play in League Two of the Scottish Professional Football League, following relegation from the 'old' Second Division in 2007-08.

Shielfield Park stands as an important structure to both Berwick Rangers and the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed. It is still seen as an important gathering point for residents. The decline of large public meeting spaces has contributed to the ground's rise in importance. As sport

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[155] Glasgow Rangers Fans' Forum <http://dothebouncy.com/main/threads/berwick-rangers-history.52108/> [Accessed 1 August 2015].
[156] Berwick Rangers Supporters' Trust <http://www.berwickrangers.org/sample-page/berwick-rangers-fc/> [Accessed 1 August 2015].
[157] Glasgow Rangers Fans' Forum.
[158] David Ross, 'Border Reivers – Sensation in the Scottish Cup', in *'Very Heaven': The story of Scottish Football's greatest ever season,* by David Ross (Raleigh NC: Lulu Press, 2007), pp. 57-62 (p. 57).

geographer John Bale argues, 'the stadium is a phenomenon of modern urban life. It is the stadium rather than in the city square, the concert hall or the cathedral that we find the largest urban congregations, at pre-ordained times and at regular intervals, to witness sporting rituals and records'.[159] As Bale demonstrates, the stadium has become a prominent site of collective cultural identification. This is certainly the case for the Shielfield Park Stadium, which has become the site of both Scottish and English collective cultural identification and a key tool for ensuring the continued development of solidarity amongst 'Berwickers', especially as most of the team and half the support are Scottish.[160] Berwick Rangers recognise the special bond between the club and its supporters and respects the invaluable contribution the supporters make to the life of the Club. As such, the club consults its supporters on a regular basis through two organisations: Berwick Rangers Supporters' Club and Trust, which: support activity in the local community and the wider football community, seek to promote close links between Berwick Rangers and the community and introduce young people, to football as players and spectators.[161]

*A brief history of Oswestry (Shropshire)*

If you visit the northwest corner around Oswestry, one of the UK's oldest border settlements, you will encounter the mountains of Wales curiously embrace the county 'marking a blending of cultures that has created a unique and genuine English-Welsh alliance'.[162] Oswestry, a town of 17,105 which sits in the historic English county of Shropshire, in the West Midlands of England, with a population of 473,900, is a place of ancient British origin. The town changed hands between the English and the Welsh so frequently during the Middle Ages that Oswestry acted as a true frontier zone between England and Wales. In 1149, the kingdom of Powys under Madog ap Maredudd captured the border town stronghold, and it remained in Welsh hands until 1157, when King Henry II set about restoring English authority in Wales.[163] In 1216 it was burnt

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[159] John Bale, 'Introduction', in *The Stadium and the City,* ed. John Bale and Olof Moen (Keele: Keele University Press, 1995), pp. 11-21 (p. 11).
[160] A football ground guide <http://www.footballgroundguide.com/leagues/scottish-spl-premier-and-football-league-clubs/scottish-league-two/berwick-rangers-shielfield-park.html> [Accessed 1 August 2015].
[161] Berwick Rangers Supporters/Customer Charter < http://www.berwickrangers.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/SupportersCustomerCharter.pdf > [Accessed 1 May 2016].
[162] *Shropshire Tourism* <http://www.shropshiretourism.co.uk/oswestry/> [Accessed 6 April 2010].
[163] Paul R. Davies, *Castles of the Welsh Princes* (2011), p. 14

by King John I of England and again in 1233 by Llywelyn the Great of Wales.[164] Having being the seat of the lordship of the same name, it was incorporated into Shropshire in 1535-36.[165] 'Dual nationality' has inevitably left its mark on Oswestry. Situated only 3.5 miles (5.5 kilometres) from Wales, Oswestry has many Welsh street and place names and the town's name in Welsh is *Croesoswallt*, meaning 'Oswald's Cross'.[166] The English name 'Oswestry' is thought to originate from the legend of the pagan King of Mercia, who in 642 defeated St. Oswald of Northumbria and dismembered him, hanging his limbs from an ash tree as a warning for anyone who might dare to challenge his rule.[167] The many remnants of more turbulent times show that Oswestry was once a strategically vital frontier town. An ancient hill-fort, said to be the birthplace of Queen Guinevere overlooks the town and Offa's Dyke marks out the nominal Shropshire/Wales border.[168] The influence of Wales still remains strong and a distinct fusion of languages – English and Welsh – and accents local or from further afield, can be heard around the town.

Today's visitors to Oswestry will question: am I in England or Wales? Welsh can be heard on the streets – particularly on market days and the town boasts one of the few Welsh-language bookshops outside Wales. It is the birthplace of Major-winning golfer Ian Woosnam (nicknamed the 'Wee Welshman'), and is home of the Welsh Guards Museum and Welsh football champions, The New Saints of Oswestry Town. Oswestry is a club with a chequered 150 year history. Indeed, Oswestry comes from an even longer history, the history of the Welsh Marches, a thousand year old region of contention between England and Wales, with a distinctive geography and unique identity.[169] Here we find what Garner calls 'Anglo-Welshness', in essence hybridization with Welsh town names and cultural influence on the English side of the border and the opposite in Wales. As Lawrence Garner states, this quality is 'strongest in genuine border towns like Oswestry, which survived against the odds and are still not quite sure which side they are on'.[170]

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[164] John Pryce-Jones, *Historic Oswestry: Episodes from the Past of a Welsh Border Town* (Oswestry: Shropshire Libraries, 1982), pp. 12.

[165] John Bartholornew, *Gazetteer of the British Isles* (1887) <http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/place/218> [Accessed 28 August 2015].

[166] P.H. Sawyer, *From Roman Britain to Norman England*, 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 30.

[167] John Vince, *Discovering Saints in Britain*, 3rd edition (Princes Risborough: Shire, 2001), p. 35.

[168] Frank D. Reno, *Arthurian Figures of History and Legend: A Biographical Dictionary* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2011), p. 136.

[169] Andrew Allott, *Marches* (London: Collins, 2011).

[170] Lawrence Garner, *The Visitor's Guide to the Welsh Borders* (Ashbourne: Moorland, 1984).

_A brief history of Oswestry Town, Total Network Solutions and The New Saints Football Club_

Oswestry Town Football Club was born at a moment of great sporting vitality; many clubs sprung up and just as quickly disappeared at the end of the nineteenth century. Oswestry Town, one of the world's oldest football clubs (founded in 1860) was a founder member of the Football Association of Wales (FAW) in March 1876.[171] The town's apparent Welshness did not go unchallenged, however. Beyond football, Stanley Leighton the Conservative member for Oswestry, made a practice of 'ridiculing all things Welsh'.[172] Yet, as Martin Johnes has noted, 'the FAW [though] sensitive to criticism over the issue of playing outside Wales [realised that] the border represented a historic and geographical frontier, rather than a closed social, cultural and economic boundary'.[173] The club became the main sporting focus of the town and north-east Wales and became a social phenomenon of enormous significance. Oswestry Town grew and gained its social pre-eminence as its sporting prestige grew. The initial explosion of interest came over the period c. 1870-1890, coinciding with Oswestry's first 'golden age'. This was inspired by William Henry Davies, who represented Wales on four separate occasions during the 1870s and 1880s, playing in Wales' first international match against Scotland (a 4-0 defeat in Glasgow) on 25th March 1876, and even scoring Wales' first international goal on 18th January 1879 against his country of birth: England.[174] Described as 'equally at home as a forward or half back (who) could pass the ball accurately and possessed good dribbling skills…his presence as a forward always meant danger for opposing defences'.[175] In 1879, nine players from the Oswestry club represented Wales in the first international against England, including three who were spending a season with Oswestry as their own club, Druids, was temporarily without a ground.[176]

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[171] Johnes and Garland, 'The New Craze', pp. 280-3.

[172] Kenneth O. Morgan, _Rebirth of a Nation: Wales, 1880-1980_ (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), p. 57.

[173] Johnes and Garland, 'The New Craze', P. 292.

[174] _Home of football statistics and history_, 'Wales national football team "A" international record (1879)', <http://www.11v11.com/teams/wales/tab/matches/season/1879> [Accessed 3 May 2015].

[175] Gareth Davies and Ian Garland, _Who's Who of Welsh International Soccer Players_ (Wrexham: Bridge Books, 1991), p. 46.

[176] England 2 Wales 1, 18 January 1879 <http://www.wfda.co.uk/international_details.php?id=4 Welsh Football Data Archive> [Accessed 17 May 2010].

Fig. 1– Map of teams in the Welsh Premier League 2011-12 including rivals Rhyl FC from the Cymru Alliance (Original source: Welsh Premier League and Rhyl Football Club; adapted by author)
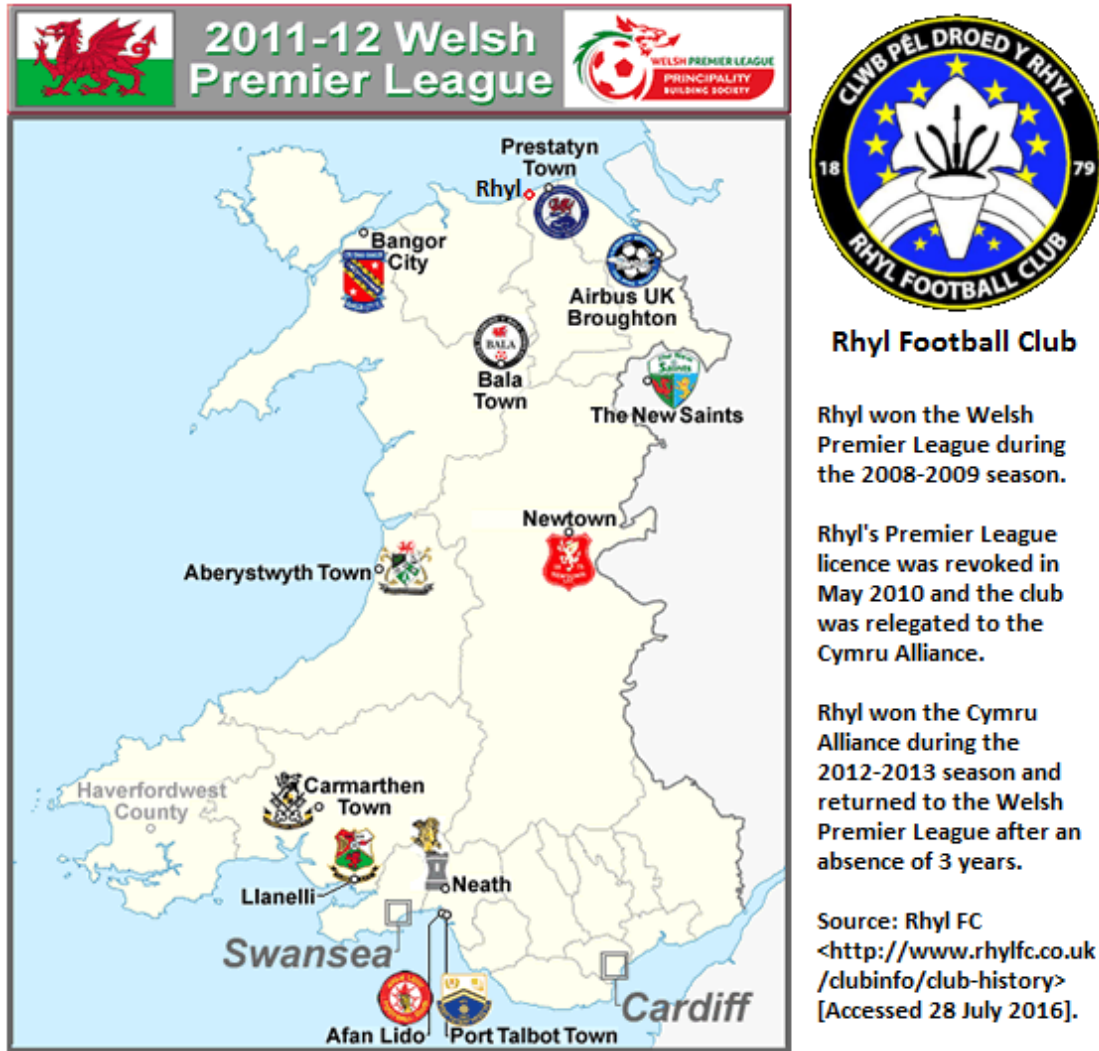


Though English-based, Oswestry Town Football Club has a long history of playing Welsh opposition. The club competed in Wales and Border Counties Association Challenge Cup during the 1870s and 1880s and won the Welsh Cup in 1884 (becoming the first team to take the trophy over Offa's Dyke), fielding ten Welsh internationals, only four of whom were born in Wales.[177] In April 1885, Oswestry again reached the Welsh Cup Final where they were this time defeated 3–1 by Druids, at the Racecourse, Wrexham.[178] The 1890s brought a lack of success.

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[177] Johnes and Garland, 'The New Craze', pp. 291-2.
[178] Welsh Football Data Archive, 'Welsh Cup Final, 1884/85',
<http://www.wfda.co.uk/welshcup_final_detail.php?id=8> [Accessed 17 May 2010].

There were only two semi-final appearances, and since the legalization of professionalism in England in 1885, the power of Lancashire money ensured the best players were gradually absorbed by the richer clubs of Lancashire and Cheshire.[179] However, Oswestry restored some pride by beating Druids 1-0 and Whitchurch 2-0 in the 1901 and 1907 Welsh Cup Finals, the latter match drawing a crowd of 6,000.[180] The 1920s were also a key point in time, as the era saw Oswestry obtain the services of local-lad, Herbert Roberts, who in December 1926 caught the eye of Herbert Chapman, manager of Arsenal. 'Herbie' won five League Championships and two FA Cups whilst playing for the Gunners. He also won an England cap, despite coming from a Welsh-speaking family who regularly attended the Presbyterian Church of Wales, Oswestry.[181]

In 1999/2000, led by Dr. Andy Cale, Total Network Solutions Football Club, representing the large village of Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain, Powys, Wales, wrestled the Welsh title from Barry Town's grip.[182] TNS went on to dominate the Welsh premier League with titles in 2005, 2006 and 2007, in addition to success in the Welsh League Cup trophy and the FAW Premier Cup.[183] As Mike Bradbury notes, 'T.N.S. was the sponsored name of Llansantffraid FC. They were sponsored by a company of that name [Total Network Solutions] in 2000, but when they were bought out by British Telecom in 2005, that arrangement came to an end [immediately after the 2005/06 season] and TNS renamed themselves The New Saints'.[184] Total Network Solutions Football Club was notably the first football club in the UK to incorporate the name of the sponsor into the name of the football club. 'They'll be dancing on the streets of Total Network Solutions', since updated to, 'they'll be dancing on the streets of The New Saints', is an expression immortalised by Sky Sports *Soccer Saturday* presenter Jeff Stelling, who referred to the border club's status as a corporate entity rather than as a named place.[185] Yet Peter Millward notes that, 'using football clubs as a vessel to promote its owner's other commercial interests is not a new phenomenon', as exemplified by Indian chicken poultry firm Venky's takeover of

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[179] Johnes, *A History of Sport in Wales*, p. 34.
[180] Welsh Football Data Archive, 'Welsh Cup Final, 1906/07', <http://www.wfda.co.uk/welshcup_final_detail.php?id=30> [Accessed 18 May 2010].
[181] Arsenal: The Official History 1886-2009 <http://www.arsenal.com/membership/membership-news/arsenal-the-official-history-1886-2009> [Accessed 17 May 2010].
[182] TNS FC: Club History <http://www.tnsfc.co.uk/clubinfo/club-history/> [Accessed 8 August 2016].
[183] TNS FC: Club Information <http://www.tnsfc.co.uk/clubinfo/> [Accessed 8 August 2016].
[184] Mike Bradbury, *Lost Teams of the Midlands* (Dartford, Xlibris LLC, 2013), p. 264.
[185] Phil Shaw, *Tell Him He's Pele: The Greatest Collection of Humorous Football Quotations* (London: Ebury Press, 2010), p. 164.

Blackburn Rovers in 2010.[186] P. Kennedy and D. Kennedy concluded that, 'the loosely regulated path that football has taken has brought with it socio-economic consequences for football fandom. [Thus] if existing stadia cannot churn out the required revenue, football supporters can be shunted to new locations and new stadia which can improve the club's finances; if a club is not considered to be viable from a commercial perspective, it can be merged with local rivals'.[187]

Total Network Solution's merger with the financially weak Oswestry Town Football Club, was completed in 2004/5, with 'the opportunity to develop and increase the club's Welsh fan base'.[188] In September 2005, following two high profile legs against Champions League holders Liverpool in the Champions League Qualifying rounds in the summer, the company announced plans that to move across the border to Oswestry, Shropshire (England).[189] TNS renamed themselves The New Saints of Oswestry Town and Llansantffraid Football Club. Llansantffraid had always been known as 'The Saints', while Oswestry had strong connections with Saint Oswald. A new club badge was developed at the same time, featuring a red Welsh dragon, a symbol of national independence to represent Llansantffraid, and an English lion rampart to represent Oswestry.[190] The club was finally obliged to relocate to Park Hall, Oswestry, in 2007 to accommodate the hundreds of fans who were unable to squeeze into the tiny Treflan ground in Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain.[191] In 2009/2010, TNS regained the Welsh Premier League title after a three year absence, and on 27 April 2010 completed a domestic double, defeating arch-rivals Rhyl 3-1 in the Welsh League Cup Final. Five league titles between 2011/2012 and 2015/2016, including two domestic doubles and three trebles, have made The New Saints of Oswestry Town the most successful team in Welsh Premier League history.[192]

The difference between The New Saints and similar clubs of its size in Wales lies precisely in the fact that the existence of TNS, its social consequence, cannot be explained solely as a result of its sporting success. Such success cannot adequately account for the importance and

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[186] Peter Millward, 'New football directors in the twenty-first century: profit and revenue in the English Premier League's transnational age', in *Leisure Studies*, Vol. 32. Issue 4 (2013), pp. 399-414 (p. 406).

[187] Peter Kennedy and David Kennedy, 'Football supporters and the commercialisation of football: comparative responses across Europe', in *Soccer & Society*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (May 2012), pp. 327–340 (p. 330).

[188] TNS FC: Club History <http://www.tnsfc.co.uk/clubinfo/club-history/> [Accessed 8 August 2016].

[189] *BBC News,* 31 October 2005 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/mid/4392922.stm> [Accessed 8 August 2016].

[190] The New Saints FC Crest & Club History <http://www.footballcrests.com/clubs/the-new-saints-fc> [Accessed 5 April 2010]. It is important to note that Oswestry Town's club's crest consisted of a blue shield outlined in gold, featuring a large golden lion on the right and a small red shield (with a white cross in the centre) below a red Welsh dragon on the left.

[191] TNS FC: Club History <http://www.tnsfc.co.uk/clubinfo/club-history/> [Accessed 8 August 2016].

[192] TNS FC: Club Information <http://www.tnsfc.co.uk/clubinfo/> [Accessed 8 August 2016].

transcendence of the club. Within the club, there is a great diversity of people who are members for a whole variety of different reasons: sporting, family, friendships, emotional commitment, and also because beyond football, Oswestry has a mixed Welsh and English heritage, even hosting eisteddfodau in the mid-nineteenth century.[193] When referring to TNS, it is the club's supporters who have given meaning to its existence, made it what it is today and given it the significance it has for Wales within Europe. It is true that circumstances have changed. England and Wales have made irreversible changes. The devolution process has progressed significantly since 1999, with the Welsh Assembly in Cardiff having gained law-making powers in 20 devolved areas in 2011, without the need for consulting Westminster. In this new situation, the role of TNS has also had to change, the club has to put itself at the service of national feeling and strengthen the values which as a club it has always held dear. TNS is again close to its fans. The heart of Oswestry is again beating to the rhythm of Welsh 'national' concerns. Without sporting relevance there can be no social relevance, as the history of football shows us all too clearly.

*A brief history of Hay-on-Wye, Powys*

Between Wales and England lies Hay-on-Wye, a town of 1,469, within the current jurisdiction of Wales but a town which lies on three borders: the national boundary with England, and the old county boundaries of Brecknockshire and Radnorshire.[194] Because of its strategic position on the border between England and Wales, Hay-on-Wye has experienced a turbulent past with many battles fought over control of the Marcher Lordships.[195] The history of the town and the castle are inextricably bound together. Built in c.1200 by the powerful William de Braose, Lord of Brecon and Gower, the castle was burnt down by King John I of England in 1216 while he attempted to suppress the rebellion of Giles and Reginald de Braose, who had forced him to sign the Magna Carta.[196] In 1231, the town was again burnt, this time by Llywelyn the Great, the de facto ruler over most of Wales, and the castle had to be rebuilt by King Henry III in 1233.[197] The castle was to change hands twice during the Second Barons' War of 1264 to 1267, captured first by Prince Edward in 1264 before it was recaptured and burnt by Simon de

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[193] *Shropshire Tourism* <http://www.shropshiretourism.co.uk/oswestry/> [Accessed 6 April 2010].

[194] Geoffrey Lowrie Fairs, *A History of the Hay: The History of Hay-on-Wye* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1972).

[195] *Powys Digital History Project* <http://history.powys.org.uk/history/hay/castle1.html> [Accessed 4 August 2016].

[196] Adrian Pettifer, 'Hay Castle', in *Welsh Castles: A Guide by Counties*, by Adrian Pettifer (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000), p. 13.

[197] David Hunter, 'Hay-on-Wye to Kington: In the steps of the drovers', in *Offa's Dyke Path: A journey through the border country of England and Wales*, 2nd edition *(*Milnthorpe, Cumbria: Cicerone, 2011), pp. 96-112 (p. 99).

Montfort, 6th Earl of Leicester and Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in 1265.[198] In 1322, such was its importance to the English crown that Edward II's royal forces captured and confiscated the castle.[199] In 1402, Welsh forces again sacked the castle, this time during Glyndwr's rebellion.[200] Repaired in 1454, it was again destroyed in 1460 by Welsh rebels. It was at this time that Hay Castle passed to the Earls of Stafford, later Dukes of Buckingham, under whom it suffered further damage during the Wars of the Roses conflicts in the 1460s.[201] The last Duke of Buckingham, Edward Stafford, who rebuilt the Norman keep, was executed by King Henry VIII of England in 1521, leading to the castle's eventual abandonment and decay.[202] Hay's turbulent history of changing hands between England and Wales has given the town a unique identity.

Situated just within the Welsh side of the border with Herefordshire, England, Hay's boundary follows the English border/Dulas brook from the River Wye. The adjacent village of Cusop, England, home to the Co-Operative supermarket, lies on the English side of the Dulas Brook, with the nearest city being Hereford, county town of Herefordshire, 22 miles to the east in England. Seventeen years of the Welsh Assembly has reinforced an awareness that Hay's residents live on the border dividing two nations and, importantly, make the material differences between Welsh and English jurisdictions more pronounced, with reduced university fees and social and welfare (free medical prescriptions) services in Wales. What, one might properly ask then is: what does studying contestable people or places along the Anglo-Welsh border have to do with constitutional change, attitudes towards independence, greater devolutionary powers in Wales and a declining sense of British national identity? Although it is not being claimed that there is some 'identity crisis' in Hay-on-Wye, the context of heightened identity salience in the Welsh Marches during the post devolution era in Wales is here afforded far greater attention.

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[198] David Hunter, 'Hay-on-Wye to Kington', p. 99.
[199] Geoffrey Lowrie Fairs, *A History of the Hay: The History of Hay-on-Wye* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1972), p. 6.
[200] John Norris, *Welsh Castles at War* (Stroud: Tempus, 2000), p. 30.
[201] 'Hay Castle', *Castle Wales* < http://www.castlewales.com/hay.html> [Accessed 4 August 2016].
[202] Pettifer, 'Hay Castle', pp. 13-14.

Fig. 2 – A map of Herefordshire
(Original source: Touristnetuk.com; adapted by author)



Internationally known as the 'Town of Books', Hay's success owes much to the contribution of Richard Booth, MBE.[203] In 1973, Booth acquired Hay Castle, and in April 1977 was crowned 'King' in a ceremony on the castle walls, released a national anthem on record, wore a crown, ermine gown, ball and sceptre and produced his own currency and passports.[204] He declared Hay an 'independent country'; separate from both England and Wales.[205] The advantage that national independence gave to the population of Hay was the opportunity to set up its own 'Hay House of Lords' in April 2000, where 21 hereditary peers were created for the 'Kingdom of Hay'.[206] Today, the Hay Peerage is available to Richard Cœur de Livre's loyal

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[203] Paul Whitfield, 'The Brecon Beacons and Powys', in *The Rough Guide to Wales*, 7th edition (London: Rough Guides, 2012), pp. 199-252 (p. 226).

[204] 'Home Rule', *Richard King of Hay* <http://www.richardkingofhay.com/home-rule.html> [Accessed 4 August 2016].

[205] McDonald, 'Welsh Marches - Hay-on-Wye and around', p. 557.

[206] *BBC News*, 31 December 2003 < http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/mid/3357209.stm> [Accessed 4 August 2016].

'subjects' with Booth, conferring Dukedoms, Earldoms, Baronies and Knighthoods.[207] World renowned for its bookshops, Hay-on-Wye has since 1988 also become home to the annual Hay Festival of Literature & Arts, sponsored by *The Daily Telegraph* newspaper, which draws 80,000 visitors annually.[208] Now in its 27th year, the Hay Festival continues to bring together writers from around the world to debate and share stories, in this tiny border town in the Welsh Marches.

Hay-on-Wye, or 'Y Gelli Gandryll' as it is known in the Welsh language, is twinned with Timbuktu, the town with the oldest Islamic library in the world. Most of the town lies in Wales but as it is located on the Wales/England border, the eastern parts of the town to encroach into England.[209] Wales has two living languages: Welsh and English. Mid-Wales encompasses some of the regions where the Welsh language is strongest and weakest. On the one hand, it is spoken by the majority of the population in Bala where, according to the 2011 Census, 78.5% of the population are fluent Welsh speakers.[210] On the other hand, regions that lie next to the English counties of Shropshire and Herefordshire, such as Hay, are among the areas in Wales with the lowest percentage of Welsh speakers. It is perhaps little coincidence that the smallest amount of Welsh medium primary schools can be found in Powys. The adoption of the English tongue came early in Hay-on-Wye. In 1876, in his investigation into the Celtic languages of the British Isles, E.G. Ravenstein found that Capel-y-Ffin ('Chapel of the boundary'), a tiny hamlet eight miles south of the town, in the deanery of Greater Brecon (which included Hay) was the last stronghold of Welsh in the area.[211] The fortunes of Welsh in Powys appear delicately poised above a precipice of major changes. In January 2014, Welsh language campaigner, Menna Elfyn, was elected Wales PEN Cymru's President. As an organisation PEN are committed to the fight for the linguistic rights of minority cultures, a theme which Wales has addressed as a bilingual and multicultural nation.[212] It is interesting that Hay was chosen as the venue for PEN's first AGM; a small town in the 'debatable lands' between Wales and England, Hay has its own distinctive characteristics and hosts an annual event which promotes a local cultural identity.

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[207] 'Royalty/Buy Titles', Richard King of Hay <http://www.richardkingofhay.com/royaltybuy-titles.html> [Accessed 4 August 2016].

[208] Rupert Matthews, *Wales: A Very Peculiar History* (Brighton: Book House, 2011).

[209] *Brecon Beacons* <http://www.breconbeacons.org/hay-on-wye> [Accessed 4 August 2016].

[210] UK Census Data, 'Key Stats – Welsh profile' for Bala <http://www.ukcensusdata.com/bala-w05000047#sthash.LpTVICLt.dpbs> [Accessed 4 August 2016].

[211] E. G. Ravenstein, *On the Celtic languages in the British Isles: a statistical survey* (Statistical Society, 1879).

[212] *Hay Festival* <https://www.hayfestival.com/p-9050-wales-pen-cymru-with-menna-elfyn-fflur-dafydd-jon-gower-owen-sheers-and-friends.aspx> [Accessed 4 August 2016].

*A brief history of football in the Welsh Marches*

Ronald Frankenberg's, seminal sociological study during the late 1950s of Glynceiriog, a Welsh village less than five miles from Llangollen in North Wales, which was given the pseudonym Pentrediwaith ('Village without work'), provides some notable similarities with Hay.[213] His comparative study describes residents' confrontation with the neighbouring English 'outsider' and provides first-hand descriptions of the village football club. The findings in Pentrediwaith, in many ways, have pre-empted the current agenda for a contemporary case study in a small frontier town in Wales. The people of 'Pentre' felt that their village was isolated, geographically and economically and ought to be united. Yet, this isolation was in most cases illusory, as it was part of a larger whole – Welsh society. The Welsh language also served as a powerful weapon against encroachment from outsiders as well as a symbol of Welsh national identity. Sport played an important role in the lives of residents with football bringing the village into contact with other villages. Football represented a symbol of village unity, cohesion and a powerful local identity, 'the honour of the village and its place in the outside world are at stake in each game and in the day-to-day conduct of the club'.[214] Proximity, family, kinship, religious affiliation and Welshness were all ties which united inhabitants with each other. Pentrediwaith, despite its position in both England and Wales, remained geographically isolated but united. To conclude, Frankenberg made three powerful observations about football in the Welsh Marches. Firstly, divisions are often resolved or are muted when a border community feels itself threatened from outside or by outsiders. Secondly, neighbouring communities, or groups along the border, who are most like each other are also those most inclined to exaggerate and to venerate their differences from each other. Finally, Frankenberg highlighted the significance of the 'stranger' or the 'outsider' meant that 'outsiderhood' could be considered relative rather than absolute; and that the individual who was outsider to one group might also be core to another.

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[213] Ronald Frankenberg, *Village on the Border: A Social Study of Religion, Politics and Football in a North Wales Community* (London: Cohen & West, 1957).
[214] Frankenberg, *Village on the Border*, p. 102.

In their investigation into Welsh national identity and Cardiff City Football Club, Rookwood and Rogers assert that the 'Cardiff case' is relative to FC Barcelona (Spain) and Celtic (Scotland) because; it is claimed, both express identities outside of the league in which they compete.[215] One has to point out, however, that there are significant complexities at play here. Firstly, the potential link between Cardiff City and the Welsh language is rather weak. As the Office for National Statistics data reveals, in 2011, only 19% of people in Wales and 11.1% people in Cardiff stated that they could speak the language. In comparison, Catalan is the national language of Catalonia, spoken in Barcelona by an estimated 75% people daily. It is also a language with a history of more than a thousand years, spoken by nearly 10 million people in Europe. Unlike Ninian Park within a Welsh context, FC Barcelona's Camp Nou came to represent one of the few places that the people of Catalonia could openly speak Catalan (following Franco's hostility towards FC Barcelona) as a focal point for Catalan identity, which led to the Catalan language being banned**.** A second consideration is that the Irish ethnicity of Glasgow Celtic supporters is manifestly different to that of followers of Cardiff City. As Joseph M. Bradley reveals, the act of supporting Celtic is involved in the 'reproduction, maintenance, and expression of Irishness…and [often] contested subject of sectarianism in Scottish society'.[216] What is clear is that Berwick Rangers, Hay St. Mary's and TNS are inherently different in their nature to Cardiff City, and have the potential to form a set of comparative case studies which are even more coherent than that linking Cardiff City, Celtic and FC Barcelona. We cannot assume that Hay St. Mary's express 'Welshness' in an English league in the same way as Cardiff City. Nor can we make the potentially erroneous assumption that The New Saints of Oswestry Town FC and Berwick Rangers FC are the embodiment of 'Englishness' in a Welsh or Scottish system.

Uncharacteristic of Welsh football teams playing in the English league system, Hay St Mary's Football Club, a team based in the border market town of Hay-on-Wye, Powys, currently field sides on both sides of the border, in the Herefordshire Premier League (England) and Mid Wales League South (Wales). Using the specific example of the border separating Wales and England, it is important to consider whether or not inhabitants of the peripheral edges of the

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[215] Rogers and Rookwood, 'Cardiff City Football Club', p. 59..

[216] Joseph M. Bradley, 'Celtic Football Club, Irish Ethnicity, and Scottish Society', in *New Hibernia Review*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Spring 2008), pp. 96-110 (p. 97).

nation in border towns such as Hay are supportive towards the Welsh National Assembly, but xenophobic towards the Welsh language. The uniqueness of Hay is highlighted by the Welsh Football Association's attempts to stop teams close to the border playing in Herefordshire because of the actions of Hay St. Mary's. Whilst the Welsh FA allows Swansea City to play in the Premier League, Cardiff City in the Championship, Newport County in League Two, Wrexham in the National League, Merthyr Town in Southern Football League Premier Division and Colwyn Bay in the National League North, it appears that Hay St. Mary's decision to field a team across the 'national' border in England highlighted that 'something needed to be done'.[217]

Fig. 3 – A map of The New Saints FC, Hay St. Mary's FC and the six Welsh 'exiles' playing in England: Cardiff City FC, Swansea City FC, Newport County AFC, Merthyr Town FC, Wrexham FC and Colwyn Bay FC. (Source: Author)



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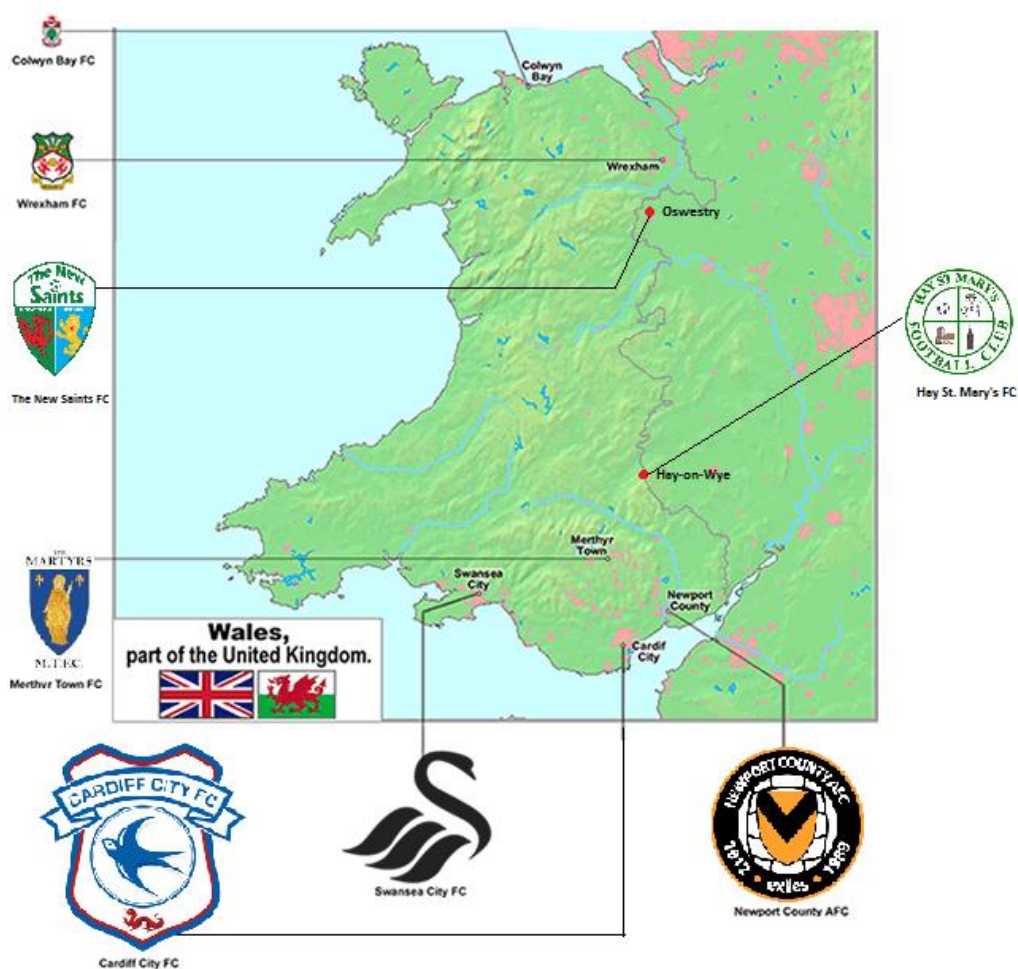
[217] Hereford United Bulls News <http://bullsnews.blogspot.com/2010/12/welsh-sting-hay-for-playing-in.html> [Accessed 3 May 2015].

Famously described by Bill Clinton as 'the Woodstock of the mind', Hay hosts the annual Hay Festival, the World's greatest literary gathering. The question of whether Hay, which prides itself on its 'national and international status', claims a single 'essentially English' national identity; and more localised identity constructs, necessitates further research.[218] Local support of a team is based not just on its sporting achievements, deeply impressive though they might be, but on what it represents, for Berwick Rangers Football Club is seen as the team of the borders area, a symbol of its unique culture, hence the motto 'working for club and community'. What can studying Berwick Rangers, The New Saints of Oswestry Town and Hay St. Mary's reveal about local and national identity across the Celtic borders? Scholars make many arguments concerning the ways in which football is connected to nationalism, ethnicity and national identity. As this thesis will show, it can be extremely illuminating. The thesis will explore the important role of football, in the social construction of supporters' identities. In border towns, sport is deeply implicated in the social construction of national identities. As Hunter Shobe notes, 'more than being merely reflective of nationalism or place-based identities, football and stadiums are themselves drawn upon to construct ideas about place and nation'.[219]

'Nation', social historian Stefan Berger argues, constitutes narration.[220] Stories about national belonging, which may change over time and which are dependent on place, will always be contested. This is undoubtedly the case in Oswestry, Hay-on-Wye and Berwick-upon-Tweed. Though not contested lands which are likely to become subject of serious dispute, they do provide an opportunity to examine the role in which borderlands in the 'Celtic fringe' play in making and sustaining national identities. Most research focuses on conflict prone borderlands (e.g. Alsace-Lorraine), but little is known about the impact of overlapping national histories on the spatial construction of national narratives and identity in boundaries between our 'stateless' nations. The lack of a direct crucible conflict is important in this context because national identity can be taken for granted. Thus the Anglo/Welsh/Scots borders can be considered 'banal'.

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[218] *The Guardian*, 25 May 2009 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/may/25/hay-festival-wales> [Accessed 1 August 2015].

[219] Hunter Shobe, 'Place, Identity and Football: Catalonia, Catalanisme and Football Club Barcelona, 1899-1975', *National Identities*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (September 2008), pp. 329-43 (p. 329).

[220] Stefan Berger, 'Narrating the Nation: Historiography and Other Genres', in *Narrating the Nation: Representations in History, Media and the Arts*, ed. Stefan Berger, Linas Eriksonas and Andrew Mycock (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2011), pp. 1-18 (p. 1).

*Banal Nationalism* by Michael Billig refers to the ordinary everyday instances in which people build an 'imagined' sense of solidarity and subconsciously interact with 'the nation'.[221] Examples of banal nationalism include the use of flags in everyday contexts, sporting events, the use of implied togetherness in the national press and the use of terms such as *our* team. Many of these symbols are most effective because of their constant repetition, and almost subliminal nature. Mike Cronin characterises such experiences in galvanizing a nation of spectators and participants as an 'evanescent' even banal form of nationalism – a way for an 'imagined community' to momentarily lose itself in sport (similar to what Grant Jarvie termed '90 minute Patriots' and Martin Johnes 'Eighty minute Patriots' in a paper on Welsh sport).[222] Given that Billig somewhat unwittingly reinforces the separation of the banal and hot processes that reproduce modern nationalism, we should begin to question and move beyond notions of banal and hotter forms of nationalism and focus on the everyday contexts within which nationalism is reproduced. According to Dafydd Evans, habitual acts of identifying, categorising, behaving and responding, national terms are often brought about by 'local' or taken-for-granted contexts. Referring to the local road signs, for example, can offer insights on 'local' matters.[223] In this sense, for many people in Hay (Powys) and Oswestry (Shropshire) the 'nation' can penetrate the everyday locale to the point where it is barely noticed, 'I was in Northern Ireland yesterday and I realised I found it strange that there weren't bilingual signs and things like that…I'm kind of immune to the bilingual signage I think…I guess [that] subconsciously I am kind of Welsh'.[224]

It is anticipated that whilst the national significance of such symbols might barely register with residents as they go about their daily activities, it will be to such latent aspects of 'Welshness' that respondents will choose to refer in accounting for a national feeling. This is likely to surface occasionally as overt instances of national identification and categorization, and crucially, it will be locally situated. As Carmen Llamas points out, Berwick-upon-Tweed's status in relation to Scotland is still ambiguous in many respects and 'the symbols of 'banal

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[221] Billig, *Banal Nationalism.*

[222] Mike Cronin, *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic Games, Soccer and Irish Identity since 1884* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999); Martin Johnes, 'Eighty minute patriots? National identity and sport in modern Wales', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 17, Issue 4 (2000), pp. 93-110; Grant Jarvie and Graham Walker (eds.), *Scottish Sport in the Making of the Nation: Ninety Minute Patriots?* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1994).

[223] Dafydd Evans, '"How far across the border do you have to be, to be, considered Welsh?" – National identification at a regional level', *Contemporary Wales*, Vol. 20, No 1 (October 2007), pp. 124-43.

[224] Evans, 'How far across the border', p. 128.

nationalism' in the town which can be seen as flagging nationhood and which appear 'unnoticed' on public buildings – the depiction of the crossing of the English flag (St. George's Cross) and the Scottish flag (the Saltire) – can be seen as sending somewhat mixed messages'.[225] It seems clear from Kiely et al.'s sociological study of Berwick and two neighbouring communities (Eyemouth, Scotland, nine miles to the north and Alnwick, England, thirty miles to the south) that a focus on the 'micro' is crucial in understanding national identity, as for many borderers national identity is not fixed, but is rather relational and emergent in context.[226] Peoples' feelings of national identity often start as antipathy towards others and this is heightened in borderlands. The manifestation of Welsh and Scottish antipathy towards the English is likely to be reflected in residents being labelled in certain 'national' terms by their contemporaries across the border. For some, banal aspects of their everyday life could undermine or render a sense of national belonging problematic. In particular, Oswestry's integration with the Midlands or Hay's with the West Country rather than the Welsh Marches may be reported as blurring the distinction between national territories thus confounding peoples' understanding of their place in a national context.

While it is likely residents of Oswestry, Shropshire, will seldom be a self-avowed 'Midlander', or indeed any other regional label, a dominant feature relating to this distinction in a national context may be the recurring theme of anglicization.[227] For some respondents 'anglicization' may be viewed in a positive light, for others it may be more problematic. In the case of Oswestry this is likely to be more directly associated with concerns by local residents relating to commuter migration over lack of integration on the part of immigrants and a failure to engage in Welsh society. An affinity to English-based football teams (for example, Liverpool Football Club) or economic and infrastructural integration with parts of the English Midlands and North West England could form the basis for describing Oswestry as 'anglicized'. For other respondents, 'anglicization' may take on a clear linguistic meaning. Accent may also act as a prominent regional marker, and consequently, will usually be accompanied by an allusion to differences in 'Welshness'. In general, however, people of both Welsh and English-speaking origin and identification may have both similar and varying ideas about the concept and, further, allude to it both positively and negatively within a relatively short space of time. Either way, the

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[225] Llamas, 'Convergence and Divergence across a National Border', p. 230.
[226] Kiely and others, 'Debatable Land: National and Local Identity in a Border Town'.
[227] *BBC Radio 4* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/routesofenglish/storysofar/programme3_5.shtml> [Accessed 1 August 2015].

concept of 'anglicization' appears in all likelihood to be a fundamental characteristic, a symbol, of the Welsh Marches region, and serve as the starting point for any discussion of 'nationality'.

The perception of the Welsh Marches, as being distinct or 'less' Welsh may not impinge, however, upon respondents' own sense of nationality. In fact, it is likely that many respondents will easily defend their national identity as 'Welsh'. Indeed, raising and probing the issue directly may often be met with some bemusement – the answer surely being self-evident, 'my mother and my father are Welsh. I was born in Wales. I am Welsh'. It is important to emphasise however, that where respondents identify themselves as Welsh they will often be aware that their area, their location next to the border, could render their nationality rather ambiguous for others, from 'the west'. As such, respondents may maintain their claim to a Welsh identity by highlighting the Welsh characteristics of the area. Others may stress the personal details of birth, upbringing and linguistic ability. Yet, despite many participants having a defined sense of nationhood and often being quite forthright in its articulation, some may at least, accommodate a view of themselves as 'inferior' and 'inward-looking' being on the margins of the national community. As might be expected, the 'place' and its inherently 'anglicized' character could render understandings of location in a Welsh national community as problematic. Nevertheless, respondents may also have clear conceptions of different regions in Wales, some of which are 'more' Welsh than others, and be well versed in negotiating and reasserting their 'Welshness'. Many respondents are likely to narrate an 'anglicized' identity for their region and consequently national identification will become locally inflected. For some participants, their geographical position on the margins of the national space may dictate their peripheral social position in the 'imagined community' of the nation.[228] For other participants, the 'place' may serve as an obstacle which has to be overcome in order to accomplish a Welsh identity. Either way, locality and region remain important factors when considering national identity in contemporary Wales.

The general approaches taken will be a combination of interdisciplinary and sociological perspectives on football participation and spectatorship as important forms and institutions of popular culture. The first section brings these ideas to bear on the identity politics of Wales and Scotland through a discussion of Welsh and Scottish national identity, nationalism and The New Saints, Berwick Rangers and Hay St. Mary's Football Club. The second section addresses two dimensions of sport culture. Firstly, it will consider the relation between, on the one hand, the

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[228] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, rev. edn.

'media sport' versions of football, looking at both press representations (Hereford Times, County Times, Berwickshire News, Berwick Advertiser, The Scotsman, The Oswestry and Border Counties Advertiser, Shropshire Star, BBC Wales, BBC Radio Shropshire and S4C's *Sgorio Cymru* coverage) and, on the other hand, collective identities at local and national levels. Material from across the 'Celtic' borders will be considered in this section. These relationships will be illustrated from contemporary sociological studies of Hay, Oswestry and Berwick and, in particular concern the civic community and local identities. Substantial accounts will be presented of community identification and the socio-historical development of club football in Hay, Oswestry and Berwick in relation to changing local and national identities. This thesis will acknowledge, in one way or another, that collective identities, even in a certain sense our own personal identities, are complex and 'socially constructed' in various ways. Furthermore, it will acknowledge that sport, culture and society have played and continue to play a significant part in the construction and mediation of different dimensions of identity as well as in their expression.

*Conclusion*

From nation-building and political culture to ethnic exclusion and cultural practice, borderlands provide a unique and close-up view into the emergence and continual reproduction of national identification. It is significant that there are no substantial studies that combine a full comparative sociological approach to football and national identity in Wales and Scotland. Recent works in sports history naturally focus on questions of methodology and issues of identity – class, gender, national or regional. Those who try to examine questions of national identity and more general issues in social, cultural and political history are hampered by the absence of historical research on recent Welsh history. Accounts of sport in Wales, generally by historians, have dealt almost uniquely with the world since 1800 or even 1945.[229] History and sociology, the world before 1979 and the world since Tony Blair, have become the preserve of separate groups. Although the research reviewed here provides a rich account of nationalism, much more work must still be done to advance our understanding of this complex topic in the post devolution era. Firstly, historical research is overrepresented in this field and most of it focuses on the 19th and 20th centuries. More research on contemporary nationalism and national identity is sorely

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[229] Two examples are Adrian Smith and Dilwyn Porter (eds.) *Sport and National Identity in the Post-War World* (London: Routledge, 2004) and Martin Johnes, *A History of Sport in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005).

needed. Secondly, a more thorough investigation of the links between football and national attachment in Wales, England and Scotland is necessary. Thus, the relationship between nationalism, patriotism, and sport in the 'Celtic' nations deserves our attention. Finally, national identification cannot be understood without full reference to other levels of group attachment.

The New Saints FC are the third most popular Welsh club on Twitter and are only surpassed by Swansea City who compete in the English Premier League and Cardiff City who compete in England's Championship. TNS's 38,000 social media followers means that Oswestry-based TNS exceed that of North Wales giants AFC Wrexham (relegated to the English National Conference in 2008), who have amassed 28,000 followers and English League Two side Newport County who also have 28,000. In a WPL context, TNS' rivals Rhyl boast 12,000 followers, whereas the last side to wrestle the title from Oswestry, Bangor City, only have 8,000.[230] In his article 'Imagining Twitter as an Imagined Community', Anatoliy Gruzd has argued that, 'the notion of "community" has often been caught between concrete social relationships and imagined sets of people perceived to be similar… Twitter can form the basis of interlinked personal communities—and even of a sense of community'.[231] Theories of nationalism conventionally began with the notion that technologies such as print capitalism (Anderson) afford a collective sense of belonging. In Britain today, social media has the power to reshape 'imagined communities' and it also possesses the potential to reconstitute the 'nation'.

These composite identities cannot be considered a uniquely football phenomenon. Cricket as a global team sport with a recognised and established 20Twenty and 50 over World Cup is arguably the most significant sporting arena whereby the 'imagined community' of England and Wales can become 'real'. This temporary union of two politically distinct nations through sport provides an interesting context for the research of national identity in Britain. For Welsh cricketers, representing Glamorgan is often viewed as representing Wales whereas representing the England cricket team is perceived as representing Britain in the same way that a

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[230] See the official Twitter pages for 'Swansea City AFC', 'Cardiff City FC', 'The New Saints FC', 'Wrexham AFC', 'Newport County AFC', 'Rhyl Football Club' and 'Bangor City FC'. Web pages for each of the clubs can be found in the bibliography.

[231] Anatoliy Gruzd, 'Imagining Twitter as an Imagined Community', *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 55, No. 10 (October 2011), pp. 1294-1318.

Welsh rugby international can be selected to play for the British and Irish Lions.[232] How does living on the border between England and Wales affect a cricket supporters' sense of identity?

Certainly, football represents one of the most striking symbols of national identity in contemporary society. However, drawing on his ethnographic research Tom Gibbons has challenged the view that the use of the St. George's flag by football fans is evidence of a rise in an English national identity. Gibbons points out that, 'the use of the St. George cross masks a more complex, multi-layered process of national identity construction'.[233] The fragmented and complicated nature of identities within the UK is highlighted in Scotland where, 'sectarianism is directly related to national identity'.[234] Given that the national boundary is intrinsic in peoples' identity and is a basis of their culture we need to recognise the power of boundary consciousness in the 'Celtic fringe', in order to understand the allure to inhabitants of ethnicity, nationhood or any other collective identity. As there are infinite ways of 'imagining communities', then one should expect the boundaries between 'nations' to follow the 'boundaries' of subjective identity.

What is the point of spoiling the match by concentrating upon the extent to which a club in the England-Wales or England-Scotland borderlands can be considered as a means to promote national identity, when there is so much else to notice, and so much more to object to? The short answer is that by noticing cultural differences in a border culture, we are noticing something about ourselves. We are noticing the multi-layers of our identity, embedded in routines of social life. Contemporary research should explore variation in the relative importance and meaning of local, regional, and national identification across geographical space. Despite important steps in that direction, approaches must be elaborated considerably if we are to understand the mechanisms through which modern nationalism is constructed, diffused, and transformed.[235]

Nationalism and football are often intertwined; stadia provide a venue where official and vernacular (borderland) cultures meet and sometimes clash. All of these dimensions are crucial for a complete understanding of the ways in which contemporary border societies construe their

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[232] *The Telegraph*, 14 September 2004 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/cricket/2386685/Englands-Welshmen-call-for-name-change.html>[Accessed 23 March 2016].

[233] Gibbons, *English National Identity and Football Fan Culture*, Back cover.

[234] Anthony May, 'Anti-Sectarian' Act? Examining the Importance of National Identity to the 'Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act', in *Sociological Research Online*, 20 (2), 14 <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/20/2/14.html> [Accessed 29 May 2015].

[235] For a survey of the relationship between sport and national identities in Europe, specifically Ireland and Scotland, see Alan Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization: European and North American Perspectives* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001).

relationship to their nation and the mechanisms by which this relationship is both reproduced and transformed over time. The need for understanding the particularities of these individual cases is obvious. However, the utility of such an understanding for scholars of nationalism as a general phenomenon may require some additional explanation. Most attention in this broad interdisciplinary field focuses on sub-national groups that seek national sovereignty. The most important reason for the broader relevance of 'Celtic' nationalism, however, is also the simplest: as part of a well-established nation-state that places a high importance on civic nationalist ideology, the borders of Scotland, England and Wales represent the perfect case for studying nationalism in its unremarkable, hot, banal and everyday form – the kind of nationalism, which is central to the continued reproduction of national attachment in modern democratic societies.

# Chapter 3 - Methodology

*Introduction*

In order to investigate empirically the extent to which football fandom plays a significant role in identity making and unmaking in the England-Wales and England-Scotland borderlands, attitudinal data needed to be elicited on how supporters' identities are defined and delimited, in particular the local, regional and national identities they claimed. Thus, this chapter outlines the chosen methodology for studying identity in a diverse set of social contexts in Oswestry, Hay and Berwick. Gareth Morgan and Linda Smircich argue that the actual suitability of a research method derives from the nature of the social phenomena to be explored.[236] Having surveyed the scholarly literature, nearly all studies of identity included some sort of case study. The case study method is preferable when examining contemporary events and is particularly appropriate as a method when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed. Moreover, the case study method allows the researcher to select methods of data collection and analysis such as qualitative techniques and personal field notes. As such, it is hoped that it will serve as a useful model on the analysis and methodology of identity scholarship for a wide range of interested researchers.

*Case study method*

Robert K. Yin defines the case study method as an empirical inquiry that, 'investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used'.[237] This is also well formulated and supported by Siegfried Lamnek, 'the case study is a research approach, situated between concrete data taking techniques and methodological paradigms'.[238] According to Yin, 'the case study's unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence – documents, artefacts, interviews and observations'.[239] Social scientists have commonly made extensive use of this qualitative evaluative method, 'to examine contemporary

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[236] Gareth Morgan and Linda Smircich, 'The Case for Qualitative Research', *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (1980), pp. 491-500.
[237] Yin, *Case Study Research*, p. 23.
[238] Siegfried Lamnek, *Qualitative Sozialforschung: Lehrbuch* (Basel: Beltz Verlagsgruppe, 2005).
[239] Yin, *Case Study Research*, p. 20.

real-life situations and provide the basis for the application of ideas and extension of methods'.[240]

Case studies have been criticised by some as having insufficient precision, objectivity, and rigour.[241] However, there are some strengths of case study research. For example, case studies emphasise detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships. Another advantage is that the case study method excels at bringing the researcher to an understanding of a complex issue or object and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research. Critics of case study research such as Peter Evans largely concur with the assessment of Alexander George and Andrew Bennett and argue that case-studies take an 'eclectic messy centre' approach to social science methodology.[242] Evans explains that the study of particular cases can offer no grounds for establishing reliability or generality of findings because 'neither theories nor cases are sacrosanct' and 'cases are always too complicated to vindicate a single theory'.[243] Others feel that the intense exposure to study of the case, biases the findings. Jared Diamond, for example, held this view. He observed that case study research suffers from what he called a 'crippling drawback' because it does not apply 'scientific methods', by which Diamond understood methods useful for 'curbing one's tendencies to stamp one's pre-existing interpretations on data as they accumulate'.[244] However, as Bent Flyvbjerg argues, 'the case study contains no greater bias toward verification of the researcher's preconceived notions than other methods of inquiry'.[245] The third misunderstanding about case study research is that case studies are most useful for generating hypotheses in the first steps of a total research process, whereas hypothesis testing and theory building are best carried out by other methods later in the process. Harry Eckstein for example, goes so far as to argue that case studies are better for testing hypotheses than for producing them. Case studies, Eckstein noted, 'are valuable at all stages of the theory-

[240] Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: a multi methods approach to projects for Doctor of Ministry Thesis* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011), p. 141

[241] Daphne Johnson (ed.), *Research Methods in Educational Management* (Harlow: Longman, 1994).

[242] See Peter Evans, 'The Role of Theory in Comparative Politics: A Symposium', *World Politics,* Vol. 48, No. 1 (1995), pp. 1-49 (p. 4); Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2005), p. 5.

[243] Peter Evans, p. 4.

[244] Jared Diamond, 'The roots of radicalism', *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. 43, No. 18 (November 1996), pp. 4-6.

[245] Bent Flyvbjerg, 'Five Misunderstandings about Case-Study Research', *Qualitative* Inquiry, Vol. 12, No. 2 (April 2006), pp. 219-245 (p. 237).

building process, but most valuable at that stage of theory-building where least value is generally attached to them: the stage at which candidate theories are tested'.[246] In spite of this criticism, the case study method is useful for both generating and testing of hypotheses and continues to be used extensively in carefully planned and crafted studies of real-life situations, issues, and problems. This case study research has two main objectives: to first look at how football supporters living on the national border construct, manage and make sense of their identities, both national and local, and second, to examine what the border means to these people in sporting, cultural, political, economic and symbolic terms.

*Undertaking case study research*

Many well-known case study researchers such as Robert E. Stake, Helen Simons, and R. K. Yin have written about the case study method and suggested techniques for organising and conducting the research successfully. Yin has identified that each case must be carefully selected so that it either: (a) predicts similar results or (b) produces contrary results but for predictable reasons. Stake maintains that it may be useful to select cases which are typical or representative of other cases. Yet, when no other cases are available for replication, the researcher is limited to single-case designs.[247] Collective cases strengthen the results by replicating the pattern-matching, thus increasing confidence in the robustness of the theory. Yin compares the use of the replication strategy to conducting a number of separate experiments on related topics.[248] He stresses that the careful selection of cases will either replicate (*a literal replication*) or produce contrasting findings (*a theoretical replication*) in line with the prevailing theory. According to this model, if all or most of the cases provide similar results, there can be substantial support for the development of a preliminary theory that describes the phenomena.[249] In the multiple-case studies design, Yin suggests six to ten cases, if the results turn out as predicted, are sufficient to 'provide compelling support for the initial set of propositions'.[250] On the other hand, Yin argues that since the multiple-case studies approach does not rely on the type of

[246] Harry Eckstein, 'Case study and theory in political science', in *Handbook of Political Science*, ed. Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby (Reading, Mass.; London: Addison-Wesley, 1975), pp. 79-138 (p. 80).
[247] Robert E. Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research* (Thousand Oaks, Calif; London: Sage, 1995), p. 4.
[248] Yin, *Case Study Research.*
[249] Kathleen M. Eisenhardt, 'Building Theories from Case Study Research', *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (October, 1989), pp. 532-550.
[250] Yin, *Case Study Research*, p. 46.

representative sampling logic used in survey research 'the typical criteria regarding sample size are irrelevant'.[251] Instead, sample size is determined by the number of cases required to reach saturation, that is, data collection until no significant new findings are revealed. Thus, the sample participants should be selected explicitly to encompass instances in which the phenomena under study are likely to be found. This approach to sample design is indeed consistent with the strategy of homogeneous sampling, in which the desired outcome is the description of some particular subgroup in depth.

Yin lists several examples along with the appropriate research design in each case. He also makes suggestions for a general approach to designing case studies, and recommendations for *exploratory*, *explanatory*, and *descriptive* case studies. Each of these three approaches can be single or multiple-case studies, where multiple-case studies are replicatory, and not sampled cases.

*Reliability and validity*

As in all research, consideration must be given to construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability. First, to avoid the effects of investigator bias, steps must be taken to collect data from a variety of sources and, if possible, by researchers with different perspectives. However, when these steps are not possible, the researcher should rely on 'practicing reflexivity', which Egon G. Guba describes as revealing the researcher's own assumptions to his audience.[252] This can be done by documenting personal reactions and beliefs about the data. Second, the transferability of a research study addresses the question of whether the findings are 'context-relevant' or subject to non-comparability because of situational uniqueness.[253] To provide a context for evaluating the transferability of the findings, the researcher should use theoretical and purposive sampling and develop a 'thick description' of the data that can be reviewed by others. 'Thick description', defined as a rich and extensive set of details concerning methodology and context provided in a research report, is described as a way of achieving a type of external validity.[254] Thirdly, the aim of confirming the dependability of the

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[251] Yin, *Case Study Research*, p. 50.
[252] Egon G. Guba, 'Criteria for Assessing the Trustworthiness of Naturalistic Inquiries', *Educational Communication and Technology Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1981), pp. 75-91 (p. 87).
[253] Guba, 'Criteria for Assessing the Trustworthiness of Naturalistic Inquiries', p. 86.
[254] Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry*, 6th edn (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1985).

data to ensure the stability of the findings is a challenging one for researchers; overlapping methods of data collection and/or stepwise replication are the recommended approaches.[255] Nevertheless, as a result of practical limitations, many researchers must rely on establishing a good 'audit trail' of project documentation that can be followed by others. Finally, the credibility of any qualitative research study speaks to the issue of whether the findings are plausible; this in turn rests on the steps taken during the whole process of data collection and analysis. One of the key factors to ensure credibility is the completeness of the data collection, the use of multiple analytical perspectives, and member checks to confirm the accuracy of the conclusions drawn.[256] Thus, case study proposes six steps that should be used: determine and define the research questions; select the cases and determine data gathering and analysis techniques; prepare to collect the data; collect data in the field; evaluate and analyse the data; and prepare the report.

*Step 1 – Determine and define the research questions*

The first step in case study research is to determine and define the questions that are most significant for a topic, gain some precision in formulating these questions, and to establish a firm research focus to which the researcher can refer over the course of study of a complex social phenomena or object. According to Yin, the case study approach is 'most likely to be appropriate when a 'how' or 'why' question is being asked about a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator has little or no control'.[257] Thus, the initial task is to clarify precisely the nature of the research questions in this regard. The researcher establishes the focus of the study by forming questions about the situation or problem to be studied and determining a purpose for the study. The research 'object' in this case study is often a person, or a group of people. Each 'object' is likely to be complexly connected to political, social, historical, and personal issues, providing wide ranging possibilities for questions and adding complexity to the case study. The researcher investigates the 'object' of the case study in-depth using a variety of data gathering methods to produce evidence that leads to understanding of the case and answers the study's questions.

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[255] Guba, 'Criteria for Assessing the Trustworthiness of Naturalistic Inquiries', pp. 75-91.
[256] Yin, *Case Study Research.*
[257] Yin, *Case Study Research*, p. 20.

*Step 2 – Select the cases and determine data gathering and analysis techniques*

During the design phase of case study research, the researcher must determine what approaches to use in selecting single or multiple (comparative) real-life contemporary cases to examine in-depth and which instruments and data gathering approaches to use. Yin insists that, when using multiple cases, 'every case should serve a specific purpose within the overall inquiry'.[258] Each case's conclusion can then be used as information contributing to the whole study, but each case remains a single case. The researcher must determine whether to study cases which are unique in some way or cases which are considered typical and may also select cases to represent a variety of geographical regions, a variety of size parameters, or other parameters.

*Step 3 – Prepare to collect the data*

The preparations for data collation can be complex and difficult and if they are not handled well, the entire case study may be jeopardized.[259] Thus, systematic organisation of data is imperative to prevent the researcher from becoming overwhelmed by the amount of data, and to prevent the researcher from losing sight of the original research purpose and questions. Advance preparation for doing case study research includes the prior skills of the investigator, the training and preparation for the specific case study, the development of a case study protocol, and the conduct of a pilot case study. Yin argues that the protocol is an especially effective way of dealing with the overall problems of increasing the reliability of case studies. On the other hand, all of these steps can help to assure that multiple case studies are conducted with high quality and managed smoothly.

Exemplary case studies establish clear protocols and procedures in advance of investigator field work, and conduct a pilot study in advance of moving into the field in order to remove obvious barriers and problems. Investigators need to be able to ask good questions and to interpret the answers, and be good listeners who can hear exactly the words being used by those interviewed. Qualifications for investigators also include being adaptive and flexible, and having a firm grasp of the issues being studied. Good investigators should also be unbiased by preconceived notions, including those derived from theory. Thus, a person should be sensitive

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[258] Yin, *Case Study Research*, p. 23.
[259] Yin, *Case Study Research*, p. 55.

and responsive to contradictory evidence, and be able to review documents looking for facts, but also read between the lines and pursue collaborative evidence elsewhere when that seems appropriate. Accordingly, investigators need to: 1) be flexible in real-life situations and not feel intimidated by unforeseen change, missed appointments, or lack of office space and to understand the purpose of the study and grasp the issues and; 2) must be open to contrary findings. Furthermore, they must be aware that they are going into the world of real humans who may be threatened or unsure of what the case study will bring. The final advanced preparation step is to select and conduct a pilot test using each data gathering method so that problematic areas can be uncovered and corrected. Researchers need to anticipate problems, identify key people, prepare introductory letters, establish confidentiality rules, and seek opportunities to re-visit and revise the research design in order to address and add to the original research questions.

## *Step 4 – Collect data in the field*

A major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use multiple sources of evidence which 'far exceeds that in other research strategies, such as experiments, surveys or histories'.[260] The use of multiple sources of data in case studies necessitates each investigator to carry out the full variety of data collection techniques and also organize and document multiple sources of evidence comprehensively and systematically, in formats that can be referenced and sorted so that converging lines of inquiry and patterns can be uncovered. One way of organizing and documenting the data collected for case studies consists of two separate collections: the data or evidentiary base, and the report of the investigator, whether in an article, report, or book form.

For case studies, field notes are likely to be the most common component of a database. Regardless of their form or content, case study notes record feelings and intuitive hunches, pose questions, and document the work in progress. They also record testimonies, stories, and illustrations which can be used in later reports. The notes may warn of impending bias because of the detailed exposure of the supporter to special attention, or give an early signal that a pattern is emerging. Most commonly, the notes assist in determining whether or not the inquiry needs to be reformulated or redefined based on what is being observed. Field notes can be divided into major subjects, but the only essential characteristics of the notes are that they be organised, categorised, complete, and thus evident to an outside party and also available for later access.

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[260] Yin, *Case Study Research*, p. 90.

Maintaining a chain of evidence is mandatory to increase the reliability of the information in the case study. The principle is to allow the researcher to enter some data into a database and physically store other data. As with historical evidence, the investigator will need to document, classify, and cross-reference methodological procedures and to the resulting evidence so that it can be recalled for sorting and examination during the time of the case study research.

*Step 5 – Evaluate and analyse the data*

The analysis of case study evidence is arguably one of the least developed and most difficult aspects of doing case studies. Case study researchers such as Robert K. Yin outline two general strategies: relying on theoretical propositions and developing a case description. In the case of the latter, a general analytic strategy is to develop a descriptive framework for organising the case study. Although this strategy is less desirable than the use of theoretical propositions, it nevertheless, serves as an alternative when theoretical propositions are absent. On the other hand, the first and most preferred strategy is to follow the theoretical propositions that led to the case study. The researcher will need to examine raw data using many interpretations in order to find linkages between the research object and the outcomes, which in turn reflects a set of research questions, reviews of the literature, and new insights. Throughout the process of evaluation and analysis, the investigator will need to remain open to new insights and opportunities. The case study method, with its use of multiple data collection methods and analysis techniques, provides researchers with opportunities to triangulate data in order to strengthen findings and conclusions.

*Step 6 – Composing the report*

The reporting phase of a case study is one of the most difficult to carry out and can take written or oral forms. Yin identified five general characteristics of an exemplary case study as: the case study must be: significant, complete, consider alternative perspectives, display sufficient evidence and be composed in an engaging manner.[261] An exemplary case study will transform a complex issue into one that can be easily understood, allowing the reader to question and examine the study and reach their own independent judgement. The report should be able to depict a multifaceted problem in a way that conveys an indirect experience to the reader. In fact,

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[261] Yin, *Case Study Research*, pp. 140-45.

exemplary case study research will anticipate 'obvious' alternatives, even promoting positions as forcefully as possible, and will show empirically the basis upon which such alternatives can be rejected. Under such circumstances, the investigator will need to show through either logical argument or the presentation of evidence that as the analytic periphery is reached; the information is of decreasing relevance to the case study. Complete cases should demonstrate convincingly that comprehensive effort has been used by the researcher in collecting and documenting the evidence in order to gain the reader's confidence, clearly communicating the boundaries of each individual case, and giving special attention to any conflicting propositions.

The outline of the report will include stating the problem, listing the research questions, describing the methods and any potential flaws, explaining the data gathering and analysis techniques used and concluding with the answers to the questions and suggestions for further research. Key features will include a re-telling of specific 'narrative' related to the successes or disappointments experienced by the football fans that were conveyed during data collection and answers or comments illuminating issues directly related to the research questions. Each issue will be developed using quotations or other details from the data collected, and points out the triangulation of data where applicable. Moreover, the report includes confirming and conflicting findings from the literature review and its conclusion makes assertions and suggestions for further research. This will enable other researchers to apply the same techniques to explorations of national identities in borderlands to determine whether similar findings are also identifiable.

*Applying the case study method to football clubs in 'Celtic' border communities*

*Introduction*

This collective study design capitalises on the natural experimental features of the setting by comparing the local and national identities of supporters of three border clubs (Hay St. Mary's, Berwick Rangers and The New Saints) in naturally occurring, but different, contexts; in other terms its functions in the discourse of individuals. The various contextual similarities and differences thus constitute a naturally occurring control structure. The institution, the club and supporters' social culture could be regarded as consistent features across all three case studies. The problem faced by the border community in Oswestry is caused by the particular nature of national identities. The New Saints of Oswestry Town are in the unique position of being able to play in England albeit it through the Welsh league system and bringing European football to

Oswestry and Shropshire.[262] At the outset of the design phase, it was decided that multiple cases would be studied and the study boundaries would also be set to include: Berwick Rangers, one of only a handful of teams in the world to play in a national football league other than its own country's where both countries have their own fully professional competition,[263] and Hay St. Mary's, a team who the Football Association of Wales warned had set a dangerous precedent when they resigned from the Spar Mid Wales League, only to enter their first team across the border in the Herefordshire, while fielding their second team in Mid Wales League South.[264]

*Disadvantages of using questionnaires in an exploration of football fandom and national identity*

As Mark Kirby has noted that, 'questionnaires are most commonly used when there is a desire to gain information from a large sample of people'.[265] In a study of this nature, the sample for each club will be relatively small, typically between eight and twelve supporters. One of the key disadvantages of postal questionnaires is that very often people choose not to send them back, so the response rate can often be very low.[266] Stephen Moore asserts that surveys can become useless if the response rate is low especially if those who do reply are all in agreement. This, he asserts, is because, 'you do not know if the few who reply are typical in their views of all those who did not reply'.[267] Secondly, it is difficult to go into depth in a questionnaire, because the questions posed need to elicit answers that are expressed in very clear terms such as numbers, or a researcher's predetermined categorisations such as 'Berwicker' or 'Oswestrian'.[268] A further problem is that, 'respondents may not answer questions accurately since they may not know the answers, do not understand the questions, or would rather not answer the questions'.[269]

In his explorative study, Tom Gibbons used a questionnaire to gauge fans' opinions on the relationship between English national identity and their feelings towards the national football

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[262] *The Shropshire Star*, 3 August 2010 <http://www.shropshirestar.com/sport/2010/08/03/tns-have-done-shropshire-proud-says-council-leader/> [Accessed 5 August 2010].

[263] *The Journal*, 23 November 2010 <http://www.journallive.co.uk/north-east-news/todays-news/2010/11/23/berwick-rangers-to-play-celtic-in-scottish-cup-61634-27697961/> [Accessed 1 December 2010].

[264] Hereford United Bulls News <http://bullsnews.blogspot.com/2010/12/welsh-sting-hay-for-playing-in.html> [Accessed 3 May 2015].

[265] Mark Kirby and others, *Sociology in Perspective: AQA Edition* (Oxford: Heinemann, 2000), p. 9

[266] David De Vaus, *Surveys in Social Research*, 6th edn (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 126

[267] Stephen Moore, *Sociology Alive!* 3rd edn (Cheltenham: Nelson Thornes, 2001), p. 27.

[268] Moore, p. 27.

[269] Leonard Cargan, *Doing Social Research* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), pp. 95-96.

team.[270] His questionnaire, which contained a mixture of multiple-choice and open-response questions, was distributed to three different samples of supporters on three different occasions: the World Cup (2006), European Championships (2008) and when there was no significant international tournament (2009). Gibbons chose this design in order to determine whether success/involvement impacted on supporters' sense of national identity. He distributed questionnaires on supporters' websites and football forums online. The open-ended questions that Gibbons used were coded using a qualitative approach so that data from different samples could be compared. His inclusion criteria was that supporters had to be fans of an English club and/or the English national team and they had to have defined their national identity as either 'English' or 'British'. Those who defined themselves as Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or Irish, were, however, not included in the sample. Gibbons' rationale for choosing this methodology was that 'online questionnaires have been reported to not only be easier and faster to distribute, but to glean faster/better response/completion rates and to contain less missing responses than postal ones'.[271] However, while the nature of open ended questions facilitates detailed responses, it is significant that the same supporters were not used on the three separate occasions identified. This prevented Gibbons assessing fans' attitudes over time. A further consideration is that attitudes towards national identity can often present considerable regional variation. Thus, conclusions drawn by Gibbons were based upon weaving together a potentially fragmented narrative. Finally, it must be considered that the often complex and contradictory nature of identity in borderlands does not fit neatly into questionnaire categorisations. For example, the inclusion criteria would act as a potential barrier to a supporter who identifies strongly with the England national team and considers themselves English but is a fan of Welsh Champions TNS.

## _Advantages of using focus groups in an exploration of football fandom and national identity_

Given the purpose of this investigation, a focus group research design was chosen as the principal mode of data collection and analysis because of its utility to obtain and examine large amounts of rich, detailed information in a cost-effective manner.[272] The focus group proves essential in drawing upon respondents' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions in a

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[270] Tom Gibbons, 'English National Identity and the National Football Team: The View of Contemporary English fans', _Soccer and Society_, Vol. 12, No. 6 (2011), pp.865-879.

[271] Tom Gibbons, 'English National Identity', p. 867.

[272] David L. Morgan and Richard A. Krueger, 'When to use Focus Groups and why', in _Successful Focus Groups: Advancing the State of the Art_, ed. David L. Morgan (London: Sage, 1993), pp. 3-19.

way in which would not be feasible using other methods, for example observation, one-to-one interviewing, or questionnaire surveys. One of the strengths of focus groups is that group members possess the ability, 'to claim or reclaim the agenda of the discussion, and to refuse or resist narratives imposed upon them by researchers'.[273] This is especially important when the researcher is an 'outsider' who has the potential to inadvertently presume a participant's identity. As Tony Bennet et al. affirm, 'in a study such as this, recognition of these types of re-ordering is important because focus groups are at their most revealing in relation to groups whose cultural lives are not often articulated by other methods of enquiry'.[274] Given that focus groups 'demand no technical skills of the group members', the researcher 'can inductively figure out what the key issues, ideas, and concerns are from multiple participants at once'.[275] The qualitative nature of focus groups also gives the researcher depth and breadth to a subject such as borderland identities, which very little is known. Focus groups are a quick, cheap and flexible way to gather a relatively large amount of qualitative data from participants in their own words and develop deeper insights e.g. the nature of layered identities. In addition, participants are able to build on one another's responses and come up with ideas they might not have thought of in a one-to-one interview and can act as checks and balances on one another – identifying factual errors about a collective memory such as supporting their club or extreme views such as pro-sectarian attitudes and/or behaviour.[276] Finally, focus groups are useful for obtaining data from young adults such as fans with low levels of literacy and they also provide an opportunity to involve people in data analysis (e.g. 'Out of the issues we have talked about, which are most important to you?').[277]

*Recruitment ('Gatekeepers')*

Each case study began by contacting the organisation to be investigated to gain their cooperation, explain the purpose of the study, and assemble key contact information. This approach differs to that adopted by Fiona Gill's in her investigation of national identities in Berwick for obvious reasons. As a female rugby player, Gill joined Berwick Rugby Club's

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[273] Tony Bennett and others, *Culture, Class, Distinction* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 261.
[274] Bennett and others, p. 261.
[275] Michael Bloor and others, *Focus Groups in Social Research* (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2001), p. 13; Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavy, *The Practice of Qualitative Research*, 2nd edn (Thousand Oaks; London: SAGE Publications, 2011), p. 164.
[276] Anita Gibbs, 'Focus groups and group interviews', in *Research Methods and Methodologies in* Education, ed. James Arthur and others (Los Angeles: Sage, 2012), pp. 186-192 (pp. 187-189).
[277] Hesse-Biber and Leavy, p. 165.

women's team, and played with them for over two seasons. In Berwick, Gill used a combination of participant-observation and interviews with participants consisting of people she knew, or who were recommended to her by people known to her. As Gill's approach to participant recruitment was not possible in these particular case studies, a 'gatekeeper' was contacted. Gatekeepers are individuals that have the ability to gain the trust and cooperation of members in a community to participate in programs or studies.[278] The role of gatekeepers should not be underestimated as these individuals have the ability to gain the trust of potential respondents. The collaboration of gatekeepers can also boost the response rate. John Sugden's *Scum Airways* is an example of what Alan Tomlinson has termed, 'covert observation sanctioned by a gatekeeper'.[279] As Sugden notes, one of the 'perils, pains and pitfalls' of an inside investigation of touts, black marketeers and shady dealers, is that 'after the publication of *Scum Airways*, my main gatekeeper received death threats from small-time mobsters and hardened football hooligans who were infuriated because he let me into and chaperoned me through their world'.[280] Sugden points out that the, 'risk was compounded by the fact that the book was written for a popular market and not a relatively inaccessible academic thesis'.[281] In this study, each name which appears in the focus group transcripts (Appendix 3) was substituted with a pseudonym and these were also coded in the main body of the thesis, however. 'Gatekeepers' in Berwick, Hay and Oswestry included members such as secretaries who assisted in recruitment and identified potential participants by email, social media or in person, inviting them to the focus groups. This ensured that decisions taken were justifiable, 'sociologically and in terms of public interest'.[282]

*Focus group inclusion criteria*

Groups of match-going fans were recruited from Berwick Rangers Football Club, Hay St. Mary's Football Club and The New Saints of Oswestry Town Football Club. Supporters' focus group times were also scheduled, key contact data confirmed and requests made to fans of the

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[278] Stacey Sinclair and others, 'Recruiting African Americans for Health studies: Lessons from the Drew-RAND Centre on Health and Aging', *Journal of Mental Health and Aging,* Vol. 6, No. 1 (2000), pp. 39-51.

[279] Alan Tomlinson, *A Dictionary of Sports Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 124.

[280] John Sugden, 'Truth or Dare: Examining the Perils, Pains and Pitfalls of Investigative Methodologies in the Sociologies of Sport', in *Qualitative Research on Sport and Physical Culture,* ed. Michael Atkinson, 1st edn (Bingley: Emerald, 2012), pp. 233-251 (p. 248); See John Sugden, *Scum Airways: Inside Football's Underground Economy* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2002).

[281] Sugden, 'Truth or Dare', p. 248.

[282] Sugden, 'Truth or Dare', p. 248.

three clubs to respond to invitations which were forwarded later. The participants received no payment for their involvement in this research. Informed consent was obtained from each participant in the focus group and participants were assured that all the information collected in the focus groups would be kept confidential thereby ensuring anonymity to all club supporters.

Despite the part-time and amateur statuses of Berwick Rangers and Hay St. Mary's and the geographic isolation of the towns of Oswestry, Berwick and Hay in relation to their domestic competitions, the criteria for inclusion of supporters was that they should have attended no less than fifty per cent of home and away matches in each of the last five seasons. Similar criterion had been used previously in sociological research in examining the relationship between football and national identity in Wales. For example, Rogers and Rookwood's investigation of the Welsh identity associated with Cardiff City FC included participants who had attended at least fifty per cent of home and away matches during each of the past ten seasons.[283] There appears to be no general agreement about sample size in qualitative studies. Some reports describe single person studies. Other commentators suggest sample sizes ranging from 6 to 30.[284] However, larger groups have a tendency to fragment into smaller groups beyond a maximum group size of 12.

In their exploration of 'Cardiff City Football Club as a Vehicle to Promote Welsh national Identity', Rookwood and Rogers conducted semi-structured interviews and focus groups with fans and journalists connected with the club. In Berwick, Gill also conducted semi-structured interviews, yet these comprised of fourteen members of Berwick Rugby Club, seven female players and seven males. In addition, Gill held two semi-structured interviews with groups of three or four players, five of which were individual interviews, similar to those of the women. However, as Gill concedes, this, 'was fewer than originally planned' particularly with players from the women's team. She also acknowledged that while her team-mates were happy to talk to her they were, unhappy to be 'interviewed', which led to some participants to act as 'floating' members, turning up sporadically. Some participants, she points out were not from the Scottish Borders at all, and did not 'possess the ambiguous identity forming the focus of the research'.[285] Gill notes that problems arose in the recruitment of male participants. This, in part was because of the lack of social interaction between male and female members which led her to

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[283] Rogers and Rookwood, 'Cardiff City Football Club', p. 59.
[284] Richard A. Krueger, *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research* (Thousand Oaks; London: Sage, 1994).
[285] Quoted in Gill, 'Public and Private', pp. 86-87.

revisit a previous research project into football. This can be considered a weakness given: how far 'older' data conducted with male football players in Berwick is likely to differ in its nature to an investigation into rugby, a sport which has developed its own sub-culture which is explicitly masculine and potentially hostile to women. The result, Gill accepts, led to 'the creation of a gender imbalance in the two types of data collected'.[286] The issue of gender, it seems, proved a constant thorn throughout her fieldwork in Berwick. Men notably dominate her interview data, whereas most observation data was primarily with female players. The aim of Gill's observations was to examine a private (and unambiguous) performance which takes place between team members and between community members in establishing national identity whereas interview data would explore a public performance which takes place on the sports field, when Berwick Rugby Club, interacted with 'outsiders' 'problematic' identities. Gill concludes that, in spite of these potential methodological shortcomings, both types of data, 'tend to confirm the other implying that gender differences do not make a big impact in terms of national identity'.[287]

Based on these considerations focus groups in this study were conducted with a small number of people (8-12). It was felt that participants should be afforded an equal opportunity (regardless of gender) to supply varied and detailed accounts for the purpose of this study. The nature of qualitative research means that special consideration must be given to ethical issues. If qualitative research seeks to understand individual and subjective experience and/or has been adopted because of the nature of the research question, then the researcher must be highly vigilant to ensure that all ethical considerations are well thought through and thorough in approach.[288] The participants in Hay, Oswestry and Berwick were fully informed of the nature of the research and what would happen to the data and, assured that all identities, events, places and so on would be anonymised to ensure privacy and confidentiality. The focus groups lasted approximately one half to two hours, and were structured by a scripted set of instructions, conducted by myself, as the researcher. This procedure ensured that contextual questions were asked in each of the focus group sessions, under the same strict conditions. Participants were told that tape recordings and transcripts of the focus group interviews would be held securely and once the final research report was written, the tapes would be destroyed. All participants were

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[286] Gill, p. 87.
[287] Gill, p. 87.
[288] Peter Banister and others, *Qualitative Methods in Psychology: A Research Guide* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1994).

offered a copy of their transcript and the opportunity to go through what they said and withdraw or clarify any extracts they are not content to go forward. Each participant supporter was also given an informed consent form to sign and was fully debriefed at the end of the focus group.

*Use of a pilot study*

Berwick Rangers Football Club was selected as a pilot case. Data gathering tools were applied to the pilot case to determine whether the planned timeline was feasible and whether or not the focus group questions were appropriate and effective. The purpose of the pilot study was not so much to test research hypotheses, but rather to test protocols, data collection instruments, recruitment strategies and other aspects of the study in preparation for the larger study. Helen Sampson has argued, 'too often pilots are used in incomplete and haphazard ways as tools to tweak research instruments or as background to inform research questions and foreshadow problems. Their value is far higher than this – in particular in the context of qualitative research, which should arguably make far greater use of properly conducted pilots, entailing an analysis phase as well as the specific piloting of research instruments'.[289] The obvious concern was that if there were problems with the research tool and modifications had to be made in the light of the findings from the pilot study in Berwick-upon-Tweed, data could then be flawed or inaccurate.

Since an established and validated tool was used in determining other methodological aspects, it could be argued that such data can be considered of value. The concern about including participants from the pilot in the main study centres on those involved in the pilot, and not the whole group, having had the experience. In some cases, however, it is simply not possible to exclude these pilot-study participants because to do so would result in too small a sample in the main study. Contamination is also less of a concern in qualitative research. Additionally, it is likely that the pilot will not disappoint in delivering a discrete set of useable data. This of course raises its own dilemmas with regard to both data use and the subsequent conduct of research.

In line with a more reflexive approach in social science, all pilot data was used as part of the main study. The pilot focus group was smaller in scale (6-7 participants), and the scope was also smaller; for example, the range of participants was more limited (e.g. it include mostly working adult males when a broader range of the population was used in the full study). Given

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[289] Helen Sampson, 'Navigating the Waves: The Usefulness of a Pilot in Qualitative Research', in *Qualitative Research*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (2004), pp. 383-402 (p. 400).

that access was not compromised a site (return) visit was facilitated with a *different* set of Berwick Rangers participants. Owing to the fact that Berwick is part owned by two supporters' organisations, the pilot study was conducted with the Berwick Rangers Supporters' Club Borders Branch, and the field research with the Berwick Rangers Supporters' Trust. This pilot study was essential for many reasons. Firstly, it permitted preliminary testing of the hypotheses that led to testing more precise hypotheses in the main study. This did not lead to changing some hypotheses, dropping some, or developing new hypotheses, however. Secondly, it provided ideas, approaches, and clues that were not foreseen before conducting the pilot study. Such ideas and clues increased the chances of getting clearer findings in the main study. Thirdly, it permitted a thorough check of the planned statistical and analytical procedures, providing a chance to evaluate usefulness for the data and make alterations in the data collecting methods. Finally, it greatly reduced the number of unanticipated problems because it afforded an opportunity to redesign parts of the study to overcome difficulties that the pilot study revealed.

*Conducting the focus groups*

When conducting a focus group, Madhavi Jayanthi and Janet S. Nelson assert that, 'the presence of certain participants or the dynamics of a group may necessitate that you be firm'.[290] In this study, the approach adopted was therefore one of firmness and reassurance rather than acting as a 'disciplinarian' even when encountering talkative fans whom begun to wander off topic, supporters who tried to dominate the conversation, or participants who were overzealous and overbearing and who tried to interrupt others.[291] Yet, a further problem with moderation, Monique M. Hennink suggests, 'is a lack of depth in participant's responses, leading to superficial information'.[292] Accordingly, in Berwick, Hay and Oswestry fans were probed to fully explore each issue raised and sufficient time was allocated to ensure that multiple participants expressed their views rather than only one participant. A further consideration was to provide what Hennink termed a 'permissive environment', in order to ensure that participants felt

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[290] Madhavi Jayanthi and Janet S. Nelson , *Savvy Decision Making: An Administrator's Guide to Using Focus Groups in Schools* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.; London: Corwin Press, 2002), p. 99.
[291] Jayanthi and Nelson, p. 99.
[292] Monique M. Hennink, *International focus group research: A handbook for the health and social sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 191.

comfortable in the group discussion and provided detailed responses to the specific issues.[293] It was for this reason that participants chose the venue in which they felt most comfortable in.

In her study of Muslim identity, Lene Kuhle asserts that, focus groups are, 'useful for helping people find words for their thoughts, which may be evolving during the discussion'.[294] In this regard, the focus groups conducted with supporters of Berwick Rangers, Hay St. Mary's and The New Saints of Oswestry Town proved of great utility because, as Kuhle argues, 'discussions in collective interviews help situate statements in the relevant social context and assess their importance and salience in the milieu'.[295] It is often suggested that groups of individuals will tend towards consensus. However, none of the participants appeared to have any reservations about contradicting or disagreeing with each other and so the problem of 'group think' did not arise.[296] The explanation for this, it seems, lays in the fact that Anglo-Celtic cross-border relations were a salient issue for supporters and one on which they already had opinions they were happy to discuss, but not likely to dramatically change in the course of the focus group.

During the focus group interviews, it was important to listen to the responses to the ten guided-questions and probe for clarifying information when appropriate. Following the focus group, the taped recording of the focus group discussion were listened to. The taped recording of the focus group discussions were then transcribed into computer files. According to Holly Edmunds, 'the transcripts are best utilised by the person writing the focus group report' because, 'they serve as a reminder of where to look for specific quotes, as well as ensuring that comments are properly quotes in the report'.[297] In this study, the overall analytical approach adopted largely followed the conventions of thematic analysis, often referred to also as template analysis, where the researcher produces a list of codes representing themes identified in the textual data.[298] Field notes were used to record impressions, observations and questions that would assist with the

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[293] Hennink, p. 191.

[294] Lene Kuhle, 'Excuse me, which radical organization are you a member of? Reflections on methods to study highly religious but non-organised Muslims', in *Methods and contexts in the study of Muslim minorities: visible and invisible Muslims*, ed. Nadia Jeldtoft and others (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 77-92 (p. 86).

[295] Kuhle, p. 89.

[296] 'Group think' is a term used by Nathaniel Copsey in reference to the presence of a consistent consensus in a focus group. See Nathaniel Copsey, *Public Opinion and the Making of Foreign Policy in the 'New Europe': A Comparative Study of Poland and Ukraine* (Farnham: Taylor and Francis, 2016), p. 47.

[297] Holly Edmunds, *The Focus Group Research Handbook* (Lincolnwood, NTC Business Books, 1999), p. 97.

[298] Benjamin Crabtree and William Miller, *Doing Qualitative Research* (London: Sage, 1999); Nigel King, 'Using templates in the thematic analysis of text', in *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organisational Research*, ed. Catherine Cassell and Gillian Symon (London: Sage, 2004), pp. 256-70; Matthew B. Miles and Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 2nd edn (Thousand Oaks, Calif.; London: Sage, 1994).

interpretation of the focus group data. Stories told during the course of the focus group sessions were also noted into the database so that they could be used independently as well as integrated when the case study progressed to the point of cross-case examination of data for all three cases.

*The issue of anonymity*

In a study of this nature, the anonymity and privacy of participants is a priority. *The British Sociological Association's Code of Ethics* state that, 'where appropriate and practicable, methods for preserving anonymity should be used, including the removal of identifiers, the use of pseudonyms and other technical means for breaking the link between data and identifiable individuals'.[299] In this study, every perceivable step was taken to adequately disguise the participant's identity and residential location. For example, participants were afforded the opportunity to select their own pseudonyms which superseded all original names in the transcripts. In addition, pseudonyms were changed to codes e.g. R1 or Respondent 1 which were used in the main body of the thesis and places of residence were not used. This stringent procedure was adopted to counteract possible, 'threats to the confidentiality and anonymity of the research data'.[300] Given that 'an explicit pledge of confidentiality', was given in participant consent forms, and having regard for obligations under the Data Protection Acts, identities and research records were kept confidential and research data was also stored in a secure manner.[301]

*Triangulation*

Diana Kendall asserts that while all research methods have limitations, 'many sociologists believe that triangulation – the use of multiple methods in one study – is the solution to the problem'.[302] This exploration of football fandom, nationalism and national identity therefore used focus groups to obtain the views of over thirty football supporters from three clubs in the Anglo-Celtic borderlands. Observations made in each of the border towns and at their associated football grounds were recorded in the form of field notes and secondary data – local, regional and national newspapers and histories and national census data – was used to look

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[299] *British Sociological Association's Code of Ethics* <http://www.britsoc.co.uk/the-bsa/equality/statement-of-ethical-practice.aspx#_anon> [Accessed 17 August 2016].
[300] *British Sociological Association's Code of Ethics*.
[301] *British Sociological Association's Code of Ethics*.
[302] Diana Kendall, *Sociology in our Times* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2012), p. 50.

at the subject matter – i.e. the different cases – from several angles and gain a more complete picture. This enabled the discovery of things which might not have been considered such as the importance of the Church of Scotland in the formation of Berwick fans' identity. As Douglas Harper argues, the use of secondary data 'acts a way to overcome personal or methodological biases.[303] According to Andrew Pollard, this is because it 'provides more layers and depth to understanding of the substantive case and enables each source and element of data to be checked against others'.[304] Therefore, Pollard uses the term 'collaborative triangulation', to define a type of 'dynamic comparative method'.[305] It is illustrated here with regard to focus group interviews only and is difficult to convey the value of transcripts when set alongside other types of primary and secondary data. 'Collaborative triangulation' provided a more rounded understanding of key concepts, ambiguities and perspectives than would otherwise have been possible, which was largely a result of the 'very genuine' nature of the debates structured in the focus groups.[306]

*Analysis of the data*

When we talk about findings, we refer to what has emerged from the data, after the process of analysis; for data itself does not constitute the findings of the research in the way you collect it – recordings, or pages of transcripts, or documents of one kind or another. 'Coding' or 'categorising' is a step taken during the analysis stage to organise and make sense of textual data. However, categorising does not involve assigning numerical codes as is the case in quantitative analysis where exclusive variables are labelled with present codes or variables. The concept of theme is critical to the accurate interpretation of qualitative data. Thematic identification involves organising passages of text into coherent categories and applying labels to them that indicate they are examples of a thematic idea. At its simplest, this coding process enables quick retrieval and collection together of all the text data that is associated with a thematic idea (e.g. nation, nationalism, ethnicity, national identity etc.) so that it can be examined together and the cases of Berwick Rangers, The New Saints and Hay St. Mary's, can be compared in that respect.

Textual Thematic Analyses (TTA) was conducted using a qualitative analysis software package (NVivo), designed for qualitative researchers working with very rich text-based and/or

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[303] Douglas Harper, *Visual Sociology* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), p. 58.
[304] Andrew Pollard, 'Studying Children's Perspectives – A Collaborative Approach', in *Doing Sociology of Education*, ed. Geoffrey Walford (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 95-118 (p. 109).
[305] Pollard, p. 116.
[306] Pollard, p. 117.

multimedia information, where deep levels of analysis on small or large volumes of data are required. NVivo reflected the research and the particular paradigm used. NVivo facilitated the management and analysis of data that was not easily reduced to numbers and to store and organise documents, attach ideas to text, and find patterns among ideas. NVivo was used to systematically identify 'key quotes' and themes (e.g. ethnicity, language, nationality etc.) based on the research objectives and focus group questions to create an initial template representing perceptions and beliefs and categorise them into logical groupings.[307] By employing triangulation (or 'multiple methods'), important patterns in the data were identified. This useful organisational tool enables the researcher to: index segments of the text to particular key themes, carry out complex search and retrieval operations quickly, and link research notes to coding.

Thematic analysis was chosen as it captures the richness of the data, helps organise the data collected into a structure and works particularly well with small data sets and when comparing two or three data sets or when the researcher knows what issues they are searching for. Thus, this methodology was particularly suitable for case study research, which although exploratory in nature, has identified prior issues: the possible tension in the close relationship between national identity and territory and the integration of this geographic reality with social structures. Furthermore, thematic analysis facilitates the capture of an in-depth insight into each case through a cross examination of data collected and presentation of the analysis by discussing themes which emerged from the template analysis and subsequently the cross-case examination.

In thematic analysis, each broad theme is subject to a more detailed manual analysis, which leads to the formation of more specific categories within each theme. This form of hierarchical coding allows the researcher to analyse texts at different levels of specificity. Broad higher-order codes help provide a general overview of the direction of the focus group sessions, while detailed lower order codes will enable fine distinctions to be made, both within and between cases.[308] As categories become more tightly defined, text stored in free nodes are moved into 'tree nodes'. This type of node proves highly useful because it allows the researcher to split up these broad categories through the use of interlinking 'community' which serves as sub-categories under the broad headings. Separate categories (through free nodes) allow the examination of the data and a comparison of the similarities and differences, yet it can destroy

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[307] Lincoln and Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry*.
[308] King, 'Using templates in the thematic analysis of text', pp. 256-70.

the bigger picture. The 'tree nodes' help depict the category's relationship with each other, something which is important in maintaining the overall perspective.[309] Dey notes that codes must be meaningful with regards to the data but also meaningful in relation to other categories.[310] After the themes and categories evidence were finalised for each question, the themes and categories needed to be identified across groups. The final step was to review and revise the 'big ideas' identified in the first phase of data analysis and highlight the categories which supported these ideas. These refined themes were then considered to be the definite themes. The patterns, categories, and emergent themes culminated into the development of the findings. It would be ideal that once the findings are determined, the field research report will translate those who read it as rich, tightly woven account of cases that 'closely approximate the reality it represents'.[311]

*Conclusion*

The four focus groups conducted with members of Berwick Rangers Supporters' Club, Berwick Rangers Supporters' Trust, supporters of The New Saints of Oswestry Town and Hay St. Mary's between April and May 2011 have provided a rich set of data.[312] The coded data, utilised throughout Chapters four to eight uses the letters "I" and "R" (followed by a number) to denote the interviewer and the supporter as a respondent. Field visits to each of the case study sites were also used to take a range of anecdotal evidence through observation. These field notes included conversations with staff at shops, supermarkets and the general public and were supplemented by photographs. Participation in a TNS fans' forum with Welsh-language broadcaster *S4C* interviewing supporters for *Sgorio* further added to the comprehensive data sets.

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[309] Catherine Cassell and others, 'Qualitative Management Research: A Thematic Analysis of Interviews with Stakeholders in the Field,'
<http://www.restore.ac.uk/Benchmarking/pdf/final_research_report.pdf > [Accessed 24 May 2016], pp. 1-85 (p. 10)
[310] Ian Dey, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A User Friendly Guide for Social Scientists* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 96-7.
[311] Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet M. Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Techniques and Procedures* (Newbury Park; London: Sage, 1990), p. 47.
[312] Focus group with members of Berwick Rangers Supporters' Club, Kelso (Scottish Borders), 30 March 2011; Focus group with members of Berwick Rangers Supporters' Trust, Berwick-upon-Tweed (Northumberland), 9 April 2011; Focus group with members of Hay Saint Mary's Football Club, Hay-on-Wye (Powys) 15 May 2011; The New Saints Football Club Fans' Forum, Thursday 17th March 2011, The Three Pigeons, Oswestry; Focus group with supporters of The New Saints, Park Hall, Oswestry (Shropshire), 21 April 2011.

# Chapter 4 - Case Study 1: Berwick Rangers Football Club, Berwick-upon-Tweed (Northumberland)

*Berwick Rangers began life as an English club. [But] many of its players in the early days were Scots who deliberately adopted a canny Scottish style. In one leap Berwick abandoned English football to play competitively only against Scottish teams.[313]*

## *Introduction*

This chapter will explore themes arising from the data and will analyse the contradictory nature of the England-Scotland border which often fails to fit the 'nation-state ideal of cultural homogeneity, as national borders do not always coincide with the borders of culture or ethnicity'.[314]

## *Berwick Rangers Football Club: Football fandom, nationalism and national identity in Berwick*

The 21st Century histories of Berwick Rangers and the Scottish Borders provide sharp insights into how important sport can be in the social construction of place identities. The club's discourse suggests a strong civic, political and social association with Scotland, while the question of community is clearly vital to Berwick Rangers' self-perception; the club is first and foremost a football team and thus is also partly motivated by commercial concerns. This is becoming increasingly clear and important in the post-devolution era and places Berwick Rangers in the interesting and sometimes complicated position of trying to manage the club's financial/commercial needs and its more community oriented goals. In order to understand how Berwick Rangers balances its role as a football club and as a community/social organisation it is important to see Berwick as operating at three different roles or levels: as a cultural/community organisation, as a local/regional/national organisation and as a commercial venture. While the divisions between these three roles is rarely clear-cut and may not represent the club's self-perception, it does allow for a better understanding how the club operates with different and sometimes conflicting goals. Even if the first two roles often work together in harmony, it is with the third role as a commercial venture that tensions are most likely to arise. Initially it is

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[313] Vic Duke, 'Pushed across the Border: Berwick Rangers into Scotland', in Vic Duke and Liz Crolley, *Football, Nationality and State* (New York; Oxford: Routledge, 2014), pp. 67-70.

[314] James Anderson and Liam O'Dowd, 'Border regions and territoriality: contradictory meanings, changing significance', *Regional Studies*, Vol. 33 Issue 7 (1999), pp. 593-604 (p. 595-6).

Berwick's role as a commercial enterprise that may allow the first two roles to develop by shielding the club from David Cameron's efforts to counter Scottish pro-independence sentiments. Now in Scotland, it may be Berwick Rangers' commercial interests that make it difficult for the club to negotiate its first two roles. In order to understand how the club operate, it is critical to establish who is defined as being part of the 'national community'. Through a detailed investigation of attitudinal data from participants, this case study explores the ambiguous national identity of Berwick-upon-Tweed and its unique club, Berwick Rangers FC.

One would expect that people from Berwick would claim a sense of English national identity. After all, they live in a town jurisdictionally in England and in the county of Northumberland. Moreover, one might think that because residents live only 2.5 miles south of the Anglo-Scottish border, they would be likely to feel a heightened sense of their 'Englishness'.

Fig. 4 – Map of the Anglo-Scottish Border
(Original source: ukhillwalking.com; adapted by author)
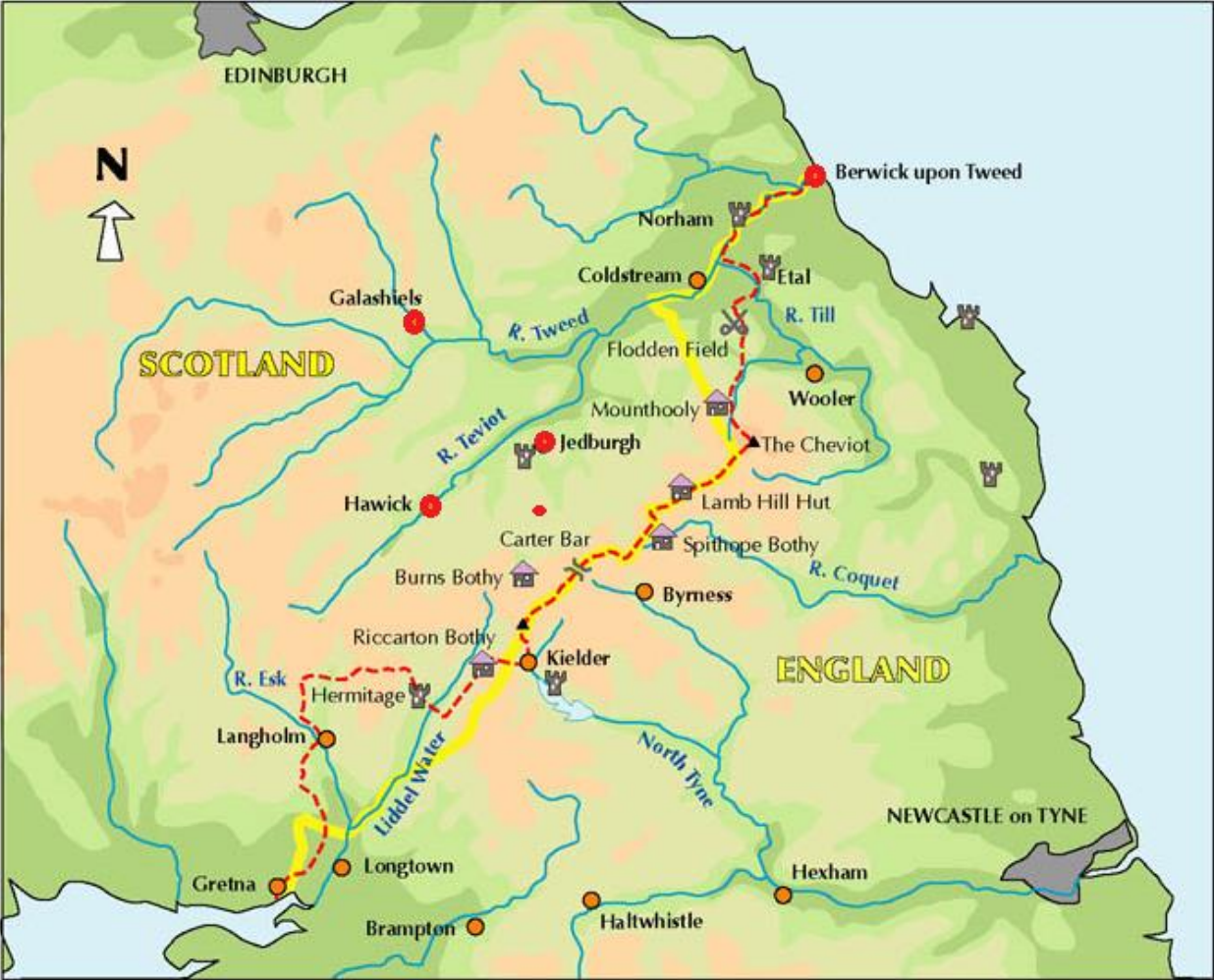
Do people feel more Scottish than English? That was a question asked in 2008 when ITV1's *Tonight Show* carried out an unofficial referendum to find out if residents in Berwick would prefer their town be part of Scotland. The poll saw 1,182 votes in favour of becoming part of Scotland and 775 in favour of remaining in England. Pro-Scotland campaigner and Berwick resident, Michael Ross, headed the 'Yes' campaign. He stated, 'I believe we would be the jewel in the crown for Scotland'.[315] In 2008, the Scottish Nationalist Party was quick to capitalise on the results with leader and First Minister, Alex Salmond promising to 'make the necessary representations' to make Berwick Scottish if residents voted in favour in a full referendum.[316]

*Scottish Independence Referendum, 2014*

In October 2012, British Prime Minister David Cameron and Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond signed a 'historic agreement laying the ground rules for holding a Scottish independence referendum in the autumn of 2014'.[317] Salmond's announcement that a referendum for Scottish independence would be held on Thursday 18 September 2014, which marked 700 years after the Battle of Bannockburn (a decisive battle in the First Scottish War of Independence (1296-1328) in which Robert the Bruce defeated an English army led by Edward II) was not unexpected.[318] As *ABC News* noted, 'as Scotland went to the polls to decide whether or not to remain part of the UK, many acknowledged the role cinema has played in forging the country's identity, and nothing on the silver screen has had a bigger impact than…[William Wallace and] Braveheart'.[319] How would Scottish independence then affect Berwick-upon-Tweed, a town which was the largest in Scotland before it was sacked by King Edward II on 30 March 1296?[320] Concerns over the outcome of independence referendum are revealed in the following accounts:

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[315] *BBC News*, 17 February 2008 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/tyne/7248529.stm>[Accessed 25 August 2015].

[316] *The Mail,* 18 February 2008 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-515350/Berwick-Tweed-votes-leave-England-join-Scotland-better-public-services.html> [Accessed 25 August 2015].

[317] *BBC News*, 15 October 2012 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-19907675> [Accessed 9 August 2016].

[318] *The Guardian,* 11 January 2012 <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2012/jan/11/scottish-independence-referendum-autumn-2014> [Accessed 9 August 2016].

[319] *ABC News*, 18 September 2014 <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/thelist/braveheart-and-scottish-independence/5750742> [Accessed 9 August 2016].

[320] David R. Ross, *On the Trail of William Wallace* (Edinburgh: Luath, 1999), p. 10.

Isobel: We've got Scots working here and English people across the border. If there's a 'Yes' vote, what are people going to get paid in? Is it going to cost more to get paid?

Alice: A lot of people where I live have 'Yes' signs up, and I never thought I'd see that in the Borders.

Phil: Either way there'll be huge implications for Berwick. The border will become more profound – life in Berwick will change.[321]

For two years, residents lived with the knowledge that members of their extended family and friends could elect to become part of an independent Scotland with strict border controls. So, how then did they feel about waking up to find that their neighbours voted to stay in the Union?

> I was very worried about the effect on businesses here. How many Scots would come and spend their cash here if they needed to go to the bureau de change first? Is anyone going to talk to us on the border when they're deciding what powers England gets? We get nothing.[322]

Here we find that one resident, Theresa, felt that Berwick had been marginalised in the 'national dialogue' about Scottish independence. But Neil, born in England but brought up in Scotland, did not agree that the border town was 'neither English nor Scots', 'We're both. Most people consider themselves English, but a lot of people see themselves as Scottish', he stated.[323]

*Local identity*

Identification with the local neighbourhood is naturally stronger for those who take part in community activities – especially being a member of organised groups such as the Berwick Rangers Supporters' Trust and Berwick Rangers Supporters' Club. Supporters of Berwick Rangers identify most strongly with the town of Berwick itself as one Trust member explained:

R3: I am a Berwicker first and an Englishman second. A lot of people that are Berwickers say that Berwick is neither English nor Scots and it's got its own unique identity.[324]

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[321] *The New Statesman*, 11 September 2014 <http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/2014/09/scottish-referendum-means-berwick-upon-tweed-faces-uncertain-future> [Accessed 25 August 2015].

[322] *BBC News*, 19 September 2014 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-29281107> [Accessed 25 August 2015].

[323] *BBC News*, 19 September 2014.

[324] Focus group with members of Berwick Rangers Supporters' Trust, Berwick-upon-Tweed (Northumberland), 9 April 2011.

This sentiment that being a Berwicker acts as a powerful local identifier is echoed by a second supporter (R2) who recalled Scottish Berwickers being attacked by non-Berwick English supporters in the early 1980s following an England-Scotland Home International football match:

R2:     We came off the train at Berwick and there were some other lads there that were Scottish that were coming from Berwick…as we got off the train some lads from Leeds got off the train to attack the Scots because they saw them as a minority and they got a fright cos everybody that was English that was Berwick turned round and said, "What the f*** are you doing?" and chased them back on the train.

As Respondent 2 suggested, this illustrates that 'the bond with the town was stronger than it was with the national thing'. In Berwick, local identity competes with national identity. Yet, the sense of a local Berwicker identity is highly influential, entwined with knowledge of Berwick's own turbulent history, combined with issues of language, kindship, ancestry and a sense of a unique culture which is in some ways unlike that found even in the more rural parts of the Central Lowlands, affected as it is by its relative geographic isolation and issues of transport.

In keeping with the multinational character of the state, a sense of British identity remains widespread in England, Scotland and Wales. In most of these countries residents have dual identities, thinking of themselves as British and Scottish, British and Welsh or British and English. Anthony Heath maintains that in the latter decades of the twentieth century, there was a slow, long-term decline in preference for a British state identity and a gradual increase in preference for Scottish, Welsh and/or English identities. Furthermore, he points to a small but growing number of people (10%) who reject either a dual or a British identity.[325] One might expect that as a convenient way of sidestepping being national – English or Scottish – Berwick supporters would choose to identify with being 'British'. However, when pressed, some members of the Trust chose to assert their 'Englishness', while others referred to a sense of Scottish identity:

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[325] Anthony Heath, 'British Identity: its sources and possible implications for civic attitudes and behaviour', <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http:/www.justice.gov.uk/docs/british-identity.pdf> [Accessed 20 August 2015], pp. 1-35 (p. 2).

R3:     I come from a typical Berwick family I've got a Scots father and an English mother but I was born in the town and I would regard myself as English. My brother regards himself as Scottish and that's not a problem. That is a fairly typical situation.

R2:     The same with me. My dad is Scottish but I'm English.

R1:     And that's bound to happen in a border town. You know it's inevitable.

R2:     Well there's a classic case…Deborah…her family is born and bred in England and you call her English…she'll batter you won't she?

R1:     Yeah…very much.

Berwick's unique identity owes much to its turbulent history, geography, patterns of work and continued cross-border associational activities. Andy Pike has argued that the Anglo-Scottish Border region is well integrated socially and economically and there is a sense of shared identity and history as a border region.[326] The contextual nature of the town's history and Berwick Rangers' identity is expressed in this exchange with members of the Supporters' Trust:

R5:     Are you aware that historically the town was in Scotland? I mean originally it was in Scotland and it changed hands.

R1:     It changed hands 13 times over a 300-year period.

R2:     Well that's the problem with the history is, is it originally in England is it originally in Scotland? Well it's Berwick. I would say that despite the fact that if you say you're English or Scottish if you think about our blood we'd all be Celts.

Here we have further clues about identity in Berwick. One fan (R2) alludes to Berwick on its own – 'neither English nor Scots' – but part of a wider geographical area, the Scottish Borders with which Berwickers possess a shared bond and 'Celtic blood'. However, for some fans, constantly looking back to Berwick's history is holding back the town. Here are two comments:

R10:    I think there is a lot of potential in Berwick but people are maybe too afraid to go away from that history. We need to move on from it all now.

R3:     I think that is a brilliant point. I think that the whole town is hung up on its historical past and I think that's a millstone. I think that handicaps progress. I think R10 is absolutely

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[326] Andy Pike, 'Post-devolution Blues? Economic Development in the Anglo-Scottish Borders', *Regional Studies,* Vol. 36, Issue 9 (2002), pp. 1067-1082 (p. 1079).

right. I used to work for a local firm here for a number of years and the thing that used to get me was how everyone paid homage to the history of the town and the community.

Being 'taken for' a particular national identity based on one's history is something people from Berwick have to confront. The historian Stefan Berger has commented that 'there are many good reasons to avoid history becoming the basis of national identity formation and legitimation'.[327] Place of birth, possessing a British passport and the location of the town are often accepted as unproblematic identity markers. This is not to say that among members of the Supporters' Club, there are not occasional difficulties, as is expressed in the following account:

R5:    I'm British… I am British…I'm the Scottish side.

R3:    Well I treat myself as English.

R1:    So would you want to be British or English?

R2:    If anyone asked me what nationality I would say "British." If anyone says, aye, "What part of Britain?" I would say "England." I've got a British passport that's it same as any Scotsman has a British passport.

R3:    That's right. I'd still treat myself as English.

R2:    It's Berwick that's it. Independence for Berwick!

R5:    The thing with me… I'm more Scottish but that's where you're divided.[328]

Making a British claim appeared often in participant's information forms. 'British', is often used as an umbrella identity sitting loosely above the older national territorial identities of England and Scotland. We live in a state, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which makes us 'British'. That is what it says on our passports. Over a third (37.5%) of supporters described themselves as 'British', 'Scottish-British' or 'English-British', and of these by far the largest proportion – 50 per cent – as 'British only'. Of the ten remaining supporters six (including a Gaelic speaker) identified as being 'Scottish' and four as 'English'. An examination of the 2011 National Census reveals a slightly different picture. Only 1.5 per cent of residents in Berwick East, 1.9% in Berwick North and 1.7% in Berwick West with Ord identified as being

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[327] Stefan Berger, 'History and National Identity: why they should remain divorced', *History and Policy* (2007) <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/policy-papers/papers/history-and-national-identity-why-they-should-remain-divorced> [Accessed 25 October 2015].
[328] Focus group with members of Berwick Rangers Supporters' Club, Kelso (Scottish Borders), 30 March 2011.

'Scottish and British only'. 'English and British only' identification by comparison was stronger (8.1% in Berwick East, 7.9% in Berwick North and 8.1% in Berwick West with Ord), while 'British only' was stronger (18.2% in Berwick East, 21.3% in Berwick North and 18.9% in Berwick West with Ord).[329] It is interesting to note that Berwick Rangers supporters are proud to be 'British' and have maintained rather than downgraded their attachment to a British identity.

The picture for supporters' identification with Northumberland differs with the strong affinity held for Berwick. The town finds itself a periphery on a periphery: the county of Northumberland is distant from London, and Berwick is peripheral to the more populous city of Newcastle where local power is located. The fact that the old county of Berwickshire (now Scottish Borders), abolished by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, was in Scotland but the town of Berwick is in England has itself become an anomaly with growing economic significance, especially with the availability of free personal and nursing care, free prescriptions and university tuition for Scottish-born students. This lack of identification with a regional identity (Northumbrian) is revealed in this exchange between members of the Supporters' Trust:

I:      Is there any bond with Northumberland?

R2:     I work for Northumberland County and I despise the bastards!

R6:     I don't think there is much of an identity.

R3:     There is the perception when you say Northumberland a lot of peoples' first conclusions is that it identifies with the former coalfield area in the south east of Northumberland… where most of the population is and where all the resources get diverted. So we're part of Northumberland as a county but that's a geographic accident.

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[329] UK Census Data, 'Key stats – National Identity' for the Berwick East, Berwick North and Berwick West with Ord wards <http://www.ukcensusdata.com/northumberland-e06000048#sthash.UTXoY7xQ.dpbs> [Accessed 10 April 2016].

Fig. 5 – Map of Northumberland
(Original source: Touristnetuk.com; adapted by author)



Stressing a weak sense of regional identity is based on a sense that Northumberland doesn't want it but Berwickshire can't have it – as revealed in an exchange with Supporters' Club members:

R5:     Northumberland is classed as like Newcastle.

R1:     Well Berwick is in Northumberland.

R2:     It's not Northumberland.

R4:     It's Northumberland.

R3:     I'd just classify it as Berwick. I wouldn't like to classify it as Northumberland.

R5:     Berwick is on its own and that's it!

R4:     The English papers are saying its Northumbrian and Scottish are saying it is English.

R1:     Nobody wants them. England doesn't want them. Scotland doesn't want them so as far as Berwick people are concerned nobody wants them. They don't belong to anyone. So we support Berwick Rangers because nobody wants us. That sums up the papers. They don't want me either.

I:      Do Berwick fans view Northumberland as being part of 'Scotland' or 'Scottishness'?

R1:     The Berwick fans don't like Northumberland because it's governed from Morpeth now isn't it? The County Council they're losing their identity, they're being swallowed up in the whole Northumberland thing. The money doesn't come from the councils because they are so far outta Northumberland.

R5:     They're very close to Newcastle.

R1:     Their losing their identity by being swallowed up by Newcastle.

R5:     That's what is happening so they're not getting their individuality.


Here we have further clues about regional identity in Berwick. Berwick Rangers supporters have to respond to being 'taken for' English or Northumbrian simply because of their geographical location. Their exclusion is highlighted by the comment that Berwick's inclusion in Northumberland is merely an 'accident of geography'. This is not an unusual finding given that people in debatable lands will often generally identify with the immediate area – the town where they have made their home (Berwick) – rather than a large geographical area (Northumberland). Berwickers are keenly aware of their potential social isolation. As individuals they find themselves unaccepted by either English or Scottish communities because of their position on the margins of the 'nation' – 350 miles from London but less than 60 miles from Edinburgh. So how does this sense of social exclusion effect identity claims and why? Here are some examples:

R3:     Berwick Rangers give a fairly far-flung, remote community a national identity. I think that is again something which has historically been undervalued and if we didn't have that that would impact on the cultural and economic life of this community if Berwick Rangers didn't give it that kind of profile. So it's really important from that point of view.

R1:     There is the political argument that we sit much better off on the Scottish side.

R2:     There was a survey that came around the town about three or four years ago and it said, "Would Berwick be better off in Scotland?"

R3:     Free prescriptions…free university places.

R1:     Given the way that the political scene in the county now is the town has basically been raped of all sort of…

R3:     Services?

R1:     You know everything is in the southeast corner.

R2:     I work for the County Council and I'm spending ages going up and down the A1 and I'm desperately trying to keep an office in Berwick and the closest office they're trying to put my services which I'm the manager of is gonna be 30 miles away. And they can't get their heads around the fact, "Let's have a meeting in Berwick." "Oh it's a long way to go!"

R3:     I think increasingly you know as a consequence of local government re-organisation Berwick is much more marginalized than it was say two or three years ago. It feels remote geographically. Its transport links are a bit iffy. All those factors give you a sense of isolation and I think that fits in with peoples' perceptions of where it fits in, whether it is English or Scottish. I mean a couple of years ago there was a sort of kinda a half joking, but half serious lobbying of Scotland to try and get Berwick moved into Scotland.

This is an interesting account because not only does a supporter (R3) prioritise the 'Berwicker' identity over national identity, but he alludes to the 'Berwicker' identity as representing a national identity. Are there any grounds at all, then for fans to claim to be 'borderers'? Tom Maxwell in his book *The Lone Rangers* has asserted that a number of residents in Berwick claim to be 'borderers' if they are 'feeling particularly cosmopolitan'.[330] Here is a

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[330] T. Maxwell, *The Lone Rangers: an English club's century in Scottish football* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Northumbria Press, 2011), p. 3.

dialogue between members of the Supporters' Trust, keen to distance themselves from this unwelcome nickname and association which they argue has been afforded to them by 'outsiders':

R2:     It didn't come from anywhere it was given to us. I don't like it personally.

R3:     No I don't. It's a lazy nickname in that no supporter ever knows Berwick Rangers – none of us the hard-core guys would ever call Berwick Rangers "the borderers."

R1:     It doesn't mean anything.

Contrast those comments with these made by members of the Supporters' Club who draw on Berwick as a place on a real border, politically and geographically with a unique history to emphasise its ambiguity, but accept that Berwick Rangers has firm roots in the Scottish Borders:

R2:     It identifies them doesn't it?

R1:     Yeah, because it identifies them as part of the borders…because although they're on the English side of the border there is a lot of followers come from the Scottish side of the border across…and it joins the borders.

R5:     A lot of supporters come through the borders. Even some of the players actually come through the borders…so…you know what I mean?

R1:     Yeah…Andy McLean and Stevie Notman…our star players.

R5:     That's why I think it gives them an identity.

R1:     But I think it also links the England/Scottish thing, so…we cannat be seen as anti-Scotland and anti-English.

R2:     It joins them together. It is a wide area though innit?

R1:     Exactly. If you had a map and circled it you've got the likes of Dunbar, Eyemouth, Alnwick, Denholm, Jedburgh, Hawick…Kelso.

R5:     Hence why you go back to that border because you've literally got the border and 'the borderers'.

R3:     That's why we're the borderers!

Given Berwick's close proximity to the border – around two and a half miles – it is perhaps surprising that the people in Alnwick and Edinburgh show a lack of awareness in order to validate the claim made by supporters that they are Berwickers rather than English or Scottish.

Supporters' Club members recognise that people in Edinburgh and Alnwick attribute national identity to them in sharply contrasting ways. People from Edinburgh view them as 'English', while people from Alnwick regard them as 'Scottish'. Some supporters keen to emphasise the position of Berwick in relation to the border argue that, 'it's the closest team to the borders gate that you are gonna get'. This fuelled a debate about the relationship that undoubtedly exists between the town, the club and the border, 'it identifies them doesn't it?' one said, claiming that coming 'through the borders' gave Berwick Rangers an identity. What we have seen here is a complex interplay between identities – local and regional. As far as most 'Berwickers' are concerned, they have little in common with Northumberland. People in Berwick see themselves as 'different' to their southern (Northumbrian) and their northern (Scottish Borders) neighbours.

While Haller and Donnan accept that 'there are many definitions of borders'; they assert 'culture and identity in border regions, while recognising the ways in which these shape and are shaped by the power enacted between and within nations and their states'. [331] After all, as Gillian Wylie has noted, 'we live in a world which remains criss-crossed by boundaries and frontiers, some of which are real, some are which are imaginary'. [332] 'Imaginary' and 'imagined' must not be confused, however. This is because, 'an "imaginary" border exists in the imagination only, while an "imagined" border is an artificial construct with very real effects'. [333] In the Israeli-Palestine context, Ahmed Badawi successfully guided participants from both cultures through 'a deep analysis of the core conflict issues'. [334] On the one hand, Badawi found that the Israeli discourse referred to the West Bank wall, which divides Israel and Palestine, as a 'fence', which implied that it is 'a minimal defence mechanism to prevent terrorist attacks within Israel'. [335] Contrastingly, the Palestinians referred to the West Bank as a 'wall' which implied the forced

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[331] Dieter Haller and Hastings Donnan, 'Liminal no more: The relevance of border studies' in *Journal of European Ethnology*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (2000), pp 1-22 (p.12).

[332] Gillian Wylie, 'Trafficking in Women: Networks of Knowledge and the Cultural Construction of Europe', in *Networking across borders and frontiers: demarcation and connectedness in European culture and society*, ed. Jürgen Barkhoff and Helmut Eberhart (Frankfurt am Main; Oxford: P. Lang, 2009), pp. 155-169 (p. 155).

[333] Ovidiu Laurian Simina, 'On the New European Borders: The New Geography of the European Migration', in *Migration, Mobility and Human Rights at the Eastern Border of the European Union - space of Freedom and Security*, ed. Grigore Silasi and Ovidiu Laurian Simina (Timisoara: West University publishing, 2008), pp. 79-99 (p. 94).

[334] Ahmed Badawi, 'From Antagonism to Resonance: Some Methodological Insights and Dilemmas', in *From identity-based conflict to identity-based cooperation : ARIA approach in theory and practice*, ed. Jay Rothman (New York; London: Springer, 2012), pp. 71-99 (p. 76).

[335] Badawi, p. 76.

demarcation of territory and people and a deliberate infringement by Israel on Palestine'.[336] Thus, as Peter Auer has concluded, 'geopolitical borders (above all, national) should be looked upon on cognitive constructs intimately linked to the "imagined communities" they delimit.'[337]

Fig. 6 – Map of Scots Dialects of Scotland and Northern Ireland
(Original source: Wikipedia; adapted by author)
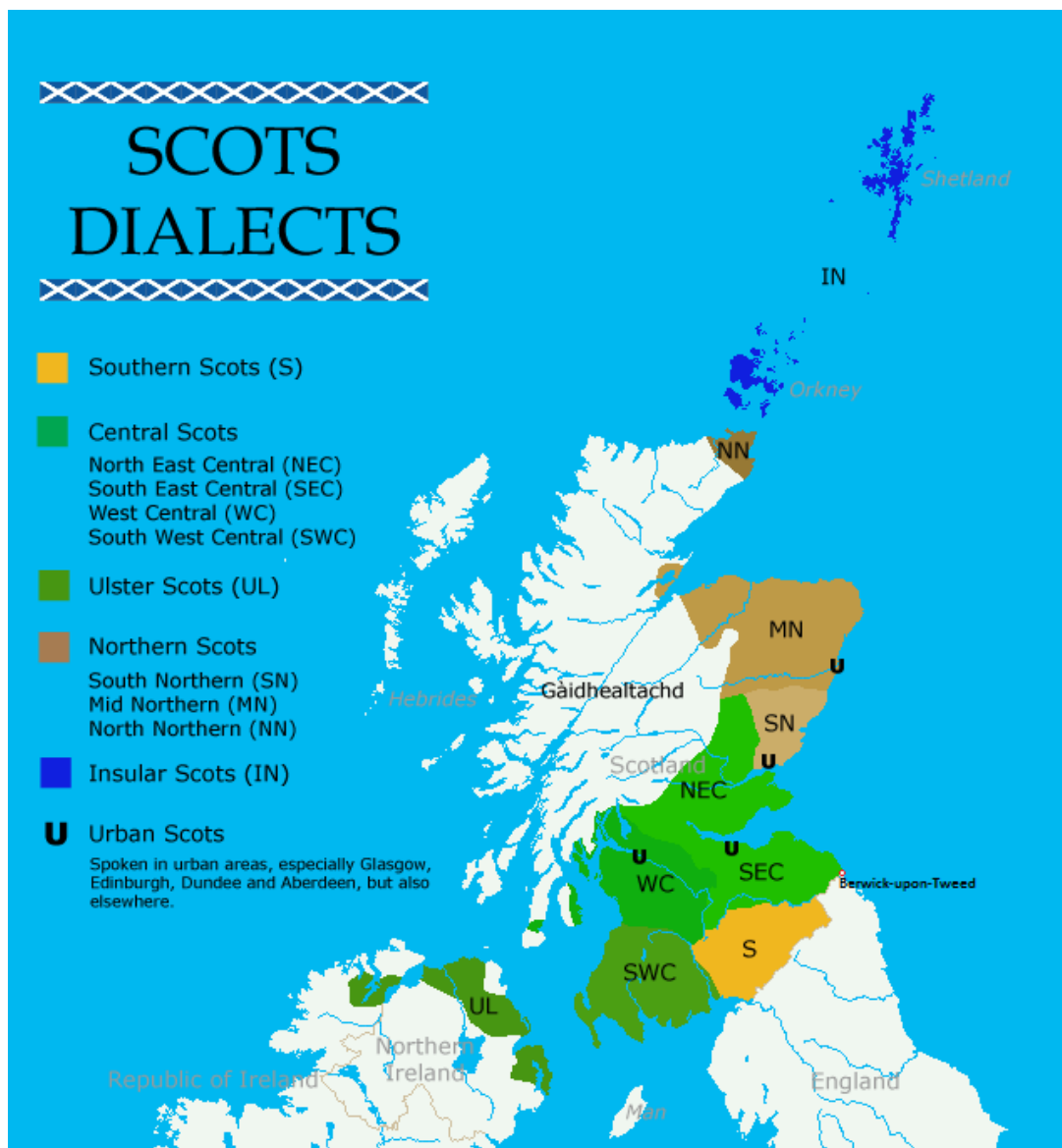
[336] Badawi, p. 76.

[337] Peter Auer, 'The Construction of Linguistic Borders and the Linguistic Construction of Borders', in *Dialects across borders : selected papers from the 11th International Conference on Methods in Dialectology (Methods 11), Joensuu, August 2002*, ed. Markku Filppula (Amsterdam; Philadelphia, Pa.: John Benjamins, 2005), pp. 3-30 (p. 28).

Dialect and having knowledge of the Scots language is something that plays a key role in how 'Berwickers' mark their national identity and express differences from 'outsiders', as members of the Berwick Rangers Supporters' Trust explained in the following exchange:

R2:     I don't see it as a definitive language …it's not like Welsh or Gaelic with a different structure and everything. Coming from Berwick I've never had a problem understanding anybody in Britain. Yet, there's people from other areas who could sit in a pub in Berwick and not even understand a word of what is going on.

R6:     I get that in work. When somebody phones up from Newcastle, "there is a woman on the phone. I can't understand her. She's Scottish!" I don't even sound Scottish.

R2:     I had a situation working with a lass from Sheffield. I was out working in Berwick and a lad basically said, "Are you going out? Well if you are going out can you help us out?" And we had this short conversation and she just looked at me and I said, "What's wrong with ya?" And she says, "I didn't get a word of that. I don't know what the hell you were talking about." We've never had that problem before. I think there's just a dialect thing.

Respondent 2's assertion that Scots is not a 'definitive language' adds to an already contentious debate over whether Scots is a language, a dialect of English or slang. The origins of when exactly the Scots language was first referred to as slang is difficult to determine. By 1494, Scottish Gaelic, previously the language of Scottish kings, was replaced by Scots and became the language of the court, state and law.[338] The turning point in the fortunes of Scots came not as a result of any single event in Scotland – but one which occurred across the border in what was at the time a 'foreign' kingdom. In 1603, the childless Tudor monarch Queen Elizabeth I of England died. This brought her cousin, King James VI of Scotland (and I of England) to the English throne (Union of the Crowns of Scotland and England). It was his imposition of the Authorized Version of the Bible in 1611 which brought many Scottish aristocrats gradually towards the use of 'southern' English, albeit with a Scottish accent.[339] The loss of the organic link between Scots and Scottish identity was a hammer blow to the fortunes of the language as it lost its status in Scotland, which led to 'a considerable number of rather less exalted Scots

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[338] Colm O'Baoill, 'A History of Gaelic to 1800', in *The Edinburgh Companion to the Gaelic Language*, ed. Moray Watson and Michelle Macleod (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 1-21 (p. 13).
[339] Robert McColl Millar, 'An Historical National Identity? The Case of Scots', in *Language and Identities*, ed. Carmen Llamas and Dominic Watt (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 247-256 (p. 253).

moving south'.[340] But both Robert Burns and Sir Walter Scott were not ashamed of Scotland's culture and did much to keep the 'Mither Tongue' alive at a time when it was being forgotten as a medium for literature.[341] While its prestigious history and strong literary tradition challenges the notion that Scots is slang, there remains no hard and steadfast rule about what constitutes one person's speech a dialect and another's a language. But, as Norman McCraig points out, 'it's as absurd to call Scots a dialect of English as it is to call English a dialect of Scots'.[342] What is clear is that Scots is a language with a long and difficult history. Spoken throughout modern Scotland, Scots today is recognised as a language in its own right by the European Union and the UK and Scottish Governments. Scots, it appears, will be looking forward to a far more promising future.

In 2011, the Scottish Census asked the people of Scotland whether they could speak, read, write or understand Scots. It was the first time that a UK Census had set out to record the number of Scots language speakers. The total number of enumerated as being able to speak, read, write or understand Scots was 1,929,444 million (37.7%) out of total population of 5,118,223 aged 3 and over.[343] The Census identified that speakers realised that they are speaking Scots and are doing so, not thinking that it is slang or even bad English. The results revealed that the Scots language is widely, and generally, understood despite some confusion remaining whether it is Scots or English that is spoken at home. This propensity to claim to be a Scots speaker can also be seen through an examination of the responses Berwick supporters gave to questions on the focus group participant forms. Nine out of ten members of the Supporters' Trust claimed that they understood Scots, of which seven stated that they could speak the language, six possessed the ability to read Scots and three could write in Scots; only one supporter possessed no language ability. Nevertheless, the Census data enumerated only two residents in Berwick North and one resident in Berwick West with Ord as claiming that their *main language* is Scots.[344] It is clear, however, that outside of Scotland there remains no precise way of quantifying proficiency in Scots. This is partly because the 2011 'language question' in Scotland: '*Can* you understand

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[340] Millar, 'An Historical National Identity? The Case of Scots', p. 253.

[341] John Corbett, *Language and Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), p. 9.

[342] *BBC Two Scotland,* 21 August 2008 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/whereilive/voices_features/bigscotsroadtrip/index.shtml> [Accessed 9 April 2015].

[343] 2011 National Census – National Records of Scotland <http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/documents/censusresults/release2a/scotland/QS212SC.pdf> [Accessed 9 April 2016].

[344] UK Census Data, 'Quick stats – Main language', for the Berwick East, Berwick North and Berwick West with Ord wards <http://www.ukcensusdata.com/northumberland-e06000048#sthash.UTXoY7xQ.dpbs> [Accessed 10 April 2016].

spoken Scots, speak, read or write Scots?' inevitably provides outcomes incompatible to the UK Census question: 'What is your main language?' It is significant that the Census does not take into consideration key statistical information on language *skills* in Berwick, nor does it provide detailed information about speakers' use of the Scots language or Scottish Gaelic in a range of settings. Given a lack of understanding of what Scots is, 'Scots is only what I consider to be English with a Scottish accent', it is probable that the number of inhabitants in Berwick who speak Scots habitually, is far higher than three.

How, then do supporters of Berwick, manage the complex issue of accent, dialect, the Scots language and identity which surrounds the town? Here are two Trust members' comments:

R2:     My partner is from Halifax and she works in the Scottish Borders and she finds often she'll come back and she says, "What does this mean? What does this mean?" "Berwick" itself is related to Scots but also to other words that derive from the North East as well.

R1:     It has…it is known as 'Berwick' and it is heavily influenced by Romany cos traditionally the eastern borders had big travelling Romany populations. Years ago there was a Berwick Rangers end of season bash and it was a sit down meal and on the back of the menu we produced a series of selective phrases and words from the Berwick dialect.

R2:     We were sat there in the pub one day and we took fifty well known songs and tried to put them to the Berwick dialect to see if you could understand … as a stranger you may not understand them. I mean when you're talking about Romany one of the common words, it's not just a Berwick word cos they use it in South East Scotland and the North East, the word "Gadgie." When in the Czech Republic we kinda said to people "Gadgie" and they said "Gadgie...Gadgio." Gadgio means "white man" in Romany and they knew the word.

If we consider the views of participants on accent and the 'Berwick' dialect, then we can understand why such a strategy of localism is practiced by Berwickers. Language is a robust marker of social identity, capable of binding Berwickers together. That it is a 'Scottish' town based on its linguistic characteristics, is a claim which fans are keen to forgo. Members of the Supporters' Trust point to a clear linguistic boundary where 'Berwick' ends and Scots begins:

R1:     Where does it start?
R3:     You go across the border to the fishing town of Eyemouth.

R1:     Go five miles across the border.

R3:     Their accent is completely different to ours. It is much more strongly Scots than here.

R8:     I think one of the most striking examples of Scots is in Cornhill…a mile apart with a river in between and a huge difference.

R1:     If you went to any of these communities you would find they're rampant Scottish.

The use of Scots in the Lowlands and Gaelic in the Highlands is used by Berwick fans to contextualise their own unique local identity from towns across the border. Accent and dialect make a clear difference to their perspectives of Berwick itself, as this exchange revealed:

R1:     It's hereditary isn't it? It's their identity. Berwick – they'll hang on to their history.

R2:     But why have a bilingual thing when Gaelic was only ever spoken in the Highlands. It was never ever spoken south of the Highlands. Scots is a form of Anglo-Saxon English. It is not a language on its own. We use the same words with a slightly different accent. We've got the border, "Welcome to Scotland" in Gaelic. Gaelic was never ever spoken around here. I don't class it [Scots] as a language …so…I would never use it

R1:     I mean if you listen to Hawick and the local border towns even Gala they have their own language. I mean Gala has a lot of Glasgow but the Hawick accent it's unique to Hawick.

What this exchange reveals is a perception of Scots as a key marker of Scottish identity. One supporter (R2) also alludes to the use of Scottish Gaelic, a language restricted to most of the Highlands, the Hebrides and Galloway after the Middle Ages, on signage throughout Lowland Scotland. These comments are reiterated by Gaelic historian Richard Deveria, 'it is absurd for the Scottish Government to use legislation to impose Gaelic on the lowlands, where Scots has been the traditional form of speech…and where [Gaelic] is of little or no relevance'.[345] This propensity for Berwickers to distinguish themselves with neighbouring Scottish towns and people further south in Newcastle highlights that language is powerful identity marker. How then does the border shape national identity? Here are some observations from members of the Trust:

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[345] *The Courier*, 12 April 2013 <http://www.thecourier.co.uk/news/scotland/gaelic-historian-attacks-attempt-to-impose-language-on-lowland-areas-1.83908> [Accessed 25 August 2015].

R2:     I think there is a difficulty in the town when you're talking about England and Scotland… you look around here and people would cross the border every time and it's just to go to Berwick. It's not like you're crossing a national border or anything like that.

R1:     People cross the border twice a day to go to work, you know, it doesn't mean anything.

R2:     I think the people that have the problem with Berwick and can't understand the bi-national nature of the club and maybe of the town as well is that people come from afar. They say "you've got to be one side of the border or not." Well no. It's only a factor when it comes to local government because of the finance. In daily lives it isn't. I work for a local authority and I don't know anything about what goes on in my discipline across the border at all. I think when it comes to local government there is a big difference there.

R1:     I work for the NHS in Northumberland and we never go past the border…never ever.

R2:     My partner works in the Scottish Borders. She got a call out from Berwick once and said: "Well that's England! I can't come out." So she phoned the equivalent in Gosforth and the Gosforth people said, "No. No. That's in Scotland!" They didn't even know.

R8:     Well I [run] into problems sometimes [with] the two different legal systems. You have to remember which side of the border you are on to know which way you dealt with them.

For all that it holds in common with the laws of the other jurisdictions of the UK, the Scottish legal system and its distinctive character plays a key role in shaping and expressing Scottish national identity. These comments about Scots Law and Scotland's devolved NHS are interesting, as they highlight an awareness amongst 'Scottish' and 'English' Berwickers that, both legally and politically speaking Berwick, is not considered part of Scotland's 'national community'. Do the FA and SFA then view Berwick Rangers as English, Scottish or British?

R1:     We have to ask the permission of the SFA to play in the Northumberland Senior Cup.

R2:     I think that's the one thing when the border really gets in the way. We had an under 17s football team who entered into the Scottish system and we couldn't fulfil the fixtures because some lads [who] played for English clubs couldn't get international clearance.

R1:     International clearance…bizarre.

R2:     There are houses around the ground…you could get a kid who has lived in that house all his life but for some reason in the past he's played for Eyemouth or Duns and so has Scottish registration and he would have to go the same way as you sign… I don't know.

R4:     Fernando Torres to Chelsea.

R2:     It's the same process to get that kid to play for Berwick.

R1:     It delayed the season for a number of months until the paperwork could go through.

R2:     When everybody was re-building the grounds in the 80s, 90s we couldn't access grants because the Scottish FA paid their grants on geography. The English FA did it on affiliation. We couldn't get money from the English FA because we weren't affiliated to the English league but we couldn't get money from the Scottish league because we weren't in Scotland. So actually we couldn't get money for that and that was a thing that went to our MP and everything and nobody could give us an answer. And with the Heysel disaster when all the English clubs were banned from Europe we had to get dispensation. We had to say look, "We play abroad according to you every other week."

As one of England's two expatriate clubs, Berwick Rangers supporters are forced to manage the national identity question on a weekly basis. Is Berwick then 'an English club in Scotland' or 'a Scottish club in England?' Here are comments from members of the club's Trust:

R3:     I think a combination of both to be honest.

R1:     We're an English based club.

R2:     Playing in the Scottish league. We probably have more affinity with the teams that we are playing, the likes of your Stenhousemeurs and that we're in that genre aren't we? I can't think of a particular genre in England to say we are equivalent of something in England. So, we're probably a Scottish club playing in England I would say.

R3:     All the players come from Edinburgh and Glasgow…there are no local players so you've got a bunch of guys that turn up at Berwick every two weeks and then disappear again.

R1:     You interestingly hear some shouts just every Saturday from the home crowd…eh…"Fuck off, something, something you Scottish bastard." No hang on now that's our team. Yet it's aimed at the away team.

Fig. 7 – Map of Scottish League Two clubs and Scottish League One rival side Stenhousemuir Football Club (Original source: Myfootygrounds.co.uk; adapted by author)
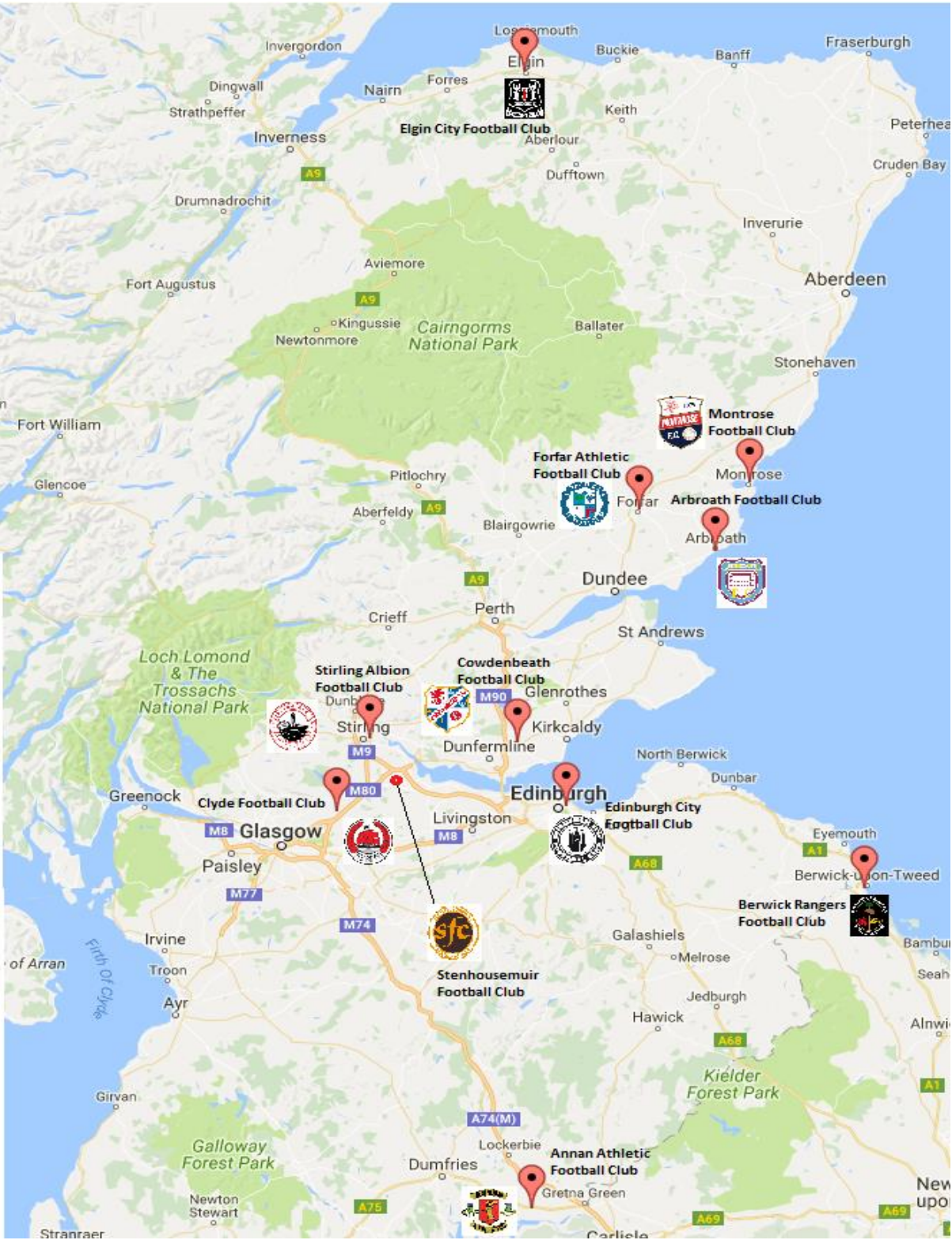
These comments illustrate the grounds on which some Berwick supporters claim that the club is Scottish or English: Berwick Rangers though English-based are represented by Scotsman. The ambiguity and distinctiveness of Berwick Rangers raises important questions: who is the community that Berwick Rangers serve? Let us start with the views from members of the Trust:

R3:     Well I think first and foremost the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, which is odd because it is a border town and I don't know what the mix of the nationality mix is. I mean I think yes it is probably something like 65 English 35 Scots…60-40 perhaps?

R2:     I think the supporters are 50-50 because we've got people who live across the border… are Scottish and support Berwick. I think the mix of the town is far more English than it was than when I was a kid…definitely.

R3:     But I think it resonates beyond the town because the eastern borders are still quite supportive of the town…I think less so in the central borders. It's an English club playing in the Scottish league, so it's got that unique aspect that attracts that type of supporter.

Again we find this sense of Berwick Rangers Football Club as 'other', as ambiguous, situated for many Scottish people living in the Scottish Borders as 'in England' but not really 'English nor Scottish'. Throughout its tumultuous history, Berwick Rangers supporters have attempted to sidestep the nationality issue by choosing to assert that they are Berwicker and often displaying either the St Andrew's cross or the St George's cross on their scarves. However, in late 2011 supporters were informed by the Scottish FA that they could no longer show the St George's cross on their scarves when attending away games following a complaint from rival club Stranraer. Officials at Stranraer informed *The Times* that there had been escalating tension at Stair Park and that Berwick supporters would be asked not to bring Union flags or the St George's cross into the stadium. Tom Maxwell, author of *The Lone Rangers*, retorted that, 'it seems particularly ridiculous when no Scottish fans get told to take down the saltire when they come to Berwick'.[346] The importance of a 'national' scarf to an English-based club playing in Scotland is clearly a sensitive issue, especially when Berwick supporters choose to identify with England or Scotland. Take these comments from members of the Supporters' Trust for example:

R1:     R2 has got a scarf with an English and a Scottish badge on it.

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[346] *The Daily Mail,* 29 August 2011 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football/article-2031458/Berwick-Rangers-fans-banned-flying-English-flag.html> [Accessed 21 August 2015].

R2:     At the time of the Home Internationals there was about 10 or 11 of us from town went up to the game [at Hampden]. Half us were English and half of us were Scottish and we all wore the colours … I wore an England hat and scarf and my mates had Scottish ones.

R8:     I've got the Scottish one!

R2:     We sell more England scarves than Scotland scarves mainly because there's more English people coming into the shop. The problem is that if you're showing England and on the other side you've got Scotland that's next to your heart and vice-versa.

The consensus between the Berwick Supporters' Club and Berwick Rangers Supporters' Trust, when discussing issues of national identity and nationalism was remarkably inconsistent:

I:      Are Berwick Rangers an 'English club in Scotland' or a 'Scottish club in England?'

R2:     Scottish club in England.

R1:     Scottish club in England. Scottish club, Scottish players.

R5:     They're in the borders, and from Edinburgh.

R2:     It's where the English system didn't want us. We are too far north.

R1:     The supporters are very staunchly English… [Away] they'll take like the Union Jack.

R2:     And take the St. George's cross as well.

R1:     They'll take the flag because the Berwick contingent is English. It is to make sure that the Scottish teams are aware that this is an English link as well.

R2:     They will start fighting on the terracing as well. I've seen Berwick fans fight amongst themselves.

R1:     Yeah they do once they start chanting Scottish stuff.

R5:     Well you've got Scottish and English fans together.

This propensity to claim partisan antagonism exists towards supporters who adhere to a particular national identity – English or Scottish – can be more systematically examined from survey data which was collected after the qualitative focus group interviews. Charges reported at Berwick matches under the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act (2012) reveal the nature and method of abuse at football grounds in Scotland and across the border in Berwick-upon-Tweed. The methods of abuse include: the use of national banners, offensive gestures, speech, and singing along with generally offensive behaviour. The

report notes that some charges contain reference to more than one category. Six charges relate to 'offensive behaviour at a match in Northumberland, England, between Berwick and Glasgow Rangers on 23rd February 2013 at Shielfield Park'.[347] Section 1 of the Offensive Behaviour Act, which applies to incidents which take place around regulated football matches 'outside Scotland', appears, designed to deal specifically with England's anomalous club. Here are some comments from supporters about the relationship between football and nationalism in Berwick:

R2:     I have a real problem with nationalism anyway. I mean I've put down that I'm British but I'm also English but I would like to be able to choose what I believe in not because of where I was born. I think nationalism is one of these things when somebody flies the flag and there is an expected thing. I mean you know the Braveheart film sort of kind of epitomised that didn't it because everybody believed that was a true reflection of history.

R3:     It was Mel Gibson showing how the anti-Englishness came up.

I:      In that case, how does identity work when you're a Berwick Rangers supporter?

R3:     I've got to be honest I mean I'm English and I went to University in Dundee. I had a real awakening because I'd always been quite ambivalent about nationalism but I remember sitting watching the Home Internationals in the hall of residences… there in the hall of residences TV rooms and the anti-Englishness was so in your face it was incredible.

This notion of anti-Englishness (R3) was, however, challenged by a 'Scottish' Berwicker (R1):

R1:     And you don't get any of that down south of course?

R3:     No you don't chief.

R1:     Yes you do!

R3:     No I'm sorry you don't.

R1:     I'm sorry you do!

R3:     Not in my experience you don't.

R1:     No?

R3:     I mean it was so aggressive almost violent it was in your face and I've never experienced anything like that in my life before and it really made me understand.

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[347] *Scottish Government Social Research* (2013)
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_JusticeCommittee/Inquiries/Charges_reported_under_OBFTC_Act.pdf>
[Accessed 21 August 2015].

R1:     We'll have to agree to disagree on that!

Sporting manifestation of Scottish, English, Irish and British nationalism is one which makes Scottish football intriguingly different from English football. So what effect does this have on Berwick Rangers? Take these comments from Supporters' Trust members for example:

R2:     I think…I think… I mean if you're talking about nationalism. I'd far prefer to see a Scottish flag at a Rangers or Celtic game rather than a Union Jack or an Irish one. One of the problems we have… I remember we took Union Jacks to St. Johnstone. It must have been twenty years ago. I was told to take them down by the police because they were offensive. And I'm thinking how the f**king hell? That's the flag of this county!

R1:     That is your national flag!

R2:     How can that be offensive?

I:      Is it treated with any animosity with other fans?

R8:     The St. George's flag… definitely.

R1:     Animosity? No it's just hatred.

That comment about animosity and hatred shown towards supporters of Berwick Rangers – England's frontier football club is interesting. Anti-English sentiment in the Scottish Borders can be traced to the region's tumultuous past and its unique identity. 'Remembering Flodden' is part of an event held annually, 'The Common Riding', as Supporters' Club members explained:

R1:     The borderers fought with the English…you just go way back into the real history…it's still there. It's still underlying and I think the Common Riding is that all the border towns have their annual celebrations that celebrates soldiers getting killed and all the wars and celebrating the whole anti-English thing.

R3:     It's very anti-English there.

R5:     There is one in Jedburgh that is very, very…

R1:     Jedburgh, Hawick, Selkirk…some of the main borders towns are very much celebrating being anti-English…sand that's kept alive every year.

It seems, then, that claims to be a Berwicker and to support Berwick is an important and frequently used form of social identity, especially when met with anti-English nationalistic attitudes of Scottish clubs and their supporters' in games across the border. Here is one example:

R1:    I think they just use that English thing as a reason.

R5:    It works both sides cos the English are just as bad.

R1:    Berwick can be equally as bad. I wouldn't say it is real animosity I don't think there is real hatred between them.

R2:    Go to some of the away games and see what animosity you get I'm telling you.

R3:    Oh it really is bad!

R2:    I've lost count of how many times I've had my parentage doubted like when I've been at away games.

R1:    I don't think that's acceptable in any sport.

R2:    I was telling somebody that was from Dundee area. He was Scottish from the Outer Hebrides and he was embarrassed by what I had to put up with from a certain guy who must have been in his 60s who was having a go at me for being English and I wouldn't bite back. "Oh" I says to him, I says, "By the way, my mother and father were married in 1954 and I was born in '61 so I cannot be a bastard"…I said "English yes, bastard no."

R1:    I mean to me that is every bit as bad as the Catholic-Protestant thing. I just think nowadays in this day and age it shouldn't be ignored.

R5:    It's like racism.

We have seen that many fans allude to how others see them, inside and outside of the club and, sometimes react (even violently) against the stereotype of being English (or Scots). This highlights the important point that national identity of fans is often asserted or denied by others. What, then, is the relationship between sectarianism and Berwick Rangers Football Club?

According to the 2014 Scottish Social Attitudes survey, almost nine in ten Scots believe that sectarianism is a problem for the country, with respondents identifying that it is a problem across the whole of Scotland. The survey, which saw football chosen as the most common factor which contributed to sectarianism, also revealed that one in two respondents believe that it is the main factor. Although Scottish teams and their fans come from a diverse range of ethnic origins

and religious backgrounds, historically certain clubs are seen to be sectarian rivals.[348] In the case of Berwick Rangers, nine supporters interviewed identified with the Presbyterian Church of Scotland or the Church of Scotland. This finding is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, Presbyterianism in Scotland is firmly rooted within the Protestant tradition. Secondly, in recent years, Scotland has become increasingly secular and as a consequence of the changing cultural status of Protestantism, those Scots who are football fans and who possess a shared Protestant heritage have gravitated towards Glasgow Rangers.[349] As Anthony May has argued, 'the process of secularization in Scotland has recast religious identities and the terms "Catholic" and "Protestant" are now associated with a number of different identity elements, including national, political, and cultural identities, amongst others'.[350] This is particularly prevalent in the case of football in Scotland and Berwick-upon-Tweed, to the extent that on 1 March 2012, the Scottish government brought into law the 'Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act'. As an organisation Berwick Rangers FC maintain that they are 'opposed to racism, sectarianism, bigotry and discrimination in any form'. This is corroborated by Superintendent Tim Smith of the Northumberland Police, who has maintained that, 'we have never arrested anyone here [at Shielfield Park, Berwick] previously for sectarian chanting'.[351]

*Conclusion*

In this chapter we have found that contradictory images of borders can co-exist concurrently in the same individual. For the fans of Berwick Rangers the border is especially complex as they feel separate from Scotland, yet are reliant on the Scottish league to follow their club. How do they express themselves in away matches in Scotland? Some supporters keen to assert their 'Englishness' clearly have a history of stirring up anti-English nationalistic tensions across the Scottish border. Firstly, at Cowdenbeath in March 2008 police and stewards, who

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[348] *Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2014: Public Attitudes to Sectarianism in Scotland* <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00471791.pdf> [Accessed 25 July 2016], pp. 1-83.
[349] *Scottish Social Attitudes Survey*, p. 13
[350] Anthony May, 'An "Anti-Sectarian" Act? Examining the Importance of National Identity to the "Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act"', *Sociological Research Online*, 20 (2), 14 <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/20/2/14.html> [Accessed 23 October 2015].
[351] *The Daily Record, 24 February 2013* <http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/two-arrested-over-sectarian-chanting-1728295> [Accessed 22 August 2015]

attempted to remove a Berwick fan's England national team flag, were met with expletives.[352] In the case of Berwick Rangers there appears little chance that a mutually acceptable agreement will be found. On the one hand, Berwick supporters remain embittered by what they perceive as the actions of over-zealous police and stewards who stop them from waving their national colours at away matches. On the other hand, it is claimed by Berwick's Scottish league opposition that the use of the St. George's flag provokes Scottish crowds. As a club spokesman has stated that, '[Berwick] do not allow flags which could be seen as sectarian or abusive, but we have no problem at all with the national flags of both England and Scotland'.[353] This zero-tolerance attitude adopted towards sectarianism is demonstrated by the immediate sacking of the Berwick U-17s captain for comments he made on Twitter about the Catholic manager of Celtic, Neil Lennon. He tweeted, 'wish that parcel bomb f****** killed Neil Lennon, the little c***'.[354]

The complaint made by Stranraer that some Berwick supporters adorned themselves with the St. George's or wave union flags in order to cause upset and who were responsible for 'sectarian tension-raising', is a claim that has also been dismissed as being 'ludicrous' by author Tom Maxwell who launched a staunch defence of Berwick and its fans. He argued, 'there have been occasions where fans have been told to take the St George's Cross down at away grounds on the basis that it might incite trouble. I doubt that Cardiff, Swansea or Wrexham fans get told to take down Welsh flags at English grounds'.[355] As the argument continues to rage I can see both viewpoints. In Wales, not only are Cardiff, Swansea and Wrexham fans allowed to put up Welsh flags at English grounds, but national identity and anti-Englishness in Welsh soccer fan culture has its own literature. In the case of Berwick, one of two English expatriate clubs, the misconceptions about where the border lies remains contentious. As for the confusion over fans' national identity, how far across the border do you really have to be to be considered "English?"

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[352] YouTube, 'Police and stewards remove Berwick fan's flag at Cowdenbeath', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0LUIUAPPSbM> [Accessed on 22 August 2015].
[353] *The Berwickshire News*, 2 September 2011 <http://www.berwickshirenews.co.uk/news/local-news/all-local-news/rangers-fans-hit-out-at-st-george-s-cross-ban-1-1820529> [Accessed 22 August 2015].
[354] *The Daily Record,* 21 April 2011 <http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/sport/football/berwick-rangers-sack-teen-skipper-1100932#idqICSVQBSX5uzmQ.97> [Accessed 22 August 2015].
[355] *The Daily Record,* 29 August 2011 <http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/berwick-rangers-fans-hit-out-1110705> [Accessed 22 August 2015].

# Chapter 5 - Case Study 2: The New Saints of Oswestry Town, Oswestry (Shropshire)

*The pragmatism and elasticity in who was deemed a Welsh club [in the period c. 1870-1890] was clearly evident in the treatment of Oswestry, a town just over the Welsh border. The club played most of its matches against Welsh opposition and appears to have been treated as part of Wales.[356]*

## *Introduction*

This chapter considers the contradictions between The New Saints of Oswestry Town and Llansantffraid FC being Welsh champions, but playing their home matches in Shropshire.

## *The New Saints Football Club: Football fandom, nationalism and national identity in Oswestry*

For over one hundred and fifty years Oswestry has sustained its national ambiguity, is it an English or Welsh club? A hybrid? British? Or a borders club? The New Saints of Oswestry Town tugs jealously first one way and then another by the lion and the dragon; obscured by inconsistencies; baffled by indecision. It is, perhaps, remarkable in itself that such questions can be asked; and there is no easy answer at the end. For some there remains only confusion. Ian Rush, Neville Southall and Michael Owen are high-profile products of the strong history that exists between north Wales, the borders and 'the putative capital' of Liverpool.[357] Geographical proximity is one obvious reason for the close relationship between the areas, as players travel from Liverpool and Birkenhead, St Helens, Wrexham, Manchester and Chester to play for TNS.

Identity among supporters, players and the coaches of The New Saints is certainly a complex issue as Oswestry has spent almost its entire existence competing in the Welsh system, with non-Welsh involvement at player, owner, and managerial levels. In the past century, the club's supporters may have developed a strong sense of Welsh identity in the context of continuous Welsh opposition, manifested through proclamations of pro-Welsh sentiment. The club has had to cope with severe threats to its identity from the rival sport of rugby league (*Croesgadwyr Gogledd Cymru Rygbi'r Gynghrair* 'North Wales Crusaders', St. Helens Saints, Widnes Vikings and Warrington Wolves), and mass support for Wrexham and English-based

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[356] Johnes and Garland, 'The New Craze', p. 291.

[357] An expression used by Neil Evans in his paper, **'**Regional Dynamics: North Wales**,** 1750-1914', in *Issues of Regional Identity: In Honour of John Marshall*, ed. Edward Royle (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), pp. 201-225 (p. 207).

football teams, such as Liverpool, Everton, Manchester City and Manchester United, whom have well-established supporters clubs in North Wales and the Welsh Marches.[358] A succession of Oswestry Town FC owners, it seems, have failed to capitalise on the club's strong Anglo-Welsh cross-cultural catchment area, which includes the historic counties of Shropshire, Denbighshire and Flintshire.

It's often said that Wales is a country accustomed to resistance that has spent its whole history resisting. Other observers have clarified this idea and come to the conclusion that in reality, it's not a matter of resistance, but rather of a constant rebirth.[359] Wales is a country which, as for example Gwyn A. Williams put it, is 'made and remade day by day and year by year' and always bounces back.[360] The 150-year history of Oswestry Town can be seen then, as a story of continual bouncing back. The philosopher Josep Ferrater Mora has said that, 'a nation cannot pass its whole life constantly being reborn, without any rest'.[361] The same applies to a club as important as TNS. Its challenge must be to create continuity with the past, which it must aim to project into the future. It is very probable, as Martin Johnes has put it, that 'our most defining feature as a people is our desire to exist as such'.[362] This too is the principal characteristic of The New Saints Football Club.

TNS's unique status as the only professional English club to play in the Welsh league will challenge/provide further support for, and build upon, findings from research into Berwick Rangers with a view to the following questions: whether the ambiguity that surrounds the national identity of people in Oswestry extends any considerable distance on either side of the England/Wales border; whether local identity is prioritized in the same way as it is in Berwick and how questions relating to localism, regionalism, nationalism, language and national identity in Wales and the Welsh Marches are received by the local community. The importance of identity claims, and moreover the receipt of these claims, remains the core of continuing empirical interest in national identity processes in borderlands on the periphery.

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[358] Many major towns and cities of the 'Welsh Marches' are either on the border, or very close to the border, between England and Wales. Principally, the Welsh Marches include: Cheshire, Shropshire, Herefordshire (all in England), Monmouthshire (Wales), the western half of Gloucestershire (England), as well as Flintshire and Wrexham (Wales).

[359] Kenneth O. Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales, 1880-1980* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981).

[360] Gwyn A. Williams, *The Welsh in their History* (London: Croom Helm, 1982), p. 200.

[361] Joan Laporta, 'The Spirit of Barça', London School of Economics (7 March 2005) <http://www.lse.ac.uk/publicEvents/pdf/20050307-LaportaJoan-BarcelonaFC.pdf> [Accessed 18 April 2016], pp. 1-4 (p. 4).

[362] Johnes, 'Every day when I wake up', pp. 52-68.

One would expect that people from Oswestry would claim an English national identity. After all, they live in a town jurisdictionally in England and in the county of Shropshire. Moreover, one might think that because inhabitants of the town live only 3.5 miles east of the Wales/England border, they would be likely to feel a heightened sense of their 'Englishness'.

Should Oswestry be in England or Wales? That was a question asked by a team of reporters from ITV regional news in 1972 when a debate erupted about which country should lay claim to the border town. A handful of residents were interviewed offering an intriguing insight:

I:     Do you consider yourself English or Welsh?

A1:    Welsh. I tell you I've lived in Essex and I've lived in Somerset and I've lived in London but I was evacuated here during the war. My two girls married two Welsh boys and the only grandsons I've got are Welsh.

I:     But you live in Oswestry, which is in England at the moment.

A1:    Oh, is it?[363]

However, two students from the Girls' Modern School did not share this view. Both stated they were English but they liked the idea of the town joining Wales and would be prepared to learn the language. Another elderly resident developed the view that it is an 'English' town:

I:     Do you consider yourself English or Welsh?

A2:    Well I can't speak Welsh so I consider myself more English than Welsh.

I:     You live in Oswestry though do you?

A2:    I do yes.

I:     What do you think about Oswestry returning to Wales as it once was?

A2:    Oh I don't think that's necessary.

I:     You'd be against it would you?

A2:    No. [364]

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[363] *The Shropshire Star*, 13 May 2015 <http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2015/05/13/watch-43-years-on-should-oswestry-be-in-england-or-wales/> [Accessed 20 April 2016]. It is important to note that the identities of the news reporters and respondents have been anonymised by ITV. 'I' is used to denote the 'ITV reporter' who interviewed the residents in 1972 whereas 'A1', 'A2', and 'A3' are used to denote the two female and the one male respondent.
[364] *The Shropshire Star*, 13 May 2015.

That comment about being more English than Welsh because of an inability to speak the language is interesting, and not uncommon, as research I have conducted in the town almost four decades later will testify. The 'language issue' in Wales and the Welsh Marches and its association with national identity has long been a topic of debate. Data from the 2011 Census revealed that people who 'can speak Welsh' are more likely to identify with a Welsh national identity (77%) when compared to those who do not speak Welsh (53%).[365] Yet, an examination of data across Local Authorities highlights significant variation. Thus, the Welsh language may not be central in choosing national identity in Wales as popular debate sometimes suggests.

Having said that, one respondent thought that Oswestry was, is, and will forever be, Welsh:

I:      Do you think Oswestry should be returned to Wales?

A3:     It is Wales. Oswestry is Wales.

I:      But is hasn't been since the Act of Union in 1536.

A3:     Maybe…but that's only what's stolen from us, isn't it?

I:      So you ignore that do you?

A3:     Of course we do…absolutely.

I:      What do you think the people would Oswestry have to say about any takeover from Wales?

I:      I think they'd appreciate it…very much.

A3:     So you don't think it would have the effect of dividing the town?

I:      No. That's not possible.[366]

Interestingly, this sentiment, it seems is reciprocated by a younger generation of residents today as Alex Wagner, aged 14, from Maesbrook (who attends an Oswestry school) testifies:

Oswestry should be a Welsh town as it has Welsh heritage. Its old name, 'Croesoswallt' is Welsh and the only reason that it is now in England was that the English had a mightier army and captured it.[367]

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[365] ESRC Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity, p. 3.
[366] *The Shropshire Star*, 13 May 2015.
[367] *The Shropshire Star*, 13 May 2015.

Being the subject of a national conflict between England and Wales helps keep the town's Welsh reputation alive, as does the awareness of its continued Welsh cultural and linguistic heritage. Supporters of The New Saints would appear to have a number of options open to them when it comes to claiming a 'national' identity. Let us consider each of the possible repertoires in turn. They could claim to be Welsh, English, British, European, or even advance some form of multi-national hybrid English and Welsh identity, as Anglo-Welsh or 'Wenglish'.

First, to what extent do supporters of The New Saints of Oswestry Town claim to be English? Birth, upbringing, ancestral ties and place of residence are the most powerful markers of national identity. If someone were to make a claim based on these markers then it would generally be accepted and upheld by others in the community in almost all circumstances. An obvious starting point is the 'legal' position, that TNS are English because Oswestry is in England. On what grounds might fans claim to be English or Welsh? Here are several claims:

I:      How did the merger of Oswestry, an English club and Llansantffraid, a Welsh club… how does it work in reality?

R4:     It's in England but Oswestry Town were founding members of the Welsh FA. A lot of people were against it…they are now because the ground is in England.

R3:     The first player to score an international goal for Wales was an Oswestry player.

I:      TNS… are they a 'Welsh club in England' or an 'English club in Wales?'

R1:     I would have thought it is more of a Welsh club…our affiliations are English and Welsh.

R2:     We're a Welsh club although we're playing in England.[368]

Making an English claim is by no means unknown in the town. Being taken for a Welsh national identity is also something supporters have to confront. On what basis do people who do that, given that juristically Oswestry is in England? Here are some examples:

I:      How would you describe the nationality of TNS to a football supporter who might be in London or Cardiff?

R2:     We're a Welsh club.

R1:     I'd say, "We're Welsh Premier League Champions."

R2:     We play in the Welsh Premier League. We're a Welsh club.

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[368] Focus group with supporters of The New Saints FC, Park Hall, Oswestry (Shropshire), 21 April 2011.

R7:     We have got both emblems on our shirt haven't we?

R6:     Welsh border.

R2:     There's no question about it…I think…if you look around this table there isn't many Welsh people.

R5:     I'm English. Born in Oswestry I was.

R1:     I was born and bred in Oswestry and I always consider myself English.

R6:     I'm Welsh. I really am Welsh!

Here we find being English asserted as a matter of 'actual fact' (because 'I'm English…born in Oswestry'), just as supporters living across the English border were keen to identify themselves as Welsh. It is interesting to note that supporters of TNS who reside in Wales do not see being an English-based club playing in Wales as a divisive issue because they believe they are close enough to the border for the club's Welsh claim to be meaningful.

The perceptions of residents that living on the English side of the border can make the opposition feel strongly opposed to their nationality are expressed in the following account:

R1:     Oswestry as a town is a good mixture of English and Welsh.

I:      So how does identity work when you're a supporter of The New Saints?

R1:     We do find that when you go away to other clubs…I won't name any clubs in particular… there does tend to be a bit of almost racial banter towards us…"You shouldn't be here, you're English! You mid-Wales sheep shaggers,"… even Welsh criticism from one Welsh lot to another Welsh lot because of Mid Wales.

R2:     The likes of Caerswys and Welshpool were in the Welsh Premier League and you used to get it there. You'd still get the same thing and they were sort of living ten, twelve miles from here and you still used to get it.

R1:     Some areas like at one time Shrewsbury and that used to have quite a bit of sort of agro between sort of cross the border English-Welsh rivalries and so on …there has always been a certain thing with Oswestry…I can remember at school and when I was younger there were always Oswestry-Chirk rivalries. We used to have proper rivalry down here when Rhyl were in the Welsh Premier League…there was rivalry like.

We have seen that supporters allude to how others see them, reacting against the stereotype of being English or Welsh. This confirms and reinforces the problematic identity status of the town. Here are some later comments from fans attempting to negotiate identity:

I:      [Are] you treated as a Welsh team or treated as an English club?

R4:     We were treated…

R7:     English really.

R1:     Probably more English.

R2:     It's a lot of jealousy. Jealousy of what we've got…there's no club in the Welsh Premier that has achieved what The New Saints have achieved.

R1:     I wouldn't say racism but it is…it is…you get that comment sometimes about being English…it's quite strange. You don't normally get that sort of comment if you lose but if you win you'd get that comment.

Here we have further indications about national identity in Oswestry. The supporters of The New Saints have to respond to being 'taken for' English because of the club's continued success in relation to Welsh clubs. This propensity to assert the Welshness of TNS is often in conflict; however, with fans' own sense of national identity, as can be seen more systematically from national identity research online and census data. According to data published by Nominet in March 2015, pride in being Welsh is strong, with almost two-thirds (65%) of adults in Wales identifying mainly or partly as Welsh, as opposed to British, with the overwhelming majority (97%) expressing pride in their heritage. Overall, eight out of ten adults (80%) affirmed that they were proud to show it, wearing items of clothing or symbols that identify them as Welsh.[369] Contrastingly, the 2011 Census revealed that more than half of residents in Oswestry East (63.8%), Oswestry South (54.9%) and Oswestry West (55.8%) classified their identity as 'English only'. 'Welsh only' identification by comparison was far weaker (7.4% in Oswestry East, 8.1% in South and 7.8% in West).[370] TNS supporters are keenly aware of how others see them, and are thus prepared to challenge mistakenly held assumptions about their nationality.

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[369] Nominet <http://www.nominet.uk/new-cymru-and-wales-domain-names-get-off-to-a-flying-start/> [Accessed 20 April 2016].

[370] UK Census Data, 'National Identity – Key Stats' for the Oswestry East, Oswestry South and Oswestry West wards UK Census Data, 'Main Language – Quick Stats' for the Oswestry East, Oswestry South and Oswestry West

R1:     We've always had a Welsh kind of… side of it to Oswestry you know.

R2:     We've always had a Welsh presence even when we played in the English system.

R6:     I didn't know that.

Having what sounds to others like a Welsh accent obviously makes it harder to claim to be English, even if you do possess other appropriate markers of an English national identity. This linguistic marker is a key reason why TNS supporters are often attributed with a Welsh national identity by 'others' and may have their claim to being English challenged:

R2:     I got called "Taff"… they used to call me Taff all the time.

R6:     I think it's because we're so close to the border they class you as Wales. Even my brother down south says that.

R2:     I worked away a lot and I was always classed as Welsh…by my accent.

R5:     Because you're living by the border.

Stressing localism can often be a way of overcoming the issue of 'being national' – English or Welsh – in this unusual identity context. Here is a dialogue between four supporters and the interviewer, two (R2 and R6) alluded to a weak sense of local identity, and this was also supported by two friends and fellow fans (R1 and R7) who were both born and bred in Oswestry:

I:      Is there a strong local identity in Oswestry?

R6:     I doubt it.

R1:     Again I think it's quite a mixed [national] identity.

R2:     It is not a strong one.

R6:     It's really half and half really isn't it?

R2:     To me it's a poor relationship.

I:      What would be the most important identity for you?

R1:     Would you regard yourself as more English, do people think of themselves as more English, more Welsh or is it quite a neutral?

R6:     It never bothers me. It's just Oswestry.

R7:     It's because Oswestry is close to the border. It's four miles from the border.

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wards <http://www.ukcensusdata.com/shropshire-e06000051#sthash.MXUWOWxB.dpbs> [Accessed 20 April 2016].

R2:     We've lived with this all our lives.

What this exchange reveals is the importance of the context in which claims to be English or Welsh are made. Furthermore, supporters openly acknowledge that local identity is largely insignificant. The result is summed up neatly by one female supporter, 'it never bothers me. It's just Oswestry'. Local identity in Oswestry is not given priority over national identity in the same manner as in Berwick-upon-Tweed, nor is claiming national identity avoided. If we consider the receipt of such claims and attributions by people in the town itself, then a number of examples demonstrate that the town's dual heritage is seen as being a valid strategy to side-step the identity issue. Oswestry 'always had that sort of joint nationality', a senior supporter explained. 'It's such a mixed community', his middle-aged son added. The rationale for this ambiguity a female supporter argued is, 'because Oswestry is close to the border'. From the outset, people by and large, adopt a straightforward way of overcoming the problem of 'local identity'. It becomes almost like a reflex reaction with subtle variations on the theme of 'it's such an amalgamated society', and the identity is 'quite a neutral' one. Residents in Oswestry find it bizarre to answer the question of national identity in terms of locality because their trivial sense of localism has little to do with their sense of nationality. Above all, the perceived duality of Oswestry has culminated in residents' weakened sense of localism. Rather than choosing to proudly associate with being local, fans choose to affirm their nationality and emphasise the Welsh identity of TNS. It seems then, that stressing the duality of Oswestry, which has strong regional links to the Welsh rural hinterland, where there were well established Welsh-speaking families well into the Twentieth Century, and which had no ancestral connections to Wales at all, is an important and frequently used form of social identity used to sidestep the problem of 'being national'.

Residency and ancestral ties are also important identity markers, as several residents explained when they discussed the 'nationality' of sportsmen past and present from the town:

I:      Ian Woosnam, is he from Oswestry… the golfer?
R2:     He was Welsh.
R1:     His parents are Welsh so he represents Wales in sport.
R2:     Graham Williams is still local… a Welsh international.
R6:     Frank Buff. Frank Buff is another one.

R2:     Frank Buff was born and bred in Oswestry. He actually opened the army stadium when it was here but he was not fluent in Welsh.

R1:     It's dependent on their parentage. I am English…but… you refer to a Scot as an Englishman or whatever they'd probably tear your head of you know? Around Oswestry I don't think there is so much national pride in that respect or so much bigotry.

The nationality of golfer Ian Woosnam presents an interesting case, as former Welsh rugby international, commentator and sports journalist Eddie Butler explained:

> It all began on these uplands…Shropshire on one side, Mid-Wales on the other. Llanymynech Golf Club above Oswestry straddles both England and Wales. [Woosnam] came from down there [Oswestry] but it didn't matter that he came from that side or that side. The important thing was where he was going. That way [to the top]![371]

The *Ian Woosnam Official Website* is certainly clear where the golfer's local, regional and national loyalties lie. Woosnam, OBE, was born in Oswestry, and he is described as 'Oswestry's'. His close association with Shropshire is also recognised, as exemplified by the description, 'Shropshire golfing legend'. However, it is the issue of national identity which remains more unclear. On the one hand, while Oswestry and Shropshire are identified as 'England', Woosnam's nationality is listed as 'Welsh'.[372] Confusion over his nationality, it seems, extended to his distinguished playing career, where at the 1991 Augusta National, Woosnam was introduced as being 'from Wales, England'.[373] Yet, being born and raised across the border in England did not change his parentage. Woosnam has always claimed a Welsh national identity, becoming the first Welshman with a major golf championship to his name.

So what sort or identity markers do residents, on the very borders of Wales use to justify individual national identity claims and that of the club they support? Having knowledge of the Welsh language is something that figures quite prominently in accounts of the nationality of the town and supporters' own identity following an English-based 'Welsh' football club, as emphasized by a father (R1) and son (R2) who are Oswestry born and bred:

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[371] Quoted by Eddie Butler, 'Wales and the History of the Ryder Cup', *BBC 1 Wales*, 28th September 2010.

[372] *Ian Woosnam Official Website* <http://www.woosie.com/> [Accessed 14 August 2015].

[373] *The Independent,* 1st April 2011 <http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/golf/ian-woosnam-a-voice-in-my-head-said-to-me-this-is-your-time-step-up-2258693.html> [Accessed 14 August 2015].

R2:     We are happy that it's come to Oswestry (Shropshire)… But we'd have gone and followed The New Saints if it had been at Llansantffraid (Powys).

I:       How you would feel today changing the name back to Oswestry Town?

R1:     As an Oswestry person I would obviously like to see 'Oswestry'…I am not a big lover of teams having a name that isn't recognisable of where they come from.

I:       How does your identity work then supporting a Welsh club?

R2:     There are quite a few non-Welsh speakers that support TNS.

R6:     I'm not a Welsh-speaker but I'm Welsh.

R2:     I was born and bred in Oswestry and I've always…English has always been my first tongue. We weren't taught Welsh in school... I'd quite often wished I had learned to speak Welsh.

R1:     I've picked up more Welsh words believe it or not through the football.

R2:     Being in the Welsh Premier yeah. You can understand a certain amount of Welsh.

Sitting on the Welsh border, it is inevitable that elements of the Welsh language have entered everyday usage in the west of the county in Oswestry, which occupies a stretch of land which used to be known as the Welsh Marches. The Welsh influence can also be heard in accents in and around Oswestry. At the town's weekly livestock market words and phrases are exchanged as Welsh and English farmers gather. Welsh can also be heard on the streets and is used by many local businesses including its many butchers, it has a Welsh language shop (*Siop Cwlwm*) and use of the Welsh language and bilingual signage can be found in national supermarket chain Morrisons in the town centre. Many local people, including David Ellis, Chairman of the Oswestry branch of the National Farmers' Union, have fought to safeguard the future of the Welsh language in Oswestry against the strong anglicizing influences of intermarriage, de-population, resettlement and the media. This campaign has been rewarded by Oswestry being chosen as the host the Powys Eisteddfod in July 2016, in order to 'promote and safeguard the values… [in a town which] has a proud and vibrant Welsh tradition… [where] the Welsh culture and language still thrives amongst its inhabitants'.[374]

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[374] Eisteddfod Cymrodoriaeth Talaith a Chadair Powys, Croesowallt 2016 <http://smala.net/steddfota/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Eisteddfod-Powys2016.pdf> [Accessed 1 May 2016], pp. 1-40 (p. 2).

Fig. 8 – Map of the Welsh language in the 2011 Census
(Original Source: Wikipedia; adapted by author)
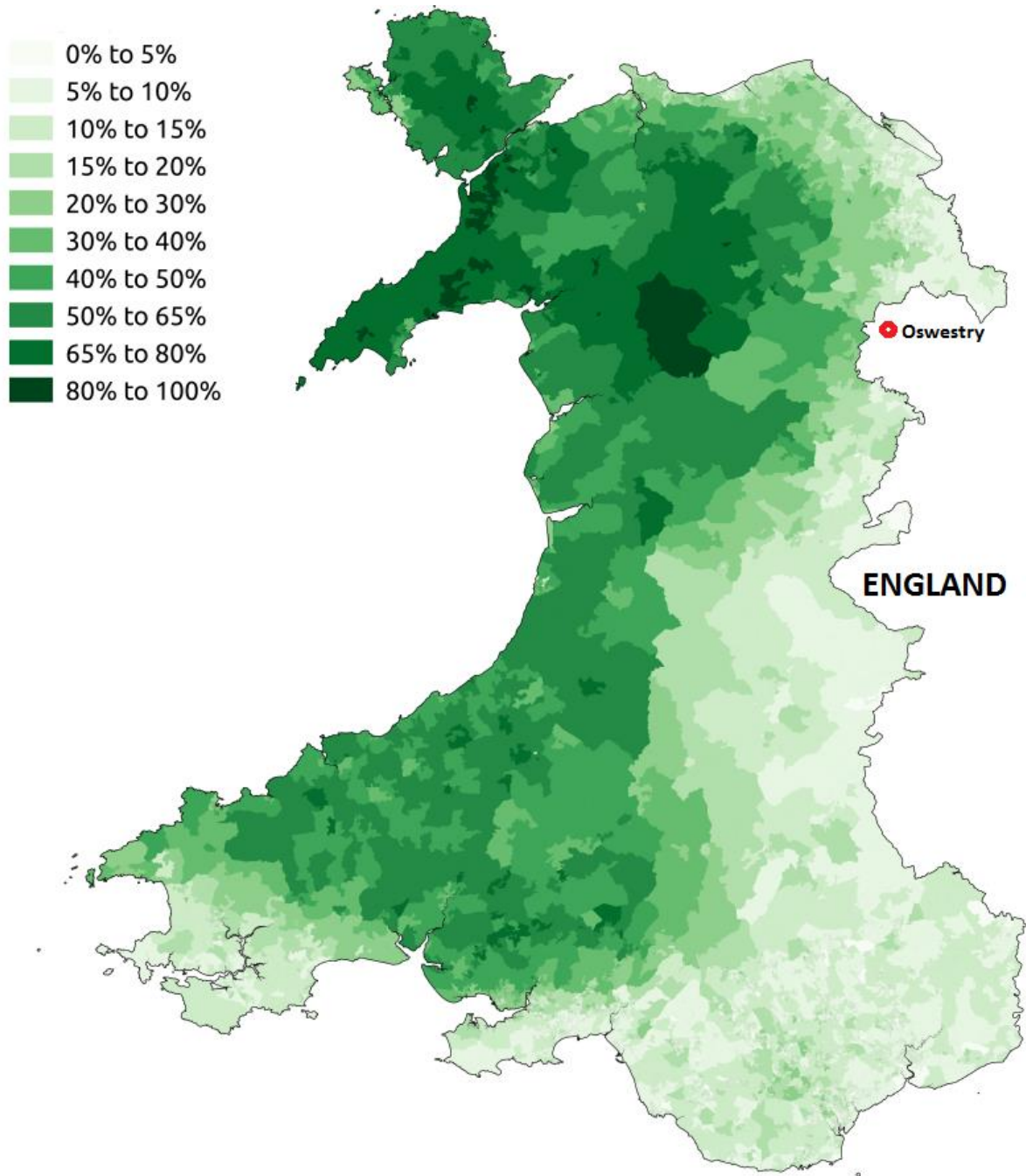


In her linguistic study of Berwick, Llamas has argued that, 'as far as the attribution of national identity is concerned, linguistic behaviour is central to a categorisation'.[375] Although the focus of this study is not primarily a linguistic one, it is important, however, to examine whether

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[375] Llamas, 'Convergence and Divergence across a National Border', p. 231.

or not fans use language to project an accentuated sense of national identity. An indication of the familiarity with the Welsh language which thrives to this day is given in the following exchange:

R2:     If you come into Oswestry on a Wednesday and you walk up the main street I can guarantee… they're speaking Welsh. A lot of people come in from the outlying villages and outlying areas, the farmers on a Wednesday and they're Welsh-speaking.

R1:     One good thing that *S4C* have now done …you can actually press the red button now and get the English which… I think has helped with a lot of clubs being on borders.

I:      What do you think of the coverage of TNS on *S4C*?

R5:     I'm English I can't understand a word.

R1:     When it was first put out it was Welsh only. So it was a case of watching it…you could watch it but you wouldn't understand a word.

R1:     We've got a lot of people in the ground and here at this club that don't speak Welsh… I think that having the option to now in English was a very, very good move.

I:      What impact do you think watching an English-based club would have on *S4C*'s Welsh-speaking audience?

R1:     I think at the end of the day fifty per cent of the players on that pitch are Welsh. You go to certain places and people show you their ignorance when they say 'Oswestry is it in Wales or is it?' They're not even sure for definite that Oswestry is English or Welsh so I don't think it makes any difference.

R4:     I've been around the local area and there is a lot more Welsh spoken in Oswestry market than Welshpool in Wales. And we're on the border.

R1:     I've never met that bloke Ally Hanner or whatever his name is. His name keeps flashing up at half time of every game.

R1's reference to 'Ally Hanner' is interesting. This is because his knowledge of the Welsh language allowed him to make a joke. After all, the phrase 'Ail Hanner' in Welsh means 'Half time' in English. Despite being born in Oswestry, R1 was clearly conscious of the prevalence of Welsh in the town and the presence of Welsh-language broadcaster *S4C* at TNS matches. Oswestry's position as a linguistic frontier town can be traced to the Early Modern Period. Henry VIII's Laws in Wales Acts 1536-1542, which had the effect of annexing Wales to England, created five new counties in the border areas. Yet, several of the marcher lordships

were incorporated into English counties. It was at this point, that the boundary between England and Wales, which has existed ever since, was effectively fixed. According to the Welsh historian John Davies, the town of Oswestry henceforth became a linguistic and cultural anomaly:

> Thus was created the border between Wales and England, a border which has survived until today. It did not follow the old line of Offa's Dyke nor the eastern boundary of the Welsh dioceses; it excluded districts such as Oswestry… where the Welsh language would continue to be spoken for centuries, districts which it would not be wholly fanciful to consider as Cambria irredenta. Yet, as the purpose of the statute was to incorporate Wales into England, the location of the Welsh border was irrelevant to the purposes of its framers.[376]

The contextual nature of the administrative frontier is expressed in the following account:

R1:     If you go along the border you've got English people living in Wales, Welsh people living in England. The border is really to be honest just a line on a map.

I:      How far across the border would you say you have to be to be considered Welsh?

R2:     I've got to be honest …I sometimes have to wonder when people ask me the question. I mean I have to think about it whether I am Welsh or English because I've lived here all my life and…you know…it's debatable really.

R1:     It's actually four miles to the border.

Awareness of the linguistic boundary is also something which figures quite prominently in peoples' accounts of the town's position on the very periphery of the nation, for example:

R1:     If you sort of go to what like Four Crosses and areas like that and then the schools get to start to teach Welsh …I don't know. Do the Chirk area and that teach Welsh?

R2:     Yeah Chirk do.

R1:     You're probably going around…probably four miles outside of town, four or five miles before you're starting to get Welsh taught in the schools.

R2:     I work with Welsh people all day every day and I'm visiting Welsh people all the time. That's why it would be an advantage to me to move there.

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[376] Quoted in John Davies, *A History of Wales* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), p. 226.

R1:     If you look at the border area it sorts of wraps very much around Oswestry as well. The border is not a straight line on a map.

R6:     You climb over that mountain over there and you're in Wales aren't you?

According to Ulrike Schmidt, 'minority groups very often refer to language as a key marker of ethnic identity, as many among those instruments explicitly require a distinctive language for a group to qualify as a minority'.[377] So how important then is the Welsh language as an ethnic identity marker for the 'Welsh minority' in the town? And how vibrant is the language in Oswestry? One useful indicator is presented through an examination of *Siop Cwlwm*'s bilingual website which states that 'the Welsh language is what joins Oswestry to Wales'. *Siop Cwlwm* also encourages residents to 'practice Welsh at our 'talking shop'.[378] During one of many visits to the town a member of staff in a Welsh language shop was asked, 'how strong is the Welsh language in Oswestry?' 'Welsh is strong in the town, more so than other towns in North Wales such as Mold', she replied. How then, I thought, do residents of Oswestry, overcome the problem of safeguarding the Welsh language when it is not taught in schools in the town itself?

> Children from Oswestry go to a Welsh playgroup just over the border and attend the Welsh secondary school there. There are many families in Oswestry which have one Welsh speaking parent and one English speaking parent. They choose to bring their children up bilingually and send their children to Welsh schools.[379]

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[377] Ulrike Schmidt, 'Language loss and the ethnic identity of minorities', *European Centre for Minority Issues*, Issue 18 (November, 2008) <http://edoc.vifapol.de/opus/volltexte/2009/2004/pdf/brief_18.pdf> [Accessed 1 May 2016], pp.1-15 (p. 2).
[378] Siop Cwlwm (the Welsh Shop) <http://www.oswestrymarket.co.uk/balcony/148-siop-cwlwm> [Accessed 1 February 2011].
[379] Field notes recorded in Oswestry (Shropshire), April 2011.

Fig. 9 – A map of North Wales
(Original source: Touristnetuk; adapted by author)



It seems, then, that claiming to speak the Welsh language is an important and frequently used identity marker in Oswestry. So how do supporters of The New Saints use language to justify the claim that TNS is a Welsh club? 'Four TNS players are Welsh speakers', asserted one proud supporter. One fluent Welsh-speaker also forms a notable presence at a turnstile at Park Hall on match days. Furthermore, a Fans' Forum, attended by national Welsh language broadcaster *S4C* saw TNS players and supporters answer questions in Welsh.[380] And yet, no bilingual signage can be seen at Park Hall. The club's ambiguous attitude towards the Welsh language is an issue which some supporters feel needs addressing:

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[380] The New Saints Football Club Fans' Forum, Thursday 17th March 2011, *The Three Pigeons*, Oswestry (Shropshire).

R1:    One time I think we had a couple of supporters that did actually used to put things up, they used to post things in Welsh …it wouldn't hurt…you know even the club history…certainly wouldn't hurt.

R2:    I think you've gotta.

R3:    I don't think necessarily a bilingual website but having bilingual signage …it's just an open handed gesture to other clubs in the league as well I mean there's supporters in Oswestry that speak Welsh you know…so I don't see why not. I think it's mostly the North and South clubs…they tend to they run through team lists in both languages. I think it is [TNS are] geared to the public and the majority of the supporter base. Most people round here… their first language would be English so we announce in English.

The 2011 Census reveals that 115 Oswestry residents claimed that their *main language* is Welsh. Let us emphasise, because it is such as crucial point that outside of Wales there remains no precise way of quantifying these language conundrums.[381] This is partly because the 2011 'language question' in Wales, which is: '*Can* you understand spoken Welsh, speak, read or write Welsh?' inevitably provides outcomes incompatible to the UK Census question, 'what is your main language?' It is significant that the Census does not take into consideration key statistical information on the language *skills* outside Wales, nor does it provide detailed information about speakers' age, frequency of use, fluency, and their use of Welsh in a range of settings. Given that Annual Population Survey (APS) estimates of language ability are historically higher in Wales than those produced by the Census, it is very probable that the numbers of Oswestry residents who have knowledge of, or are at least semi-proficient in the Welsh language is higher than 115.

While a return to Wales seems no longer a serious political option, the legacy of the town's historic position within the Welsh Marches is still called on in the process of identity formation. In some cases, a unique and genuine Anglo-Welsh border identity, equally applicable to people living in close proximity to the border on either side, is allured to:

I:    So TNS are they a 'Welsh club in England' or an 'English club in Wales?'

R1:    A hybrid basically.

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[381] UK Census Data, 'Main Language – Quick Stats' for the Oswestry East, Oswestry South and Oswestry West wards UK Census Data, 'Main Language – Quick Stats' for the Oswestry East, Oswestry South and Oswestry West wards <http://www.ukcensusdata.com/shropshire-e06000051#sthash.MXUWOWxB.dpbs> [Accessed 20 April 2016].

R2:    That's a good question.

R1:    We have to class ourselves really as…

R6:    Border…border counties.

R1:    I think well…to play in the Welsh system really we tend… I would have thought it is more of a Welsh club…we're playing in the Welsh system.

R2:    The way you've got to look at it… the Welsh FA and the Welsh international team were picked in Oswestry. It started in this area.

R1:    I don't think there are many clubs that have a special dispensation that allows them to play in two different affiliations.

R2:    Wales was in Oswestry or Oswestry was in Wales. Oswestry was in Wales? They did move the border.

R3:    Oh yeah.

R2:    They did move the border.

R3:    A few times.

R1:    Over the centuries it has skipped the border a few times.

R2:    And they pass us off as being English.

R3:    The borders changed that many times I mean you could… have been born in Oswestry at one point and…

R2:    Be Welsh.

R3:    Never left the town and be Welsh and died in England you know what I mean?

R1:    For many, many years when you look around in Oswestry you've got the old hill fort which is an old Bronze Age hill fort and that was you know…and over the years we've got various different castles and that around here that were literally protecting the border when it was swinging backwards and forwards over the centuries.

The position of Oswestry, a town on the periphery, is interesting precisely because it delimits the geographies of nations – England and Wales – as 'imagined communities'. As Stefan Berger maintains, it is 'within national histories [that], borderlands play an important role, as it is at the border that the nation defines itself most rigorously'.[382] For TNS supporters social

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[382] Stefan Berger, 'On the role of myths and history in its construction of national identity in modern Europe', *European History Quarterly,* Vol. 39, No. 3 (July 2009), pp. 490-502 (p. 497).

interaction in the Welsh Premier League sheds light on what it means to be 'English', 'Welsh' or of 'dual nationality' in a town which remains on a fluid and problematic national boundary. This gives rise to all sorts of anomalies. For example, one TNS supporter explained that while he associates with the England football team, his allegiance when it comes to rugby is with Wales:

R1:     This year I went to watch Wales in the rugby against New Zealand. I was there screaming for Wales.

Does any of this matter? It does, if you are a resident in an ambiguous border town within the historic Welsh Marches where even something as mundane as transport, insurance companies and locating the national boundary can arouse a sense of considerable difficulty:

R1:     I drive to and back across it every single day of my working life.

R6:     I'm trying to think if there's a marker.

R2:     You have a county stone on the Chirk boundary. There is a county stone. That's it. That's where you take it as.

R1:     People don't always associate Oswestry as being English or Welsh. They never know.

R8:     Twenty mile away… because Oswestry is in the Welsh Premiership I bet they'll probably obviously think Oswestry is in Wales.

R2:     Course they do. Course they do. You speak to anyone in Telford and Oswestry is Welsh…in Wales.

R1:     You get that with Oswestry all the time. Even when you ring people up you know and give them your details like an insurance company. They'll say, "Is it in Wales?" "No. It's England!" Oswestry people tend to think the English aren't really sure if it's English, the Welsh aren't sure whether it's Welsh…. nobody really knows.

The location of the town is not only significant for its inhabitants in terms of its national identity but also its regional affiliations. Situated in the top north-western corner of the county of Shropshire, the town is further north than much of Wales. Making a weak regional claim is by no means unknown in Oswestry. So what markers do residents of the town and supporters of TNS use to justify their weak bond with the county of Shropshire? This exchange paradoxically introduces a regional identity within an Anglo-Welsh context:

I:      Do you think there is a strong bond with Shropshire, being in Oswestry?

R1:     I think Oswestry has played for so long in the Welsh system now…but Oswestry as a town with Shropshire yeah.

R2:     I honestly wouldn't like to play in the English system again.

R1:     But as a town I think we're the second or third biggest town in Shropshire.

I:      Do TNS fans view this part of Shropshire as being part of Wales?

R1:     We're two mile from the border.

R6:     We're a border town.

R2:     We're right on the border.

When pressed on the issue, one found that supporters felt a sense of relative exclusion/isolation from Shropshire as a result of 'limited' media attention afforded to TNS:

R2:     During those European games I had a difference of opinion with reporters and some of the media at Park Hall because we never see them. We don't see them week-to-week when we're playing in the Welsh Premier. I'm talking about *Radio Shropshire*.

R6:     *Shropshire Star*.

R2:     The *Shropshire Star*. And I [also] had a difference of opinion with the *Shropshire Star* reporter.

R1:     That's the thing people are always glory hunting.

R2:     Our local paper is here week in week out. The *Shropshire Star*, this is where the Shropshire bit comes into it again. Once we got knocked out it was a full page.

R6:     It was on the front page wasn't it? 'Dream's over'.

R2:     Full stop. Because we got knocked out…'Dream's over'…final…forget. You know the club still exists and we've had nothing from them.

The surprisingly weak attachment of residents to a Shropshire identity is a significant finding. It appears that it is not simply close proximity to the border but a combination of unique forces – historical, cultural and demographic – in Oswestry that has led some people in the town to shy away from explicitly articulating a definitive regional identity. Another contradictory marker is the historically and culturally contested character of the town itself. In other words, because Oswestry itself has an ambiguous past and, indeed present, so its residents have

ambiguity attributed to them. Here is an example of a respondent denying any sense of a regional Shropshire identity, because The New Saints play in the Welsh Premier League:

R2:     They are talking about it being a Shropshire club... we play in Wales. We're a Welsh club. We represent Wales in Europe not Shropshire, or Oswestry, we represent Wales.

R1:     It is a hybrid club. Our affiliations are English and Welsh.

I:       So you think that the European Cup put Oswestry rather than Shropshire on the map?

R3:     It's an advert for the Welsh Premier League and the club itself. I don't think it's about putting one place or another on the map.

R1:     It put Oswestry on the map as far as exposure but not necessarily as anything else.


Fig. 10 – A map of Shropshire
(Original Source: Touristnetuk.com; adapted by author)

What these comments reveal is the importance of the context in which claims of a dual identity are made as a way of sidestepping the problem of being local or regional. So how do TNS supporters then justify the Welsh Champions' participation in the Shropshire Senior Cup?

R1:     I'd like to have seen us play in the Shropshire Senior Cup to put us up against the local big sides Shrewsbury, Wrexham even Chester.

R3:     We've been invited to play in the Shropshire Cup along with, I think, Market Drayton.

I:      Do you have to get special dispensation from the Welsh FA to play in it?

R1:     Because of being founder members [of the Welsh FA], it's like a joint nationality as it were. That's the best way of putting it.

R2:     We're affiliated to the Welsh and the English FA.

Again, we find this sense of Oswestry, as 'other', as distinct, situated for supporters at least as 'in Shropshire' but 'not really Shropshire'. Some said that they found the town as 'not truly Shropshire', partly because of 'distain' shown regionally towards Oswestry Town:

R4:     The problem that I found when I was Chairman of Oswestry Town was the Olympic (Athletics Club). If we did something wrong we were in trouble with the County Council. The Olympic could have anything. They wouldn't let us have a penny.

R2:     They never helped us. The Oswestry Town ground was council owned and Mike bought it off the council…the Council dragged their heels in.

The perception of regional alienation, it seems, acts only to heighten TNS' sense of duality. Ambiguity and distinctiveness in Oswestry is in large part jurisdictional – the town is English by geography while TNS are a Welsh club – governed by the Football Association of Wales (FAW). Such ambiguity, in the unique case of TNS may involve negotiating identities.

R1:     It works in your favour sometimes because like… with the development of the ground here and putting the pitch in we applied to Sport England…but the majority of the funding will come from whoever you are affiliated to…

R2:     Welsh.

R1:     The Welsh system. That's my understanding of it. So with the ground improvements we applied to the Welsh FA.

R2:     But we had funding didn't we from Sport England when we did it?

R4:     Sport?

R2:     Sport England…when we developed the ground to Welsh Premier League standard. We had Sport England grants and we were playing in the Welsh system.

It seems then that residents see it as distinct, even anomalous, a place a part. There is in the town it appears, some acceptance that there is a seamless web between Wales and its anomalous frontier town. The point here in not to search out the 'correct' answer to the national identity question but to consider further 'national' strategies open to residents: either claim to be British, Welsh/British or English/British. Superficially, these would both appear to offer solutions to the problems of claiming an unequivocal English or Welsh identity. However, one TNS supporter allured to fans choosing to identify with both Wales and England. For example:

R2:     A lot…look towards having dual nationality cos …perhaps their mother or their father was Welsh but living so close together… they'd have one parent as Welsh.

One might ask, why don't residents side-step the legal position that Oswestry is in England by simply claiming an overarching British identity? This is not altogether clear. However, I did, in fact, encounter some examples, as below, of residents doing exactly that:

R2:     I think we represented Wales.

R1:     I don't know. I think…I put on the form we filled in before for you know I put that I was English and British.

R7:     Wales is part of Great Britain…we're in Britain.

R1:     You know I would consider myself British.

R7:     We are.

R1:     I am a Home Nations person so if we are representing Great Britain then great.

R6:     Yeah. I'd agree with you.

R1:     I don't just necessarily just focus it down to have to represent England, have to represent Wales. I don't care. We are representing our league in Europe.

The idea of a British 'umbrella' identity, emphasising citizenship, appeared often in the participants' information forms. Yet, there was 'evidence of tentativeness, and uncertainty',

regarding whether they or their own country – England or Wales – was 'really' European.[383] As Haller and Donnan point out, 'borders [continue to] act as markers of identity, are instruments of state policy, and delimit state sovereignty'.[384] Despite the fact that the European Union comprises of 28 member states, in the Celtic borderlands, 'the nation [and nation state] continues to be the primary reference for political identity.' [385] For example, two-thirds of fans described themselves as 'Welsh-British' or 'English-British', and of these by far the largest proportion – 67 per cent – said they were 'Welsh-British'. Of the three remaining supporters one (a fluent Welsh speaker) identified as being 'Welsh' and two as 'English'. A cursory examination of the 2011 Census reveals a different picture, however. Only 1.0 per cent of residents in Oswestry West, 0.8% in Oswestry South and 1.9% in Oswestry East identified as being 'Welsh and British only'. 'English and British only' identification by comparison was far stronger (7.4% in Oswestry West, 7.5% in Oswestry South and 8.3% in Oswestry East), while 'British only' was even stronger still (17.9% in Oswestry West, 19.0% in Oswestry South and 14.5% in Oswestry East).[386] Paradoxically, 'British' is often seen as synonymous with 'English', and as such is not a neutral solution to the question of national identity as a Saints' supporter. The existence of competing forms of 'being national' – has largely led to a problematizing of national identity.

The moments when the "English" have rallied behind the national flag have been scarce. For much of the last two decades politicians in Westminster have avoided the 'English question' with former Conservative Party leader William Hague labelling 'Englishness' as 'the most dangerous of nationalism that can arise within the UK'.[387] Over the past thirty years, football has rarely featured in the wider debates about the construction a contemporary form of civic rather than ethnic nationalism. Yet, the English national football team offers one of the very few civic institutions which form a focus for the construction of England's 'imagined community'. But what is the state of the English football nation? In the UK, a peak audience of 23.2 million viewers (77% share) watched BBC One's coverage of England's loss to Italy on penalties in the Euro 2012 Quarter Finals. Two years later 20.3 million also tuned in to watch England lose to a

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[383] Alistair Ross, 'European Identities: The borderlands', in *Understanding the constructions of identities by young new Europeans : kaleidoscopic selves* (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2015), pp. 119-160 (p. 141).
[384] Haller and Donnan, p.14.
[385] Haller and Donnan, p.14.
[386] UK Census Data, 'National identity – Key stats' for the Oswestry East, Oswestry South and Oswestry West wards <http://www.ukcensusdata.com/shropshire-e06000051#sthash.MXUWOWxB.dpbs> [Accessed 20 April 2016].
[387] *BBC News*, 9 January 2000 < http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/596703.stm> [Accessed 20 May 2012].

Luis Suarez inspired Uruguay during the group stages of the 2014 World Cup.[388] However, the English nation itself, and its identity continues to shift between 'Britishness' and 'Englishness'.

So how does The New Saints manage the identity question when representing Wales' 'imagined community' in Europe? Here are some examples which supporters gave, when presented with photographs of flags used during The New Saints' European Champions League matches against Bohemian FC of the Republic of Ireland and R.S.C. Anderlecht of Belgium:

R2:     There aren't any Welsh flags.

I:       What flags are there?

R8:     Irish.

R1:     They felt they were representing Ireland in European competitions. So they were proud to be Irish. There were Welsh flags on the TV weren't there?

R2:     The New Saints…green and white.

R1:     There are a couple of hybrid flags going around, George cross and Welsh dragon.

R8:     Did we always put flags up?

R5:     Yeah in Anderlecht.

R1:     I think it's because we've got that split supporter base…we've got English-Welsh so you've got the mixture of the two flags. You've got the England supporters that like to wave the English side of the club and you've got the Welsh supporters that like to highlight the Welsh side…so a few different flags that have been made up by people.

R2:     I've not seen any of the flags that are on here.

R1:     I've seen a few of them at home games and away where they've got the George cross with a dragon in the corner and the TNS badge.

*Conclusion*

The claim that The New Saints Football Club represents the nation, Wales' 'imagined community' in Europe, is itself a paradox riddled with complexities. The 'nation' that supporters of TNS allured to ended not at Wales' administrative border with England, but east of the town itself. In practice, there was little evidence found to suggest the nationality of the town is split

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[388] *BBC News*, 25 June 2012 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-18577671> [Accessed 27 July 2016]; *Campaign*, 20 June 2014 <http://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/itv-attracts-highs-203m-viewers-englands-defeat-uruguay/1299816> [Accessed 27 July 2016].

evenly down the middle. If anything, the collective characteristic of supporting the Saints was often in conflict with an individual's own identity. Paradoxically, fans asserted the hybridity of the club, but most identified as either Welsh-British or English-British. However, Census data indicated that residents in the town, some of whom are presumably supporters, thought of themselves as English, but simply because that's where Oswestry had ended up jurisdictionally.

This chapter has revealed a sound understanding of the processes of identity claim, attribution and receipt in contexts where the vast majority of supporters do claim a national identity. These identity claims and attributions are often based on various combinations of the markers of birth, ancestry, residence, upbringing and commitment to supporting The New Saints, backed up by other markers. Tom Maxwell's book *The Lone Rangers: An English Club's Century in Scottish Football* erroneously asserted that Berwick are 'England's only expatriate football club…a side for whom every fixture is an international'.[389] This case study reveals that Berwick is not unique, for in the 2005/06 season The New Saints famously played reigning European Champions Liverpool in a UEFA Champions League Qualifying round, with the matches broadcast live on ITV2 to a national television audience. In contrast to Berwick-upon-Tweed and Berwick Rangers, Oswestry's unique national status presented a footballing first within a UK context: two English sides competing to represent the 'nation' in Europe – Liverpool (England) and TNS (Wales). While it may have been a Steven Gerrard inspired Liverpool that progressed, Liverpool's four-year absence from the Champions League contrasts with the fortunes of The New Saints who, arguably, continue to represent England's 'national community' in Europe.

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[389] Maxwell, *The Lone Rangers,* back cover.

# Chapter 6 - Case Study 3: Hay Saint Mary's Football Club, Hay-on-Wye (Powys)

*Lost Host of Host, asleep on High*
*Awake and cast a kindly eye*
*On independent Hay-on-Wye*[390]

*First verse of the Hay-on-Wye 'national' anthem*

## Introduction

This chapter evaluates the effects of Hay St. Mary's continued participation on both sides of the Wales-England border, which has acted to create tension between two competing levels of consciousness: between Hay being regarded as something separate and different when competing in England, yet at the same time being regarded as 'borderish' and anglicized by Welsh-speaking opposition in Wales.

## Hay St. Mary's Football Club: Football fandom, nationalism and national identity in Hay

Welsh singer/songwriter, author and broadcaster Cerys Mathews has argued that, 'people in Hay are very discerning, very special. I think that comes from it being a Welsh border town. They are incredibly independently minded places'.[391] Place attachment and a strong sense of local belonging are distinctive characteristics of members of the town's football club, Hay St. Mary's. Hay supporters relate easily to issues of territorial identity, and most supporters put greatest emphasis on the importance of the town, which can hardly be overemphasized in dealing with the national identity issue. Here are a number of examples to give a sense of 'localism':

I:      Do you feel Hay has a strong sense of local identity?

R6:     It's Hay.

R7:     It's Hay

R1:     Yeah absolutely.

R2:     I think there's an identity. You know the team wore the kit and were proud to wear it and the community were involved in it because they went to watch.

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[390] Guy McDonald, 'Welsh Marches - Hay-on-Wye and around', in *England*, by Guy McDonald (London: Cadogan Guides, 2003), pp. 557-559 (p. 557).
[391] *The Telegraph,* 3 June 2011 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/hay-festival/8556321/Hay-Festival-day-nine-as-it-happened.html> [Accessed 27 October 2015].

R6:     It's just local.

R2:     I would say, "We're more Hay".[392]

This distinct sense of local identity amongst members of Hay St. Mary's Football Club is not given priority over national identity in the same manner as Berwick Rangers, nor is claiming national identity avoided. Hay St. Mary's do not find it difficult to answer the question of national identity in terms of local identity because their strong sense of localism has little to do with their sense of 'nationality'. Why does there appear to be ambiguity around the identity of Hay, an ambiguity that permeates and has a complicating effect on the ways in which the town's inhabitants construct their own sense of national identity? The town's identity owes much to its history and geography, and the persistence of certain forms of cross-border associational life. Interestingly, Hay St. Mary's FC plays in both the English and Welsh leagues. The result in national identity terms is summed up neatly by these supporters:

R1:     I would class us as a Welsh club. Our first team at the moment are playing in England. Our reserves are playing in Wales. We live in Wales. We're a Welsh club.

R2:     Essentially Hay is a community football club that has roots in Welsh football culture.

I:      Are Hay St. Mary's a 'Welsh club in England' or an 'English club in Wales?'

R2:     Welsh club in England.

R4:     Welsh club in England.

I:      How would you describe, again, the nationality of Hay St. Mary's to a football supporter?

R2:     I know of our history they've played in Wales, England, Wales, England, England, Wales. It just happens to this time in the history of Hay that we're in England. I think.

This is an interesting account given that one supporter (R2) alludes to how the pendulum has swung throughout the club's history between two nations: England and Wales. What about the attitudes of the FAW? How has this impacted on supporters' sense of identity? Here is an example, with added tension over the perception that Hay are a football club in 'no man's land' between Wales and England, or 'part of Wales but not really wanted':

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[392] Focus group with members of Hay Saint Mary's Football Club, Hay-on-Wye (Powys), 15 May 2011.

R2:  Phil Woosnam [Central Wales FA] came here and said, "If you want to play in Hereford you can do that." He said that to us up there (points towards the pitch). "Don't worry you'll get our support. We don't really want you in the Welsh league."

The point of this account is that it is used to justify a position. It represents justification for Hay's claim to participate in England which emanates from a sense of alienation from Wales. As Romanucci-Ross and DeVos have pointed out, groups are inherently expressive in that the identity of a group always involves emotional, expressive needs.[393] The perception is that antipathy from the FAW is due to the town's relative geographical isolation which makes mid-week away fixtures for teams in the Mid Wales League undesirable and unmanageable. This, supporters believe has seen the Central Wales FA 'encourage' Hay St. Mary's to compete across the border in Herefordshire. It is important to explore then, how a 'Welsh' club who enter their first team in Herefordshire's Premier League are viewed from 'south and mid Wales'. Several supporters discussed this 'anomaly':

R1:  Of course we're a Welsh affiliated club. We have to field a side in Wales. So if we went down to one club side that side would have to play in Wales. It's an argument that a lot of us are annoyed about because it seems bigger clubs are treated different.

R2:  There's always been a derogatory look on Hay St. Mary's because we're the furthest club towards the border. People don't like us in Mid Wales – in the bigger part of Wales – because they've got further to travel. They don't realise they only have to do it once a year and we have to go all the rest of the places. But there has been a derogatory thing from the Board of Central Wales [Football Association of Wales].

R1:  It's an awkward one for us because it's still ongoing; we've got solicitors involved and the courts. They wrote comments in an article which are not true. They [the Central Wales FA] said that we withdrew a team and entered the Hereford league. Not true. We were already in [it]. How long have we been in the Hereford Leagues?

R6:  Three years.

R1:  Another thing they said was basically insinuating that we had gone in had grant money and done a runner. We did the work with some local builders – they've been paid. We've

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[393] L. Romanucci-Ross and G. DeVos (eds.), *Ethnic Identity, Creation, Conflict and Creation* (Walnut Creek, California: Altamira, 1995), pp. 370-73.

never had grant money. That's another ongoing argument of ours. The money was from the season we were in the [Welsh] league and fulfilled our fixtures.

R4:     And we've still got a Welsh team.

R3:     In an ideal world we'd still be in the South Wales Mid League.

In August 2010, Hay St. Mary's were issued a £400 fine by the Central Wales FA following their resignation from the Mid Wales League. Although Hay had made assurances that as a club they would respect the Welsh league by fielding its strongest side, Phil Woosnam, the Secretary of the Central Wales FA, remained very critical of the border club:

> In the past such decisions have been based on the recommendations of the regional association, but the Welsh FA are now considering taking all powers for such decisions. Obviously the fact that Hay developed their facilities, while enjoying the benefits of Welsh league membership, only to join the English system, has highlighted that something needs to be done. I do not think that a club based in Wales should be able to enter a team on both sides of the border.[394]

Woosnam's comments that Hay should not be able to enter a team on both sides of the border are considered unfair by Hay St. Mary's supporters. Firstly, Hay had already been part of the Herefordshire football set-up for three years and prior to the demise of Hereford United (Hay's closest city) several youngsters had even gone onto play for Hereford's under 18s team. Secondly, owing to the relative isolation of Hay as a town and the considerable distances participation in the Mid Wales League necessitated, players found the mid-week journeys to away fixtures both unmanageable and discriminatory, as these fans have revealed:

R3:     We just weren't able to field a team in it.

R1:     You know it was hard when you had all those players being sent to places like Llansantffraid on a Wednesday night – 84 miles.

R2:     Well exactly and that was down to the fixtures secretary which is what I said about them not wanting us there. It was quite clear to us at the time that they didn't really [want us. They] tolerated us put it that way. Then all of a sudden… we're in shit.

R1:     Like you said every team would come here and said, "Oh my god how far is this?"

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[394] *The County Times*, 3 December 2010 <http://countytimes.co.uk/news/96352/cross-border-question-for-faw.aspx> [Accessed 28 October 2015].

R2:     "How far as well? Hang on, we have to come to all of you lot!"

R1:     Every other week for Hay.

This conversation highlights that identity in Hay is complicated by its geographical location. The town lies just within the Welsh side of the border with Herefordshire, England, which is demarcated by the Dulas Brook. Where the brook joins the River Wye just to the north of the town, the border continues north along the river. The village of Cusop lies on the English side of the brook. While the county boundary is marked by the River Wye, the national boundary follows the brook along a small valley past Cusop Dingle. Hay is what Raymond Williams termed 'Border Country', and the town operates in a fascinating, low-level identity crisis: Welsh or English? Part Welsh, part Hereford or part West Country? So how do supporters manage the identity question? For some supporters, the Dulas Brook is seen as significant, mainly because it forms a national boundary between Wales and England:

I:      What is the next village?

R1:     Cusop.

I:      Is that England?

R1:     Yep.

R4:     I can see it from my window.

R1:     I can step out of bed into Cusop. It's a brook.

R2:     And to be fair most of us shop in England because the Co-op is on the corner.

R1:     That's it. There's a brook. That's like Wales, that's England. It's got 'Welcome to Wales', 'Welcome to Hay-on-Wye' as you're coming in from that way.

R2:     Are you in Wales now?

R4:     England I'm in. But if I jump the brook I'm in Wales.

R3:     You're English!?

R2:     No. He didn't say he was f****ing English. He said his house is in England.

This use of rational explanation is used to reinforce the point that, while one supporter (R4), lives in the adjoining English village of Cusop (and was born in Hereford County Hospital), supporters who live in the town don't necessarily think of Cusop residents as being English. They claim, however, that Cusop is 'England' and Hay is 'Wales'. It is significant that

in the case of the tiny town of Hay, two 'nations' are demarcated by a national border which is barely noticeable. This 'anomaly' continues to make identity difficult to negotiate.

At the same time, to further complicate the issue of national and regional identification, Hay-on-Wye is nominally, though of course not jurisdictionally, a postal town in the English county of Herefordshire. Ian Beesley, the chairman of the board which advises *Royal Mail* on running its address database, has said that in postal terms the use of county names in an address is an unnecessary 'vanity attachment'.[395] It can be argued, however, that county identity is part of a historically rooted sense of loyalty, heritage and belonging to a place and people who live there. It is hardly surprising given Hay's curious Anglo-Welsh location and postcode that supporters of Hay St. Mary's regard themselves as being between two counties: Powys (Wales) and Herefordshire (England), as these fans' accounts highlight:

R2:     We've all got English postcodes. We've all got Herefordshire postcodes.

R4:     You can go quite a way into Wales and still have HR.

R8:     Can you?

R2:     Yeah. Yeah.

R6:     Three Cocks it changes.

R8:     Does that become Powys then?

R6:     'LD' is 'Three Cocks' yeah.

R8:     That's quite a way though.

R6:     Because they get their post from Brecon don't they?

There are examples of all sorts of anomalies, some a reflection of the postcode confusions, such as that HR is the Herefordshire postcode, but Hay is jurisdictionally in Wales. One supporter (R6) was keen to point out that Three Cocks, which lies around five miles west of Hay and the Anglo-Welsh border represents the first village with a 'Welsh' postcode. Does any of this matter? The Welsh sociologist Dafydd Evans certainly thinks so. He has argued that 'features as mundane as telephone and postal codes can plausibly be used by people to explain national belonging or exclusion [because] symbolic boundaries affect the articulation of national

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[395] *The Telegraph,* 31 July 2010 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/royal-mail/7919253/Counties-to-be-axed-from-postal-addresses.html> [Accessed 27 October 2015].

identity'.[396] Furthermore, the *Association of British Counties* suggests that the historic counties of Great Britain and Northern Ireland remain important markers of identity. Not only are they fundamental to our culture but they are an undeniable part of our history and important cultural identities. Moreover, they are sources of identity and affection to many people.[397] This is particularly evident in Northern Ireland where the town and parish are key focal points around which sporting rivalries and other forms of local identity are built and most people feel a strong sense of loyalty to their native county, a loyalty which also often has its clearest expression on the sports field. So how do Hay St. Mary's fans manage the club's association with a parish church which declares that it 'stands firmly in the Catholic tradition of the Anglican Church?'[398]

R1:     I would say like most clubs a hundred odd years ago when they were invented and named after the local church. Our church is Saint Mary's, the church in Presteigne is Saint Andrews's and several other clubs so I would say we're named after the church.

I:      Is there a strong relationship?

R1:     No.

R2:     No.

I:      What denomination is it?

R2:     Church of England.

I:      So why is the nickname 'the Saints' important to Hay St. Mary's?

R1:     I don't know really that's just we've always been called 'the saints' ever since I've been involved, since I was a kid coming here, my grandfather was Chairman before me… we've always been known as the Saints.

R3:     To be fair. I didn't know it was the Saints.

R5:     A different era expression.

R2:     And certainly the Junior Club doesn't have Hay St. Mary's attached to it. It's Hay.

As this exchange reveals, in an increasingly secular Welsh society, religion and religious ideas have become less important. Despite the fact that Hay St. Mary's is named after Hay St. Mary's Parish Anglican Church, supporters of Hay have a weak attachment with the church.

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[396] Evans, 'How far across the border', p. 130.
[397] *Association of British Counties* <www.abcounties.co.uk> [Accessed 29 October 2015].
[398] Hay St. Mary's, Hay-on-Wye <http://www.saintmaryshay.com/page9.html> [Accessed 25 July 2016].

Interestingly, R2 allured to the Church of St. Mary's as being 'Church in England', yet Hay Church belongs to the deanery of Greater Brecon in the Diocese of Swansea and Brecon, and is part of the Church in Wales.[399] Paradoxically, then, Hay St. Mary's, a Welsh club whose first eleven play in England continue to represent a church disestablished from the Church of England in 1920, and which has a strong Welsh liturgical, theological and spiritual heritage.[400]

Catrin Stevens in her 2006 'Wales Identity Day' survey found that despite a 'common bond' of shared passion for Wales there are clear identities in the four regions: South East Wales, Mid Wales, West Wales, and North Wales, based on their local heritage.[401] People in Mid Wales place the Welsh language as the key to making their region unique, choosing the father of Welsh nationalism Owain Glyndwr 'as their ideal ambassador for the area'.[402]

Despite its close association with Powys, supporters of Hay St. Mary's Football Club largely feel alienated by the county. This is forcing them to look twenty miles across the border to Hereford and Herefordshire for a 'regional' identity.

R2:     Very few people from south-county, south Powys get into Mid Wales teams.

R1:     We had a letter saying 'do you want to nominate anyone to play for Powys?' We said, "We've got two boys, cracking players," and we sent their names off and then about a month later the team come out which was selected – they hadn't even looked at them.

R2:     That was always the case because 'he was from up there'.

R8:     It's so prejudiced innit?

R1:     We are over this way. You see these guys they represented football for Herefordshire when really they should have been playing in Wales being this side of the border.

Whilst the significance of Hay St. Mary's continued lack of representation in Powys county teams might barely register with members of the Central Wales FA it is to latent aspects of 'alienation' that supporters chose to refer to in accounting for national feeling. This does surface occasionally as overt instances national identification and categorisation. One Hay

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[399] *The Church in Wales* <http://www.churchinwales.org.uk/structure/places/benefices/?id=519> [Accessed 25 July 2016].

[400] Gareth Elwyn Jones, *Modern Wales: A Concise History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 281.

[401] Catrin Stevens, 'Identity quest for Wales' regions', *BBC News*, 24 November 2006 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/6179648.stm> [Accessed 20 October 2015].

[402] *BBC News*, 24 November 2006.

supporter (R8) alludes to the manifestation of antipathy shown towards Hay St. Mary's, which equates to prejudice and 'discrimination' at both a regional and national level.

Even something as seemingly mundane as coverage in local and regional newspapers in Brecknockshire and Radnorshire does matter, as these Hay St. Mary's supporters observed:

I:      Have you received coverage in the local media in England and Wales?

R1:     Yes.

I:      Which ones?

R7:     *The Hereford Times*.

R3:     We wouldn't go much further than the English than that.

R1:     You get *The Hereford Times*, *The Brecon and Radnor*, *The Mid Wales Journal*…*The County Times*.

R6:     The Cambrian?

R1:     *The Cambrian News.*

R2:     We have been in *The South Wales Journal* as well on occasion.

I:      Did some of the ones on the Welsh side just cover the team that plays in Wales or do they cover the team that plays in England as well?

R3:     *The Radnor* covers both and the *Mid Wales Journal*.

Again, we find this sense of Hay-on-Wye as a town as 'other', as distinct, situated for many Welsh at least as 'in Wales' but not 'really Welsh'. The theoretical paradigm of 'centre versus periphery' introduced by Johan Galtung describes the rise of regional areas outside the previously identified 'centre'. [403] As Llamas has noted, border localities 'may be at the centre of their own borderland region which may straddle the political divide and may include localities in close proximity to both sides of the border'.[404] This essentially allows localities on the periphery of nations to become centres of regions themselves. Nonetheless, in these regions sharp inter-group categorisations may remain, as these supporters alluded to later in the same interview:

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[403] Johan Galtung, 'A structural theory of imperialism', *Journal of Peace Research,* Vol. 8, No. 2 (1971), pp. 81-117.

[404] Llamas and Watt, *Language and Identities*, p. 238.

R2:     Press coverage? *The Powys County Times* are a bunch of t***s. Number one. It's true! The year we won Mid Wales League South the headline on the back page was 'Rhosgoch [Builth Wells, Powys] were runners-up'.

R1:     Yeah it was.

R2:     You had to go to the ass end of the back page to find out, 'by the way Hay won it'.

R1:     That's true that is yeah.

R2:     So I don't like Brecon or Radnor for the coverage they give us. *The County Times* promised us we would get in it, and they said when you get into the Spar [Mid Wales League] then you'll get regular. You've started me off you know that don't you?

The issues raised by these last comments illustrate that whilst ordinary features of locality reinforced a sense of national distinction and belonging for some, other supporters referred to the local and regional media as undermining or rendering a sense of national belonging problematic.

It is interesting that Hay's integration with parts of Herefordshire was rarely reported as 'blurring' the distinction between the national territories. An affinity to Powys was also used as a basis for describing the town as 'Welsh'. Here are some comments which reflect this:

I:      Is there a strong association with Powys? Do you feel associated with the county?

R3:     Well I think with Powys you know.

R1:     Yeah I mean as kids when you represent football as a junior you would have played for Powys round here. Powys is what we come under the banner of.

R5:     At particular ages though then there are some that drift into the Herefordshire system.

R1:     That's right yeah.

R5:     Because it seems to run out at a particular age.

R2:     There had been county sides which had traditionally been picked from 'north' county. In fact in the fifteen years I was there I don't remember barely any of them where we did get players [from south Powys] in.

What we have seen here is that for Hay St. Mary's to be successfully be narrated as Welsh, supporters needed an 'other' to which it could be compared. In this context that 'other' represents the remaining football clubs in Powys 'other' than Hay. As regards to regional identity, there appears then, to be an ambivalent affinity in Hay-on-Wye to Powys (Wales) and a

weak allegiance to Herefordshire (England). Hay is constructed as a place on a 'real' border; historically and culturally distinctive and yet marked by political and geographic marginality. The perception that Hay may be considered distinct or 'less Welsh' did not impinge upon supporters' own sense of national identity. Indeed, raising the issue was seemingly met with bemusement as if the response was self-evident. Here is an example:

R1:     We're an English-speaking town.

I:      Would you rather Hay received coverage on the *S4C* website?

R1:     No I don't. We beat a side up here in the Welsh Cup. We did really well. We had a couple of wins didn't we? And we were then on the live draw. And it came on and it said: 'Y Gelli' and we all went, "Who's that?" We were all googling this bloody team.

R2:     That's us!

R5:     It took me ten years to realise that was the name.

In Hay-on-Wye around a third of residents (30%) identify as 'Welsh only', the proportion of Welsh speakers is relatively low. It is perhaps significant that, in the 2011 Census, only 58 (6.0%) out of 961 residents aged 16 and 64 were enumerated as being able to speak Welsh.[405] The Welsh language skills of residents aged 3 years and over present a more positive picture, however. Almost two thirds of residents (62%) aged 16 to 64 stated that they possessed one or more Welsh language skills. Having said that, among residents aged 3 to 15, this dropped to around a tenth (12%). Worse still, only one in twenty residents aged 3 to 5 were enumerated as 'able to speak Welsh', which dropped to one in two hundred for those aged 65 and over. This can largely be attributed to two factors: a largely English-born population (58%) and the absence of a Welsh language primary school in the area. Although Welsh is taught in Hay-on-Wye County Primary School (7-11), residents of secondary school age (11-16) have the option of attending Gwernyfed High School, Brecon, Powys (Wales) or Fairfield High School in Peterchurch, Herefordshire (England). Given Fairfield High School's status as one of the top state schools in England, parents in Hay are forced to make the conscious decision of whether or not they want their children to be educated in Wales or to send them across the border, where the teaching of Welsh is not a statutory requirement. A number of Hay St. Mary's fans confirmed this practice:

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[405] UK Census Data, 'Quick stats – Main language', 'Key Stats – Welsh profile' and 'Welsh language skills' for the Hay ward <http://www.ukcensusdata.com/hay-w05000304#sthash.xOElLcfK.dpbs> [Accessed 20 April 2016].

R1:   There's a secondary school six miles that way.

R8:   Gwernyfed.

R1:   Which is in Wales and one that way which is in England…. 10 miles.

R2:   Fairfield.

I:    Where do children tend to go to secondary school?

R1:   I would say 85 per cent would go to Gwernyfed.

I:    Are they teaching Welsh in the local primary school?

R8:   Yeah. I think Hay School is fantastic.

R3:   Saying that we did Welsh [at Hay Primary and then Gwernyfed High School] for about probably about eight years and then all of a sudden we had to drop it at the end.

R2:   You didn't have a chance. You had no choice but to drop it.

R3:   It was the biggest joke ever really to be honest.

R2:   They got to Gwernyfed, they did four year at high school and when it came to GCSE they said, 'right we're gonna concentrate our Welsh languages courses with Year 7. And Year 11 we'll put you in for it if you want'. The year above didn't have a choice. They could sit it they just couldn't have any lessons on it. They didn't have a teacher. They allocated the teaching hours elsewhere. That wasn't normal. It's just bullshit!

R8:   But it is compulsory. It is compulsory.

If we consider the attitudes of fans of Hay St. Mary's towards the Welsh language and their own national identity, then we can understand why such a strategy of localism as practiced by those who consider themselves as 'just Hay', might often be met with scepticism. What strikes the casual visitor is that far from showing antipathy towards the teaching of the Welsh language, residents in Hay-on-Wye feel let down by the education system in Wales which they believed has not fulfilled its legal responsibility: to equip 11-16 year old residents in this unique town with skills in the national language of Wales: Welsh.

Fig. 11 – A map of Powys
(Source: propertysurveying.co.uk)
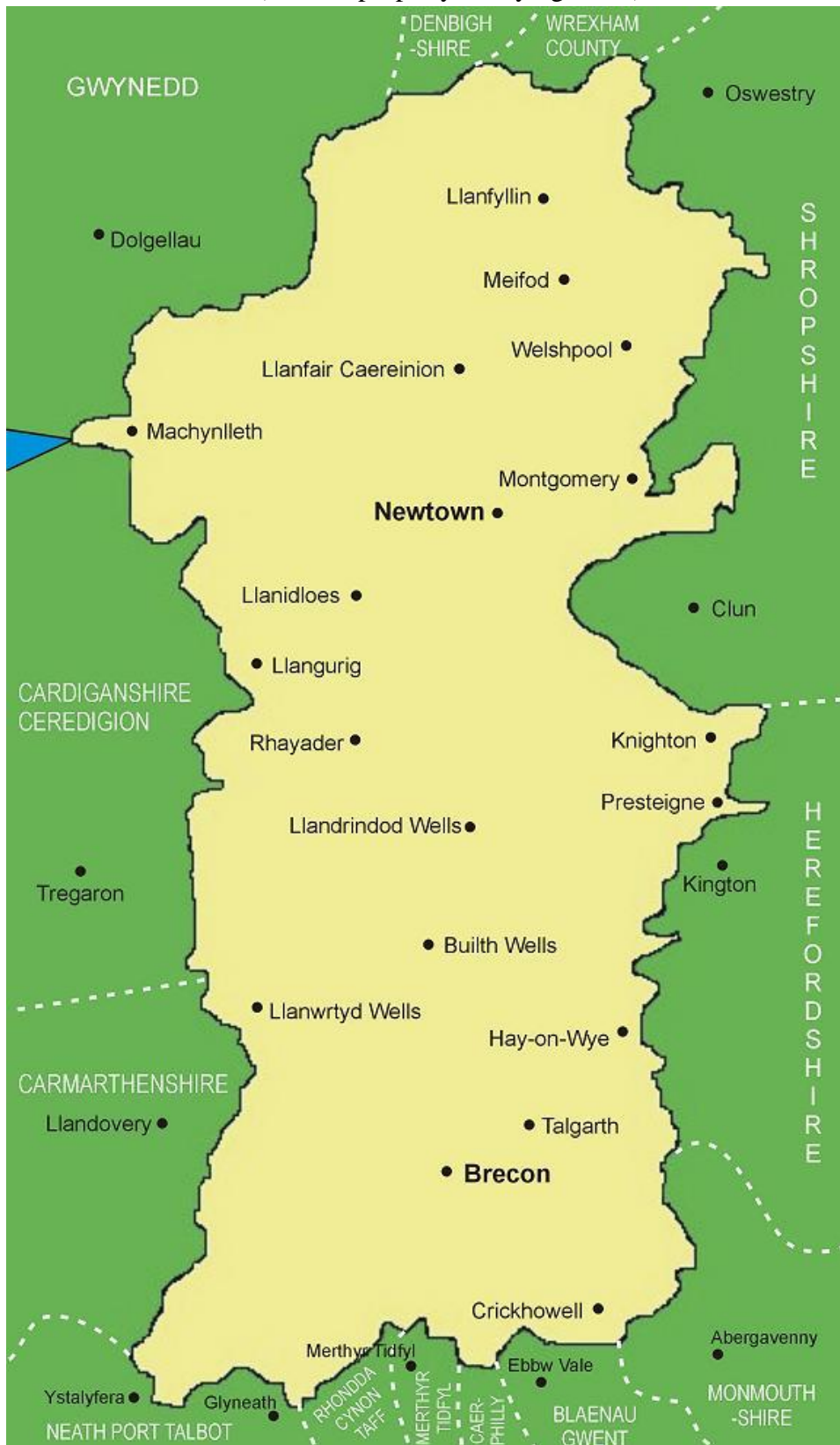
Described as 'a divided border town', separated only by a brook from the English village of Cusop, Herefordshire, Hay-on-Wye councillor Gareth Ratcliffe asserts, that, 'when it comes to sporting events the town is always split between England and Wales although we are more Welsh on this side of the border'.[406] Building a new £5 million primary school in Hay-on-Wye it is believed could, however, bring together a community 'torn apart by rows'.[407] This sense of injustice is yet directed again at Powys Council. The decision to overhaul secondary education in the county will lead to closure of Gwernyfed and necessitate travelling to a new Brecon super school. William Powell, Mid & West Wales AM and Talgarth councillor, has argued that, 'there has been genuine shock that Gwernyfed, one of the most flourishing schools in the history of Powys, should be faced with closure'.[408] The impact on the community of Hay-on-Wye looks ominous, as town councillor, Gareth Radcliffe points out, 'Gwernyfed is being seen as a sacrificial lamb in all of this. I don't want my son to have to travel 40 to 50 minutes every morning and afternoon and all over again for football training at night, you can't do homework on a bus or in a car'.[409] Given considerable opposition amongst parents to sending their children to school in Brecon it appears that Fairfield School will become an increasingly attractive alternative. Yet, this may represent the final nail in the coffin for the Welsh language in Hey. So does this sense of 'unity' against Powys impact on Hay supporters' attitudes towards Welsh? Does language transcend sporting and administrative boundaries? Here are some examples:

I:      Does language ever become a contentious issue when travelling [to away matches]?

R6:     When we played some of the teams up north in the Spar they were speaking Welsh.

R4:     They were speaking Welsh yeah.

R6:     And to the ref.

R1:     Did you have that [R5] when you were the manager of Builth [Wells]? You went to Bont a couple of games before us?

R5:     Yeah.

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[406] *The Hereford Times*, 16 June 2016
<http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/14561134.Border_rivalry_ahead_of_the_big_game_today/> [Accessed 14 August 2016].
[407] *The Hereford Times*, 28 October 2015
<http://m.herefordtimes.com/news/13902527.New___5_million_primary_school_in_Hay_on_Wye_school_could_bring_community_together/?ref=arc> [Accessed 30 October 2015].
[408] *Wales Online,* 24 March 2015 <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/parents-concerns-over-brecon-super-8912099> [Accessed 30 October 2015].
[409] *Wales Online,* 24 March 2015.

R1:     And we found that when we got there they were speaking to us in English, a real lovely friendly club, really nice and as soon as we started playing them and were winning and oh, "Och, och, och," to the ref and I thought that was really wrong.

R3:     It's confusing as well when they communicate in Welsh because you can understand in English what they're gonna do.

R1:     The ref to me should have answered them back in English, you know?

In August 2011, Carmarthen East and Dinefwr MP commented that, 'it is often said that hatred of the Welsh is the only remaining form of acceptable racism'.[410] This complaint, on this occasion, was directed not at Hay St. Mary's but the Caerphilly-born Mr Lewis who described Welsh as a 'moribund monkey language'.[411] If we consider the comments made by Hay St. Mary's Chairman (R1), these are an ignorant insult to those whose first language is Welsh. His view was though challenged by another fan (R2):

R2:     Why?

R1:     Cos he was talking back to them in Welsh.

R2:     I don't mean to be rude but it's the Welsh league. Just because you don't understand their language it doesn't make it wrong for them to speak it does it?

R1:     I think it's rude. I'm not saying it's wrong.

R2:     Ahh… different thing…well ok.

R1:     They were speaking English to start with it. When we started winning that it was all 'och, och, och' and that. What were they saying? We don't know what's going on?

R5:     I mean I can see your point of view. You don't expect the referee to be some sort of interpreter for the opposition. You know what I mean?

R2:     No fair point.

R5:     There's two sides to it really isn't it? He's perfectly obliged to answer back in Welsh if he wants. If there is any suspicion then that's our suspicions isn't it?

R2:     I think so personally. You can get paranoid about it can't you? I suppose. I think what you're saying is sometimes they do it deliberately, they, the Welsh, being English, they do it deliberately because they don't want you to know what they're saying.

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[410] *BBC News*, 16 August 2011 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/mobile/uk-wales-14548630> [Accessed 20 May 2015].
[411] *BBC News*, 16 August 2011.

This example reveals that Hay's English-speaking supporters have both conflicting and varying attitudes towards the Welsh language and, further referred to it both negatively ('I think it's wrong to speak Welsh on the pitch') and positively ('but it's the Welsh league'). Being brought up speaking English, rather than Welsh has, for a club on the national boundary had a profound impact on its attitudes towards Welsh-speaking opposition. Playing against clubs and having match officials who speak Welsh also adds to club's sense of alienation. With contradictory and ambiguous attitudes towards the Welsh language shown, it was important to find out how supporters felt about adopting a bilingual website and using Welsh language signage at the ground. These Hay supporters discussed the issue as follows:

R1:     I had it [the website] designed for us. I write most of it. I don't think there's the need to be honest with you in our club. [He] has got a GCSE in it but that's about it.

R4:     I could make out the odd word but nobody would read it.

R1:     If someone played for the side that was Welsh-speaking and said, "I want to do a match report in Welsh," then I would be more than happy for them to do so. We have no problem with that at all but there's no point me doing it. I'd have to do 'pedwar, un'. Oh no that's French isn't it?

R2:     You can guarantee that the number of hits the Welsh language version of the report would get concurring to the English one would be…

R7:     98 per cent.

R3:     Find me a Welsh person that can't speak English. There's no need for it is there?

R2:     You're a Welshman. You said it!

R3:     No there isn't. There isn't a need for it.

Again, the point to stress here is that supporters maintained their claim to a Welsh identity based on their geographical location ('you're a Welshman'). Generally, supporters of Hay St. Mary's Football Club seemed well versed in negotiating and asserting their 'Welshness'. In Hay-on-Wye, while the Welsh language represented a contentious issue, it was not an important identity marker. Having said that, among some supporters there appears to be an awareness of the linguistic ambiguity and highly localised nature of Hay-on-Wye as a place:

R2:     Hay is Welsh. It's the pattern of Welsh-speaking communities from the eastern borders through to the west and the further west you go the more… but you know you're likely to meet Welsh-speaking people [in Mid and South West Wales] as more of a case than here. Maybe one in twenty are happy to speak Welsh here, probably more than that, one in fifty. But Brecon it gets [a lot more Welsh-speaking]… and certainly in Carmarthen.

I:      So how important do you think the Welsh language is to the identity of the town?

R1:     I think it's not at all.

R3:     To the town or the football club?

I:      Either, or both.

R3:     To the football club probably not but I think to the town it probably does doesn't it?

R1:     Is there many Welsh-speakers in the town?

R7:     I don't know.

R2:     I think there are significant Welsh-speakers in the town that would be really pissed off to hear us say it doesn't matter.

A Welsher 'Mid and South West Wales' served as an important construct in supporters' narration of a 'more Welsh' Brecon and Carmarthen. For some supporters, for instance, the distinction was that 'west county' was perceived as the true heartland of Wales, which centred primarily on use of the Welsh language. In such instances, 'mid and west Wales' was attributed with strong anti-English language sentiments. Despite some of the same supporters identifying themselves as Welsh, where these views were expressed, the real 'Welsh people' constituted the 'other' and were invariably found in 'mid' and 'west' Wales.

Most Hay supporters treat the Powys/Herefordshire border as an almost invisible fact of everyday life, crossing it to attend youth matches in Herefordshire or shop at the local supermarket. In the case of the latter, it is interesting then that the Co-operative, based over the border uses bilingual signage for customers from Hay who do not speak, or have little or no knowledge of the Welsh language. Hay-on-Wye is a town on a real border – constructed in terms of its geographical, historical, political and cultural distinctiveness. The border is 'real' for supporters of Hay St Mary's because different political, institutional and associational practices are real. Hay-on-Wye's ambiguity is its cultural asset, as these Hay supporters explained:

R2:     I don't have to go through passport control every time I go across the border. I don't sort of go 'back in England'.

R8:     It has an effect though doesn't it? I think it does. Don't you?

R2:     Yeah.

R1:     When you drive back in you're aware of it because you see a sign saying you know 'Hay-on-Wye, Wales'…so it's right in front of you.

R2:     'Hay-on-Wye, Y Gelli'.

R3:     Especially when you've been away for a couple of weeks and come home. Do you know what I mean?

R1:     They have a passport in Hay-on-Wye.

R2:     Aye. I've got one.

R3:     I've got one of them.

R1:     He [Richard Booth] made the town independent and forth which is why Hay's quite a lot to do with books. He bought passports for everyone and you could buy a Hay-on-Wye passport and get it signed by the King. He made himself 'King of Hay'.

R2:     He put Hay on the map.

Here we find being asserted 'independent' as a matter of 'actual fact' because Hay has its own passport and monarch. Booth's contribution to the success of Hay as centre for second hand books is indispensable. 'Richard Coeur des Livre', obtained world press coverage and courted the media by presenting Hay castle along with the currency of the 'Free state of Hay', border maps and Hay 'national' passports. As the travel writer Guy McDonald argues, this 'gave [Richard Booth's] campaign for Home Rule a decree of plausibility'.[412] Although Berwick does not possess its own passport, the issue of 'real' borders is not limited to Hay, however. As the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Partnership, supported by Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council has maintained, 'Berwick is in England now, but some would say her heart's still in Scotland'.[413] Thus, Berwick (Northumberland) and Hay (Powys) remain towns 'between two kingdoms'.[414]

The Hay Festival which attracts some 80,000 writers from across the UK, Europe and the USA represents another by-product of the burgeoning number of bookshops in the town.

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[412] McDonald, 'Welsh Marches', pp. 557-558.
[413] *Berwick-upon-Tweed: Town between Two Kingdoms*, Tourism brochure (2010), inside page.
[414] *Berwick-upon-Tweed: Town between Two Kingdoms*, front cover.

Internationally renowned as one of the world's top literary festivals, it has been visited by two former US Presidents – Bill Clinton in 2001 – who famously described the Hay Festival as 'the Woodstock of the mind' – and Jimmy Carter in 2008.[415] Richard Booth's, role in making the Independent Kingdom of Hay the World's first 'Town of Books', along with hosting the annual Hay Literary Festival has afforded Hay-on-Wye with a unique 'international' identity.

On 17th September 2014, almost forty years after Booth declared Hay's independence, a referendum was organised on the same day that Scotland went to the polls. Despite Hay's comparatively low key campaign, Derek Addyman, who spearheaded the 'Yes' campaign was confident of a 'resounding yes vote'. Residents, who cast their votes outdoors in the Cheese Market, were asked, "Do you want Hay to *stay* independent?" 'Prince' Derek Addyman, described as King Richard's 'spiritual heir', organised the referendum to 'affirm Hay's status as an 'independent kingdom' squeezed between England and Wales'.[416] Interestingly, a manifesto issued by Addyman outlined how the vote would be used to push for a HOW1 postcode (rather than the despised HR, Herefordshire) that better reflected Hay's identity, along with the formalisation of the 'Kingdom of Hay's international boundaries'.[417]

Hay's 'international' influence can be seen in its successful bid to be twinned with Timbuktu, Mali, West Africa, beating historic British cities like York and Liverpool for the honour.[418] How important then was the twinning to the town to the identity of Hay supporters?

R6:     When you drive in you get that twin town and all that thing that come into it, Timbuktu and all that. Maybe it comes into it then the language.

I:      Being twinned with Timbuktu, is that quite important for the town?

R2:     Most recently…it's been recently.

R1:     A lot of publicity it's given the town because Timbuktu is famous for god knows what.

R6:     Books is it?

It is not only the twinning of Hay with Timbuktu, its world renowned festival or monarchy that upholds its independent status. Its multi-national football team, Hay Saint Mary's

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[415] *BBC News,* 27 May 2011 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-13561739> [Accessed 4 August 2016].
[416] *Wales Online*, 17 September 2014 <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/hay-on-wye-reaffirm-independence-referendum-7789354> [Accessed 3 January 2016].
[417] *Wales Online*, 17 September 2014.
[418] *BBC News*, 7 February 2007 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/mid/6337935.stm> [Accessed 4 August 2016].

for whom every fixture is an international; play in both England and Wales. 'The club is waiting on international clearance', is a line a person might expect to read in the press reporting on a freshly-signed international superstar player such as Zlatan Ibrahimović and his availability for a fast-approaching Premier League fixture. However, this piece of administration is not a simple transaction for Hay St. Mary's Football Club. Take these comments for example:

R1:    The trouble is a lot of players play cross-border – they get paid. It's a loophole. You can't do that in Wales, but you can play for Hereford and you can play for Newbridge-on-Wye or they could play for us, when we weren't in the Herefordshire League.

I:     Do you have any issues with international clearance?

R1:    Yes. It can be an absolute nightmare at times.

I:     How does it work? Can you give me an example?

R1:    Okay…um…well when we were then say, if we go back twelve months, forget that we're now in England… we could have signed a player from say Kington to come and play for us and get him international cleared by the Saturday if he didn't have a game then he would have gone back the other way and had himself internationally cleared to play back. Does that make sense? Whereas now, again it does annoy people, because we're Welsh playing in England, and we don't have to internationally clear anyone.

R2:    It goes back to what I said before at the start of this meeting. The bottom line is the tier system, the pyramid system in England where the level we're playing at is like thirty or forty levels below the Premier League, in Wales we're three or four levels below it so the league becomes more important in Wales to have the international clearance than it does in England. They don't actually care. It's a bureaucratic piece of rubbish to them whereas in Wales it's important.

In the case of Hay St. Mary's, supporters were keenly aware that their town, their club and their location next to the border, could render their nationality as ambiguous for others. National identity therefore was exploited to the benefit of the supporter in a given content. Yet, for some supporters nationality may be unchanging. This may be to do with the fact that dual registration for clubs in England and Wales is not permitted and transfers between Welsh clubs playing in the English league system and English clubs require FIFA international clearance because the player is crossing a defined international border. Thus, due to the fact that the

Herefordshire FA shares a national border with the Central Wales FA, players who play for teams in Powys need an international transfer certificate before they can register to play in the Herefordshire League. Although the Herefordshire FA and the Central Wales FA may both sanction a transfer, FIFA may fail to grant a Hay St. Mary's player international clearance immediately. The fact that both teams may play in the same domestic league is of no relevance to the rules. This illustrates that while some might argue that the border is of nominal significance, for the inhabitants of border towns such as Hay, it matters.

This Wales-England border study has exemplified that inhabitants in Hay often have an accentuated sense of a multi-national identity. However, whether or not Hay fans used football to project an 'international' identity appeared to be problematic, as these supporters discussed:

I:      Do you think the club is in some sense 'international?'

R7:    In terms of the festival maybe it is.

R2:    But the club isn't is it?

All:    No. Na.

R8:    It's a creative audience.

R2:    In the sense that the people involved in the club are multi-national then yeah…it's multi-national but it's not an international identity. No.

R6:    It's more local innit?

This exchange revealed that constructing difference is the first step towards constructing a social identity. Anthony D. Smith has argued that, 'the self is composed of multiple identities and roles – familial, territorial, class, religious, ethnic and gender'.[419] If social identities are constructed around the immediate locality, community, territory or region, that is, with an area that is not coterminous with a nation or state, but nevertheless gives one a sense of belonging, a sense of attachment, a sense of place, then we would expect to find such talk around national identities. In debatable lands, however, they become problematic and contestable. In the case of the second supporter (R2), self-definition is done entirely in terms of being 'the other'. The notion that 'we' are 'multi-national' reinforces the ambiguous nature of the club. It may be expected, for example, that supporters of Hay would have a heightened sense of 'Welshness' given their close proximity to the border where national identity may be seen to be problematic

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[419] Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991), p. 4.

or, at least salient. Yet, supporters demonstrated the fluidity of the concept of national identity: Hay was described as 'a Welsh club in England' – at the same time as being 'multi-national'. Moreover, supporters attempted to side step the question of international identity as they foregrounded their local identity. As Keith Robbins asserts, 'sport and patriotism [are] indeed linked, but not in any straightforward fashion'.[420]

The United Kingdom is the only sovereign state which contrives to have no less than four 'national' sides competing internationally – Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. In 'God save the King', the 'British' have the oldest 'national anthem' in the world. Yet, historically this represented a prayer intended to invoke patriotic fervour for the monarch rather than celebrate the unique language, history, culture and traditions of either land or people. It was not until 1905 that the anthem 'Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau' ('The Land of my Fathers') became the Welsh national anthem. There are, however, particular contexts where the 'British' national anthem supersedes the 'national' anthem of each home 'nation' for non-English athletes. In the London 2012 Olympic Games, seven Welsh athletes were awarded gold, silver or bronze medals to the sound of 'God save the Queen'. Robin Cohen, who coined the phrase 'fuzzy frontiers' has provided a convincing explanation of the multinational, non-ethnic definitions of being British: 'multiple axes of identification have meant that the [Northern] Irish, Scots, Welsh and English people have had their lives intersect one with another in overlapping and complex circles of identity construction and rejection'.[421]

So with whom do people in Hay identify themselves, and does it matter? It is argued strongly here that it does. If the Welsh and the English feel like they have little in common, then it would seem quite likely that ultimately the 'British' identity would be weakened. On the other hand, if supporters of Hay St. Mary's feel they have a lot in common with each other, then although their primary allegiance may be to their nation (Wales or England) rather than their fellow British citizens, the nation would seem to be on much firmer ground. Here is a nice example of imputed ethnic difference which arises in a discussion between Hay supporters:

I:      How would you feel if the FA described Hay as a 'British' rather than a 'Welsh' club? Would you be opposed?

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[420] Keith Robbins, 'Sport, patriotism and the will to win', in *Nineteenth Century Britain: Integration and Diversity*, by Keith Robins (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), pp. 162-182 (p. 162).
[421] Robin Cohen, *Frontiers of Identity: British and the Others* (London: Longman, 1994), p. 35.

R1:     No because I think personally I'm British and Welsh.

R6:     Yeah British and Welsh.

I:      Which is most important to you first and foremost? Is it Welsh then British?

R3:     Yeah in the local area we're Welsh aren't we?

R2:     I'm an Englishman but I think Hay St. Mary's is Welsh first and foremost. We don't object, we wouldn't object to being called British, but I think we would certainly object to being called English.

R3:     Yeah.

In the case of the first supporter (R1), self-definition is done entirely in terms of prioritising a British identity over national identity (or at least placing it on a par with the Welsh element). The second supporter (R6) alludes to the 'nesting' of identities – 'Britain's Wales', whereas the fourth Hay fan in this exchange (R2), a self-proclaimed Englishman, reinforces the British allegiance of Hay St. Mary's though asserts that the club is Welsh 'first and foremost'. That is not to say that such 'nesting' prevents Hay supporters from claiming a Welsh national identity. Indeed, a number did – as the third fan (R3) was keen to assert, 'we're Welsh in Hay… in the local area'. However, Hay supporters often tended to do so only when pushed on the issue.

So which sport matters most to the people of Hay, Welsh rugby or Welsh football? Central to the strong cultural identity of Wales and a source of national pride, is rugby, which is deeply embedded in the national psyche. If any evidence were needed that rugby defines and unites the Welsh 'nation' like nothing else, we need only to look back to the Rugby World Cup in 2011 where some 60,000 people attended the Millennium Stadium to watch Wales play France. What is remarkable is that the game itself was taking place in New Zealand over 11,000 miles away. In 2011, the Welsh 'nation' was one clearly swept up in rugby World Cup fever, with children attending school in full Welsh kit. In the British Isles, however, it remains possible to combine a domestic international tournament with 'British' overseas representation. The 'British and Irish Lions', as they came to be called, who last toured Australia in 2013, significantly represent the Home Unions of England, Wales and Scotland and also include Ireland. How does this affect fans' sporting allegiances and their sense of a Welsh identity?

R3:     If England are in a World Cup playing rugby I would not support them.

All:    [Indiscriminate chatting].

R3:     Never… ever… I'd support New Zealand before them and….the French.

All:    [Indiscriminate chatting].

R3:     I'd support the French over the English. Christ I can't stand English rugby.

R2:     You can't support the French!

R1:     I'd support anyone who faced England.

R2:     Oh my god…anybody but England?

R8:     If they're up against Ireland or Wales I'd feel more allegiance to them. Sorry. Rugby and football are different. If it's football England always, if it's rugby then I'm sorry.

R4:     There's more passion.

R3:     It's strange because the fans are different there's more hatred isn't there?

R1:     I used to go out as a kid to watch rugby when Wales would play England. I would say 95 per cent of the people in the pub supported Wales. If I go now, it's fifty-fifty.

The notion that rugby allows the Welsh public to come together in a spirit of nation pride and patriotism is a view which seemingly remains unchallenged. 'Nothing defines and embraces the Welsh nation like rugby', Simon Thomas affirms.[422] Yet, football remains more popular in Wales in terms of participation and support, with Wales' two most successful clubs Cardiff City and Swansea City consistently attracting crowds which their rugby regional counterparts can only dream of. Rugby's unrivalled position as the national support, it appears, could yet be superseded if Wales enjoy success at the 2016 European Championships. The question remains: is football ready to play a more fundamental role in determining perceptions of national identity in Wales? In the following extract Hay supporters discuss football's impact on national identity:

I:      What happens in Hay-on-Wye when England plays Wales?

R2:     When England are playing Wales in the football, in Wales, then the Welsh FA allocate us tickets to go…but they say, "Don't bring English people with you." So I decline to go because I am English. The Welsh…they'd be jumping up when England score so I'm best not to go… I did say that…but when England are playing Wales in England we won't get any bloody tickets for Wembley that's for sure.

I:      So would you all be rooting for Wales in the football?

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[422] *Wales Online*, 30 May 2015 < http://www.walesonline.co.uk/sport/rugby/rugby-news/welsh-rugby-versus-welsh-football-9356774?pageNumber=15> [Accessed 15 June 2015].

R2:     No. Not at all.

R3:     I'd root for Wales but then again I'd watch England if they go to a World Cup.

R1:     Yeah same here, same as me…but if Wales play England I want Wales to win. But I'll cheer Ireland on cheer Scotland on.


*Conclusion*

This chapter has found that nationalistic attitudes and behaviour simply reinforce the wish to side step the national issue as no choice of national identity would satisfy both those west (Wales) and east of the border (England). As Garner has argued, this quality is, 'strongest in genuine border towns like Knighton, Kington, Presteigne and Hay which survived against the odds and are still not quite sure which side they are on'.[423] The evidence suggests that the same feeling is likely to extend to anyone living west of Shrewsbury, Ludlow or Hereford, because these Marcher towns, far more than the boundary marks the beginning of the English 'nation'.

Identification in Hay-on-Wye is distinctive; members assume a layered identity, retaining a strong sense of localism and emotional identification, as well as thinking of themselves simultaneously as 'British' and 'Welsh'. According to Guntram H. Herb's *Nested Identities* concept, the thinner overarching British identity could include various national identities.[424] Members of Hay St. Mary's have no problems in providing clear and articulate accounts of holding multiple identities choosing to prioritize themselves as 'Hay', British, Welsh and/or English respectively. This strategy of localism provides for them a solution to the problem of 'being national' and is generally seen to overlap an overarching British nation-state identity.

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[423] Garner, *The Visitor's Guide to the Welsh Borders.*

[424] Guntram H. Herb and David H. Kaplan (eds.), *Nested Identities: Nationalism, Territory, and Scale* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999).

# Chapter 7 – Discussion

*Introduction*

This chapter draws together certain key themes arising from the individual case studies. These themes are shared across the three case studies: The New Saints and Oswestry, Berwick Rangers and Berwick-upon-Tweed and Hay St. Mary's Football Club and Hay-on-Wye. The public appearances of the three cultural communities at different positions along the national border reveal diverse layers of affiliation within them. By focusing on the supporters of Berwick Rangers, The New Saints and Hay St. Mary's, the national dichotomy can be compared in different societal settings. It adds important new perspectives to the literature on national identity in border areas in the 'Celtic fringe' and fills a noticeable gap in the historiography in the English language, which lacks modern analyses of national identity in Welsh and English border towns.

*Discussion and implication of findings*

Most academic analyses of Welsh national identity have argued for Wales' distinctiveness from English national identity or even a British identity. Denis Balsom has suggested that, 'Welsh and British identity need not be in direct confrontation and many individuals feel a sense of dual identity'.[425] In his assertion that 'one part of this duality must be the ascendant', Balsom indicated his belief that for the majority in Wales a distinctive 'Welsh ethnic identity' was prevalent and that British identity was only secondary. The 'Three Wales model' paradigm, which separated Wales into three geographical regions – *Y Fro Gymraeg, Welsh Wales* and *British Wales*, was each defined by the strength of Welsh national identity. The first area, which Balsom called *Y Fro Cymraeg* ('the Welsh language area'), covered the west-central and north-west heartland, the second, referred to as *Welsh Wales* consisted of the Welsh Valleys, defined by the South Wales Coalfield while the third area, labelled as *British Wales*, comprised of Pembrokeshire, the south-eastern and north-eastern coastal belts and the regions of

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[425] Denis Balsom, 'The Three Wales Model', in *The National Question Again: Welsh Political Identity in the 1980s*, ed. John Osmond (Llandysul: Gomer, 1985), pp. 1-17 (p. 1). It is important to note that Balsom's notion of 'The Three Wales Model' is actually derived from the earlier work of Alfred Zimmern who proposed a similar three way division. Zimmern referred to 'Welsh Wales', 'American Wales' and 'upper class or English Wales' in his book Alfred Zimmern, *My Impressions of Wales* (London: Mills and Boon, 1921).

mid-Wales which bordered with England.[426] According to Balsom, Welsh identity was determined by two factors: territory and a long established linguistic and cultural tradition. The case of Oswestry makes the concept of *British Wales* problematic, as the geographical dispersion of national identity groups did not take into account Welsh identification outside of Wales' borders. Oswestry does not fit neatly into *Welsh Wales*, an area which is Welsh identifying but non-Welsh speaking, nor does it belong to *British Wales*, where 'Welsh speakers present a maverick image'.[427] Furthermore, given the duality of national identity and the shared linguistic heritage of Oswestry it hardly can be considered to be representative of *Y Fro Gymraeg*, a distinctive Welsh-speaking, Welsh identifying group largely centering on north and west Wales.

At the outset of the sixteenth century, the linguistic fundamentals in Oswestry faced considerable change. The language of administration and the court was English. Public business was conducted in English, too, even though the population of Wales mostly spoke Welsh and few spoke English. One has to assume that at least the leading echelons of the town must have understood the English language in which trade, commerce and the rule of law depended upon. The lower echelons of the town, however, operated in a different linguistic environment and the language question rarely presented itself until modern times. The significance of a line of linguistic division was formed but which never turned into a rigid boundary, was further increased by the introduction of compulsory schooling in the 1870s. School was held in English. Nonetheless, Oswestry today contains one of the largest numbers of habitual Welsh speakers outside of the UK's most populated cities of London, Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham.[428] Even if one treats the linguistic 2011 Census figures with caution, they remain useful for the relative comparison of Hay-on-Wye, a community which straddles the Wales/England border.

Developments on the Welsh side of the modern-day border with England followed a somewhat different path. The tiny town of Hay, contained rural communities with conditions reminiscent of the neighbouring anglicised town of Knighton, Powys, in other words, with an English vernacular and an established tradition in church and school. In his description of South Wales, written in 1856, Charles Knight wrote, 'Radnorshire contains only a small number of

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[426] Balsom, 'The Three Wales Model', pp. 4-16.
[427] Balsom, 'The Three Wales Model', p. 6.
[428] It is worth noting that 1310 individuals in London were enumerated as speaking Welsh as their 'main language' in the 2011 Census. This was followed by Liverpool with 359 inhabitants, Manchester with 222 inhabitants and Birmingham with 141 inhabitants. Chester, a town close to the Welsh border, was enumerated as having 24 inhabitants who spoke Welsh as their main languages while the Marcher town of Ludlow possessed only 11 speakers < http://www.ukcensusdata.com/england-e92000001#sthash.hBEm80Vn.dpbs> [Accessed 20 April 2015].

towns with which Englishmen are at all familiar - New Radnor, Presteigne, Knighton and Rhayadyr, are the four which present themselves principally for notice'.[429] Writing almost a century later, William Henry Howse declared, 'in most of [western] Radnorshire, Welsh was largely spoken up to the beginning of the 18th century, but died out rapidly in that century'.[430] This assertion is indeed corroborated by John E. Southall, who in 1895, revealed that while 95 per cent of the population of Carmarthenshire could speak Welsh, only 6 per cent of inhabitants, which was 'not far short of 1000', spoke Welsh in Radnorshire which was 'nearly all English [speaking]'.[431] The dramatic decline of the Welsh language in Radnorshire during the course of the 18th century can largely be attributed to 'the introduction of English parsons, the missionary preaching of the likes of John Wesley and the county's historic reliance on the market towns of neighbouring Herefordshire'.[432] This placed Radnorshire in an 'ambiguous position', not 'in terms of administrative status like Monmouthshire but in terms of national cultural allegiance'.[433]

Whereas the English communities of Oswestry and Berwick constituted a local majority intent on preserving its cultural distinctiveness, Hay had markedly fewer cultural characteristics to defend. The town's distinctiveness originated primarily in its sense of self and only subsequently acquired national overtones when playing Welsh-speaking opposition. This suggests that different types of identity do not only set apart border communities in Wales but also coexist within them. The continuous interplay of linguistic distinctions and personal identifications in the case of Hay fans highlight the respective role of objective and subjective markers of identity. But linguistic conditions in Oswestry were far more complex. Although the Welsh language was represented in Hay-on-Wye, this process of anglicization was weakest across the border in Oswestry, a traditionally Welsh-speaking town, which was largely seen as Welsh at the onset of the twentieth century. More than in many localities in North Wales, Welsh defended its position during the inter-war years, although it lost its hegemony. In the decades since the Second World War, the Welsh language, however, has as older TNS supporters confirm, continued to play an active part in the town's identity. Today, linguistic conditions raise

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[429] Charles Knight, *The land we live in: a pictorial and literary sketch-book of the British Empire*, *Part II* (London: Charles Knight, 1848), p. 460.
[430] William Henry Howse, *Presteigne, Past and Present* (Hereford: Jakemans Limited, 1945), p. 59.
[431] John E. Southall, *The Welsh language census of 1891 : with coloured map of the 52 registration districts into which Wales is divided* (Newport, Mon.: John E. Southall, printer and publisher, 1895), pp. 9, 19.
[432] Tom Bullough, 'A Divided Identity: Representing Radnorshire and the Welsh Borders in Fiction' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of South Wales, 2014), p. 4.
[433] Bullough, p. 5.

questions about the legitimacy of the existing political boundary. Within the minority Welsh-speaking populations on both sides of the border, the Welsh language culture of Oswestry is kept alive. Many supporters avail to the use of Welsh within the confines of the market, the town's streets, its local butchers, and the supermarket, in its Welsh language chapel (Sion) and at the turnstiles of Welsh league and cup champions The New Saints. Its permanent location at the interchange has given fans a multifaceted linguistic identity. As will become clear, a minority affiliation in the town to the Welsh 'nation' is rooted in personal motive rather than in language.

Before considering dual Welsh and English or English and Scottish identities, however, one has to reflect on Berwick, a town between two nations. For many centuries, Berwick-upon-Tweed was a prosperous and important town in Scotland. Today, Berwick's position as Scotland's largest town in the late 13th Century is all but a distant historical memory.[434] Upon closer inspection, analysis of national identity along the Scottish-English border highlights the composite and changeable nature of identity in Berwick. It is important to consider therefore what motivates Berwick supporters to define themselves as 'English' or 'Scottish' or 'Berwicker', and how this compares with fans of TNS and Hay. Cultural efforts in Berwick have focussed on the preservation of local traditions, including the use of dialect, but in a manner more resonant of corresponding Scots language efforts in Scotland. The presence of lowland Scots has endured in Berwick with fans aware of its inclusion in the 2011 Census and professing to proficiency. When language is discussed, most Berwick supporters merge into a hybrid version of Berwicker-Scots. In their eyes, they are a self-contained people, and they do not speak an English or Scottish local or regional linguistic variety. Berwick fans establish their individuality in the linguistic, cultural and sporting sphere. Paradoxically, the relationship of many supporters to the Scots-speaking majority is shaped by their discomfort with English national identity and by their rootedness in Anglo-Scots social and cultural reality. Since political devolution was established in Scotland, many Berwick Rangers supporters have set their hopes on a generous autonomy within Scotland. The Scottish independence referendum of 2014 it seems has once again brought a national focus to the far flung community of Berwick to the fore.

In order to further this line of enquiry and to assess the extent to which language plays a role in national identity making and marking in the Welsh border region, it is important to consider the experience of TNS and Hay fans in relation to Berwick Rangers. Next to Berwick's

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[434] Michael Lynch, *Scotland: A New History* (London: Pimlico, 1992), pp. 61-63.

relationship to Scots, a comparable community took shape in twentieth century Oswestry. In Oswestry, the Welsh language became an important marker of Welsh national identity, with the language question transformed from a matter of practicality to a matter of principle. Ironically, the history of the Welsh language in Hay was not one of bitterness and dispute derived from its association with anglicizing influences. Contrastingly, the Welsh language in Oswestry was secured most safely in its affiliation with trade in the Welsh Marches. Due to the rural character, the future of Welsh was inescapably decided in the Shropshire countryside. The majority of the working population in Oswestry was employed in agriculture, and the town grew far more slowly than in many Welsh-speaking communities in south-east and north-east Wales.[435] During the interwar era, Welsh language activists in the town remained a small minority. Ironically, the opposing camps were not so far apart on the core questions of Welsh language and culture.

Today, while English endures as the official language in trade and commerce, the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt NHS Trust, located in Oswestry has, 'developed and implemented a programme to strengthen bilingualism'.[436] As the Trust has noted, 'this is the only nomination received [from outside Wales] where there was no statutory obligation to provide a Welsh medium service'.[437] In the long run, bilingualism has enabled the town to establish Welsh cultural expressions in areas where it had few historical precedents, which has helped to reinvigorate Welsh traditions. Nonetheless, the influx of 'outsiders' to Oswestry who lack an awareness of the unique Welsh language culture of the town has acted to undermine its distinctiveness, especially the everyday use of the Welsh language. Thus, Welsh national identity has been facing the danger of becoming eroded on the one hand, with the emergence of a dual English-Welsh hybrid on the other. On the positive side, despite is anomalous position as an English based club; TNS is keen to promote itself first and foremost as 'a Welsh club in Wales'. The history of Oswestry Town highlights the dilemma for TNS fans who may previously have followed Oswestry Town and who sometimes lacked the cultural understanding of supporting a club which is an amalgamation of two border communities, one based in Wales (Llansantffraid),

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[435] Colin Williams, 'The Case of Welsh Cymraeg (in Wales), in *Rebuilding the Celtic Languages: Reversing Language Shift in the Celtic Countries*, ed. Diarmuid O'Neill (Talybont, Ceredigion: Y Lolfa, 2005), pp. 35-115 (pp. 40-41).

[436] *NHS Wales, Welsh Language Policy Unit* <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/page.cfm?orgid=415&pid=48397> [Accessed 26 July 2016].

[437] *NHS Wales, Welsh Language Policy Unit*.

and the other in England (Oswestry), the places being eight miles apart. Thus, fans of TNS have found themselves squeezed between the evolving cultural societies of 'Wales' and 'England'.

The nature of the linguistic problem in Scotland is that central to many 'imagined communities' is the connection of a common language with a 'nation'. Yet in the case of Scotland there are three: Scots, Scots Gaelic and English. Fishman has argued that there are also two forms of 'national identity', one associated with 'nationality' which is defined by a shared ethnic culture and expressed through the use of the nationality's language, whereas the second is not an ethnic construct.[438] Since the passing of the Gaelic Language Act (2005), Scotland has been 'officially' bilingual. The connection between Gaelic and Scottish national identity has, however, always been fraught. Today, Scots Gaelic remains a minority language spoken by approximately 60,000 (1.2%) of a Scottish population of 5 million. Given that, 'by 1400 at the latest, Scots Gaelic was, in the case of lowland thinking, associated with the remote Highlands', one would expect that Berwick supporters would possess little or no knowledge of Gaelic.[439] Thus, the presence of a Gaelic speaker at the turnstiles of Berwick matches in England can be considered somewhat remarkable given that relatively small numbers of speakers can be found south of the Scottish urban centres of Glasgow and Edinburgh. Nonetheless, there is considerable danger that after centuries of what could be considered a combination of neglect and suppression that the imposition of Scots Gaelic excludes and alienates a large part of the Scottish population.

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[438] Joshua Fishman, *Language and nationalism: Two Integrative Essays* (Rowley, Mass: Newbury House, 1973).
[439] Diarmuid O Neill, 'Scottish Gaelic (in Scotland)', in *Rebuilding the Celtic Languages: Reversing Language Shift in the Celtic Countries*, ed. Diarmuid O'Neill (Talybont, Ceredigion: Y Lolfa, 2005), pp. 338-365 (p. 341).

Fig. 12 – Map of Scots and Scottish Gaelic language speakers in the 2011 Census
(Original source: http://scotshaunbuik.co.uk; adapted by author)
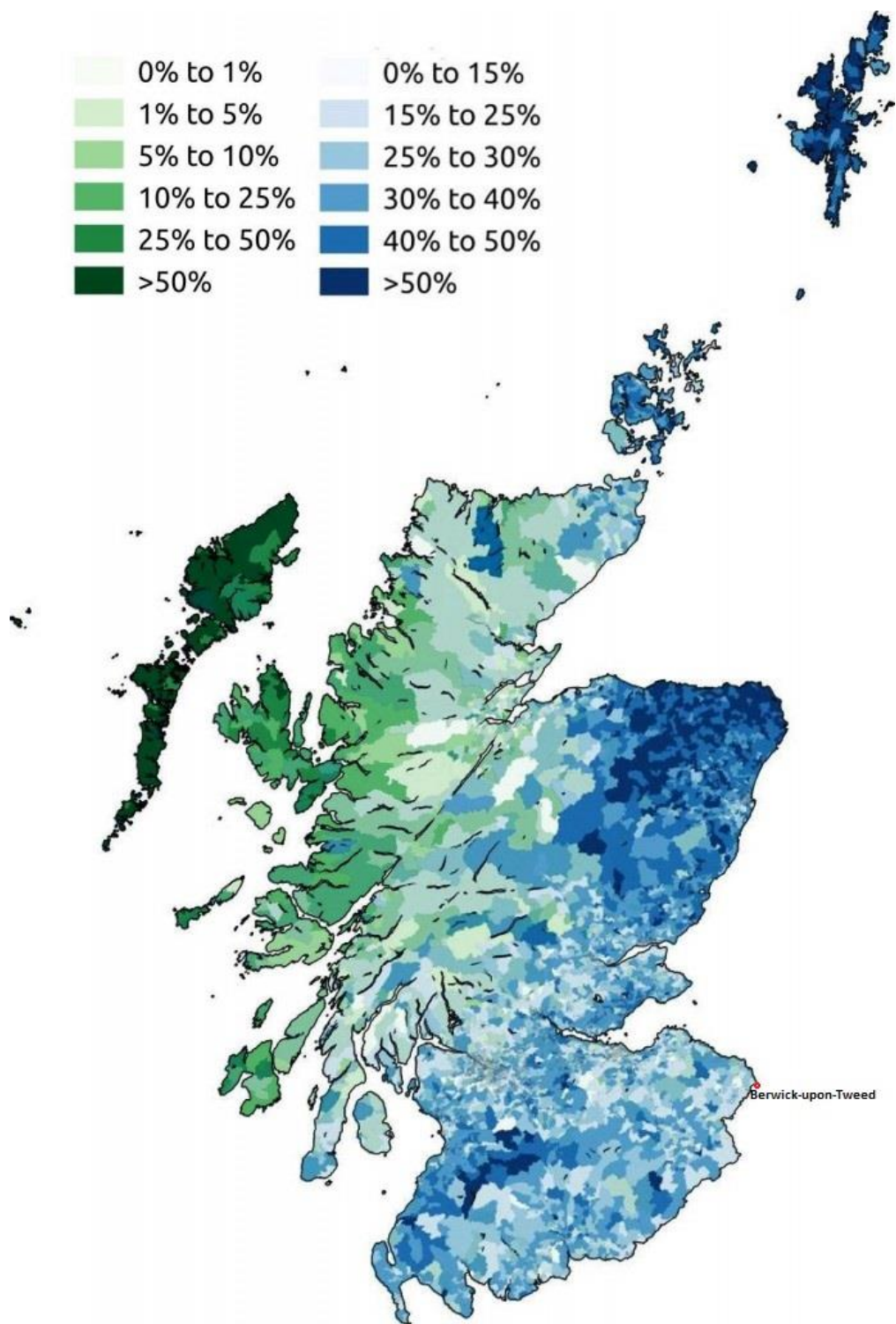
Berwick Rangers supporters felt aggrieved by the fact that Gaelic seems to be given special treatment with explicit connections made between proficiency in Gaelic and national identity. Moreover, supporters point towards Scottish Gaelic being used more as a token gesture in the lowlands and at matches played against Scottish opposition, when Scots has many more speakers in the Scottish Borders and is spoken in various dialects in all of the counties of Scotland and south of the border in Berwick. Berwick supporters also allured to the presence of a 'Failte gu Alba' ('Welcome to Scotland') sign along the A1 north of the town which demarcates the national border with Scotland, and which they often crossed to attend matches in Scotland. One fan questioned the relevance of the use of Scottish Gaelic as a Scottish national identity symbol, 'but why have a bilingual thing when Gaelic was only ever spoken in the Highlands? It was never ever spoken south of the Highlands'.[440] Nevertheless, the Scots Gaelic speaking Berwick fan quickly retorted, 'there's a minority population that can speak that language. They have a right to see those signs!'[441] As Diarmait O'Neill has pointed out, 'moderate growth in places such as Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen is taking place'.[442] The presence of Scots Gaelic speakers in Edinburgh is of no small importance for supporters of Berwick Rangers. This is because Scots Gaelic is spoken in a city which can be reached from Berwick in less than 45 minutes by train. Although Gaelic can create a strong sense of identity for a Scottish minority, it can be assumed that for the fans of Berwick, it does not play a vital role in defining identity.

The Scots language is sufficiently distinct from English to be considered part of a separate entity. Whether Berwick fans can speak a discrete form of Scots, and how the national vernacular relates to national identity, remained unclear. This confusion can be attributed, in part, to the lack of definition of what the relationship of Scots is to Standard English. The accent, dialect and language that Berwick supporters speak represented a product of their cross-border environment. Why is it that Scots, cannot be used as a symbol of national identity in Berwick in a straightforward way as, say, Scottish Gaelic? To answer this we must consider the accounts of several Berwick supporters. 'Listening to a conversation between people who are proper borderers there is a strong accent and a strong thing in Berwick itself. Part of that is related to Scots but also to other words that derive from the North East as well', one fan claimed.[443] 'It is

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[440] R2, Berwick Rangers Supporters' Club.
[441] R1, Berwick Rangers Supporters' Club.
[442] O Neill, 'Scottish Gaelic (in Scotland)', p. 347.
[443] R2, Berwick Rangers Supporters' Trust.

known as Berwick…a few years ago at a Berwick Rangers end of season bash, on the menu we produced a series of phrases and words from the Berwick dialect', he explained.[444] Berwick Rangers Football Club plays a vital role in creating a strong sense of local identity. Everyone who supports Berwick Rangers can participate, no matter what their ethnic or linguistic origin.

In Wales, Colin Williams has argued that, 'Welsh modern identity is more closely linked to the maintenance of the language than the other Celtic cases' – Scotland (Alba), Ireland (Eire), Cornwall (Kernow), the Isle of Man (Mannin) and Brittany (Breizh).[445] Manifestations of Welsh identity in Hay, however, are not reliant on language but can be found instead in non-linguistic expressions of Welsh identity. There are many features of Welsh life that plays a vital role in defining national identity in Hay. Football affords Hay fans with the opportunity to compete with English teams across the national border. Conversely, Hay matches played against Welsh-speaking opposition acted to create a sense of inferiority amongst fans because they believed that as a border town they were viewed as 'less Welsh' or 'borderish' by teams in Mid Wales. Football created a strong sense of identity in Hay but it did not possess the force of the ethnic and linguistic identities of Celtic club counterparts TNS and Berwick Rangers. Rather, the identities of Hay fans could be seen as more nationalist and civic rather than nationalist and ethnic.

Although the focus of the study is not a linguistic one, it is clear that accent is a vital identity marker in Berwick. It is a key reason why supporters of Blyth Spartans in Northumberland would attribute Berwick Rangers supporters with being Scottish, whereas supporters of Selkirk Football Club in the Scottish Borders would not attribute Scottish nationality south of the border in the same way, perceiving the accent of Berwick Rangers supporters as 'Northumbrian' or 'Geordie' and 'English'. Berwick supporters themselves seemed to side-step the question of a national identity based on language, as they foregrounded their local identity as Berwickers. Their alienation from English national identity led those without English family ties to gravitate instead towards a Berwicker identity. Being 'local' constituted a viable alternative; together with the co-opted national Berwicker Scots, the only real alternative. Estrangement from the English tradition is only part of the problem in Berwick, however. Some Berwick fans expressed their fear of the changing dynamic of the town and the issue of

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[444] R3, Berwick Rangers Supporters' Trust.
[445] Williams, 'The Case of Welsh Cymraeg', p. 40.

assimilating English newcomers linguistically into a Berwicker Scots speaking mainstream, 'I think it's far more English than when I was a kid…definitely', one Berwick fan commented.[446]

Fig. 13 – Map of Selkirk FC (Scottish Borders), Berwick Rangers FC and Blyth Spartans FC (both Northumberland)
(Original source: thisisnorthumberland.com; adapted by author)



Many English speaking newcomers to Berwick have proved unable or unwilling to fully adapt to Berwicker cultural codes. They still considered themselves normal members of the English national community, however. As Rawi Abdelal et al. has pointed out, 'an identity may

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[446] R2, Berwick Rangers Supporters' Trust.

be defined by what it is not – that is, by some *other* identities'.[447] It seems clear from this study that national identity in Berwick cannot be approached entirely from an essentialist perspective, as for many Berwick supporters national identity is not fixed, but is fluid and dependent on the social context. For example, some fans of the English border club who acted as subjects for the study described themselves as Scottish at least some of the time, 'Scottish club, Scottish players', claimed one Berwick fan.[448] 'Although the supporters are very staunchly English', it was explained.[449] The results in Berwick illustrate that different strategies appear to be in operation in different borderlands. Such data demonstrates the difficulty of generalising about border towns.

The significance of the national border impacts on both claimed and ascribed national identities of Berwick, TNS and Hay fans. However, each border club has its own individual relationship – a relationship which is the result of historical, political, linguistic and cultural circumstance. If we consider whether or not supporters have an accentuated sense of national identity and whether they use boundaries to project or explain them we see that in the case of Wales broad generalisations of this sort appear to be problematic for clubs which straddle a single national border of around 150 miles (from Chester in the north to Chepstow in the south). How do fans delimit it – does it start at the border or cross it, and how far does the border region extend on each side? 'The border area it sorts of wraps very much around Oswestry...The border is not a straight line on a map', one fan pointed out.[450] 'You can't say "well you're on that map all you people are Welsh and these are all English"', he explained.[451] For some fans *nationality* is an unchanging, essential part of their identity. The justification for this position is that 'over the centuries it has skipped the border a few times'.[452] Paul Gilbert asserts that, 'one inherits one's nationality from others and is related to those who shares it by common ancestry…nationality is founded on lines of descent and of alliances contracted in accordance with accepted conventions'.[453] However, in the case of fans of The New Saints, this may be to do with the prestige of being Welsh champions. For others, it is clearly not an essential part of their identity.

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[447] Abdelal and others, *Measuring Identity*, p. 3.
[448] R1, Berwick Rangers Supporters' Club.
[449] R1, Berwick Rangers Supporters' Club.
[450] Respondent 1, Focus group with supporters of The New Saints, Oswestry (Shropshire), 21 April 2011.
[451] R1, Focus group with supporters of TNS.
[452] R1, Focus group with supporters of TNS.
[453] Paul Gilbert, *Terrorism, Security, and Nationality: An Introductory Study in Applied Political Philosophy* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 111.

Oswestry, on the Welsh border, was a largely Welsh speaking town during the Elizabethan period. Paradoxically, in 2013, *English Heritage* joined the campaign to protect the town's history opposing plans from Shropshire Council to earmark land at the bottom of an Iron Age hillfort for housing development. Amanda Smith, *English Heritage's* historic environment planning advisor for the West Midlands argued vehemently that the hillfort was important to the history of the area as well as being 'one of the most impressive hillforts in England'.[454] Smith had added that 'the site is of great national importance, helping to define our national story and identity'.[455] These comments raise some important questions. Firstly, is the 'area' to which Smith allured the historic Welsh Marches between England and the Principality of Wales, or more specifically the Welsh-speaking town of Oswestry? Secondly, given that it was not until Henry VIII's Laws in Wales Act, 1536, that these 'impressive hillforts' belonged to 'England', can they not really be considered Welsh? Finally, for whom is the site of 'great national importance' – the English, Welsh or those who live on a national border and who watch the Welsh Champions play home against title rivals Bala Town one week only to host an England versus Republic of Ireland International in the Centenary Shield fixture at Park Hall, Oswestry the very next week?[456]

Anthony D. Smith has argued that developments of modern 'nations' can be traced to ancestral times and that many 'national' affiliations are predetermined.[457] Wales and Scotland may, therefore, be considered as diverse frontiers which often, though not always, coincided with each other through conquest, settlement, language, culture and the dominance of the English crown. 'Marches', a common feature within and at the boundaries of medieval Europe was also a common feature in Wales and Scotland from the late medieval period through to the modern era. Though the regions of the Scottish Marches came to an end with the 'Union of the Crowns' in 1707, the 'March of Wales', often used geographically to describe the borderlands of Wales and which includes the English counties of Shropshire and Herefordshire, has continued to represent an extensive frontier zone shaped culturally, by the Anglo-Norman conquest of Wales. According to Rees R. Davies, the Anglo-Norman conquest of the eastern borderlands of Wales saw the transformation of Welsh communities, which became 'proudly and defiantly English in

[454] *The Shropshire Star*, 5 September 2013 <http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2013/09/05/english-heritage-joins-oswestry-hillfort-fight/> [Accessed 24 March 2016].
[455] *The Shropshire Star*, 5 September 2013.
[456] English Schools' Football Association, Wednesday 6th January 2016 <http://www.esfa.co.uk/news/?2016/01/06/133300/shropshire-schools-and-colleges-football-association-to-stage-u18-schoolboy-international> [Accessed 24 March 2016].
[457] Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*.

customs, language, place-names, law, agriculture and social structure'.[458] This is exemplified by the phrase 'the laws and customs of the March' which saw the creation of hybrid institutions and practices in the Welsh Marches. Much of the cross-border tension, as in many frontier towns such as Berwick were born out of communal rivalries, often caused by disputes over boundaries which fed a tradition of enmity. These towns have retained many remnant features of a time as a frontier land, where two cultures and two peoples had met. It is important, therefore, to consider the interactions of the fans of border clubs, for all their differences, alongside each other as frontier towns. They certainly shared many common features and similar historical experiences.

Although the Welsh Marches were settled by the Laws in Wales Acts in 1536 and 1542, the country of Wales has experienced many ways in which its border areas have been divided up for administrative and other purposes. To the supporters of TNS and Hay St. Mary's, the political boundary which demarcates the national border with England is significant. In contrast, for political analysts such as Denis Balsom, who proposed a tripartite division of Wales, this boundary may have less meaning. Ethnic identity, that is, a sense of Welsh national identity is 'a stronger discriminator than the language' he wrote.[459] The rationale for his view was that the people within the region he called 'Welsh Wales', which was identified as the traditional area of south Wales, had more in common with each than those who did not speak Welsh. On this basis, ethnic identity was something that could unite the Welsh, and distinguish Welsh identity from British identity. This explicitness in understanding traditional embedded perspectives has its limits for people who lived in the Welsh Marches, however.

Whilst the people of Oswestry, Hay and Berwick have had the option of dual national identities in terms of Welsh-British, or Scottish-British, an English-British identity has often remained fused. In *The British Isles*, published in 1973, G. H. Dury divided Wales and the borderlands into two major regions: the 'Welsh Massif' and 'the Welsh Borderland'.[460] In contrast to the English penetrated margins of the Welsh Borderland, the 'Welsh Massif' was characterised by 'a strong cultural heritage and traditions' despite political union with England. Yet, the Welsh-speaking enclave of Oswestry can be considered as a bastion of the language,

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[458] Rees R. Davies, 'Frontier Arrangements in Fragmented Societies: Ireland and Wales', in *Medieval Frontier Societies*, ed. Robert Bartlett and Angus Mackay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 77-100 (p. 78).
[459] Balsom, 'The Three Wales Model', p. 6.
[460] G. H. Dury, *The British Isles* (London: Heinemann Educational, 1973), p. 122.

cultural heritage and traditions of Wales. Thus, contemporary approaches from authors deeply rooted in Wales and who have an appreciation of its distinctive history and culture are desirable.

One writer with such an appreciation was Brian Rodgers who described 'Central Wales' as primarily rural in origin characterised by a slow erosion of its traditional 'linguistic identity'. The future of this region, he maintained, was dependent on the economics of adjacent regions in England.[461] For supporters of The New Saints, an association with an English Midlands region remained far from desirable. This was exemplified by the antipathy shown by supporters to comments made by Shropshire County Council Leader Keith Barrow. 'TNS have put Shropshire sport on the map through their efforts in [the] European Champions' League. They have done Shropshire proud. They are flying the flag for Shropshire', Barrow maintained.[462] Clearly this assessment reflected the view of an 'outsider' as this TNS fan articulated, 'we represented Wales in Europe not Shropshire, nor Oswestry. We represented Wales as TNS'.[463] The ardent defence of the club's nationality was followed by the accusation that Barrow was ignorant of the club's binational nature, had never been to watch TNS and had made the comments for self-promotion and publicity for the English county at the club's expense. 'As far as he goes if he can raise the image of Shropshire in any way and jump on the back of any bandwagon and success then that's what he's gonna do. He's gonna mention Shropshire as many times as he can', one fan claimed.[464] TNS's Commercial Manager Ian Williams also chose to respond to Barrow's comments. He stated that, 'we are in the unique position of being able to play in England albeit through the Welsh League system to bring European football to Oswestry. It has been fantastic for the region and for Shropshire and there has been a lot of interest'.[465] It is interesting that Williams' reference to the county of Shropshire did not provoke the same reaction that Barrow's comments had. As an 'insider' Williams was seen to have an appreciation of the club's heritage and he knew to make reference to 'region'. TNS fans were conscious that 'region' meant 'border region', an area to which they had strong affinity. Paradoxically, as a Shropshire-based club, fans remained keen for the club to participate in the Shropshire Cup; yet they were adamant that they did represent Shropshire. In the end, as has become evident, none of the attempts to recognise

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[461] H. Brian Rodgers, 'The West Midlands and Central Wales', in *Regional Development* ed. Gerald Manners and others (London: John Wiley & Sons, 1972), p. 202.
[462] See Fig. 29 – Comments made by Shropshire's council leader, Oswestry town Mayor and The New Saints' General Manager, p. 209.
[463] R2, Focus group with supporters of TNS.
[464] R3, Focus group with supporters of TNS.
[465] Fig. 29, p. 209.

regional difference within the 'fuzzy' borders of Wales and Scotland can be regarded as fully valid. The sense of regionalism remains strong within academic discourse in Britain. But for the fans of TNS, Hay and Berwick, 'region' equated more to the 'real' borderlands in which they lived rather than any geographically defined county or politically defined constituency boroughs.

In Oswestry, the most common path of identity formation did not follow the gradual politicization of cultural attributes, especially language. Identification with the Welsh linguistic community proved powerful enough to withstand the ideological influence of the English centre. Yet a substantial number of people chose a different course. Following the incorporation of Wales into England in 1536, the dominance of the English language in matters of law and government saw a clear majority of the Welsh speaking gentry on both sides of the Anglo-Welsh border became increasingly bilingual. English made, 'significant inroads in the Marches, as indicated by the need to increasingly hold church services in the [English] language'.[466] However, the dominance of the English language along the eastern borders of Wales, particularly in Monmouthsire, Radnorshire and Breconshire, remained far from assured, with the gentry largely functioning as 'representatives' for the uneducated and Welsh monolingual peasantry.[467]

As with many border localities, Berwick's status in relation to Scotland is still ambiguous in many respects. The ambivalent allegiance of Berwick fans can be considered hardly surprising given the town's chequered history. In 1333, following victory at Halidon Hill, Edward III was eager to pacify and supervise the town with a population of mixed loyalty. This problem was exacerbated by local monks, who were openly supporting the rebel forces.[468] Edward therefore sent the following instructions to the provincial priors of various orders: 'all your Scottish brothers now residing in our town and county of Berwick are to be sent to the houses of your orders in England to stay amongst your English brothers'.[469] Yet reports that reached Edward only a year later revealed that secret meetings were being held in the town to plot further rebellion against the English crown. Despite its incorporation into England in the late fifteenth

[466] Alan R. Thomas, 'English in Wales', in *The Cambridge History of the English language: English in Britain and Overseas: Origins and Development,* Vol.5 ed. Robert Burchfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 94-147 (p. 94).

[467] Thomas, 'English in Wales', p. 96.

[468] Andrea Ruddick, 'National and Political Identity in Anglo-Scottish Relations c. 1286-1377: A Governmental Perspective', in *England and Scotland in the Fourteenth Century*, ed. Andy King & Michael A. Penman (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007) p. 202.

[469] Ruddick, 'National and Political Identity in Anglo-Scottish Relations', p. 202.

century, Berwick's struggle with nationality endures today, with symbols of 'banal nationalism' which can be seen as flagging nationhood continuing to send somewhat mixed messages.

The popular appropriations of national symbols in which people subconsciously interact with the nation in some form or another are key contributory factors in the creation and maintenance of national consciousness. Media representations of Welshness, for example, can be found in the 1995 film *The Englishman Who Went up A Hill but Came down a Mountain*, which tells the story of a pair of visiting surveyors from England who arrive at Ffynnon Garw (a name that is impossible in Welsh but which combines *ffynon* 'spring, well' and *garw* 'rough', to record the topographic details.[470] Despite being celebrated as 'the first mountain in Wales', the news that it is 'only a hill' because it falls slightly short of the 1000 feet in height requirement, comes as a 'devastating blow' to the Welsh villagers.[471] Described as 'the most self-consciously endearing film about national identity', the locals are shown to be worried by the prospect of 'losing' the mountain to the English 'outsiders', and resolve to 'uphold the pride of the Welsh'.[472] Thus, mountains are celebrated as a source of 'Welshness'. This, Redfern argues is because, 'landscapes play a key role in the invention and reimagining of nations, and landscape imagery has long been viewed as an integral component of national identity'.[473]

By participating in the debate, Hay St. Mary's, TNS and Berwick Rangers supporters have reinforced and further contributed to the imagining of the nation, whether it is English, Welsh or Scottish. Billig's argument focused in particular on the national media and the way in which the nation is subtly flagged. Given that Hay, Oswestry and Berwick fans are living on a national border, most of their experiences and allegiances remain tied to the locality, however. As such, acts of identifying and responding in national terms were often explained in relation to locally taken for granted contexts. Referring to the national press in England and Scotland, for example, Berwick fans were quite used to being labelled in certain national terms by their contemporaries. '*The Scotsman* said "English club...we're having nothing to do with you"', one noted, whereas *The Daily Mail* referred to Berwick as 'Northumbrian…English', another

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[470] *The Englishman Who Went up a Hill but Came down a Mountain* (1995).
[471] Nick Redfern, 'Making Wales possible: regional identity and the geographical imagination in The Englishman Who Went up a Hill but Came down a Mountain', in *Cyfrwng,* Vol. 4 (April 2007), pp. 57-70 (p. 61).
[472] *The Independent*, 2 August 1995 <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/well-it-definitely-isnt-scotland-1594501.html> [Accessed 24 August 2016].
[473] Redfern, p. 57.

reflected. Again, crucially, a sense of alienation did surface occasionally and the, 'nobody wants us – neither England nor Scotland' attitude means that being 'local' as a fan really does matter.

Billig's focus on the daily, localised symbols also frequently appeared in narratives of supporters in relation to the Welsh nation. However, different processes affected articulation of national identity in different ways. In the case of Hay St. Mary's, ordinary features of locality reinforced a sense of national distinction and belonging, 'I don't have to go through passport control every time I go across the border. I don't sort of go 'back in England', one Hay fan explained.[474] This suggests that people in Hay do not assume the Berwicker position, which ultimately entailed a dividing line that left Berwick on the English sided, whereas all of the 'borders' fell into the Scottish political sphere. Yet in Oswestry, TNS fans did refer to banal aspects of everyday life as making a sense of national belonging problematic, 'you literally go out of the town before you get even into Welsh road signs'.[475] For many, that symbols such as bilingual signage were connected to the national, rather than local level seemed irrelevant. Identification with the Welsh national community was further undermined by a sense of exclusion, as one fan explained, 'you see the gritter. It sees the sign "Welcome to England," turns around and goes back'.[476] The issues raised by these examples highlight that understandings of nation are always partly dependent on the specifics of the locality, for TNS is also shown weekly on Welsh-language football programme *S4C* where commentary of the Welsh Premier League and Welsh champions is in Welsh and TNS is referred to as 'Y Seintiau Newydd'. This anomaly has, in some cases, helped to strengthen identification with the Welsh national community, as articulated by this fan, 'being in the Welsh Premier you can understand a certain amount of Welsh…We've got three Welsh-speaking players…three Welsh lads…[But] If you see the interviews on the pitch there isn't many Welsh speakers when they're interviewing for *Sgorio*'.[477] For the fans of TNS, the language exists as an aspect of the reality of their unique relationship with Wales and the Welsh border. It was a taken for granted feature of the town and the club and it was at this level, as much as any other, that supporters construed national identity.

Though supporting a football club represents a group experience, social identity is also lived and experienced on a personal level in the daily lives of fans. Group identities rather than

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[474] Respondent 2, Focus group with members of Hay Saint Mary's Football Club, Hay-on-Wye (Powys) 15 May 2011.
[475] R1, Focus group with supporters of TNS.
[476] R1, Focus group with supporters of TNS.
[477] R2, Focus group with supporters of TNS.

personal identity are the concern of the study, though ultimately, of course, the individual 'self' is crucial to an understanding of peripheral localities. It might be expected that supporters of border clubs would certainly contain a strong presumption in favour of political loyalty, coinciding with national, ethnic identity. However, it must be considered that fans may not have very clear conceptions of their national identities and the distinctions may therefore be 'fuzzy'. What is clear is that TNS, Hay and Berwick cannot be understood outside of their borderland context. They often represent a border population with ties to several cultural communities. These communities are not divided by fundamental barriers of religion or appearance and even share some of the same historical symbolism. As a consequence, it is possible to pass from one national community to the other and feasible to embrace more than one or none at the same time.

Fans of border clubs often bewilder the core groups of English, Welsh and Scottish, because their identity sometimes remains genuinely outside of a national framework. For example, in Berwick, R3 (a member of the Supporters' Club) referred to 'the independent state of Berwick-upon-Tweed', and allured to a sense of isolation felt by all 'Berwickers', which 'affected peoples' perceptions of where it fits in, whether it is English or Scottish'.[478] It is possible to be English, Scottish and Berwicker, but a fan can be all of these things in his or her own way, which does not correspond to the manner in which nationally, minded English and Welsh fans defend their identity. In borderlands, the line between individual and collective identity is often blurred by a personal choice or group attachment. Certainly, Hay fans have almost invariably used clear-cut distinctions in their descriptions of opposition teams in matches across the border in England. In most circumstances, a change in allegiance was also presented by fans of Berwick as a betrayal of the nationality of one's birth, an exceptional occurrence that required explanation. On an emotional level, however, self-identification as a Berwicker takes root early, even if the exact meaning of this identification changed over time and became more politically motivated in later life. 'You'll always remember it because it is Berwick isn't it? It's that unique place', one fan noted.[479] However, the advantage of its inclusion in 'England' was questioned as 'there is the political argument that we sit much better off on the Scottish side'.[480]

Such responses would seem to suggest that an assumed connection between national identity and allegiance is strongly embedded in public consciousness, even if the official rhetoric

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[478] R3, Berwick Rangers Supporters' Trust.
[479] R9, Berwick Rangers Supporters' Trust.
[480] R1, Berwick Rangers Supporters' Trust.

suggested otherwise at times. Yet Berwick fans implicitly reject the very concept of the town of Berwick as simply English. It is not an uncontested town; it is inseparably intertwined with the turbulent history of the Scottish Borders. Instead, its character as a bicultural territory is epitomised by the club, which, as one supporter put it 'joins the borders'.[481] The town's position beyond Hadrian's Wall which was used to effectively mark 'the outer limits of the great Roman Empire that stretched across much of Europe and North Africa', has led some fans to believe that Berwick is effectively a town between two nations.[482] Respondent 1, for example, asserted, 'there is always two and a half mile of no man's land because you're leaving England. Then you've got a wee gap then you're in Scotland... anything below Edinburgh is seen as English. I mean even some of the border towns like Gala and Hawick.[483] Berwick's true calling is as an intermediary, a bridge between England and Scotland, between the English and Scottish 'nation'.

Fig. 14 – Map of Hadrian's Wall and Antonine Wall
(Original source: Wikipedia; adapted by author)



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[481] R1, Berwick Rangers Supporters' Club.
[482] David Else and others, *Walking in Britain*, 3rd edn (Footscray, Vic.; London : Lonely Planet, 2007), p. 233.
[483] R1, BRSC.

It is intriguing to look at how cultural identities are shaped by diverse influences. This process did not always reflect its sociocultural origins. TNS supporters did choose sides, however, and they upheld their decisions throughout the remainder of the focus group. Berwick and Hay in turn, consistently placed local identity above all others, 'I'm a Berwicker first', one Berwick supporter proudly declared. 'I'd say we're more Hay', a Hay. St. Mary's fan also declared. It is important to consider, therefore, what motivates such a weak attachment to the locality in Oswestry. There has been a scarcity of academic attempts to answer this question. It is intriguing to look at rationales given by individual TNS supporters who themselves partook in or at least experienced the club's merger in 2003. A compilation of comments from fans of Llansantffraid based Total Network Solutions and the now defunct Oswestry Town offers a glimpse at individual motivations seen from a respective and retrospective angle, 'the reason they're at Park Hall… it's in England but Oswestry Town were founding members of the Welsh FA…a lot of people were against it…they are now because the ground is in England', the former Chairman of Oswestry Town explained.[484] Yet many Total Network Solutions had no prior association with English traditions; more than a few had roots in parts of Shropshire that were far removed from the Welsh-English borderlands, however. How did Oswestry-born supporters of TNS experience the passage from English to a Welsh identity? 'Llansantffraid had their own identity', a fan pointed out. But 'we'd have gone and followed The New Saints if it had been at Llansantffraid', a former Oswestry Town board member maintained.[485] All of the fans agreed on the same parameters. Oswestry Town lay in financial and sporting ruin whereas 'the potential [at Llansantffraid's ground] wasn't so economic for UEFA standard any road'.[486] Within these broad parameters, individual motivations varied. Many were keen for the Oswestry name to endure as one supporter allured to, 'I would obviously like to see "Oswestry". I am not a big lover of teams having a name that isn't recognisable'.[487] Others conceded that they simply desired a better future for TNS despite being based in England and playing in the Welsh league.

What makes the identity of TNS fans so multi-layered is that the different expressions exist side by side. Whereas the supporters of Oswestry Town gravitated towards an English identity, fans of Llansantffraid based Total Network Solutions were proudly Welsh. Thus,

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[484] R4, Focus group with supporters of TNS.
[485] R2, Focus group with supporters of TNS.
[486] R2, Focus group with supporters of TNS.
[487] R1, Focus group with supporters of TNS.

several layers of identities can exist within the community of Oswestry simultaneously. Yet from the very beginning, the cultural background of Oswestry Town attached greater importance to their affiliation with Wales, although there were exceptions. 'My father farmed in Chirk, which is over the Welsh border… although he was English. You've always had that sort of joint nationality really'.[488] Although Chirk, situated between Oswestry and Wrexham was often identified as demarcating a linguistic boundary it was not seen as demarcating a *national* boundary. Playing in the Welsh league, attending away matches supporting TNS and working across the national border, however, subsequently reinforced this awareness. Many ex-Oswestry Town fans had similar ties to the Welsh community. Most common were experiences like Bill's. Born in Oswestry in 1931, Bill grew up as a Welsh-speaker in a completely Anglo-Welsh borderland environment. Bill was not disillusioned with Shropshire but was ready for new ideals with the merger, which he expected to find in Wales. It was an emotional conversion rather than a cultural or linguistic one, although his previous experiences with Oswestry Town in Wales and England had deepened his familiarity with the latter aspect as well. For others, the national reorientation of the club had tentative implications. Their adult lives took place in a borderland environment, and some had even married Welsh speakers from across the border. Nonetheless, fans of TNS retained a sentimental attachment to things English, coloured primarily by memories of supporting the England national football team as this supporter revealed, 'you still get the rivalry when it's England-Wales. You really do'.[489] Yet when it comes to TNS, supporters were keen to point out that they took a more pragmatic stance, as the following exchange revealed, 'you've got the England supporters that like to wave the English side of the club and you've got the Welsh supporters that like to highlight the Welsh side'.[490] If the Welsh village of Llansantffraid wanted to be nationally relevant or even achieve a border revision for participation in the Welsh league, it needed to integrate Oswestry Town supporters. This decision has had a lasting impact on the nature of national identity in the Anglo-Welsh borderland.

However, for Hay fans to be successfully narrated as Welsh, respondents need an 'other' to which to be compared. In a large measure, this distinction was associated with Hay's position on the Welsh side of the national border. 'I would class us as a Welsh club. Don't matter where

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[488] R2, Focus group with supporters of TNS.
[489] R2, Focus group with supporters of TNS.
[490] R1, Focus group with supporters of TNS.

you're based. As far as I'm concerned we're Welsh. We live in Wales,' one Hay St. Mary's fan stated.[491] When respondents identified themselves as Welsh they were often aware that fans from English clubs might categorise them differently, however, based on their geographical position. Narrations of themselves as Welsh in relation to others from England were, therefore, seemingly corresponding experiences of interactive with the English 'other', as this Hay fan revealed, 'there were two teams that gave us a lot of abuse. So it's there… because I asked a referee after a game, "If one of my players had said to one of the lads…you know…you black so and so what would you have done?" And he said "straight red". So I said "what's the difference?" Their centre mid was calling us "Welsh this" and "Welsh that" and he was really abusive'.[492] Just like Berwick Ranger supporters, fans of Hay St. Mary's considered national identity as part of a personal self-realisation; it was meant to evoke national enrichment rather than personal sacrifice. Rather, Hay supporters maintained their claim to a Welsh national identity by highlighting the club's roots in Welsh football culture. Although these examples reflect the flexibility of identity along the Wales-England border, they also highlight the presence of counteracting aspects. Most Hay fans were socialised in Welsh schools, but their English linguistic background and family history proved influential. Symbolic barriers that separated Wales from England, such as national sporting events – the Six Nations (rugby) and the World Cup (football) confused some fans who, as part of the Herefordshire league, experienced the projected English 'other' as part of itself. Torn between conflicting subjective identity markers, Hay St. Mary's supporters were more open to dual or 'multi-national' identifications and are often drawn towards supporting the Welsh national team in rugby and Wales or England national team in football (or sometimes even both).

On both sides of the England-Scotland and England-Wales border, it must be considered that supporters have moved in and out of their national communities, without raising too many eyebrows. A lack of employment and educational opportunity is often cited as a key motive for the younger generation leaving, as this Berwick fan allured to, 'it must be exciting for you to be at your age to be thinking of actually about getting away from here? When I left I went to Liverpool and after that I was thinking "that's me finished for Berwick"'.[493] By crossing the deep psychological barrier between leaving a highly localised community to join the 'English national community', Berwick fans had added another facet to the competitive nature of border identities.

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[491] R1, Focus group with members of Hay St. Mary's.
[492] R1, Focus group with members of Hay St. Mary's.
[493] R2, Berwick Rangers Supporters' Trust.

In Oswestry, this multiple integration was shared by TNS supporters. In the case of the Saints, however, this presented an alternative sense of belonging. In many ways, supporters remained a cross-border hybrid; their allegiance belonged to an idealised rural community within the Welsh Marches but it also had its roots in England which was considered much older than the present nation-state. Fans referred to 'Oswestrian', but it was Oswestrian in an allegorical more than a concrete meaning. It was a comprehensive 'borders' identity that could accommodate all fans. The experiences of The New Saints revealed the diversity of subjective identity formation. Each of the supporters made choices about their national belonging. The nature and motivation of these choices varied considerably, however. Having experienced an amalgamation of two clubs on opposite sides of the border, fans resolved to prioritise one of two cultural traditions that had accompanied them as a supporter. Confronted with the choice of 'nation' or 'nation-state', fans, however, invoked a sense of duality of national identity rather of prioritising themselves as 'local' or 'national'. Most claimed 'multi-national' as an alternative to a Welsh or English identity. This example has shed light on individual components to the question of identity formation in the English-Welsh borderlands. Yet how does The New Saints fit into the larger picture of national identity formation in border localities in a comparative context. How unique are the markers of national identity in Oswestry? To receive an answer to these types of questions, one has to undertake an analysis of the parameters of nationality in Berwick and Hay.

In this study of identity formation in the Scottish-English borderland, the potential malleability and ambiguity of national identity has become apparent. It is important to consider how nationalism has impacted on a culturally composite Scottish Borders region with ties to the emerging Scottish state. England and Scotland are two nations which have faced highly divergent histories. It is significant, however, that the English and Scottish have many similarities in their shared experience of being part of the nation state. What motivated the peripheral population of Berwick to identify with one national community, or to refuse to do so? Historical relations between the Scots and English are widely seen as fractious, tense and confrontational and operating on an almost unprecedented scale when compared to Welsh sport.

Considerably little is known about intimidating interactions between the supporters of Berwick and the Scottish teams they compete against on both sides of national border. Herb has maintained that Berwick 'finally became Scottish town in England in 1482, its English

jurisdiction only confirmed in 1885. But the border has not framed the Scottish nation'.[494] In Berwick, the Scots and the English have lived side by side, and numerous families straddle the ethnic divide. Ethnic interaction in Berwick has occurred in different forms. In some instances, the fluidity of national identity has resulted in a process of national homogenization, in which fans have been assimilated into their town environment. Yet there also existed a more enduring aspect of animosity (and even hatred) between fans of Berwick and Scottish league opposition. 'I have a real problem with nationalism. I think nationalism is one of these things when somebody flies the flag and there is an expected thing', one fan asserted.[495] Another resident referred to an incident in the Highlands in which he had been subject to 'horrific nationalist abuse' during an England vs. Scotland match, 'on a level that you would not imagine in this day and age'.[496] Such interactions appeared to be manifest; as one fan forewarned, 'go to some of the away games and see what animosity you get I'm telling you'.[497] Despite the degree of severity, Berwick fans did not, however, consider the Scottish supporters they faced as hooliganisms. Joel Rookwood suggests that this is ultimately because, 'the non-violent majority of supporters have often shared the same space, rituals and social characteristics as hooligans, and also witnessed football violence and the processes that instigate and escalate it'.[498] Certainly, it appears that 'the Scottish experience finds its richest and most complex expression in football. [Fans are] intensely patriotic, a reflection of the distinct sense of nationalism to be found in the character of most Scots'.[499] While the two settings, Scotland and Berwick, resembled each other, there were visible cultural differences, which made people aware to the challenges of modern Scottish nationalism.

Even more interesting for the question of nationalism is the relationship between sectarianism, Scottish football and Berwick Rangers. In their participant forms, Berwick fans identified most strongly with the Church of Scotland and noted that they attended St. Andrew's Wallace Green (Church of Scotland). This was despite the presence of Berwick Parish Church (Church of England), being in close proximity. Built 19 June 1859, St. Andrew's Wallace Green

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[494] Guntram H. Herb (ed.), *Nations and Nationalism: A Global Historical Overview* (Santa Barbara, Calif.; Oxford: ABC-CLIO, 2008), p. 236.
[495] R2, Berwick Rangers Supporters' Trust.
[496] 'The Bothy Restaurant and Bar', *TripAdvisor* <https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g551810-d1516176-r314422065-The_Bothy_Restaurant_and_Bar-Fort_Augustus_Loch_Ness_Scottish_Highlands_Scotland.html> [Accessed 1 May 2015].
[497] R2, Berwick Rangers Supporters' Club.
[498] Joel Rookwood, *Fan Perspectives of Football Hooliganism: Defining, Analysing and Responding to the British Phenomenon* (Saarbrucken: VDM Verlag, 2009), Back cover.
[499] Jon Garland and Michael Rowe, *Racism and Anti-Racism in Football* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), p. 130.

clearly has firm roots in the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, serving parishioners for over one hundred and fifty years.[500] This historic association with Scottish Protestantism inadvertently led to Berwick Rangers supporters choosing to emblazon the club's colours of black and gold onto a British Union jack which they had taken to away matches. This, along with the use of other British 'union flags' by fans, created animosity at some Scottish league grounds with complaints made that Berwick incited sectarianism. This is because, 'British-Scottish identities are greatly manifest and widely recognised', amongst supporters of Glasgow Rangers Football Club who are often viewed as 'preoccupied with hostility against Catholics in Scotland', particularly rivals Glasgow Celtic, whose support acts as a, 'contemporary reflection and representation of the Irish-Catholic diaspora in Scotland'.[501] The equation of Berwick Rangers Football Club and 'Scottish' Protestantism, as a central aspect of a contemporary social identity, puts into question the narrative advocated by fans that they are consistently the victims of unprovoked nationalistic abuse, especially as it was common to encounter supporters whose group identification did correlate to that of their parents and even to their parent's own 'Scottish-Protestant' background.

The religious divide in Scottish football and the town's own mixture of local and national history and religious association has created a uniquely rich identity for Berwick Rangers supporters. Yet the link between national and religious identity of supporters rarely surfaced in the examination of the Welsh-English borderland. Despite a named association with St. Mary's Church, The Church in Wales, Hay supporters pointed out that there was not a strong relationship and that the club's name had originated from a 'hundred odd years ago' at a time when 'they were invented and named after the local church'.[502] The abandonment of the club's religious heritage suggests that the Church in Wales, separated from the Church of England (1920) in order to assert its national and linguistic identity, had little relevance to fans in an era of increasing secularisation.[503] It is important to note that traditional denominational affiliations do not continue to influence ethnic and national identity in Wales. Hay's somewhat peripheral

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[500] *St. Andrew's Wallace Green and Lowick Church of Scotland* <http://www.sawg.org.uk/our-history> [Accessed 26 July 2016].

[501] Joseph M. Bradley, 'In groups, out-groups and contested identities in Scottish international football', in *Sport: Race, Ethnicity and Identity – Building Global Understanding*, ed. Daryl Adair (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 82-97 (pp. 89-90).

[502] R1, Focus group with Hay St. Mary's.

[503] Williams, 'The Case of Welsh Cymraeg (in Wales), p. 43.

location helps to explain its idiosyncrasy within a Welsh cultural environment: St Mary's is in Wales but, the postal address of the church is recoded as: 'Hay-on-Wye, Hereford, HR3 5DQ'.[504]

From a theoretical perspective, the Anglo-Celtic border regions between the English-speaking world and its northerly and westerly Scots and Welsh speaking neighbours illuminate the complexity of national identity on the intersection of linguistic, cultural and religious history. The examination of border towns also revealed the value of examining zones which tied together different cultural entities through cross-border supporter contact and passage. For the fans of TNS, Hay and Berwick group identification visibly became a matter of personal choice. The clubs and the communities that they represented had inadvertently creates zone of fluid identity. For example, in the Welsh border town of Oswestry, The New Saints *understood* the club's binational cultural and linguistic heritage; they learned from it, transmitted this awareness on to other members of the Welsh footballing community in the Welsh Premier League, and thus contributed to a constant flow of information between themselves and far larger cultural spheres.

The experience of supporters demonstrates the diversity of identity formation in borderlands. For centuries Berwick bridged the divide between England and Scotland. Through its history it was Scottish and English, finally being tied to the latter during the Elizabethan era. It was hoped that the 'union' between Berwick and England would have clarified any uncertainty that may have been created by the Treaty of Everlasting Peace signed between England and Scotland in 1502, which stated that 'Berwick was England but not in England'.[505] On the other hand, Berwick continued to be mentioned separately in Acts of Parliament until the late nineteenth century. This gave prominence to the myth that Berwick was still at war with Russia given that Britain's declaration of the Crimean War in 1853 had allegedly mentioned Berwick separately but the Treaty of Paris which was signed in 1856 did not. It was an account that workers at Morrisons were keen to converse in when asked why so much emphasis was put on Scottish produce in Berwick, where the Scottish 'nation' was flagged in its banal everyday form. Like many composite territories, Berwick has welcomed the cultural differences. The substantive boundary may have come to demarcate distinctive populations; however, the integrated Scottish border region continues to be more disjunctive than its Welsh-English borderland counterpart.

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[504] 'St. Mary, Hay-on-Wye', *The Church in Wales* <http://www.churchinwales.org.uk/structure/places/churches/?id=5833> [Accessed 26 July 2016].
[505] McGinn, 'Blood on the borders', p. 132.

In the contemporary context The New Saints and Berwick Rangers both act as vehicles to promote distinct hybrid identities which act simultaneously in multiple contexts and cross borders.[506] Berwick's border with Scotland continues to experience attention on a national scale with Scottish Labour in 2015 calling on the Scottish National Party to vote against the repeal of fox hunting in England. Sarah Boyack, Scottish Labour's Environment and Rural Affairs spokeswoman criticised the SNP's decision to abstain and argued, 'Scotland's moral voice as part of the UK doesn't end at Berwick-upon-Tweed'.[507] This marked renewed attempts to redraw the border 'around' Berwick. Yet it seems Oswestry is also subject to such a redrawing as it has its own Welsh Tourist Information Centre and is included in the *Visit Wales* guide.[508] Why include Oswestry in Wales*?* 'Oswestry and the Welsh Borderlands is where Wales meets Shropshire', *Oswestry Borderland Tourism* has proclaimed. In spite of its Welsh character, TNS has developed an ambiguous national orientation.[509] However, not every TNS fan has developed subjective self-ascriptions that deviate from their cultural origins. Constructing the border as a space that is unique to Oswestry and TNS and not a national divide between Wales and England is important. Examples of the Saints' growing distinctiveness and embracing of European networks has helped the club and the locality to retain its identity in the face of globalization.

Identities in the Anglo-Celtic borderlands also display many variations, which correspond to different theoretical models. The persistence of a Welsh-English hybrid identity in Oswestry shows the resilience of cultural allegiance in the Wales-England borderland. In spite of the threat of anglicization and the demise of many Welsh-speaking communities across the border, the Welsh-language minority in Oswestry held onto its Welsh heritage and even deepened their national commitment. Next to this sense of Welsh identity rooted in the language, culture and participation in a Welsh football league, the borderland brought forth a more subjective sense of personal identity to fans. Giving true meaning to the image of the Welsh 'nation' as a linguistic frontier, many fans formed their national identity in opposition to their linguistic background but instead dependent on their Welsh environment in which they lived. In Hay, diverse political, economic, cultural and social factors weighed far heavier in the mindset of fans than proficiency

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[506] See for example, *Hybrid Identities: Theoretical and Empirical Examinations*, ed. Keri E. Iyall Smith and Patricia Leavy (Chicago, Ill.: Haymarket, 2009).

[507] *The Herald,* 17 May 2015 <http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/13214203.Labour_calls_on_SNP_to_vote_to_keep_ban_on_fox_hunting_in _England/> [Accessed 3 April 2016].

[508]*Visit Wales* <http://www.visitwales.com/contact/tourist-information-centre> [Accessed 3 April 2016].

[509] *Oswestry Borderland Tourism* <http://www.oswestry-welshborders.org.uk/> [Accessed 3 April 2016].

in the Welsh language. For some, geographical position had no significant repercussions on identity. For others, the peripheral nature of the town became the most critical marker of identity.

The different expressions of subjective identity in borderlands are exemplified most visibly by the community of Berwick in Northumberland which displayed the most diverse composition, however. As England's most northerly town, Berwick finds itself on the periphery. As such, Berwick Rangers supporters feel isolated from the county of Northumberland. An affinity to the British state is not necessarily weaker here; it follows that a shared British identity can take root. 'I'm British but I'm also English but I would like to be able to choose what to believe in not because of where I was born', one Berwick fan articulated.[510] 'If anyone asked me what nationality I would say British. I've got a British passport', another supporter declared.[511] Their relationship to British identity remained central to their self-identification. It did not matter so much that there was awareness that there has been a marked decline in a sense of Britishness in Scotland and England since the late twentieth century. What mattered to some fans was that Britishness provided an umbrella identity which could be used to explain and justify their local Berwicker identity. Identities and loyalties in the town were not, however, fixed in a permanent hierarchical order; they remained constantly shifting among levels – Berwick, England and/or Scotland and Britain. Such a conscious self-identification with the Scottish Borders was rare and, when faced with a choice between England and Scotland, supporters tended to side with England, 'I'd still treat myself as English', was often the response when pushed on the issue of national identity.[512] In a parallel manner, it was possible to evoke a local identity in opposition to being English or Scottish, or be both. 'That's what makes us unique because we're English and Scottish. We've got a scarf which has got the Scottish and English flag', one fan explained.[513]

In these borderland cases, identities are often at odds with the national narrative and operate interchangeable spatial identities on diverging geographical scales. In *Territories, Boundaries and Consciousness*, Anssi Paasi argued that in the Finnish-Russian borderland there were three competing identities: the most important identification being with the nation state, the second with the nation in which most of the inhabitants occupied, and the third was with a borderland identity, largely engendered from the symbolism of living as part of a Russo-Finnish

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[510] R2, BRST.
[511] R2, BRSC.
[512] R3, BRSC.
[513] R1, BRSC.

frontier society.[514] According to Paasi, in Eastern Europe, borderland identities had the potential to become preeminent as the 'blur' between political boundaries became more concrete over time. Yet, in the England-Scotland and England-Wales borderlands a sense of identity did not decrease in relation to geographical and spatial distance from the communities in which supporters lived. Thus, the strongest sense of identification often occurred first in relation the town, followed by the sense of belonging to the cross-borderland area, followed by nation then nation state. The development of identity in Hay, where fans identified first with Wales, second with Hay and lastly with Britain, has highlighted that differences are always relative, and that social expression of loyalties and affiliations are also an expression of difference and distinction.

Oswestry has illustrated something of the confusion related to the meaning of, and foundation for 'nation', 'nationalism' and 'national identity'. Herb's view that that nation 'evokes a stronger loyalty from its members than other communities' does not fit neatly in the case of Oswestry, as supporters do not believe that they 'share an idyllic and often primordial past', choosing instead to encompass bicultural values.[515] The notion of 'nested identities' also proved too simplistic for the complexity of England-Wales borderland contextual concerns. Rather, TNS has a positive impact on the way supporter identification is made with the 'nation'. Local and borderland attachment acts to reinforce and does not necessarily compete with a national identity that is derived from an attachment to the nation and its associated nationalism.

In his book *National self-determination* Alfred Cobban argued that, 'any territorial community, the members of which are conscious of themselves as members of a community, and wish to maintain an identity of their community, is a nation'.[516] The town of Hay-on-Wye does not define itself predominantly by its local identity nor does the Oswestry community, however. Yet this particularly subjective form of identity is central to Berwick; it is self-chosen and voluntary and is assumed by Berwick fans but is rejected by others in Scotland. The key point is the sense of being local rather than the desire not to be English or Scottish. In fact, national identity has increasingly positive connotations among fans. They are not Berwickers because they want to escape an undesirable English or Scottish national identity. Rather it is owing to

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[514] Anssi Passi, *Territories, Boundaries, and Consciousness: the Changing Geographies of the Finnish-Russian Border* (Chichester: J. Wiley & Sons, 1996).

[515] Guntram H. Herb, 'National identity and territory', in *Nested Identities: Nationalism, Territory, and Scale* ed. Guntram H. Herb and David H. Kaplan (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999), pp. 9-30 (pp. 16-17).

[516] Alfred Cobban, *National Self-determination* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 48.

collective memory in the face of adversity that binds Berwick fans. In Berwick, being 'local' is a convenient way of sidestepping the question of national identity. Paradoxically, one fan rejected the notion the club faced an identity crisis, 'it's something that people outwith Berwick give a lot more consideration to than the people inside the town', he stated.[517] Interest in self-identification has endured, however, and this often caused some serious resentment, 'we're an English based club staffed by Scotsman playing in Scotland. I'm a Berwick fan. "Are you English or Scottish?" So what! I support Berwick', a senior member of the Supporters' Trust vehemently argued.[518]

The findings in the border towns of Berwick, Hay and Oswestry are relevant for national self-identification along the England-Wales and England-Scotland borders as well. One section of The New Saints supporter base chose to identify with the English majority without truly assuming English cultural codes. Debates have continued to rage about England's identity crisis, however. What does it mean to be English and how significantly does it affect those living on the border? Tom Nairn has argued that the English 'need to reinvent an identity'.[519] For many football fans nationwide an English-only identity is inadequate. In this way, 'Englishness' in its modern form can be seen more of an emotional attachment perhaps best expressed in the raising of the flag of St. George, the singing of the national anthem or in the asserting of English national identity. Yet it is not just fans of border clubs who place preference for locality or region above nation. Supporters of Liverpool Football Club have often proclaimed, 'we're not English, we're scouse!'[520] As fan and writer John Ritchie has explained, when asked which identity is most important, the response from Liverpool fans is unanimous: 'scouse first, English second'.[521]

Identities of fans in marginalized cities, towns and regions in Europe appear far more complex, fluid and multifaceted than ever before. In Spain, FC Barcelona is fiercely Catalan and is adamant that it is not Castilian Spanish. It is clear that with 80% of Catalan voters keen to leave Spain, doubts have been raised about the future of Barcelona's participation in the Spanish *La Liga* in the event of Catalan independence. 'Barcelona will be excluded' the Spanish league

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[517] R1, BRST.

[518] R1, BRST.

[519] Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-nationalism*, 3rd expanded edn (Altona, Vic.: Common Ground Pub., 2003), p. 248.

[520] See for example, Joel Rookwood, ''We're not English we are Scouse!' Examining the identities of Liverpool Football Club supporters', in, *Sport and Social Identity: Studies from the Field,* ed. J. Hughson, C. Palmer and F. Skillen (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2012), pp. 95-120.

[521] *This is Anfield,* 1 April 2013 <http://www.thisisanfield.com/2013/04/were-not-english-we-are-scouse/> [Accessed 4 April 2016].

president Javier Tebas has claimed.[522] Nonetheless, support for pro-independence has remained strong among some fans with pro-Catalan chants heard in the 17th minute of every home game to commemorate 1714, the year Catalonia as a region last had complete autonomy. Sentiment for the Scottish 'nation' also found support at Camp Nou during the build up to the Scottish independence referendum in 2014, with some *Cules* choosing to wave the Scottish saltire during a home Champions League group match against Apoel Nicosia. FC Barcelona fans have, and continue to play an important role in the formation of Catalan identity. The communities of Berwick, Hay and Oswestry have not, and cannot form its mirror image. Answers vary widely from one club to another, from one side of the national border to another and each particular cross-border community. The connection between borders and identities is a fundamental element of TNS, Hay and Berwick fans' experiences of following their clubs. Borders not only reflect who they are but in some sense it is who they are, and it defines them both directly and indirectly. They use borders in a direct way to denote and assign identities indirectly, 'we're the furthest club towards the border', one Hay St. Mary's fan said.[523] 'I think the people that have the problem with the town say, "You've got to be one side of the border or not. Well no"', a Berwick Rangers supporter argued.[524] This sentiment was also evident in an exchange with a supporter of TNS. He explained, 'we've lived with this all our lives. We're a border town'.[525]

Identities and their relationship with the national boundary are not static, however. Both are constantly shifting and being re-negotiated in response to the ever-changing context of Welsh and Scottish domestic league restructuring, participation and the exchanges with rival fans across the border. Whilst the Welsh minority in Oswestry attach greater importance to their linguistic affiliation with the Welsh-speaking communities in mid and north Wales, the analysis of the experiences of Hay and Berwick supporters has confirmed that culture does not consist of language alone but also encompasses a wide variety of motives, traditions and attitudes. The TNS case is especially illustrative of the intricate interplay of personal identification and cross-border cultural realities. However, identity in Oswestry has become problematic. The experience of TNS highlights the inherent duality of national identity which is not dependent on social

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[522] *The Daily Mail*, 21 September 2015 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football/article-3243745/Barcelona-excluded-La-Liga-Catalonia-gains-independence-Spain-warns-league-president-Javier-Tebas.html#ixzz45EfbfVwr> [Accessed 8 April 2016].
[523] R2, Hay St. Mary's.
[524] R2, BRST.
[525] R2, TNS.

identity and which can be rejected or embraced by fans. Culture and language do not inherently determine national orientation in Hay, however. Nonetheless, on both sides of the Anglo-Welsh and Anglo-Scots borders, fans have developed a sense of self which was not always rooted in language. By drawing attention to their fragmented nature, the experience of supporters supplements and refines the academic debate on nationalism in Britain rather than invalidating it.

These are, of course always practical and immediately compelling questions for inhabitants living in close proximity to an ambiguous national border. While such marginal people may have been of little significance to those whose purpose it has been to forge 'national identity' and consciousness, the exact positioning of the boundary was, and stills is, an everyday concern to them. Along the England-Wales and England-Scotland border frontier, which came first: did people acquire a sense of being inherently Welsh, English or Scottish so that a national boundary line could be drawn accordingly or did the people either side of the border develop a sense of national distinction *after* the boundary was finally formalised between these nations?

The present border between Wales and England does not; in the case of Oswestry make any real *geographical* sense. That is to say, the boundary is not based upon any geographical features, which can be considered more significant than those of any number of alternatives. In no sense therefore should a Welsh-speaking town be found in Shropshire, England. Moreover, the present borders between Wales, England and Scotland do not distinguish between people who belong to different racial or ethnic groups. Nor does it divide people who speak difference languages, separate different religious groups and it is not largely (though not entirely) positioned in accordance with any pre-existing cultural differences. The chosen boundaries also do not make any *military* sense, for the Dulas Brook, Rivers Wye and Tweed are not the contested Rhine or Danube and the Cambrian Mountains are not the Alps. In addition, the decision to situate the Welsh Guards Collection in Oswestry seems to make no sense. Nonetheless, Lt. Gen. Sir Francis Lloyd, charged with forming the Welsh Guards came from Aston Hall, Oswestry, while the Regiment's first Colonel Lord Harlech lived in Brogynton Hall.

The present national boundary does not seem to make any *historical* sense either. It cuts straight through the linear earthwork monument of Offa's Dyke which roughly follows the current border between Wales and England and it has nothing to do with how the Romans distinguished and established their frontiers at Hadrian's Wall in the North of England and Antonine's Wall, between the Firth of Forth and the Firth of Clyde across the Central Belt of

Scotland. The presence of the dyke has continually re-affirmed the living tradition of English and Welsh origins and is directly associated with the development of profoundly rooted ideas of Welsh and English cultural identity. Moreover, it has become a basic strand in the makeup of the United Kingdom and remains an artificial cultural/national boundary which still has relevance for people today linked to its original purpose: to function as a boundary between Wales and England. It would seem therefore that the national boundaries have been placed in this position for no discernible reason, for Oswestry, could easily have found itself in Wales were it not for the actions of some clumsy English administrators in 1536 during the reign of King Henry VIII.

## *Contributions of the study*

This research suggests that theories of nationalism have for too long taken an essentialist 'top down' approach which has denied the importance of local 'actors'. This bias has been redressed through an exploration of cross-border football which has generated invaluable insights into the cultures at the periphery of the nation, as well as the formation and management of identities. It encompasses many attributes of a significant sociological study of sport and the making and unmaking of national identity in the Anglo-Celtic borderlands, which should not be overlooked by sports sociologists, ethnographers and sports historians. Its strengths are that it proves both relevant and provides results which are far-reaching. Why is it relevant? 'Sports', writes Kari L. Jaksa 'positively contribute to the formation of national identity and they engender national unity'.[526] As Gibbons has asserted, 'many citizens from the 'Celtic' nations – Wales and Scotland – who belong to a nation-state, and who were once proponents of a strong "British" identity prior to devolution may also, in light of recent developments (in European integration) feel the need to reassert their national, regional and/or local identities'.[527] The territories considered Celtic nations, referred to as the 'Celtic fringe', also include Cornwall, Ireland, Brittany and the Isle of Mann, each of which has its own Celtic language, however.[528] The focus of the three case studies was to examine the extent to which football fandom can provide a lens through which the complexities underlying modern concepts of 'nation' and 'nationalism' and contemporary identity – local, regional and national – in borderlands can effectively be observed.

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[526] Kari L. Jaksa, 'Sports and Collective Identity: The Effects of Athletics on National Unity', *SAIS Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (2011), pp. 39-41 (p. 39).
[527] Gibbons, *English National Identity*, p. 36.
[528] Murray Pittock, *Celtic Identity and the British Image* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).

Amongst the strengths of the study are the following: it is historical, Berwick Rangers, The New Saints and Hay St. Mary's clearly deserve sociological attention, it is comparative and it highlights that border communities do not conform to a prescribed homogenous 'national identity'. Considerable care was taken to research and 'learn' the history of the clubs and the border communities they represented through extensive reading of travel guides, newspapers, archival material, census data, historical books and sociological studies. Furthermore, visits were made to Berwick, Oswestry and Hay on numerous occasions as a participant observer enabling extensive field notes to be made. These facilitated a thorough examination of the social, linguistic and cultural character of each town, in addition to affording opportunities to attend a series of matches and hold informal discussions either via email or verbally with club secretaries, local historians, shop keepers or language enthusiasts. Moreover, these visits enabled focus group interviews to be conducted at various venues in association with the club (TNS FC), board members and players (Hay St. Mary's FC) and two supporters' groups (Berwick Rangers FC).

Fiona Gill's explorative study analysed national identity in Berwick specifically as a performance, and rugby, was the context in which that performance took place.[529] However, Gill a former female player of Berwick Women's Rugby Club, admitted that she did not discuss the interplay between Scottish, English and British identities in Berwick, nor did she make comparisons with identities of football supporters in Berwick or rugby players elsewhere in 'other' contentious 'border towns' in Britain. Sociologist David McCrone too, has conceded that further empirical research in debatable lands is required, 'comparatively little has been written explicitly on "national identity" and a great deal less is solidly evidence-based'.[530] It is perhaps significant that McCrone's own research in Berwick, largely based on unpublished data conducted some fifteen years ago, identified Berwick Rangers as 'the most famous' association which has to manage the identity question.[531] Such attention has, in part, been afforded to Berwick by Tom Maxwell's *The Lone Rangers*, which has provided a brief history and which has also brought a popular interest in football and national identity in border towns to a fore.[532]

These case studies evaluate how groups of supporters in three border towns along the Anglo-Welsh and Anglo-Scots borders 'do' identity. As Mike Cronin has argued, '[Football]

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[529] Gill, 'Public and Private', pp. 83-102.
[530] David McCrone, 'Debatable lands: national identities on the border', in *Understanding National Identity*, ed. David McCrone and Frank Bechhofer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 68-96 (p. 94).
[531] McCrone, 'Debatable lands', p. 94.
[532] Maxwell, *The Lone Rangers*.

clubs are an important location for the creation and sustaining of identities that are reflective of wider issues within society'.[533] As a leisure pursuit, football provides a common language and a shared experience which often unites all elements within society. The avenues of communication and the contact between fans demonstrate a tendency towards the creation of a single cultural identity. Such an assertion, in the cases of Hay, Berwick and Oswestry, are, however, too simplistic. The comparative experience of fans of Berwick, TNS and Hay highlight that cross-border football has not diminished the importance of the border as a 'mental marker' of state boundaries or the importance of often competing local, regional and [inter]national allegiances.

The systematic study of fans and borderland culture provides a contemporary exemplar of ethnographical research in the Welsh Marches and Scottish Borders. These case studies contain most attributes of good sociological methodology and can be used to pre-empt further socio-ethnographical research into the relationship between football fandom and the formation and projection of national and social identities in borderlands in Britain and Europe. Moreover, the case studies highlight that answers to the identity question vary widely from one national border to another and between different communities and supporters' groups, whether they live on the same side of the Anglo-Welsh or Anglo-Scots border, or they straddle it. The cases of TNS, Hay St. Mary's and Berwick Rangers provide reliable and meaningful data about the effects of borderland football on how people shape their attitudes to contemporary 'national frontiers'.

## _Concluding remarks – suggestions for other geographical locations_

Yin has argued that, 'when doing a multiple case study…you should decide whether the two (or more) cases are to represent confirmatory cases (i.e. presumed replications of the same phenomenon).'[534] Yet Yin also suggests that six to ten cases are desirable for data rich results. In order to 'provide compelling support for the initial set of propositions',[535] an exploration of case studies in other geographical locations in Cornwall, Monmouthshire and Northern Ireland are desirable as too is a study of female football fandom and sectarianism in Scottish league football.

Cornish distinctiveness has in the past twenty years, become resurgent. The Cornish language now receives government funding to be taught in Cornish schools and it appears on

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[533] Mike Cronin, 'Playing Away from Home: Identity in Northern Ireland and the Experience of Derry City Football Club', in _National Identities_, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2000), pp. 65-79 (p. 65).

[534] Robert K. Yin, 'Case study methods', _COSMOS Corporation_ <http://www.cosmoscorp.com/Docs/AERAdraft.pdf> [Accessed 4 January 2016], pp. 1-25 (p. 8).

[535] Yin, _Case Study Research_, p. 46.

bilingual signs at the Cornwall-England border on the A30. The St. Piran's flag, once confined to Redruth, the 'most Cornish town' in the Duchy (according to the 2011 Census), is now common.[536] The revival of the Cornish language, the survival of Cornish identity and the recognition of the Cornish people as a minority, alongside the Welsh, Scottish and Irish confirm the differences that become obvious the moment you cross the River Tamar. Nevertheless, the *Celtic League*, an organisation that promotes self-determination and modern Celtic identity and culture in the six Celtic nations, has noted that Breton, Cornish and Manx remain the three most unsupported Celtic languages. Whereas Breton is not recognised by the European Charter of Minority Languages, in Britain's 'Celtic fringe', Cornish was recognised by the UK government as an official language in 2002, and 'over the past 25 years, the government of the Isle of Man has made special efforts to develop a positive mental attitude towards culture, national identity and Manx especially'.[537] Although the Isle of Man is, 'not part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, nor is it part of the European Union', the Ellen Vannin Football team represents the Manx nation through participation in the Confederation of Independent Football Association tournaments, which allow membership of, 'national teams not under the auspices of FIFA – representing nations, minorities, isolated dependencies or cultural regions'.[538]

In the case of the Cornwall, whether through kinship, work, landscape or feeling of exclusion, the border between Cornwall and England (or Devon) is a much contested phenomenon. Cornwall is a land of paradox, where there are not only contradictions between the River Tamar being perceived as both a county and a 'Celtic' national border, there are also contradictions within the Tamar borderlands and within Cornwall itself that are created by ethnical and cultural issues.[539] There is more than one border that divides or unites Cornwall. Nonetheless, what makes Cornwall 'national' is that the Duchy represented Great Britain at the 1908 Olympics, winning the silver medal in the rugby final.[540] The survival and strength of Cornish identity in the twenty-first century is evident in campaigns which consider legal action

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[536] *The Cornish Guardian*, 29 April 2014 <http://www.cornishguardian.co.uk/Redruth-Cornwall-s-Cornish-town-Saltash/story-21028337-detail/story.html> [Accessed 4 January 2016].

[537] *The Celtic League* <https://www.celticleague.net/news/foinse-focus-on-manx-breton-and-cornish-languages/> [Accessed 2 August 2016]; ConIFA <http://www.conifa.org/en/about-us/faq/> [Accessed 2 August 2016].

[538] Brian Stowell and Philip Gawne, 'Manx', in *Rebuilding the Celtic Languages: Reversing Language Shift in the Celtic Countries*, ed. Diarmuid O'Neill (Talybont, Ceredigion: Y Lolfa, 2005), pp. 383-423 (p. 384).

[539] See Milden, 'A Much Contested Border, pp. 1-12.

[540] *The Telegraph*, 2 December 2008 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/rugbyunion/3542374/Olympic-spirit-too-much-for-Cornwall-rugby-team-against-Australia-in-1908-Rugby-Union.html> [Accessed 3 January 2016].

to allow Cornwall to be represented independently at the Commonwealth Games in 2018 and for the Cornish Pirates to be able to compete in a 'Seven Nations' international rugby tournament. Thus, Cornwall represents one of the most exciting places to study border identities in Britain. It can be argued that more consideration needs to be given to examining identities of supporters of the Cornish Pirates (rugby) and Truro (football) or Saltash United, the principal frontier town and club, at various spatial levels nationally and locally, externally and internally. In the case of the latter, both a letter and email was sent to the Chairman of Saltash United FC outlining my hope to examine group experiences among supporters' experiences. However, a response was not forthcoming which meant that an 'internal' Celtic borders comparison was not viable.

There also continues to be relatively few sociological and ethnographical studies at more local levels in the immediate Northern Ireland/Republic of Ireland border region, and even fewer dealing with football on both sides of the border. Ffionn Davenport explains the politics of names in respect to 'Derry-stroke-Londonderry', a town with two names, which has been problematic among two communities.[541] On the one hand, British Protestant unionists in Northern Ireland associate strongly with 'Londonderry' (the town's official name since it was granted a Royal Charter in 1613), used in government publications, ordnance survey maps, rail and bus timetables and the literature of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB).[542] Conversely, Irish Catholic nationalists and republicans use 'Derry' and 'often deface the London part of the name on road signs'.[543] 'To use either name', Mona Baker suggests, 'is to deny the legitimacy of the other'.[544] Father Alex Reid and the Rev. Dr. Roy Magee reveal that local expressions seen in the form of loyalist and republican paramilitary murals painted on neighbourhood buildings and walls are still commonplace in Derry/Londonderry.[545] Although Davenport concedes that, the town 'remains a touchstone of people's political views', she points out, however, that 'the majority of people continue to use 'Derry' in their everyday speech'.[546]

In his article 'Playing Away from Home: Identity in Northern Ireland and the Experience of Derry City Football Club', Mike Cronin explored the history of Derry City in the period 1968-

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[541] Ffion Davenport, *Ireland*, 8th edition (Footscray; London: Lonely Planet, 2008), p. 644.
[542] Davenport, p. 644.
[543] Davenport, p. 644.
[544] Mona Baker, *Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 124.
[545] Father Alex Reid and the Rev. Dr. Roy Magee, 'Men who walked the street: Northern Ireland', in *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution*, ed. David Little (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 53-96 (p. 59).
[546] Davenport, p. 644.

1985, and the effect the troubles in Northern Ireland had on the club.[547] However, the absence of detailed contemporary studies of cross-border relations highlights that significant gaps and limitations remain. Derry is an example of how a Catholic supported club could not successfully compete in Northern Ireland against Protestant teams before the Belfast Good Friday agreement. Derry City Football Club's departure from the Irish League before applying to join the reorganised League of Ireland south of the Northern Irish/Irish Republic border in 1985 required special dispensation from FIFA and the IFA. It is of note that all football players born in Northern Ireland today are able to declare their allegiance for the Republic of Ireland when given the choice of which nation to play for. This anomaly is evident in the case of ex-Derry City, Manchester United and current Everton footballer Darron Gibson who in 2008 caused strong protests from the Irish Football Association (IFA) after he declared his allegiance to the Republic of Ireland. The border dividing Northern Ireland from the Irish Republic (Eire), and more particularly Derry City, provides a unique case for addressing sectarianism in Irish football.[548]

In its long and extensive history, Monmouthshire has been a county, borough, and Unitary Authority in Wales; it has also been part of the Welsh county of Gwent, part of the English county of Herefordshire and an English county in its own right. It has held complex allegiances with both Wales and England over the five hundred years of its existence. Since the administrative county of Monmouthshire and associated lieutenancy were abolished in 1974 under the Local Government Act 1972, the area has been placed 'definitively in Wales'. Yet, the county motto *Utrique Fidelis* ('Faithful to Both'), used on the Arms of Monmouthshire County Council, also used by Gwent County Council 1974 to 1996, shows the county as faithful to both England and Wales, and the lion of England and the dragon of Wales, each grasping its country's national emblem, the English rose and Welsh leek, illustrate its double allegiance.[549] The ambiguity of Monmouthshire's national status still endures. Situated on the eastern edge of the County of Monmouthshire, Monmouth (Welsh: Trefynwy 'town on the Monnow') stands at the heart of the Wye Valley. This Welsh border town has a rich history, a renowned market, and home to Geoffrey of Monmouth, author of *Historia Regum Britanniae* ('Histories of the Kings of

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[547] Cronin, 'Playing Away from Home', pp. 65-79

[548] See for example, 'Sectarianism and Irwin knife incident listed amongst sports incidents', in *The Londonderry Sentinel*, 3 January 2011 <http://www.londonderrysentinel.co.uk/news/londonderry-news/sectarianism-and-irwin-knife-incident-listed-amongst-sports-incidents-1-2362109#ixzz43jzvo5Ob> [Accessed 23 March 2016].

[549] Tony Hopkins, 'In Search of Monmouthshire, 1536-1972', *Gwent Local History*, No. 71 (1991), pp. 35-46 (p. 35).

Britain'), described by Fiona Tolhurst as, 'one of the most popular and influential texts in medieval Europe'.[550] Geoffrey's accounts of the glorious hero King Arthur, written in c. 1136, were according to John Davies, 'central to the consciousness of the Welsh for many centuries'.[551] However, all attempts to discover Geoffrey of Monmouth's exact sources have failed. Thus, as Davies noted, 'it appears that most of the *Historia* is the product of [Geoffrey's] own imagination'.[552] And yet, Monmouth has a second famous son: Henry of Monmouth, the future King Henry V of England, who was born 9 August 1386 at Monmouth Castle. The Battle of Agincourt in 1415 was a major victory for England in the Hundred Years War. Despite being significantly outnumbered, the English easily defeated the French and it has become one of the best known events in British history, immortalised in tales, plays and poetry.[553] It is commemorated in Monmouth in the naming of Haberdasher's School, 'Agincourt', the main town square as 'Agincourt Square', and a statue of Henry V on the front of the Shire Hall.

Monmouth's semi-professional cricket club currently compete in the Glamorgan and Monmouthsire League Division Three, having previously played in the Herefordshire Marches League and the Worcestershire County League Second Division, a feeder league to the Birmingham and District Premier League. Nonetheless, in 2012 Monmouth Cricket Club chose to change its national allegiance once again. This context of exploring border cricket could be evaluated by considering the historical narrative, the 'official' accounts of cricket and national identity, media representations of Monmouth on both sides of the border, and the views of contemporary Monmouth match-going supporters. It was regrettable, therefore, that despite initial contact being made with the Monmouth club secretary (through social media) that the participation of its members was not forthcoming and could not be included in this study.

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[550] Fiona Tolhurst, *Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Translation of the Female Kingship* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 3-4.
[551] Davies, *A History of* Wales, p. 1.
[552] Davies, *A History of* Wales, p. 119.
[553] Robin Neillands, *The Hundred Years War* (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 3.

# Chapter 8 - Conclusion

## *Introduction*

The complex and ambivalent attitudes of borderers in Hay-on-Wye, Oswestry and Berwick-upon-Tweed towards England, Wales and Scotland suggests the need to rethink what has become an accepted model of identity and loyalty in Britain. In the ethno-sociological cases considered here, a Berwick Rangers supporter would identify first with Berwick as a 'Berwicker', then in succession with England or Scotland and finally with Britain itself. Thus, in generic terms, the strongest sense of identification in border towns can often be found with the immediate locality, community, territory or region that is with an area of land that is not conterminous with a nation or a state, but nevertheless gives one a sense of belonging, a sense of attachment, a sense of place. We see this with the way supporters identified themselves strongly with the towns in which they lived. However, in many cases, the identity of a borderland region was further complicated by its distance from the centre. In addition to being at the political boundary, regions such as Northumberland and the Scottish Borders are peripheries. As such, fans of Berwick, who live in England's most northerly frontier town rarely feel such an emotional or societal barrier between England and Scotland. For example, fans who live on the English side of the border described themselves as 'Berwickers'. Across the river, a 'borderer identity', however, resonated amongst many Scottish Berwickers. 'Borderers' are not determined by which side of the national boundary they live, as the term applies to all those who live within the immediate borderland locality, where the criss-cross nature of the rural roads throughout the border area illustrated the lack of any real boundary recognition between the two historic nations.

## *National identity and nationalism in borderlands*

Postmodernists have pointed out that any 'national identity' rests upon a binary or plural opposition to another identity: what can be termed 'the other'. Communities, peoples, nations are defined by what they are not. At one level this may be a relatively simple opposition: thus Linda Colley has argued that British Protestantism found itself in opposition to French Catholicism, helping to strengthen Protestantism as a constitutive strand in British national identity.[554] With its emphasis on the conflictual relations between England and the Celtic periphery, Michael

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[554] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the nation, 1707-1837* (London.: Vintage 1996).

Hechter's book *Internal Colonialism* is at odds with Colley's emphasis on a mutual shared identity as 'British', albeit an identity which did not exclude the continuation of identities as Scots or Welsh as well, or indeed of more local allegiances.[555] However, for some postmodernists the implications go deeper than this. Looking at modern nation-states they observe that population movements since the loss of empire by Western countries has involved influxes of ex-colonial peoples, immigrants, guest workers and asylum seekers. Their arrival has eroded the traditional narratives and images of homogeneous national identity, revealing instead a fragmented hybrid identity. For example, in Oswestry when pushed on the issue of a unilateral national identity, the response was clear, '[we're] a good mixture of people….a hybrid basically'.[556] The conflict arises because of the discordance between the two national identities, Wales and England, at separate spatial scales. As a consequence, border localities often fail to be culturally and ideologically assimilated by the nation and are often part of a conscious process of consolidating internal differences into a dual, multi-national or unique borderland cultural identity. Postmodernists argue that pluralism has replaced essentialism, and national identities are losing their grip on people. Former assumptions about 'national community' and 'identity' have to be rethought, and only multicultural politics represent a way forward, it is argued. Yet, the exploration of national identities among fans in border communities has found quite the opposite: a strong sense of loyalty to the 'locality' and an ambivalent attachment to the 'nation'.

A number of important theorists of nationalism and national identity have taken the Scottish experience as a starting point for their analysis and model building. The relationship between England and Wales was not as crucial to the viability of the nation state as were English-Scottish relations, most recently exemplified in 2014 on the issue of Scotland's oil industry in the event of Scottish independence. Therefore, contemporary Welsh national identity has not attracted the same amount of international scholarly attention. This experience for the people involved in culturally or politically ambivalent border populations is no less significant, however. Berwick fans are frequently met with tension and antagonism, but at the same time the town and club constitute a natural cultural transition zone from one nation to another. There were families with both English and Scottish ancestry; sometimes Scots or English born siblings chose

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[555] Michael Hechter, *Internal colonialism: the Celtic fringe in British national development, 1536-1966*, 1st paperback edn (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1975).
[556] R1, TNS.

a different nationality. Such accumulated experiences and familiarity across ethno-cultural lines has helped to create a powerful local identity in which numerous ties bridged the national divide.

What does this all really mean for the peoples of Hay-on-Wye, Oswestry and Berwick-upon-Tweed? It means that for those who were born and brought up along a contemporary frontier there is no good reason that borderers should be enthusiastic about shouting 'Wales' or 'Scotland' in preference to 'England'. But for the relative 'accidents' in the comparative histories of these ambiguous towns and nations, the inhabitants of the Welsh Marches and Scottish Borders today may easily have ended up feeling instead obliged to shout 'England' while English Borderers in Oswestry or Berwick shout 'Wales' and 'Scotland' respectively. Whatever it is that 'Scottish Borderers' might feel like shouting today, they may not feel like shouting quite so loudly tomorrow, especially if Berwick Rangers are ever relegated from Scottish League Two.

The examination of football in Hay, Oswestry and Berwick has sought to explain the effects of liminal borderlands on the construction of Welsh, Scottish and English identities. In recent years, several studies have addressed the creation and manifestation of border identities. These studies tended to express the question of limited national identities in terms of England's relationship with its contentious neighbour Scotland. Surprisingly, there have been few studies of England's relationship with Wales. This collection of case studies has shown that examining border football offers some of the most fruitful occasions for exploring the complicated intersections among contemporary borders, nationalism and identity formation. Moreover, it has highlighted a kind of hybridity at play in football that negotiates identity, one that affirms and yet complicates both premodern and postmodern ways of theorising 'nation', 'boundaries' and 'borderer identities'. In these cases, the expression of identity regularly depends not merely on the idea of the 'other' but on the other's footballing tradition. Although England, Wales and Scotland are often locked in an age-old adversarial rivalry, it is never merely that: rather each side becomes a key element in defining the other's identity, a dynamic that finds particularly intense expression in contemporary border regions themselves, but extends into the 'nation'.

One purpose of the focus on the supporters of Hay St. Mary's and reigning Welsh Champions The New Saints of Oswestry Town was to simply draw attention to the importance of the Anglo-Welsh border as a symbolic cultural entity, for it remains a contested space of identity. What unites these cases is their focus on the border and the region surrounding it as a space for contact and change, a place of division that is home to a cross-border culture where

football supporters can display an almost simultaneous antipathy and affection towards their counterparts on the other side. What exists are localities divided by significant national allegiances – yet one whose inhabitants still have more in common with their cross-border neighbours than with the respective administrative centres of Edinburgh, Cardiff and London.

Drawn together by cultural similarities, while simultaneously driven apart by common economic interests and a discourse of national enmity, English, Welsh and Scottish borderers have more complicated allegiances and more multifaceted identities than has previously been recognised. As a distinctive geopolitical entity and symbolic cultural and linguistic frontier zone in which identities are compared, contested, and renegotiated, the Anglo-Welsh and Anglo-Scots borders emerge as an articulation of Welsh, English and Scottish consciousness and cultural identity. Moreover, they reveal the border's reach, showing that it extends deep into the discourse of each 'nation', and that no fan that negotiates the border goes unmarked by the crossing. Above all, what emerges from these case studies is a sense of complexity of Anglo-Celtic political, linguistic and cultural relations and the decree to which the Welsh Marches and Scottish Borders themselves remain integral to Welsh, Scottish and English imaginations.

*Conclusion*

Throughout these investigative cases, myriad interpretations of identities manifest in often surprising ways, revealing not only the hybridity of cross-border football culture, but also the interdependence of English, Welsh and Scottish supporters' identities more broadly. The New Saints of Oswestry Town, for example, demonstrates a fundamental paradox of borderland hybridity in which difference is sometimes (though not always) articulated and negotiated through sameness. The contested symbolism of the border in the creation and expression of national identity in Berwick has also presented border identities as uncertain and suspect, subject to continual negotiation, change and doubt, for the border never entirely separates Berwick, a town between two kingdoms. These towns remain sites of linguistic conflict and change, which inform national identities that are often multiple and overlapping. The seeming contradictions and subtleties of national identities in Hay, Oswestry and Berwick remind us of the interdependence of Scottish, Welsh and English cultures and self-conceptions. Such interdependence reminds us of the value of attention to national borderlands and boundaries in the United Kingdom in any investigation into identities. The case studies demonstrate that the

official rhetoric of national identity imposed from the centre tends paradoxically to reveal difference, threatening to expose the 'nation' as constructed rather than natural and timeless.

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# Appendix 1 - Illustrations, prompts and sources for focus groups

_Berwick Rangers Football Club_

Fig. 15 – Berwick Rangers Football Club crest (Source: Berwick Rangers FC)

Fig. 16 – Newspaper coverage of Berwick Rangers FC in *The Journal*

# Berwick Rangers to play Celtic in Scottish Cup

*The Journal* (23 November 2010)

FOOTBALL bosses in a Northumberland town are gearing up to host their biggest match in almost a decade.

Club officials at Berwick Rangers – the only English team to play in the Scottish league – are hoping for a bumper pay day early next year after being drawn against Scots giants Celtic in the fourth round of the Scottish Cup.

Usually, Celtic only journey south of the border for European matches, but will be heading to Berwick on Sunday January 8 for what is a domestic fixture.

The greatest success in Berwick's hundred-plus year history came in 1967 against Glasgow Rangers, with the Northumberland club producing one of the greatest upsets in Scottish football history to claim a 1-0 win.

Fig. 17 – Newspaper coverage of Berwick Rangers FC in *The Scotsman*

# Berwick hit jackpot with home clash against Celtic

*The Scotsman* (23 November 2010)

BERWICK Rangers, the club responsible for the greatest Scottish Cup shock of all time, are dreaming of another one after being drawn against Celtic in the fourth round of this season's competition. Fittingly, it was John Hughes, a former player with both Berwick and Celtic, who pulled the Shielfield Park club's name from the hat during the draw at Hampden yesterday

It was in January 1967 that Berwick beat Rangers 1-0 at home in the cup – a result that stunned Scottish football. The English club was unable to repeat that shock when they met the Glasgow club in 2002, although they did force the tie to a replay before going down 3-0 at Ibrox.

Fig. 18 – Newspaper coverage of Berwick Rangers FC in *The Daily Mail*

## Celtic face trip to minnows Berwick in fourth round of Scottish Cup

*The Daily Mail* (22 November 2010)

Berwick Rangers have been given a dream Scottish Cup tie against Celtic.

The Bhoys will travel down to Shielfield Park in the north of England for their fourth round tie in January.

Fig. 19 - Newspaper coverage of Berwick Rangers in *The Berwickshire News*

## Bumper payday for Berwick as Sky opt to screen Celtic cup tie

*Berwickshire News* (27 November 2010)

BERWICK Rangers will play to a live nationwide audience after it was confirmed that the Sky television cameras will be at Shielfield Park for what promises to be a lucrative Scottish Cup tie at home to Celtic.

Players will also relish the rare chance to pit their wits against the country's best players live on TV. Berwick defender Elliott Smith said: "I played for Forfar against Rangers a few seasons ago and that game was also on Sky. As a part-time player it gives you a massive buzz knowing people might be watching you."

Fig. 20 –Scottish flags used by Annan Athletic FC, Scottish League Two (Source: Annan Athletic FC)



Fig. 21 – Scottish flags used by Montrose FC, Scottish League Two (Source: Montrose FC)

Fig. 22 – Use of Scots on the website of Arbroath FC, Scottish League Two (Source: Arbroath FC)



Fig. 23 – Use of Scots on the website of Forfar Athletic FC, Scottish League One (Source: Forfar Athletic FC)



Fig. 24 – Use of Scots on the website of Partick Thistle FC, Scottish Premiership (Source: Partick Thistle FC)

Fig. 25 – Use of Scots on the website of Carnoustie Panmure JFC, Scottish Junior
Football East Region Super League (Source: Carnoustie Panmure JFC)
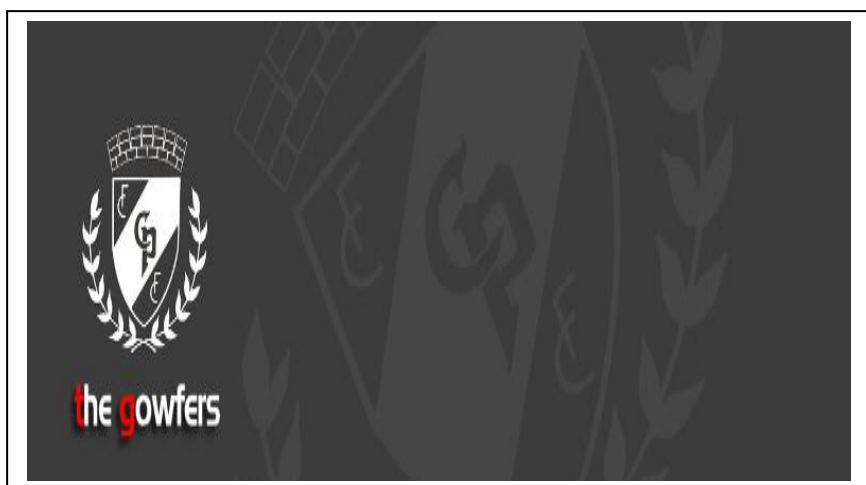
Fig. 26 – Berwick Rangers FC 'Scottish' scarf (Source: Berwick Rangers FC)

Fig. 27 – Berwick Rangers FC 'English' scarf (Source: Berwick Rangers FC)

Fig. 28 – The New Saints FC crest (Source: The New Saints FC)

Fig. 29 – Comments made by Shropshire's council leader, Oswestry town Mayor and The New Saints' General Manager (Source: *The Shropshire Star*)

Keith Barrow, Shropshire's council leader has said that TNS have put Shropshire sport on the sporting map through their efforts in this year's European Champions League.

Mr Barrow said whether the team had won or lost against Anderlecht, the Park Hall-based club had done Shropshire proud.

He said: "I have been following their progress with an interest and I think what they have done is great for Oswestry and Shropshire."

"They are flying the flag for Shropshire and I am sure everyone here will hope they do well."

Oswestry town Mayor Elaine Channon also said she hoped The New Saints would enjoy more European success. She said: "I wish them every success. It is nice to see Oswestry and Shropshire represented on the European stage."

The New Saints' general manager Ian Williams confirmed that the club and its players were proud to be ambassadors for Shropshire.

He said: "We are in the unique position of being able to play in England albeit it through the Welsh league system and bring European football to Oswestry.

"It has been fantastic for the region and for Shropshire and there has been a lot of interest."

Fig. 30 – Comments made by *Soccer Saturday* presenter Jeff Stelling (Source: *Sky Sports*)



One of Jeff Stelling's famous catchphrases on his Sky Sports show Soccer Saturday occurred most weeks when TNS won at home, upon which he commented: "They'll be dancing in the streets of Total Network Solutions tonight!"

Fig. 31 – Bohemians flags at a Champions League qualifying match at Park Hall, Oswestry on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2010. The New Saints won 4-1 on aggregate. (Source: Author)

Fig. 32 – Welsh flags visible at Carmarthen Town FC's matches in the Welsh Premier League (Source: Carmarthen Town FC)

Fig. 33 – TNS flags away to Belgian champions RSC Anderlecht in a Champions League Qualifying round on 3 August 2010. TNS lost 3-0 with Romelu Lukaku scoring twice. (Source: The New Saints FC, *Facebook*)

Fig. 34 – Bilingual poster advertising the Welsh Cup Final in 2010 (Source: Welsh Premier League)

Fig. 35 – Bilingual signage advertising the Llanelli AFC club shop and an upcoming friendly football fixture (Source: Llanelli AFC)

Fig. 36 – Use of the Welsh language on the website of Welsh Premier League opponents Bala Town FC (Source: Bala Town FC)



Fig. 37 – Use of the Welsh language on Football Association of Wales' website (Source: FAW)

Fig. 38 – Use of the Welsh language on the website of Welsh Premier League opponents Carmarthen Town AFC (Source: Carmarthen Town AFC)



Fig. 39 – Use of the Welsh language on the website of Welsh Premier League opponents Bangor City FC (Source: Bangor City FC)
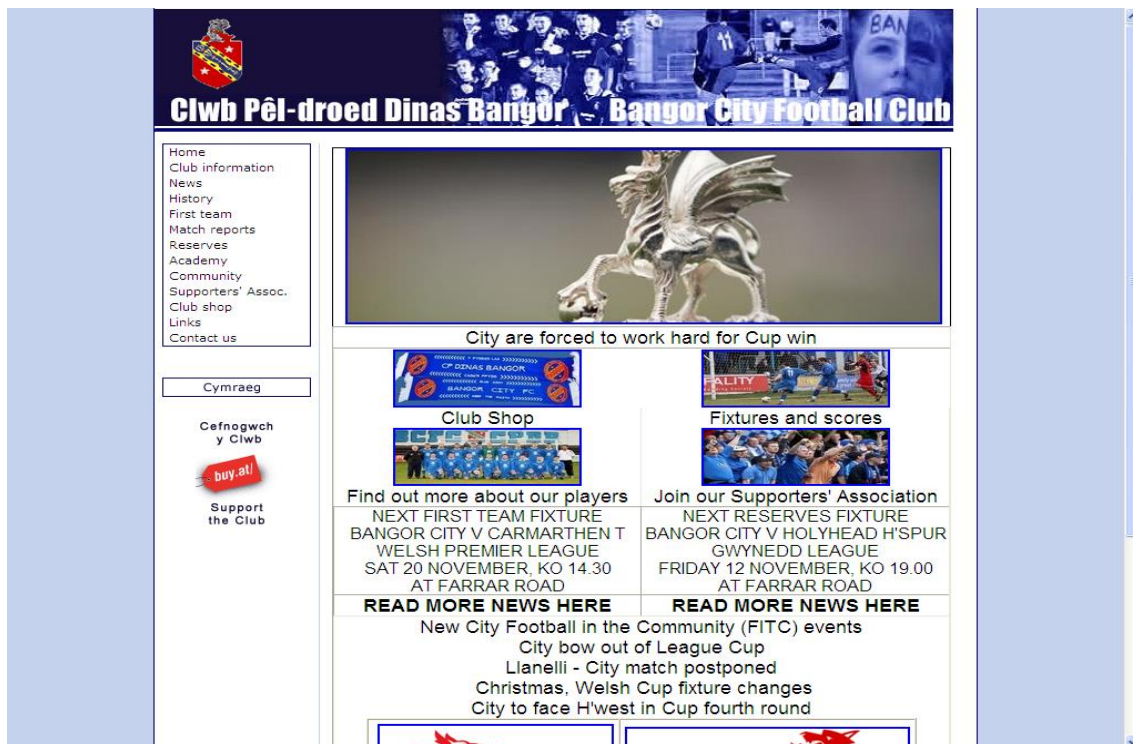
Fig. 40 – The New Saints of Oswestry Town FC home shirt for the 2010-11 season.
(Source: The New Saints FC)

Fig. 41 – The New Saints of Oswestry Town FC away shirt for the 2010-11 season.
(Source: The New Saints FC)

Fig. 42 – Hay St. Mary's Football Club crest (Source: Hay St. Mary's FC)

Fig. 43 – Comments made by the Secretary of the Central Wales FA in December 2010. (Source: *The County Times)*

This week (December 2010) the Welsh Football Association put its foot down in an attempt to stop teams close to the border playing in Herefordshire partly because of the actions of Hay St Mary's FC. The club's decision to field a side across the border in the Herefordshire Premier League while fielding another side in the Watson Associates Mid Wales League South ensured a hefty fine from the Central Welsh FA.

Secretary of the Central Wales FA is Phil Woosnam argued:

"In the past such decisions have been based on the recommendations of the regional association, but the Welsh FA are now considering taking all powers for such decisions," he told the County Times.

"Obviously the fact that Hay developed their facilities, while enjoying the benefits of Welsh league membership, only to join the English system, has highlighted that something needs to be done.

"I do not think that a club based in Wales should be able to enter a team on both sides of the border."

Whilst the Welsh FA allows newly-promoted Swansea City to play in the Premier League, Cardiff City in the Championship and Newport County and Wrexham in the Conference, it appears it doesn't want Hay St Mary's to play in Herefordshire League.

Fig. 44 – Coverage of Hay St. Mary's on the English FA's website (Source: FA)

**Hereford Times**

Home | News | Fixtures | Results | Stats | Email Sub | Contact | RESPECT | Feeds | F-T WAP

FT Home   Sign In

**Herefordshire Football League**

Season: 2010-2011    Division: PREMIER DIVISION    Hit Counter: 360841

2010-2011  GO    After selecting wait for screen to refresh

PREMIER DIVISION  GO    After selecting wait for screen to refresh

Select Cup / Competition  GO    After selecting wait for screen to refresh

Upcoming Fixtures | Postponed/Cancelled | Teams

## League Table

| POS | | P | W | D | L | GD | PTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Westfields Res | 24 | 17 | 0 | 7 | 49 | 51 |
| 2 | Lads Club | 24 | 15 | 4 | 5 | 20 | 49 |
| 3 | Hinton | 24 | 14 | 1 | 9 | 18 | 43 |
| 4 | Ledbury Town | 24 | 13 | 3 | 8 | 10 | 42 |
| 5 | Kington Town | 24 | 13 | 2 | 9 | 17 | 41 |
| 6 | Ewyas Harold | 24 | 11 | 7 | 6 | 10 | 40 |
| 7 | Wellington Res | 24 | 12 | 1 | 11 | -1 | 37 |
| 8 | Bartestree | 24 | 10 | 4 | 10 | 9 | 34 |
| 9 | Hay St Marys | 24 | 9 | 2 | 13 | 1 | 26 * |
| 10 | Bromyard Town Res | 24 | 8 | 2 | 14 | -11 | 23 * |
| 11 | Holme Lacy | 24 | 4 | 6 | 14 | -34 | 18 |
| 12 | Pegasus Res | 24 | 6 | 4 | 14 | -37 | 16 * |
| 13 | Fownhope | 24 | 3 | 6 | 15 | -51 | 15 |

Table detail

* adjustment made

## Recent Results

| DATE | HOME | RESULT | AWAY | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14/05/11 | Holme Lacy | 2 - 3 | Kington Town | L |
| 10/05/11 | Ewyas Harold | 1 - 1 | Hay St Marys | L |
| 10/05/11 | Holme Lacy | 3 - 2 | Bartestree | L |
| 10/05/11 | Westfields Res | 5 - 0 | Kington Town | L |
| 07/05/11 | Ewyas Harold | 0 - 0 | Lads Club | L |
| 07/05/11 | Fownhope | 1 - 4 | Hinton | L |
| 07/05/11 | Hay St Marys | 3 - 2 | Kington Town | L |
| 07/05/11 | Holme Lacy | 1 - 4 | Wellington Res | L |
| 05/05/11 | Bromyard Town Res | 3 - 7 | Pegasus Res | L |
| 03/05/11 | Ewyas Harold | 0 - 0 | Bromyard Town Res | L |
| 03/05/11 | Hinton | 3 - 2 | Bartestree | L |
| 03/05/11 | Holme Lacy | 2 - 2 | Pegasus Res | L |
| 02/05/11 | Hinton | 2 - 0 | Wellington Res | Cup |
| 30/04/11 | Bromyard Town Res | 3 - 5 | Kington Town | L |
| 30/04/11 | Ewyas Harold | 0 - 0 | Pegasus Res | L |
| 30/04/11 | Fownhope | 0 - 3 | Wellington Res | L |

See all results

## League News

Saturday 11th December 2010
ALL GAMES OFF
10/12/10 12:10

Fig. 45 – Coverage of Hay St. Mary's on the Football Association of Wales' website.
(Source: FAW)

Fig. 46 – Coverage of Hay St. Mary's on the website of Welsh language broadcaster *Sgorio* (Source: *S4C*)

HAY ST Marys Football Club will be returning to the past next month.

The clubs are fielding their first team this season in the Premier Division of the *Hereford Times* Herefordshire League.

"We used to enjoy playing in the Herefordshire League Premier Division and we left in the early 1990s," said Hay chairman Martin Tong.

"We are a Welsh club but the geography of the town means that Herefordshire is a good league for us and it's a good standard.

"In the Welsh League some of our trips were to places like Dolgellau. We had to travel 84 miles to Llansantffraid for a midweek fixture," explained Tong.

Hay will be running two senior teams this season and have agreed to field 'their best side available' in Watson Associates Mid Wales League South.

Their friendly against visiting Monmouth Town was goalless when it was abandoned after an opposing player broke a leg.

Tong said: "We are looking forward to the first game in the Herefordshire League."

Fig. 48 – Welsh flags used by fans of Wrexham AFC in the English National Conference
(Source: Wrexham AFC)



Fig. 49 – Welsh flags used by fans of Cardiff City Football Club in the
English Championship (Source: Cardiff City FC)

Fig. 50 - Welsh flags used by fans of Colwyn Bay FC in the Northern Premier League
(Source: Colwyn Bay FC)



Fig. 51 – Welsh flags used by fans of Swansea City Football Club in the
English Premier League (Source: Swansea City FC)

Fig. 52 – Welsh Cup trophy with the Welsh national flag in the background (Source: Welsh Premier League)

Fig. 53 – Bilingual poster advertising the Welsh Cup Final in 2010 (Source: Welsh Premier League)

Fig. 54 – Use of the Welsh language on Football Association of Wales' website (Source: FAW)



Fig. 55 – Parc Y Scarlets, Llanelli. Fans queuing for Welsh Cup Final tickets in May 2010 (Source: Welsh Premier League)

Fig. 56 – Parc Y Scarlets, Llanelli. The venue for Welsh Cup Final in May 2010. (Source: Welsh Premier League)

Fig. 57 – England's national football team crest ("Three Lions") (Source: FA)

Fig. 58 – Wales national football team crest (Translation: "Best play is team play")
(Source: FAW)
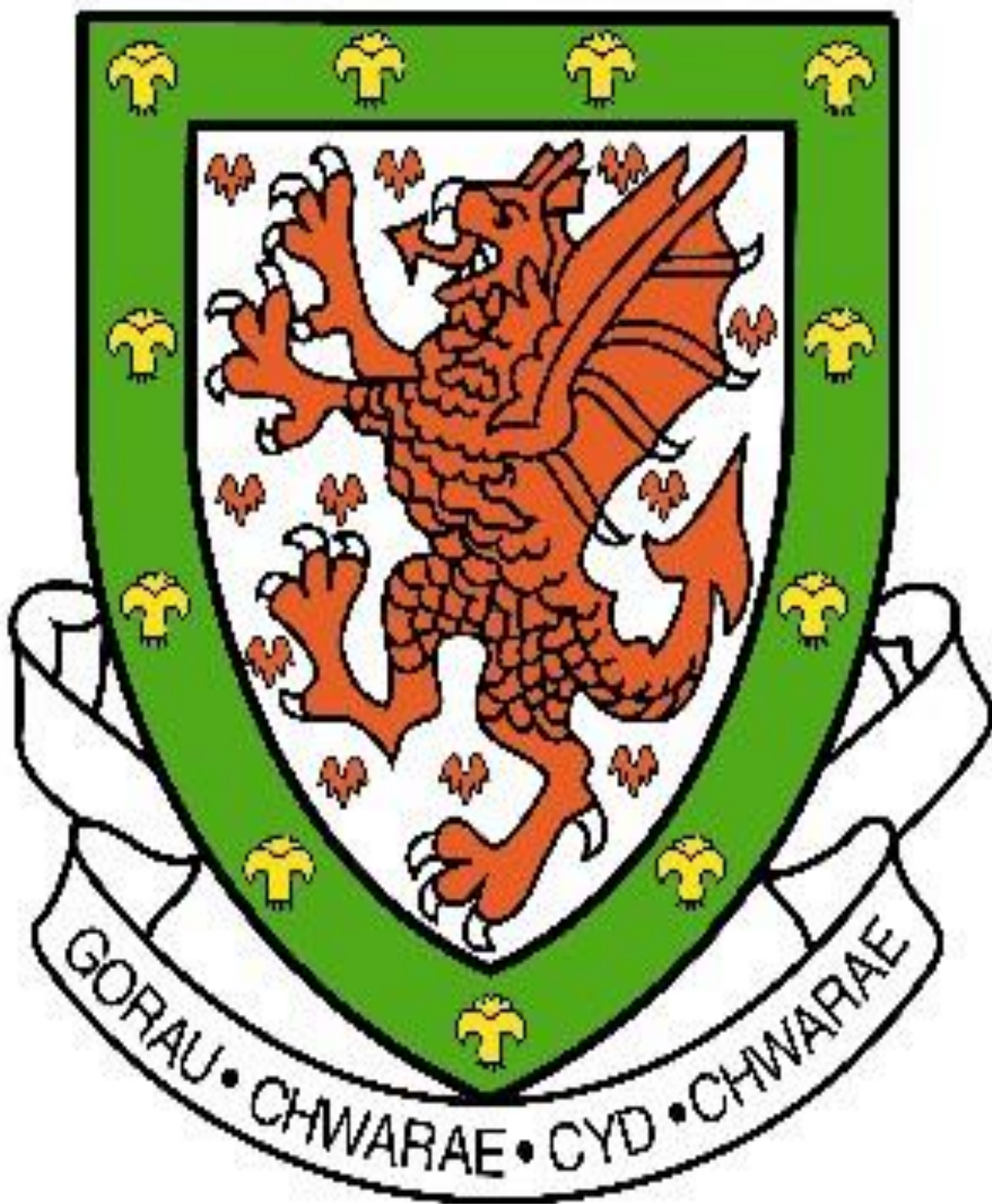
# Appendix 2 – Focus group questions

o *Berwick Rangers Football Club (Berwick-upon-Tweed)*

1. Who are Berwick Rangers? Where did the nickname 'The Borderers' come from? Why is the nickname important to Berwick Rangers FC? [Identity of Berwick-upon-Tweed]

2. [Show club crest – Figure I] Explain this. Why is the use of two lions and a bear important to Berwick? What do they symbolize? Did the crest originally consist of just the bear and tree? For what reason was this replaced? [Iconography of multiple identities]

3. Are Berwick Rangers an 'English club in Scotland' or 'a Scottish club in England?' How would you describe the nationality of Berwick Rangers to a neutral football supporter? Who is the community Berwick Rangers serve? [Ambiguity of border identity]

4. [Show newspaper reactions to the Berwick versus Celtic Scottish Cup Fourth Draw – Figures 2-4] Would you be opposed to the SFA describing Berwick as 'a British' rather than an 'English club?' Why? Has the publicity surrounding Berwick's draw with Celtic put Northumberland on the map? Does this mean Berwick fans view Northumberland as part of 'Scotland' and 'Scottishness?' How far across the border do you have to be, to be considered Scottish? [Ambiguity of border identity]

5. [Show comments made about Berwick in the *Berwickshire News* – Figure 5] What do you think the reporter meant by his comment that the Celtic game represented a rare chance for Berwick to 'pit their wits against the country's best players?' Do you feel 'a nationwide audience' is accurate? How would you describe Berwick-upon-Tweed as a place? [Imagined community style experience]

6. [Show video clip of Sky coverage – Berwick versus Celtic] How many of you are familiar with this? Why does Sky have coverage? Is it important to Berwick? Would you have preferred that the match had been aired on BBC Alba? How do you feel about Sky's English-language coverage? What impact (if any) do you think watching an English-based club would have on Scotland's Scots speaking audience? How do you think the

nationality of Berwick is viewed in Scots-speaking Glasgow, Edinburgh and throughout Scotland as a whole? [national identity/imagined community style experience]

7.   [Show pictures of Scottish flags – Figures 6 and 7] What can you see? Why do you think these flags were used? Has anyone travelled to Scotland to watch Berwick vs. Montrose, or Annan? If not, do you know anyone who has? Can you recall seeing flags with Berwick Rangers' name or crest emblazoned at domestic games? If so, which ones? What is the significance (if any) of the choice of flag? [Banal nationalism/Scottish national identity]

8.   Have you travelled to watch Berwick Rangers in England and Scotland? What was your experience like? How are Berwick treated by Scottish and English clubs and their fans? [Banal nationalism/imagined community style experience]

9.   [Show use of Scots on Arbroath, Forfar, Partick and Carnoustie Panmure club websites – Figures 8 to 11] What do you notice about these pictures? Why do you think these clubs use Scots when the SFL does not have a bilingual policy? How would you feel about the use of Scots on the Berwick website and at Shielfield? [Scots language/Scottish ethnicity]

10. [Show picture of woven scarf featuring 'Berwick Rangers' and either an England or a Scottish flags – Figures 12 and 13] Explain these. Is the scarf with the England flag worn at home games in Berwick and the scarf with the Scotland flag worn in away matches in Scotland? How would you feel about the online club shop selling more British themed supporters' gear? [Marketing/selling the club as a brand/merchandising]

*o* *The New Saints of Oswestry Town Football Club (Oswestry)*

1. Who are TNS? Where did the name 'The New Saints' come from? How does the merger of Oswestry, an English club, and Llansantffraid, a Welsh club, work in reality? Has the merger brought the two sets of supporters together? [Identity of Llansantffraid/Oswestry]

2. [Show club crest – Figure 14] Explain this. Why are the use of the dragon and lion important to TNS? What do they both symbolize? [Iconography of multiple identities]

3. Are TNS a Welsh club in England or an English club in Wales? How would you describe the nationality of TNS to a neutral football supporter? Who is the community TNS serve? [Ambiguity of border identity]

4. [Show Shropshire Council Leader's Comments – Figure 15] Would you be opposed to UEFA describing TNS as 'a British' rather than a 'Welsh club?' Why? Have TNS as Welsh champions put Shropshire on the map? Does this mean TNS fans view Shropshire as part of 'Wales' and 'Welshness?' How far across the border do you have to be, to be considered Welsh?  [Ambiguity of border identity]

5. [Show Sky Sports presenter Jeff Stelling's comments – Figure 16] What do you think he means? Do you feel his comments are unfair? How would you describe The New Saints as a place? [Imagined community style experience]

6. [Show video clip of S4C coverage] How many of you are familiar with this? Why does S4C have coverage? Is it important to TNS? How do you feel about the Welsh language coverage? What impact (if any) do you think watching an English-based club would have on S4C's Welsh-speaking audience? How do you think the nationality of TNS is viewed in Welsh-speaking Llanelli, Bangor and Aberystwyth and throughout Wales as a whole? [national identity/imagined community style experience]

7. [Show picture of Bohemian flags at Park Hall and Carmarthen Town and TNS flags in Europe – Figures 17 to 19] What can you see? Why do you think these flags were used? Did anyone travel to Belgium or Bulgaria to watch TNS versus Anderlecht or CSKA Sofia? If not, do you know anyone who did? Can you recall seeing flags with TNS' name

or crest emblazoned at European games abroad? If so, which ones? What is the significance (if any) of the choice of flag? [Banal nationalism/Welsh national identity]

8. Have you travelled to watch TNS in England and Wales? What was your experience like? Do you think travelling with TNS in European competitions is any different? How are you treated by European fans?[Banal nationalism/imagined community style experience]

9. [Show pictures of club/FAW websites along with Welsh Cup Final match programme and Llanelli fixture board – Figures 20 to 26] What do you notice about these pictures? Why do you think these clubs use Welsh when the Welsh Premier League does not have a bilingual policy? How would you feel about the use of Welsh on the TNS club website and at Park Hall?  [Welsh language/Welsh ethnicity]

10. [Show picture of home and away kits available at club shop – Figures 27 and 28] Explain these. Is the blue kit worn at home games in Oswestry and the hooped kit in away matches in Wales? Do you agree with TNS using Llansantffraid' hooped kit at home in Oswestry? How would you feel about the online club shop selling more Oswestry Town FC themed supporters' gear? [Marketing/selling the club as a brand/merchandising]

o   *Hay St. Mary's Football Club (Hay-on-Wye)*

1. Who are Hay St. Mary's Football Club? Where did the nickname 'the Saints' come from? Why is the nickname important to Hay St. Mary's FC? [Identity of Hay-on-Wye]

2. [Show club crest as visual aid – Figure 29] Explain this. Why is the use of a castle, church and tower important to Hay-on-Wye? What do they symbolize? [Iconography of multiple identities]

3. Are Hay St. Mary's a 'Welsh club in England' or an 'English club in Wales?' How would you describe the nationality of Hay St. Mary's Football Club to a neutral football supporter? Who is the community Hay St. Mary's serve? [Ambiguity of border identity]

4. [Show comments made by the Secretary of Central Wales Football Association – Figure 30] What do you think he means? Do you feel his comments are unfair? How would you describe Hay-on-Wye as a place? [Imagined community style experience]

5. [Show FA / FAW / S4C website coverage – Figures 31 and 32] How many of you are familiar with this? Why do the FA and FAW have coverage? Is it important to Hay? Would you like to see Hay receive more coverage on the S4C website? How do you feel about the FA's English-language coverage? What impact (if any) do you think watching a Welsh-based club would have on England's English-speaking audience? How do you think the nationality of Hay-on-Wye is viewed in English-speaking Hinton, Ledbury and throughout England as a whole? [national identity/imagined community style experience]

6. [Show *Hereford Times* reaction to Hay St. Mary's move to Herefordshire League – Figure 33] Would you be opposed to the FA describing Hay St. Mary's as 'a British' rather than a 'Welsh club?' Why? Have Hay St. Mary's exploits in the Herefordshire Premier League put Radnorshire on the map? Does this mean Hay St Mary's fans view Radnorshire as part of 'England' and 'Englishness?' How far across the border do you have to be, to be considered Welsh? [Ambiguity of border identity]

7. [Show pictures of Welsh flags – Figures 34 to 39] What can you see? Why do you think this flags was used? Has anyone travelled to England to watch Hay St. Mary's versus Ledbury, Hinton or Kington? If not, do you know anyone who has? Can you recall seeing flags with Hay's name or crest emblazoned at domestic games in England? If so, which ones? What is the significance (if any) of the choice of flag? [Banal nationalism/Welsh national identity]

8. [Show use of Welsh on FAW website, Welsh Cup Final match programme and at Welsh Cup Final Venue (Parc y Scarlets) – Figures 40-42] What do you notice about these pictures? Why do you think the Cup Final programme contains Welsh when the FAW does not have a bilingual policy? How would you feel about the use of Welsh on the Hay St. Mary's website and at the Forest Road Ground? [Welsh language/Welsh ethnicity]

9. [Show the crest of the English and Welsh national football teams – Figures 43 and 44] Have you travelled to watch Hay St. Mary's in Wales and England? What was your experience like? How are Hay St. Mary's Football Club treated by Welsh and English clubs and their supporters? [Banal nationalism/imagined community style experience]

# Appendix 3 – Transcripts of the focus groups

o *Berwick Rangers Supporters' Club focus group transcript (Pilot Study)*



Coding:

R1 – Pat
R2 – Fred
R3 – Defer
R4 – Alex
R5 – Ward
R6 – Meerkat

| | |
|---|---|
| Interviewer: | Just a very general question really. Who are Berwick Rangers? If someone asked you 'Who are Berwick Rangers?' How would you describe the club? |
| Pat: | They're a community team. |
| Fred: | (Whispers) a community team? |
| Pat: | We are… |
| Defer | Yeah we are a community team. |
| Pat: | We are a community club. |
| Fred: | Part-time. |
| Alex: | Semi-professional. |
| Pat: | I was asked this sort of question for The Sun when we played Celtic. I am trying to think what I said to them. |
| Defer: | We're a Third Division Scottish football team. |
| Fred: | Semi-professional. |
| Pat: | Yeah…Third Division…semi-processional. Do you want to know about the team or the club? |
| Interviewer: | Just the club really. |
| Pat: | The club…it is because it's a community club and its run by the community for the community. Yeah it is very community supporter led cos the supporters do things like the gates, the programmes…. |
| Alex: | Well, it was built by the supporters wasn't it? |

Fred:        Yes.

Defer:       That's right.

Pat:         Yeah, built by the supporters and it is still run by, even on match days everyone you saw at the gates taking your tickets or your money or selling you the programmes or selling you the half time draw…erm…all them people are involved in the club in the day to day running you know the ground maintenance with the Supporters' Club committee which holds us…which makes it…

Fred:        Tick.

Pat:         Tick…which makes it a community.

Interviewer: So, who would you say is, or makes up the Supporters' Club?

Pat:         The Supporters' Club is the committee made up of some directors, the directors and of the committee but they're actually came to the committee as individuals…erm…just because they're interest is in the club.

Fred:        Well it's since the takeover of the club isn't it?

Pat:         Yeah.

Fred:        That some of the Supporters' club members have become directors…

Pat:         [Noises of agreement]

Fred:        So we've got quite a lot of directors on the Supporters' club committee now, which we didn't have before. There has always been two committee members have been on the board of directors as representatives of the Supporters' Club but now there's…. now there's more.

Pat:         Now we have one, two, three, four…four directors on the committee… members that are also directors of the football club but that is only since the last 12 month.

Fred:        Aye, there was the Supporters' Club led takeover of the club so that's since then.

Interviewer: Okay. So where did the nickname "the Borderers" come from?

Defer:       I don't know that one.

Fred:        It has been made up really….

Ward:        I think it's mainly because of the border of England/Scotland.

Alex:        I was just gonna say I think it was actually Football Manager that gave them that nickname…you know that footballing game?

Pat:         No.

Alex:          Because I've never heard of it.

All:           (Noise of disagreement)

Pat:           No. There was something in the paper in the recent Celtic game somebody had dug up the history and there was something that it…I think it was somebody had just made reference to them because they're a border…they're a border…

Ward:          It's the closest team to the borders gate team that you are gonna get really…

Pat:           I think it was a manager or a player had made reference to them as 'borderers' and that stuck and that was way back…

Ward:          Like I said I just think it is cos we're right near to the borders.

Pat:           I think it was…

Fred:          In the late seventies?

Pat:           Something like that.

Fred:          Obviously they've got the "Wee Gers" as well don't they?

Pat:           Yeah that's because they're the little Rangers because you've got the big Rangers up in Glasgow.

Fred:          In other words, depending on how we play.

All:           (Laughter)

Interviewer:   So why do you feel the nickname "the borderers" is important to Berwick Rangers?

Fred:          Because it identifies them doesn't it?

Pat:           Yeah, because it identifies them as part of the borders…because although they're on the English side of the border there is a lot of followers come from Scottish side of the border across…and it joins the borders…

Ward:          A lot of supporters come through the borders that is what it is…

Defer:         The borders aye.

Ward:          A lot come through the borders.

Pat:           That's right.

Ward:          Even some of the players actually come through the borders…so…you know what I mean?

Pat:           Yeah, Andy McLean and Stevie Notman…our star players.

Ward:          That's why I think it gives them an identity.

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| Pat: | But I think it also links the England/Scottish thing, so…we cannat be seen as anti-Scotland and anti-English. |
| Fred: | It joins them together. |
| Interviewer: | Which leads me to the next question. Are Berwick Rangers an 'English club in Scotland' or a 'Scottish club in England'? |
| Fred: | Scottish club in England. |
| Pat: | Scottish club in England. |
| Alex: | That's it. |
| Pat: | Yeah Scottish club, Scottish players. |
| Defer: | Aye. They are Scottish players. |
| Ward: | Like I said they're in the borders and from Edinburgh. |
| Fred: | It's where the English system didn't want us. |
| Pat: | Yeah. |
| Fred: | That's the reason why we are where we are. We are too far north. |
| Interviewer: | How would you describe the nationality of Berwick Rangers to a neutral football supporter such as myself? |
| Pat: | Scottish. Although the supporters are very staunchly English…you know like when they go away they'll take like the Union Jack… |
| Fred: | And take the St' George's cross as well. |
| Pat: | But they'll take the flag because you know because the Berwick contingent are English. So it is to make sure that the Scottish teams are aware that this is an English link as well. |
| Fred: | They will start fighting on the terracing as well if there is enough… |
| Pat: | Not physical fights? |
| Fred: | I've seen it. |
| Defer: | Oh, I've seen it happening. |
| Fred: | I've seen it! |
| Defer: | Aye. |
| Alex: | Rowdy bunch. |
| Pat: | It depends who we're playing. |

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| Fred: | No but I mean I've seen Berwick fans fight amongst themselves. I've seen them like. |
| Pat: | Yeah they do because once they start chanting Scottish stuff then… |
| Ward: | Well you've got Scottish and English fans together. |
| Interviewer: | So, looking at the club crest… |
| Fred: | Is there copyright on that is it? |
| All: | (Laughter) |
| Interviewer: | So, can you just explain the crest to me really? |
| Fred: | Well I mean that's the Berwick bear. And then you've got the lion rampant of Scotland and you've got the lion rampant of England and I suppose you could class that like there as the border. |
| Ward: | The divide aye. |
| Fred: | The dividing line. You know Berwick on itself or could be any of either one… |
| Defer: | That's right. |
| Fred: | That's the actual crest of Berwick. |
| Pat: | What's the relevance of the bear? |
| Fred: | It's like erm…one of those phonetic things like bear-wick, like the bear and then wick meaning the tree. |
| Pat: | I remember being at High School and them putting the bear on to the badge at the High School many, many years ago. I could never remember what the relevance was. |
| Fred: | They've always used the bear and the tree haven't they? |
| Interviewer: | So why do you think having both of them is important to the club? |
| Fred: | It's because we're on the border. It's an identifier…it's where we are. |
| Pat: | That's what makes us unique because we're English and Scottish and everything we've got has this like…we've got a scarf, which has an England flag on the other on the other. |
| Interviewer: | [Shows own Berwick scarf with England flag on it] |
| Pat: | Has that got the Scottish flag on the other end because there was one scarf, which had an English flag on one end and a Scottish flag on the other. |
| Defer: | Aye it did yeah. |

Interviewer: Didn't the original crest of Berwick Rangers just have a bear?

Fred: Yes. Well there never has been an original crest…uh…obviously up until the last twenty years…until then it was just the bear and the tree.

Interviewer: Why did the club feel the need to go from the bear for Berwick to then changing it?

Fred: Because I think it was the time when all clubs were starting to get logos and use logos rather than…well clubs didn't have logos before that did they… with the last 20-25 years or something obviously you got an explosion of putting them on your shirts so our logo was made. I mean Conrad Turner actually designed the originally logo as that. That's my version of it and I just coloured it and put different bits on it and modernising it a wee bit…but Conrad Turner actually made the original and that actually came from what you say, the high school badge.

Pat: Yeah.

Fred: The high school badge we obviously had on had the two lions at the top and the bear was on the bottom and it was more a shield.

Pat: That's right.

Fred: That was used as the school logo, a little school logo. I think Conrad just altered it…

Pat: To make it fit in with the football.

Fred: To suit…yeah. You'll find lots of organisations about now use the same similar set-up but a different shape.

Interviewer: Is it the same situation with the Supporters' club badge?

Fred: It's different now.

Interviewer: It's different again is it?

Fred: Yeah, it's different now.

Pat: Yeah that was the original Supporters' Club crest.

Fred: Again that was Conrad that done that. But I changed it so now you've got the bear at the top. Then on this sign you've got an outline flag map so you've got the shape of England with the flag in it and on that side you've got the shape of

Scotland with the flag of Scotland on it. So it's changed slightly. Well you can see it on the Supporters' Club website.

Ward: Fair aye.

Interviewer: Obviously you got quite a lot of publicity with the Celtic game so I was interested to have a look at what newspapers were saying in England….

Pat: I wasn't impressed with the *Daily Record*.

Defer: No. No.

Interviewer: What do think the *Berwickshire News* reporter meant by his comments that the Celtic game represented 'a rare chance for Berwick to 'pit their wits against the country's best players?

Pat: I think he was being cheeky actually. I think he just meant that because they're part timers, and I mean they are young lads and stuff and when you think of a team like Celtic, multi-million pound players and stuff it's an amazing opportunity for them cos quite a lot of them players on the Celtic team are the heroes of our team.

Ward: Oh aye boyhood heroes and that.

Fred: It is a rare chance when you think of it. It's only every ten years, fifteen years; twenty years will they get a chance to play either side of the Old Firm. How big a game is that?

Pat: I mean it's a huge experience for them. When you think of some of our players to name like Andy McLean because he comes from Hawick which is a border town a relatively small-scale border town and for a young local lad that ends up playing against Celtic, not even watching them I mean playing against them you know it's got to be amazing for them.

Interviewer: So, do you feel that a nationwide audience is accurate?

Pat: Oh yeah definitely.

Ward: Oh aye. Everyone was watching it.

Pat: It was across in Germany and Australia. I mean there were people who we know tuned in to watch the football purely because we were at the football so it had that effect and they haven't even got an interest in football but were watching to see

cos they knew we would be there working on it so it had a massive pull for the club to alert them to the interest of it.

Interviewer: So, how would you describe Berwick-upon-Tweed as a place?

Ward: Cold.

Interviewer: Apart from the weather?

Pat: It's a lovely place to visit and it's a lovely road out!

All: [Laughter]

Fred: I wouldn't want to live anywhere else to be honest. I like it…so….

Defer: It is a nice little town.

Ward: It's a quiet peaceful town.

Pat: It is. I mean we lived there and that were twenty-twenty odd year ago…erm…no it's…

Fred: Well your three-quarters of an hour from Edinburgh and three-quarters of an hour from Newcastle on the train.

Ward: You're right in the middle aren't you?

Pat: It's got its own football, it's got top shops you've got your ASDA, your M&S your Morrisons, you've got Tesco you've got everything you want. I mean we were just saying last night. I don't understand why it hasn't been marketed as a commuting town because the likes of Galashiels we're an hour from Edinburgh and that's promoted as a commuter's thing and we've got housing developments across the border commuting…erm…acceptable commuting distances. I think Berwick is poor at marketing. They should be selling themselves far more. To be able live in Berwick and to travel to Edinburgh or Newcastle within an hour for your work that place should be a goldmine.

Interviewer: Why did Sky have coverage do you think?

Pat: Why did they?

Fred: It's obvious that they're after another giant killing act that's what they're after.

Ward: They were hoping Berwick would do the same.

Pat: I mean you know I think because one obviously Celtic is a big game and wherever Celtic go the cameras go.

Ward:        It's more because what Berwick did to Rangers that's what is was. They hoped like everybody did that Berwick would beat Celtic.

Pat:         Everyone wants to see the little team beat the big guys.

Fred:        It's like David versus Goliath isn't it?

Defer:       Yeah.

Alex:        Yeah.

Pat:         But I think I would like to see Sky do more for the little teams not wait till we pick the big ones.

Interviewer: Like they do with the English Conference?

Ward:        The Conference leagues and that yeah cos they have that on Sky.

Pat:         Because it does bring a crowd and it does bring a different atmosphere. I mean there were a lot of people in the pub next door…the Black and Gold…I mean it was buzzing with people. The whole camera thing brought a buzz. I mean I think even if we were playing Stranraer and the cameras were there I still think we would get more people because of the television.

Alex:        We probably would.

Interviewer: You've said that you wish Sky would give some coverage like they do to English non-league how do you feel about BBC Alba because they've done some First Division coverage?

Ward:        I agree actually because they're now starting to show some of Premier League and that and it is a good coverage as well because people are watching it from that end… because you still go to Edinburgh and that and people still go to the games if they see you…I mean so it still gives you a taster to get them down so I agree.

Pat:         I mean in this day and age…technology…and everyone is losing to the television…I mean people don't go to the game cos they can watch all these programmes on the telly and I think the television companies all of them need to take note of that and say that there is an audience there missing what is going on their doorstep because they're sitting at home watching telly. There are some that cannot go because of financials or whatever but at least the club can still have…supporting a club like Berwick you don't have to go to matches you can support them by buying the programmes, you can sponsor a seat, we have the

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| | sponsor a seat scheme, you can make donations, you don't need to go into that match to follow and support them. |
| Interviewer: | How do you feel about Sky's coverage comparing it with BBC Alba? Which would you feel more comfortable with if the financial aspect was similar? |
| Ward: | Sky's got a bigger audience…Sky is a bigger brand there's more audience and when you get Sky coming in to town people know but when you get Alba not everyone knows Alba. Do you see what I mean? I think Sky is probably better financially and it's given the club a big boost. |
| Pat: | Yeah it's got more clout hasn't it? |
| Ward: | If you knew Sky was coming in everyone would be in town, if you knew Alba was in you'd be who's Alba? It's like that. |
| Pat: | But then if Alba wanted to come in and do it and show Sky what they're missing then that's perfectly fine. |
| Ward: | It depends how they're done because at the moment with the market with Sky if Alba had the same clout as them…it's six and two threes. |
| Pat: | Maybe one day they will. I just thinking anyone filming it would help. |
| Ward: | Even a webcam. |
| Pat: | Yeah. |
| Interviewer: | What impact (if any) do you think watching an English-based club like Berwick would have on a Scots-speaking audience in Scotland? |
| Fred: | There would be animosity. |
| Defer: | Yeah. |
| Alex: | Because they think it's English and Scotland and England will never get on. |
| Pat: | There is a lot of wind up as well mind because Berwick is so on the border there's a lot of Scottish people that really don't…I mean we've spoke to people who've said we cannot stand the English but they can come into Berwick…. |
| Ward: | Because it is right on the border… |
| Pat: | So there is people who is really quite…quite…they come down to Berwick for their holidays because they think they're staying in Scotland. |
| Alex: | Yeah. |

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| Pat: | You know what I mean? So there is that. I mean I think there is an element of animosity I think it is an excuse it's like Cowdenbeath people can argue they don't like Stranraer people because they come from the coast. I think they just use that English thing as a reason. |
| Ward: | It works both sides cos the English are just as bad. |
| Pat: | Well yeah exactly the Berwick ones can be equally as bad. I don't know, I wouldn't say it is real animosity I don't think there is real hatred between them. |
| Fred: | No sometimes there is…it depends what club you get. It depends how far up you go. |
| Alex: | Cowdenbeath…Stranraer. |
| Fred: | Go to some of the away games and see what animosity you get I'm telling you. |
| Defer: | Oh it really is bad. |
| Fred: | I've lost count of how many times I've had my parentage doubted like when I've been at away games I'm telling you. |
| Pat: | I don't think that's acceptable in any…any sport. |
| Fred: | It happens though, it happens. |
| Pat: | Yeah but it's not acceptable. |
| Fred: | Especially when I was telling somebody that was from Dundee area…and he was Scottish, Scottish from the outer Hebrides and he was embarrassed by what I was having to put up with from a certain guy who must have been in his 60s who was having a go at me for being English and I wouldn't bite back. Oh I says to him, I says: "By the way, my mother and father were married in 1954 and I was born in '61 so I cannot be a bastard'…I said 'English yes, bastard no.' |
| Defer: | (Laughter) Oh aye. I've been called that. |
| Pat: | That's shocking because they're on about especially on the night of the Ally McCoist Lennon thing…I mean to me that is every bit as bad as the Catholic-Protestant thing. I just think nowadays in this day and age it shouldn't be ignored. |
| Ward: | It's like racism. |
| Pat: | It shouldn't be ignored on any level. No. |
| Interviewer: | We've touched on it already. How is the nationality of Berwick viewed in Scots-speaking Glasgow, Edinburgh and throughout Scotland as a whole? |

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| Fred: | I would say they would say we are English. |
| All: | Yeah, yeah. |
| Interviewer: | Would you be opposed to the Scottish Football Association describing Berwick as a 'British' rather than an 'English club'? |
| Pat: | It wouldn't bother me. |
| Alex: | I'd have to oppose that just for being different. I like the English nationality part of it. |
| Ward: | What you do? |
| Alex: | Aye. |
| Defer: | He's very English. |
| Ward: | I'm British… I am British…I'm the Scottish side. |
| Defer: | Well I treat myself as English so. |
| Pat: | So would you want to be British or English? |
| Fred: | If anyone asked me what nationality I would say British. If anyone says, aye 'what part of Britain?' I would say 'England'. I've got a British passport that's it same as any Scotsman has a British passport. |
| Defer: | That's right. I'd still treat myself as English. |
| Pat: | Do you mean like would you prefer the club to be described as an English club or as a British club? |
| Fred: | English, English if that's the case. |
| Pat: | It wouldn't bother me. |
| Fred: | It's Berwick that's it. Independence for Berwick! |
| Pat: | It wouldn't matter. They could move them across the border. |
| Alex: | They could play in Ireland. |
| Pat: | Yeah. Berwick Rangers are Berwick Rangers. |
| Alex: | It wouldn't a matter. |
| Ward: | I mean like you say if you played in an Irish league you'd still be classed as British. You know, you're still British. |
| Pat: | But really yous would prefer to stay an English club? |
| Defer: | I just say it's an English club. |
| Ward | That's the thing with me I'm more Scottish but that's where you're divided…. |

Defer:        So we've three who say it's English, one British and one Scotsman who couldn't care less.

Ward:         As long as they have a club on the land that's all that matters.

Pat:          As long as we've got Berwick Rangers.

Fred:         Yeah.

Interviewer:  Do you think the publicity surrounding Berwick's draw with Celtic put Northumberland on the map?

Pat:          Probably. Probably. It would certainly have put Berwick on the map.

Defer:        Berwick aye.

Pat:          So yeah. I think because of the Internet now people were saying 'where's Berwick?'

Ward:         No. I think it's done Berwick because Northumberland is classed as like Newcastle.

Pat:          Well Berwick is in Northumberland.

Fred:         Newcastle is Tyneside, Tyne and Wear isn't it? It's not Northumberland.

Alex:         It's Northumberland.

Pat:          Well you see what *The Journal* said. They said 'football bosses in a Northumberland town'. *The Journal* is Newcastle-based and they've plumbed in on the Northumberland thing.

Defer:        That's right. I can see that aye.

Pat:          Again (points at newspaper) they've called it a Northumberland club.

Defer:        I'd just classify it as Berwick. I wouldn't like to classify it as Northumberland.

Ward:         No.

Pat:          Then you see what *The Scotsman* said. They said 'the English club'. You see between the two so *The Journal* says owning it while *The Scotsman* says 'we're having nothing to do with you'.

Ward:         What's happening is Berwick is on its own and that's it.

Defer:        Aye. I think so

Pat:          And the *Daily Mail* said 'England'. So…

Alex:         The English papers are saying it's Northumbrian and Scottish papers are saying it is English.

Fred:        Nobody wants them!

Ward:        And that's the same argument right through the town innit?

Pat:         *The Journal* is saying 'we only want them if they're part of us'.

Ward:        Nobody wants them.

Pat:         I think back to my interview with *The Sun* cos they said 'what makes Berwick people so unique in accepting supporters?' And 'why have you had such a range of nationalities support Berwick Rangers?' I says 'it's actually because nobody wants them. England doesn't want them Scotland doesn't want them so as far as Berwick people are concerned nobody wants them. They don't belong to anyone.'

Ward:        It's true yeah.

Pat:         So we support Berwick Rangers because nobody wants us. That sums up the papers. They don't want me either.

Ward:        It's a tug of war all the time.

Interviewer: Do Berwick fans view Northumberland as being part of 'Scotland' or 'Scottishness'?

All:         No. No.

Pat:         The Berwick fans don't like Northumberland because it's governed from Morpeth now isn't it? The county council they're losing their identity they're being swallowed up in the whole Northumberland thing. The money doesn't come from the councils because they are so far outta Northumberland.

Ward:        They're very close to Newcastle.

Pat:         Their losing their identity by being swallowed up by Newcastle.

Ward:        That's what is happening so they're not getting their individuality.

Pat:         I mean that's what I presume.

Defer:       Would you say that?

Fred:        Hum. I agree with that yeah.

Interviewer: So in that case, how far across the border do you have to be to be considered Scottish?

Pat:         Just on the other side of the road sign.

Alex:        Just on the signpost.

Defer:       Just on the sign post aye.

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| Pat: | As soon as you turn your back on England Scotland will accept you. |
| All: | (Laughter) |
| Ward: | That's a bit of a racist comment. Goodness! |
| Pat: | You know there is always two and a half mile of no man's land isn't there because you're leaving England. Then you've got a wee gap then you're in Scotland. |
| Fred: | The funny thing is the further down Northumberland you get they'll class Berwick as Scottish. |
| Defer: | That's right! |
| Fred: | You obviously have to watch that…it doesn't take far. |
| Interviewer: | How far? |
| Fred: | Even the accent changes…I mean 15 miles and the accent will be different. |
| Pat: | I would say people in Alnwick would say Berwick is Scottish. He's got relatives in Newcastle and they think Scotland starts outside Newcastle. So I think the majority of people think it's Scottish. |
| Ward: | Berwick is classed as Scottish in a lot of peoples' minds. |
| Interviewer: | How does it work in Scotland? |
| Pat: | Anything below Edinburgh is seen as English. I mean even some of the border towns like Gala and Hawick… |
| Ward: | Even in Glasgow people consider Edinburgh like is classed as the borders. |
| Fred: | Look at that team in Gala that couldn't play in the Edinburgh leagues because they were getting that much abuse for being that near the border. |
| Pat: | That's right. That's right. |
| Fred: | They had to pack it in. |
| Pat: | The like of Gala is more central borders but I can sort of see the confusion. |
| Alex: | That's happened even years and years ago. |
| Pat: | But I mean that goes way back to the Jacobites and beyond… |
| Ward: | That's way back that's what caused it. Edinburgh down… |
| Pat: | Because the Lowlands fought with the English, which is below Edinburgh… |
| Defer: | That's right yeah. |

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| Pat: | The borderers fought with the English…you just go way back into the real history in that case…it's still there. It's still underlying and I think the common riding is that all the border towns have their annual celebrations called the common riding and that celebrates soldiers getting killed and all the wars and their celebrating the whole anti-English thing… |
| Defer: | It's very anti-English there. |
| Ward: | There is one in Jedburgh that is very, very… |
| Pat: | Jedburgh, Hawick, Selkirk…erm…some of the main borders towns are very much celebrating being anti-English…so…and that's kept alive…every year. |
| Interviewer: | [Passes around pictures of Scottish flags at club grounds] |
| Alex: | They've got good taste with the colours…Black and Gold. |
| Defer: | Aye. Good taste! |
| Fred: | Can't stick Annan. Snobby lot! |
| Pat: | I've never been to Montrose. |
| Interviewer: | What can you see in the pictures? |
| | [Meerkat, another Berwick supporter arrives] |
| Ward: | Black and Gold…very similar colours to Berwick. |
| Pat: | The Scottish flag. |
| Interviewer: | So have you travelled to watch Berwick against any of these teams? |
| Fred: | Oh aye! |
| Pat: | They have, I haven't. |
| Interviewer: | So against Annan? |
| Fred: | I've been to Annan aye…a long time ago like. |
| Defer: | I've never been to Annan. |
| Interviewer: | Morton? |
| Fred: | I've been to Morton aye. |
| Defer: | I've been to Morton. |
| Pat: | I've been to Morton. I've been to Morton…not to watch Berwick to watch Morton. |
| Defer: | I've been to Morton aye. |

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| Interviewer: | Can you recall seeing flags with Berwick Rangers' name or crest emblazoned at domestic games? Is that something you see? |
| Fred: | You do get flags at away game yeah. They've got a ginormous Black and Gold Union Jack haven't they? |
| Defer: | Yeah. |
| Fred: | You often see St. George's flags more so than St. Andrew's crosses. That's about it isn't it? |
| Pat: | Certainly. The Berwick flags come in when we played Celtic. |
| Defer: | That comes in… |
| Pat: | When we play the big games. Do you notice them at the home games? |
| Fred: | Sometime it's there. |
| Defer: | Not often. |
| Alex: | Not often no. |
| Interviewer: | Do the Berwick fans take the England flag to distinguish that their an English club? |
| Fred: | Yes. |
| Pat: | Oh yeah. |
| Alex: | Definitely. |
| Interviewer: | Does that create any animosity? |
| Defer: | Yes. |
| Fred: | Yes it does. I took one once and someone spat on it and that was it. |
| Pat: | I think that's the reason they take it as well. |
| Fred: | Oh aye. |
| Defer: | Of course it is aye. |
| Fred: | But...but in saying that the supporters in the grounds we visit don't like it. |
| Interviewer: | They don't like it? |
| Pat: | Because you're going to Scotland aren't you? |
| Fred: | They think we should have St. Andrew's crosses as well like. |
| Interviewer: | Have there been instances when you've been told to take the flags down? |
| Fred: | Yes…quite a few occasions. Even just this season I was at Clyde wasn't I and we got told to take them down. |

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| Pat: | But then the Union Jack is the national flag. |
| Fred: | St. George's. |
| Defer: | St: George's Cross. |
| Fred: | Saying that sometimes I get told to take down the Union Jack because it is supposed to be like…like the Rangers flag, the Protestant flag…and we say 'why should we take it down? It's our national flag! |
| Pat: | Yeah. |
| Fred: | To Berwick fans it has totally a different meaning to what it is to a Rangers fan. |
| Defer: | That's right. |
| Fred: | And sectarianism and things like that. |
| Defer: | That's right yeah. |
| Fred: | In Berwick we don't to tend to get that… sectarianism… |
| Pat: | No. |
| Fred: | But when teams go across to the west coast then you do and you have to accept that it's a no-no with the Union Jack innit? |
| Interviewer: | So you don't feel the need to take a Scottish flag when you watch Berwick? |
| Fred: | I'm English so I wouldn't. |
| All: | [Laughter] |
| Fred: | Then again I might stand on it…or… |
| All: | [Loud laughter] |
| Ward: | You racist sod! |
| Fred: | Alex Salmond will be after that tape. |
| All: | He will be aye! |
| Interviewer: | [Shows use of Scots language on Arbroath, Forfar, Partick, and Carnoustie Panmure club websites] what do you notice about these pictures? |
| Meerkat: | Thistles? |
| Defer: | These pictures have thistles, which are Scottish emblems. |
| Fred: | Three of them are from the Dundee area. Is that the clue is it? One is from Glasgow. |
| Defer: | They've all got Scots uh… |
| Alex: | It's all the Scots language. The Lichties, the Loons, the Jags and the Gowfers. |

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| Fred: | Scots lingual. |
| Alex: | It's all Scots. |
| Interviewer: | So what is it? |
| Defer: | It's all Scottish emblems and that like. |
| Pat: | Scottish thistles. |
| Defer: | Scottish aye. |
| Interviewer: | [Turns to Alex] and what were you saying? |
| Alex: | It's all Scots language. |
| Pat: | It's hereditary isn't it? It's their identity. I mean you know it's like Berwick they'll hang on to their history. |
| Interviewer: | So why do you think these particular clubs use Scots when the Scottish Football League wouldn't have a bilingual policy? |
| Pat: | Cos I think that if they lose their identity, their Scottish link that's gone forever. |
| Ward: | They'll lose their club. |
| Pat: | It's okay being that part of a national thing but every town has to keep their individual identity. |
| Fred: | But why have a bilingual thing when Gaelic was only ever spoken in the Highlands. It was never ever spoken south of the Highlands. Now Scots as I was saying before is a form of Anglo-Saxon English. |
| Defer: | That's right. |
| Fred: | It is not a language on its own. We use the same words with a slightly different accent. |
| Pat: | But we…we…nobody would go to Newcastle and say 'why do you speak Geordie?' We don't go into London and say 'why do you speak Cockney?' I mean you know… |
| Fred: | Yeah, but we've got the border 'Welcome to Scotland' in Gaelic. Now Gaelic was never ever spoken around here. |
| Defer: | Aye, yeah. |
| Ward: | Never was no. |
| Fred: | So why have a bilingual thing? There's only fifty to sixty thousand people speak Gaelic. I know a Gaelic speaker… |

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| Pat: | But still those fifty to sixty thousand people are entitled to be able to read a post. |
| Fred: | Yes but… |
| Pat: | It's exactly the same argument if you go into Wales; it's exactly the same argument if you go into Ireland. But there's a minority population that can speak that language. They have a right to see those signs. |
| Fred: | But there's also fifty sixty thousand against five million. |
| Defer: | Wales have them don't they? |
| Pat: | Yeah, so does Ireland they have signs. |
| Fred: | So why don't we have signs in Berwick in the Berwick language? |
| Pat: | Because it is a ridiculous language! |
| Ward: | It's true enough though. |
| All: | [Voices of agreement] |
| Fred: | If you are gonna go that far. |
| Pat: | No because the Berwick language. It's… |
| Fred: | It's Alex Salmond trying to push the Gaelic thing. That's what it is. |
| Pat: | Exactly. It's rubbish. |
| Fred: | It is. |
| Pat: | The Berwick language is like a slang it's like Geordie … |
| Fred: | That's right. |
| Pat: | It's like Cockney. It's a local dialect. |
| Defer: | Dialect aye. |
| Pat: | It's a slang unique to them, but Irish, Gaelic and Welsh is a different language. |
| Alex: | Gibberish. |
| Pat: | I think they should keep it…it's their right to keep it. |
| Defer: | Oh aye. |
| Fred: | In the Highlands. |
| Pat: | No. Not in the Highlands…it's in Scotland. No. Scotland. |
| Interviewer: | Do you think there should be Gaelic for the Highlands and then bilingual, and then Scots south of that? |
| Pat: | No because that's saying Highland peoples' not allowed to visit the borders. |
| Fred: | It's not saying that. |

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| Defer: | It's not saying that. |
| Pat: | That's like saying 'south Wales can have their language and north Wales can't. That's ridiculous, it's stupid. It's saying 'stay in your commune, don't come out!' |
| Defer: | No, no. It's not saying that all. |
| Pat: | You are saying that. |
| Defer: | It's not saying that. |
| Fred: | They can do what they want over the border I couldn't care less. |
| Pat: | Clearly you do care. |
| All: | [Laughter] |
| Fred: | Just say…it is a Northumbrian town… |
| Pat: | Exactly. |
| Fred: | Because it was part of Northumberland one time, part of Northumbria and was then stolen by the Scots. |
| Pat: | And they gave it back because they didn't want it. |
| All: | [Laughter] |
| Pat: | See what you've started? |
| All: | [Laughter] |
| Fred: | No. I don't think it should be a bilingual thing. |
| All: | [Laughter] |
| Interviewer: | So you know based on you saying it shouldn't be a bilingual thing how would you feel about the use of Scots at Shielfield Park and on the Berwick website? |
| Fred: | The use of Scots on there? Well I don't class it as a language…so…I would never use it. |
| Interviewer: | As a dialect? |
| Fred: | I would never use it. |
| Defer: | You do use it. |
| Pat: | No I mean to be fair on the website it's the Queen's English. |
| Fred: | To me it's more an Edinburgh thing rather than as a borders thing…the Scots language. To me it's more an Edinburgh thing I would say. |
| Pat: | What is? |
| Fred: | The borders, the Scots language. |

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| Ward: | No it's not. I don't think it's an Edinburgh thing either…Glasgow upwards. |
| Pat: | Edinburgh and Inverness people tend to be very proper so I would say it's Glasgow. |
| Ward: | It's Glasgow upwards. |
| Defer: | Glasgow aye. |
| Fred: | Glasgow is an Irish twang…it's not Scots. Not as in Walter Smith (the current Rangers manager)…I mean Walter Scott. |
| All: | [Loud Laughter] |
| Pat: | Yeah because I mean if you listen to Hawick and the local border towns even Gala they have their own language. I mean Gala has a lot of Glasgow…erm people…but I mean Gala the Galashiels…and erm…let's say the Hawick accent it's unique to Hawick. |
| Interviewer: | Obviously in the club shop and on the online shop you can get this one (holds up Berwick scarf with England flag) and obviously there is the one with the Scotland flag as well… |
| Pat: | That's right yeah. |
| Interviewer: | Is there one without either as well? |
| Fred: | Yes. |
| Pat: | Yes. |
| Interviewer: | So what I wanted to ask is why there is an England one, a Scotland one and then one without? |
| Pat: | Well. Probably because… |
| Fred: | Well it was actually Gordon Dixon that got them in wasn't it? He's got the ones with the St. Andrew's flags for the Scottish fans. |
| Pat: | I think the novelty… |
| Fred: | Its obvious they know who is gonna buy them. Obviously I buy one with the St. George's cross because I'm flipping English. |
| Pat: | But somes bought them with the Scottish flag on and then other peoples just don't want to make a difference. I think the ones with the neither flag are the older stock. |
| Fred: | It's older stock. |

Defer:          Aye that's older stock.

Pat:            The older design.

Fred:           Most people tend to buy them don't they in the shop?

Pat:            Well yeah. Yeah. Cos even people coming in from Scotland will buy them for the novelty factor cos it's an English tourist thing. Well there is people going away with a Scotland one on. But did I not have one with a flag on either side?

Fred:           I can't remember seeing that like.

Pat:            One side was the Scotland flag…

All:            Oh there was…

Pat:            And the other side with English.

Alex:           There was aye.

Interviewer:    Do they not sell that one anymore?

Pat:            No it must have been a unique brand. But I'm sure I had one.

Ward:           That would have been sensible that…instead of making two different ones. Just one for both…that would have been sensible.

Pat:            I didn't realise that they had made two separate scarves. I thought it was one side was Scottish and one side of it was English.

Interviewer:    So with the scarves it's not simply, because we were talking about the flags earlier, you might take the England flag to aggravate some people perhaps?

Pat:            Na I just think it was to monopolise all the market wasn't it?

Fred:           Market value.

Pat:            Yeah.

Ward:           Some people like wearing English scarves and some people don't.

Defer:          Yeah.

Interviewer:    So it's not a case of perhaps wearing the England one when you are in Berwick and perhaps wear the Scottish one when you're not?

All:            No. No.

Defer:          Nothing.

Pat:            They're not smart enough to think of that.

All:            [Laughter]

Ward:           I think we are.

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| All: | [Laughter] |
| Interviewer: | How would you feel about the club shop selling more British themed gear? A Berwick scarf with a British flag or something? Do you think that would be popular? |
| All: | No. No. |
| Pat: | I don't think it would be popular at all. No. |
| Defer: | It wouldn't be. |
| Pat: | I think as a standard rule amongst football supporters or anything they want their club stuff in their club shop not a national thing. It's the same…if you were at Glasgow Celtic, Rangers, Queens and Morton they want the club they did not a Scottish national thing. That's for the Scotland team isn't it? |
| Meerkat: | A good way to identify the club like. |
| Pat: | Yeah. |
| Ward: | That's why you have your national team though innit? |
| Pat: | It's all about promoting your club, promoting your town. |
| Defer: | That's what it is. |
| Pat: | Yeah |
| Interviewer: | Have you travelled to watch Berwick in England and Scotland? Do they have some pre-season friendlies in England? |
| Fred: | They have. |
| Pat: | Blyth Spartans and that don't they? |
| Fred: | Going back years they actually played Runcorn. |
| Meerkat: | They played Blyth at the start of the season. |
| Pat: | Hum. |
| Fred: | They played… |
| Meerkat: | Blue Star…Blue Star. They played Blue Star. |
| Pat: | Blue Star. |
| Meerkat: | Washington. |
| Fred: | I'm on about going right down south when they went down to north Wales. |
| Pat: | Did they? |
| Fred: | I cannot remember which team in north Wales. It was 1980. |

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| Defer: | I cannot remember. |
| Meerkat: | They played Northwich Victoria at sometime as well. |
| Defer: | I just cannot remember. |
| Fred: | Northwich Victoria they played. |
| Defer: | Runcorn. |
| Fred: | I am sure there was one of the Welsh clubs as well. |
| Interviewer: | How does the experience differ? |
| Fred: | Well I mean I've never really travelled to watch Berwick in England…just Scotland aye. |
| Pat: | I imagine the atmosphere would be just the same because it is a pre-season friendly it wouldn't be really competitive would it? I mean cos to be honest we didn't get out a very often. |
| Fred: | We actually played Cardiff City a few year ago at Shielfield. Sam Hammam was going around and he was offering the ball boys, he says 'you give me a Scottish five pound note'. Aye, he was buying them off them, Scottish five pound notes. Sam Hammam was actually buying notes off the ball boys. |
| Interviewer: | So you don't think Berwick would be treated any different if they were playing English or Scottish opposition? |
| Pat: | I don't think so. |
| Fred: | No. |
| Interviewer: | Obviously England are in Wales' group now for the Qualifiers. What happens in Berwick on matchday if England plays Scotland? |
| Fred: | It goes berserk! Ha ha. |
| Interviewer: | What's the kind of divide with the support? |
| Ward: | Berwick don't really care because they're on their own really aren't they? |
| Pat: | They don't go on anybodies team. Berwick are Berwick. I think they've got…I mean home supporters… |
| Ward: | Wasn't it recently that Scotland and England were playing national teams and Berwick had a game or something that's how bad it was. Was it not something like that? Everyone else was called off. They had a game in hand or something at one time. |

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| Alex: | That was a few years back. |
| Ward: | Aye. They were playing while the national team...that shows you how bad it was. |
| Pat: | We were playing on Tuesday night and England was playing. |
| Defer: | That's right yeah. |
| Pat: | I think ye cannot play when Scotland was playing. |
| Defer: | Ye cannot play when Scotland is playing |
| Pat: | But that's not the supporter's choice really. |
| Defer: | No. No. No. |
| Ward: | But what I am saying is that shows that Berwick, the fans would rather…. |
| Interviewer: | Watch Berwick? |
| Pat: | Yeah. |
| Ward: | That's what I am getting at. |
| Defer: | That's it aye. |
| Pat: | Certainly when there is a match called of because the international is playing I think there is a lot of grumbling when we could have been playing. You know? |
| Interviewer: | There was an England friendly last night and what was the attendance? |
| Pat: | 290. There was more last night. 397. 297? |
| Alex: | 297. |
| Pat: | For a Tuesday night… |
| Ward: | It's because England were playing. |
| Pat: | It was up… |
| Defer: | Slightly. |
| Pat: | For a mid-week game it was…it was good. |
| Ward: | It's cos England was playing. Is it any wonder? |
| Fred: | Champions League draw and big games in the English system will knock our gate down. |
| Defer: | Aye. That knocks our gate down. |
| Pat: | I mean our average gate like for a normal day is just below 400. 380. 390. |
| Meerkat: | Did you see that night when Arsenal played Barcelona? We got 266 that night. |
| Pat: | It fluctuates quite a lot like but it's picking up again. |
| Interviewer: | So there's no kind of preference no? People would rather watch Berwick? |

Ward:        It obviously showed that when you had 200 odd fans there watching the football.

Pat:         Yeah. There wasn't a lot came from Stranraer.

Defer:       No. There wasn't.

Ward:        That's what I'm saying.

Pat:         So they were Berwick people

Fred:        They were northeast based Stranraer supporters that were there.

Defer:       Aye.

Ward:        I mean England-Wales…that was a big game.

Pat:         I think I suppose the holiday camp is open so you have holidaymakers cos a lot of owners come from Newcastle but they would have been up cos the holiday camp had just opened.

Defer:       So they were just taking in the football.

Pat:         So the crowd will start to pick up hopefully now because of the start of the holiday season. But some of the diehard Berwick fans are dropping away for whatever reason but there's new faces coming through or people who used to support Berwick years ago and did not come for years and have started to come back. So there is…

Meerkat:     Hope.

Ward:        It's because their national team is rubbish.

Meerkat:     Scotland?

All:         [Laughter]

Pat:         Well no. There was one guy who came from Alnwick and he just fell away for whatever reason. I dunno if it's raising kids working or whatever but he just thought a few weeks ago he'd come back and see how they're doing and he's come back. He been regular since and he's enjoying it.

Ward:        It's like your local club innit? It's like your local borders club.

Pat:         But Newcastle and Blyth Spartans and all them were on his doorstep. Alnwick is nearer Blyth than us isn't it?

Alex:        Aye.

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| Pat: | Two or three of them have said it's the welcome. It's not just cos they are coming in my gate. But they are saying it's the atmosphere in the club…it's a good atmosphere… |
| Defer: | Friendly. |
| Pat: | And there's a lot of banter that goes on at the gate because you've got the programme sellers and you've got the ticket guys and the gate staff, even the stewards. There banter going on. It's a much better atmosphere cos for a few years there wasn't a good atmosphere in the club. We didn't like the chairman, we didn't like some of the directors…there was a bad atmosphere. The good atmosphere is coming back and I think that's spilling into the folk coming in through the gate. |
| Defer: | Oh, aye. |
| Pat: | They're getting a smile, they're getting a welcome and I think that's what…certainly one guy says he likes the welcome and he just comes to give me the money. |
| Interviewer: | Where does the core of support come from for Berwick? |
| Fred: | Certainly not Berwick. Its spread really isn't it really? |
| Ward: | It's actually the borders. |
| Pat: | It's spread…Alnwick and the borders, Kelso, Gala, Jedburgh, Eyemouth… |
| Ward: | You said yourselves Eyemouth, Hawick, Gala, Jedburgh, Kelso… |
| Pat: | Dunbar. There are not many that come from Berwick itself. |
| Fred: | There's people travelling from Sheffield. |
| Pat: | Yeah, aye. |
| Fred: | There's one chap used to come up from Kent. |
| Pat: | John Nutton comes in from St. Andrew's |
| Ward: | Some from Edinburgh as well. |
| Pat: | Durham. So actually the regulars very seldom miss a game which is quite a shock. |
| Defer: | So the core support isn't from Berwick. |
| Ward: | Shocking. |
| Pat: | So the community tells rubbish actually. |
| Ward: | So it's not a community club!? You're lying! |

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| Fred: | It's a community club in the sense it is a wide area though innit? |
| Defer: | It's a community club aye. |
| Fred: | It is not as if we are a big city spread over a big area. |
| Pat: | Exactly. I suppose it's right because if you had a map and circled it you've got the likes of Dunbar, Eyemouth, Alnwick, Durham, Jedburgh, Hawick… |
| Defer: | Kelso. |
| Pat: | Kelso. |
| Meerkat: | I still think we should get bigger crowds than we do like. |
| Ward: | Hence why you go back to that border because you've literally got the border and 'the borderers'. |
| Defer: | That's why we're the borderers! |
| Ward: | It's like Gala…their local club in the Third Division. |
| Interviewer: | So it's a club for the Scottish Borders? |
| Ward: | Yeah. |
| All: | Yeah. |
| Defer: | That's it! That's it! |
| Interviewer: | So how far across the Borders is the cut off point? |
| Fred: | Gala wouldn't it? |
| Ward: | No Hawick. |
| Pat: | I mean Stevie Notman is a coming through Peebles. |
| Ward: | Actually even… you're probably very close to near blooming Gretna. |
| Pat: | Jedburgh? |
| Meerkat: | Hawick. |
| Pat: | Certainly Hawick. Stevie Notman is almost Peebles. And even Gala, Kelso…. |
| Defer: | So there you go. |
| Ward: | You are going quite far up. |
| Pat: | I mean I don't know the geography but if you sent me a map and you blew it up it's quite…I think you'd be into the sea. Like I say up to Dunbar…I mean one came in from Tranent last night. |
| Defer: | Oh aye. |

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| Pat: | So they are travelling. I don't know…how far would you say Peebles is from Berwick? 50 miles? |
| Ward: | It's quite a distance isn't it? |
| Fred: | A good 40 miles anyway. |
| Pat: | So it's actually across country so it's no even up an A1. |
| Defer: | I put it at 50 mile. |
| Ward: | I would say it's 40 from Gala. Oh aye. |
| Meerkat: | Aye. |
| Ward: | So from Berwick to Gala…that's what 60? |
| Pat: | So would you say 50? |
| Ward: | It's a long… |
| Defer: | It could be 60 mile. Easy |
| Pat: | 60 miles he's travelling. |
| Alex: | 120 round trip. |
| Pat: | The players are travelling. Paul Currie is coming and he's not got a car. He's getting the train down. I don't know if the club picks up his expenses… |
| Fred: | Probably. |
| Interviewer: | Where is he from? |
| Pat: | Edinburgh. He's up in Edinburgh. |
| Ward: | A lot of them are. |
| Pat: | You'd think Jimmy would give him a lift. |
| Interviewer: | Do you think with a lot of support coming from the Scottish Borders and players are from the Borders or Edinburgh, that's may be why not a lot of people in Berwick go along to the games? |
| Pat: | It could be that because they quite often say why don't you take local players or get them from Newcastle and Blyth and take them players but the problem is they (Berwick) are training up in Edinburgh…so if they were based at Newcastle they'd have to travel up to Edinburgh that's why it's so practical. |
| Ward: | If they were based in Newcastle the players wouldn't a go to Berwick. |
| Pat: | That's right. |
| Ward: | That's your problem. |

Pat:            Edinburgh…the training is central for the players that we've got so we'd have to stop those players and start using English players who wouldn't travel up. So...

Defer:          That's right.

Coding:

R1 – Colin
R2 – AXA
R3 – Cook
R4 – Ron
R5 – Michael
R6 – Bazzy
R7 – Keith
R8 – Bill
R9 – Keez
R10 – Slab

| Interviewer: | Who are Berwick Rangers? |
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| Colin: | Not just me, everybody. |
| AXA: | I know. Aye |
| Cook: | It's on page what 167 of the rough guide to club football teams. I think there's a description there. |
| Colin: | Yeah. How would you describe Berwick Rangers? Oh God! |
| Cook: | An aberration. |
| Colin | Yeah. A pain, a nuisance eh… love, joy… |
| Cook: | We were talking about Berwick Rangers not that annoying bloke… |
| Colin: | I know aye. Frustration…elation. |
| AXA: | I think...I think maybe underappreciated because I think it's advertised as the town but I don't think the town understand how important it is. |
| Colin: | Yes. Yes. |
| Cook: | I think you know a vital part of the community as well because of what Berwick Rangers do give is they give a fairly far-flung, remote community a national identity… |
| Colin: | Yes. |
| Cook: | And I think that is again something which has historically been undervalued and if we didn't have that that would impact on the cultural and economic life of this |

community if Berwick Rangers didn't give it that kind of profile. So it's really important from that point of view.

AXA: I went to Uni in Liverpool and people knew about Berwick Rangers and they just assumed that Berwick was a substantial town the size of the likes of Colchester or places like that. You know I mean I think they were surprised. So I think as far as…all Scottish Third Division football really punches above its weight as far as of publicity is concerned…

Cook: Yeah. Yeah.

AXA: Cos when you look at some of the players who have played at Shielfield who actually have been…you know world stars and they haven't been here for friendlies they have been here for proper cup-ties. We had Freddie Ljungberg you know the Swede?

Colin: Yes. Yeah.

AXA: Caniggia, Ronald de Boer.

Cook: Charlie Adam.

AXA: You know really prominent players.

Ron: George Best.

AXA: George Best yeah.

Colin: George Best yeah.

AXA: And that wouldn't have happened…you know Blyth are an equivalent club to ours you know they'd be lucky to have played Blackburn and that's probably it forever for them. But for us there is nothing in the realms that somebody that's has played in the World Cup couldn't play at Shielfield in a proper cup tie in the next ten years.

Cook: But I think going back to the original question I think that the community would be a poorer one without Berwick Rangers. So as AXA says a very undervalued role but nonetheless a very important role and I'd love to think that in time that would come to be appreciated by more people but we've been hoping for that for years and years now

Colin: A long time. Yeah.

Interviewer:    So who is the community you feel Berwick Rangers represent?

Cook:    Well I think first and foremost the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, which is odd because it is a border town and I don't know what the mix of the nationality mix is. I mean I think yes it is probably something like 65 English 35 Scots. 60-40 perhaps?

AXA:    I think the supporters is 50-50 because we've got people here like Bill and Keith who live across the border, are Scottish and support Berwick Rangers. I think the mix of the town from the time when I was a kid to now I think it is far more English than it was than when I was a kid. Definitely.

Cook:    But I think its…it resonates beyond the town because I mean the eastern borders are still quite supportive of the town I think less so in the central borders. I think in the 40s and 50s particularly the post-war period when there was far less opportunity for people you know entertainment you know you used to get two or three buses running from every village and the hinterland used to come to Berwick Rangers matches and you just don't have that now because people have got more money in their pockets and there is a far wider range of alternative interest to pursue weekends so as a consequence of that the crowds have dropped off. It has got a novelty aspect in some ways because you always get the anoraks, the train spotters who come along to games because it's an English club playing in the Scottish league, so its got that unique aspect that attracts that type of supporter and you know we shouldn't be critical of that because it gets a lot of money through the coffers that we wouldn't otherwise get. So it's got that novelty aspect but (sighs)…within the town itself…I mean…

Colin:    It is very much ignored. You know.

AXA:    Well I mean I think…Slab did you not have that thing at the school where half the pupils hadn't even been to Shielfield… or know where it was? That was right wasn't it? That was local kids.

Colin:    That's the local high school you know?

Cook:    The Trust last year um…commissioned a survey of supporters and one of the big uh…outcomes from that survey was that we've got an ageing support and we're finding it harder and harder to get younger people through the gates and what's

been great…a great development is setting up a youth section to the Trust and hopefully that will start generating some interest amongst the younger generations. But if we hadn't done that you know in ten years we'd probably have no one left because the average age of supporters was I don't know about late 40s, early 50s so you need to grow your own supporters and the club hasn't been doing that. It's never done that.

Colin:       Never done that!

Cook:       So it needs to start being more pro-active about doing it and that is what we are trying to do.

Colin:       The only other body that represents the supporters is the Supporters' Club and exactly that situation has happened with them. They're actually; they're becoming older and older and becoming less em….

Cook:       Active?

Colin:       Active. In all ways…and em…to be fair they appear to have made little or no effort to recruit from the other end of the age scale, which is we…which is what we addressed some time ago.

Michael:     They used to have a 'Young Supporters' Club' didn't they?

Colin:       Yes they did. Yes they did.

Cook:       You're right. It depends very much on the sort of commitment and interest of a particular individual and I think that was John Ferguson…

Colin:       John Ferguson organised that at the time.

Cook:       Once John Ferguson ended up doing other things that kind of died a death so where's your sustainability?

Michael:     Even after that you could become a junior member for 2 pound a year or something like that.

Cook:       But what does it mean apart from handing over 2 quid?

Colin:       It didn't actually mean anything no.

Interviewer:  So where does the nickname "the borderers" come from?

AXA:        It didn't come from anywhere it was given to us. I don't like it…personally.

Cook:       No I don't. It's always been…it's a kinda…it's a lazy nickname in that no supporter ever knows Berwick Rangers none of us the hardcore guys…

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| Colin: | [Speaks over] It doesn't mean anything. |
| Cook: | …would ever call Berwick Rangers "the borderers". |
| Colin: | The borderers yeah. |
| Cook: | I mean we're also called the 'Wee Gers' which is a really sort of Tweed… |
| Colin: | [Interrupts] We're also called the 'Dream Team', which is the one everyone likes the best. |
| All: | [Laughter] |
| Colin: | The 'Dream Team' yeah. |
| Michael: | That guy on border television who was reading from a script used to say the 'Wee Gers' as if we were the people of Turkestan and Lichtenstein. |
| All: | [Laughter] |
| Interviewer: | So "the borderers" you don't think is important to Berwick Rangers? |
| Cook: | No. |
| Colin: | No. Na. |
| AXA: | I think there is a difficulty in the town when you're talking about England and Scotland… that you look around here and people have crossed the border to come here today and would cross the border everytime and it's just to go to Berwick. It's not like you're crossing a national border or anything like that. |
| Colin: | People cross the border twice a day to go to work, you know, it doesn't mean anything. |
| AXA: | I think…I think the people that have the problem with Berwick and can't understand the bi-national nature of the club and maybe of the town as well is that people come from afar. They say 'you've got to be one side of the border or not'. Well no… |
| Colin: | Do you don't! |
| Cook: | It's not a factor at all. |
| AXA: | It's only a factor when it comes to local government because of the finance. |
| Colin: | Yes. It doesn't really matter or not. |
| Cook: | But you've got a team where every member of that squad is… sorry there is one exception, there's one Englishman and everyone else is a Scotsman. |
| Colin: | Yes. |

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| Cook: | All the players come from Edinburgh and Glasgow so there are no local players so you've got a bunch of guys that turn up…turn up at Berwick every two weeks to play a game of football and then disappear again. |
| Colin: | And you interestingly hear some shouts just every Saturday from the home crowd…eh…fuck off, something, something you Scottish bastard'. No hang on now that's our team. Yet it's aimed at the away team. |
| AXA: | And vice-versa. |
| Colin: | Very much so yeah. |
| Interviewer: | So are Berwick an 'English club in Scotland' or an 'Scottish club in England'? |
| AXA: | That question has been asked a hundred times. |
| Cook: | I think a combination of both to be honest. |
| Colin: | We're an English based club. |
| AXA: | Playing in the Scottish league. |
| Colin: | Playing in the Scottish league. |
| Cook: | How do you perceive them? Personally how do you see them? I see them as a Scottish club based in England. |
| Colin: | We're an English based club staffed by Scotsman playing in Scotland. |
| AXA: | It depends…yeah…a Scottish club that has the majority of the staff as Scottish because of the players and that. |
| Colin: | Yes. |
| AXA: | We probably have more affinity with the teams that we are playing, the likes of your Stenhousemeurs and that… and that we're in that genre aren't we? I can't think of a particular genre in England to say we are equivalent of something in England. |
| Colin: | No. No. |
| AXA: | So, we're probably a Scottish club playing in England I would say. |
| Colin: | It's something that people outwith Berwick give a lot more consideration to than the people inside the town. |
| Bazzy: | [Noise of agreement] |
| Cook: | I think that's a good point. |

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| Colin: | If so say I'm a Berwick fan "are you English or Scottish?" So what! I support Berwick you know. |
| Cook: | I think though… I think that the nationalism thing used to be much more… |
| Colin: | Very much. |
| Cook: | And we had trouble at games. |
| Colin: | Yeah, yeah |
| Interviewer: | How would you describe the nationality of the club? |
| Colin: | Of the club? |
| Cook: | A lot of people…I mean a lot of people that are Berwickers say that Berwick is neither English nor Scots and it's got its own unique identity and you know kind of joke about the independent state of Berwick-upon-Tweed but… I think increasingly you know as a consequence of local government re-organisation Berwick is much more marginalized than it was say two or three years ago. It feels remote geographically. Its transport links are a bit iffy. All those factors kind of make you…I don't know, they give you a sense of isolation and I think that fits in with peoples' perceptions of where it fits in, whether it is English or Scottish. I mean a couple of years ago there was a sort of kinda a half joking, but half serious lobbying of Scotland to try and get Berwick moved into Scotland. |
| Colin: | Yeah. |
| Cook: | And that didn't happen for all sorts of obvious reasons. |
| Keith: | Some of us didn't want to! |
| Cook: | Well that's right. Every so often you get this kinda thing rear its head on where Berwick fits and uh… |
| Colin: | There is the political argument that we sit much better off on the Scottish side. |
| AXA: | It's a financial argument. |
| Colin: | Financial argument yes. |
| AXA: | There was a survey that came around the town about three or four years ago and it said 'would Berwick be better off in Scotland?' Given the finance of local government… |
| Cook: | [Interrupts] Free prescriptions, free university places. |

AXA:        The answer is obviously yes. Now if the question had been 'do you want Berwick to be in Scotland?' I think that would have been less of a…

Colin:      [Interrupts] Less of a definite question.

AXA:        A completely different question.

Colin:      Given the way that the political scene in the county now is the town has basically been raped of all sort of…

Cook:       Services?

Colin:      You know everything is in the southeast corner.

AXA:        I work for the County Council and I'm spending ages going up and down the A1 and I'm desperately trying to keep an office in Berwick and the closest office they're trying to put my services which I'm the manager of is gonna be 30 miles away.

Colin:      Yeah.

AXA:        And they can't get their heads around the fact 'let's have a meeting in Berwick', 'oh it's a long way to go!'

Colin:      Exactly. If you wanna test the theory all you have to do is drive 50 miles north and 50 miles south on the A1 and see the difference. I do it south every day.

Michael:    Are you aware that historically the town was in Scotland; I mean originally it was in Scotland and it changed hands…

Colin:      [Interrupts] It changed hands 13 times over a 300-year period.

AXA:        Well that's the problem with the history is, is it originally in England is it originally in Scotland? Well it's Berwick I mean there's proof you know you're talking about Celtic Studies well I would say that despite the fact that if you say you're English or Scottish if you think about our blood we'd all be Celts.

Cook:       I come from a typical Berwick family I've got a Scots father and an English mother….

Colin:      [Interrupts] You live in a caravan!

All:        [Laughter]

AXA:        He was conceived in a caravan!

All:        [Louder laughter]

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| Cook: | I was born in the town and I would regard myself as English, my brother regards himself as Scottish and that's not a problem. That is a fairly typical situation. |
| AXA: | The same with me. My dad is Scottish but I'm English. |
| Colin: | And that's bound to happen in a border town. You know it's inevitable. |
| Interviewer: | With the club crest, just can you explain the club crest to me? |
| Cook: | It's shite! |
| All: | [Laughter] |
| Colin: | Well it's is supposed to be the English and Scottish lion. |
| Bill: | You've got the Berwick bear. |
| Colin: | The Berwick bear. There is only two (football) clubs in the world who have a bear in their badge. |
| Cook: | Who's the other one? |
| Colin: | Athletico Madrid. |
| All: | Of course it is! |
| Colin: | When I was in Madrid I went to the actual…I went to the bear in Madrid…I don't think we make enough capital out of that and we haven't done for a long time. |
| Cook: | The people in Madrid do…a lot of people do say 'Berwick is my second club'. |
| Colin: | Berwick is my second team. Exactly. |
| All: | [Laughter] |
| Colin: | But the badge is very unimaginative. |
| Cook: | Have you seen the town crest Robert? The…the crest… |
| Bazzy: | It is disappearing fast now with the formal County Council. It's been taken away from our street signs. |
| Cook: | Check down the town crest, which combines the bear um…chained to a tree but also a salmon. |
| Interviewer: | Ok. |
| Colin: | Bazzy is wearing the crest we set up for the Trust, which even that is more imaginative than that [points at Berwick Rangers club crest]. |
| Cook: | The colours in the middle [points at the Trust crest] are the Northumberland county colours red and yellow in case you are wondering. Most of us despise Northumberland but that's uh… |

Michael:      Presumably the bear could also apply to Berwickshire because that's the badge of Berwickshire isn't it?

AXA:          Is it?

Colin:        Bear-wickshire, yeah.

Cook:         I mean I don't think…the badge is always a compromise because it tries to combine Berwick's own unique identity which is the bear and the tree and the national emblems of England and Scotland so that's…that's how it reflects.

Colin:        Yeah.

Interviewer:  Did the Berwick club badge did is just use to have the bear though?

Cook:         Yes it did…only the bear and the tree and I think that…I think we… was it us that kinda helped re-designed the badge? Was it Smudger?

AXA:          No I think it came before then.

Cook:         Did it?

AXA:          I think Cookie is right in the sense that what we should be doing is for all sorts of reason we could turn ourselves into cult probably cos of the reason you're here amongst anything else.

Colin:        Yeah…very much.

AXA:          And those are the sorts of things.

Colin:        You made some strides to that when you were in the club shop getting two different scarves. AXA got a scarf with an English and a Scottish badge on it which…

Interviewer:  That's the England one isn't it?

Colin:        Yeah that is the England one.

Bill:         I've got the Scottish one!

Colin:        And funnily enough the Scottish ones have got the Scottish ones on it. We all agreed some time ago that there was never enough made of that they should have pushed harder.

Cook:         You need to chuck resources at it as well I mean …you know you gotta really kinda push that.

Colin:        Yes.

Interviewer:  Obviously the club had a lot of publicity with the Celtic tie…

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| Colin: | Certainly yeah. |
| Interviewer: | So I had a look at how Berwick were referred to in the media… |
| Colin: | Yes. Yes. |
| Interviewer: | Both sides. This was in the Berwickshire news which is Berwick based isn't it? |
| Colin: | No. Berwick Advertiser is the town paper. |
| Interviewer: | *Berwickshire News* is… |
| Colin: | *Berwickshire News* is…the county paper. |
| Cook: | It's the sister paper Robert. It is the same paper. |
| Colin: | Same company, just next County. |
| Interviewer: | What do you think the reporter meant by his comments that the Celtic game represented a 'rare chance for Berwick to pit their wits against the country's best players? |
| Colin: | We normally pit our wits against average players in the Third Division. You know Celtic signed a world-renowned player prior to the game when they played at Shielfield. They also had you know… everybody knows the Celtic names. |
| AXA: | I think the other thing is given the performance if they are Scotland's best players Scotland's in trouble. |
| Colin: | Yeah. |
| Cook: | I think as well…I think that a lot of the major coverage around the game was very patronising. |
| Bill: | Aye. |
| Cook: | And I think that…I think it's always assumed that you know we're delighted to be playing these big teams and we should be in awe and all the rest of it but it doesn't feel like that to us I mean… I mean it's great because financially it helps the club it's an opportunity to go to a game at Berwick where there is a big crowd…but I get really pissed off by the patronising tones. I thought when Gordon Strachan in particular was interviewed as one of the Sky pundits I thought his attitude stank to high heaven. He's a horrible ginger bastard anyway. You know… |
| Colin: | You can quote him on that. |
| All: | [Laughter] |

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| Cook: | Notwithstanding that they see clubs like Berwick as an irritation and I think if teams like Celtic had their way the Scottish Cup would comprise of a series of rounds between Celtic and Rangers. |
| Colin: | Which is what they're trying to do is this (league) re-construction bollocks. |
| Bill: | Waita now. Celtic was probably the club that kept Berwick in the league at one time. |
| Colin: | Well. |
| Bill: | When Rangers moved. |
| Colin: | Rangers certainly weren't |
| AXA: | That was 50 years ago now though wasn't it? |
| Colin: | Historically yeah. |
| Cook: | Just talking the modern day approach you know everything about Scottish football the structure and the hierarchy is predicated against smaller clubs like Berwick Rangers. |
| Colin: | They hate smaller clubs. |
| Cook: | Every two or three years they will attempt to re-structure the set-up. One of the main objectives of that is the try and squeeze clubs like Berwick out of the picture. |
| Colin: | Yeah. |
| AXA: | I think that the problem that Celtic and Rangers have is that they see themselves as being big clubs… but they kinda then start looking south and you know Celtic's turnover is something like 30 million. Your average Premier League club is up at about 80 million. |
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| Colin: | Mind AXA that's all down to television money mind to be fair. |
| AXA: | Yes but I'm saying…Celtic see themselves as a big club that's why there is this move to join the English Premiership and all that. |
| Colin: | Yes. |
| AXA: | And they kinda use us as an excuse for why they are not getting that money which is absolute rubbish. You know the reason isn't that. |
| Colin: | For all the pontification I think Celtic hating coming here. Just f***king hated it! |

Cook:         The coach turned up in the morning and he said…the guy… the kit guy walked on the pitch and said this game cannot possible be played here and tried to influence the referee.

Colin:        Exactly.

Interviewer:  Would nationwide audience be accurate for that game?

Cook:         No. Well.

Colin:        It was on Sky television.

Bill:         It was Sky TV so no.

Cook:         If you mapped who watched it…you know if you drilled the data down to every household that watched it you would have nationwide coverage you know but you know the sheer numbers watched it. How many people normally watch Spurs versus West Brom?

Colin:        I don't know.

Cook:         What would be the figures for that?

Colin:        I have no idea.

Cook:         You wouldn't get anything like those sorts of numbers.

Interviewer:  How would you describe Berwick as a place?

Colin:        Shit.

All:          [Laughter]

Colin:        No. I wouldn't live here if I though that. It's actually a nice town to live in.

Cook:         Its got a beautiful countryside around it… its got a great hinterland. The town itself has real…some real attractions…you know the Elizabethan walls the nice location on the river.

Keez:         It's got a good history about it but it's got a lack of opportunities.

Colin:        Well exactly. A young persons view might be different to you know.

Cook:         I think that is a huge issue. From a demographic point of view we've got an ageing population we've got one of the highest elderly populations in the UK.

Colin:        Yes.

Cook:         And we've got outward migration of young people and as Keez says it's because of no opportunities so any young person with anything about them will get out of the place because there are no prospects.

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| Colin: | We've also got the lowest waged area in England. So let the young guys…you know what do you think? |
| Keez: | Like I said there's a lack of opportunity like myself personally I wouldn't as my first choice wanna stay in Berwick when I'm going to Uni… |
| Colin: | That is very pertinent. |
| Keez: | It's different like because you know there are more opportunities out there so…I was born in Ashington but I've lived here all my life. As I've grown up I've struggled to find stuff to do on the weekends. Berwick can be annoying sometimes. Honestly. |
| Slab: | I think there is a lot of potential in Berwick but people are maybe too afraid to go away from that history. We need to move on from it all now. |
| Cook: | I think that is a brilliant point. I think that the whole town is hung up on its historical past and I think that's a millstone. I think that handicaps progress. I think Slab is absolutely right. I used to work for a local firm here as well for a number of years and the thing that used to get me was how everyone paid homage to the history of the town and the community. But so many resources were keenly diverted to supporting that which no one followed. And that is one of the reasons why the average adult salary for Berwick for somebody in full-time work is 18,600 pounds a year. It's just above minimum wage level. |
| Bazzy: | Also that age group in the town did not have aspirations that's what I found as a Counsellor an ex-councillor in the town working Cook. I think that's what I used to… bang your head at…if you went to any public meetings nobody had aspirations for the town. We used to think you now when we spoke when were at conference centres and things 'where are they are going with that sort of thing?' I think despite what you're saying about wanting to leave I wondered if you lads would still be quite proud to say to people you live in Berwick? |
| Slab: | I suppose. |
| Bazzy: | Or it is a little bit of an embarrassment? |
| Keez: | I wouldn't say that. It's just that no one knows where it is and what is there because there is nothing, nowt that is… |

Cook:       And there is a whole wide world out there isn't there? It must be exciting for you to be at your age to be thinking of actually about getting away from here you know that must really be an exciting prospect.

Keez:       You'll always remember it because it is Berwick isn't it? It's that unique place.

Cook:       Yeah.

Keez:       It is Berwick. It has…it has a lot of impact anyway on our lives.

AXA:        I think the thing is I mean I left when I was 18, 19. So Cook…and my, my intention when I left I went to Liverpool and after that I was thinking 'that's me finished for Berwick'. I had a no intention of coming back and then life turned round and I found out it did. I'm not unhappy with that idea but uh… when I left I did leave thinking I was coming back and I think that is where you are isn't it?

Slab:       Well I moved up 5 or 6 years ago from Manchester so I sort of know the two different ways of being brought up and here it is a lot more relaxed and calm because it can be relaxed and calm but it's nice to be here and relaxed and calm but at the same time you want to go out and have like a party you know.

Cook:       Yesterday me and my partner had nothing to do so the two of us were gonna go out in Berwick last night but actually we ended up driving to Newcastle for a couple of pints. So we did a 150 mile round trip to get a couple of pints and something to eat cos the choice in Berwick is so limited. It's ridiculous.

AXA:        But at the same time I think that somebody…you think about ten years ago we had a…uh…an exchange and had Czech people here for a week and we had to entertain them for a week. It was when the foot and mouth was on so we couldn't get into the hinterland at all and we actually found things to do for the whole week we almost had a holiday in Berwick and I thought 'bloody hell I didn't realise that existed'. So there are things around if you look hard enough the trouble is they're under appreciated like the football club but at the same time I recognise there are things that you can't have. But you know we are an hour away from Newcastle, which is supposedly one of the best nights out in Europe. We're an hour away from Edinburgh…which you know as got a great deal but it's got the biggest festival in the world. So you're not that far away from these sorts of things so there is stuff there but it's whether you want those things or you want to

be living in a city like Manchester where you've got all these opportunities. I remember one time I went to Manchester with the youth project and you went past this industrial estate and it had graphics company and this company and this company and I was thinking we've just walked past a whole thing of people which kids could do none of which we have in Berwick.

Interviewer: Obviously the Berwick-Celtic game was on Sky. How would you feel about games being aired on BBC Alba?

Colin: I've watched some of Alba yeah. I just can't understand the language.

Bill: No that is the trouble. Can't understand a word.

Cook: I've never yet watched a game yet on Alba.

Michael: I watched that cup final once but I couldn't understand it.

Colin: Watching the football is fine!

Cook: If you take a step back…if it gives us more um…if it raises the profile of the club and gets to the wider audience…if by watching a Berwick game on BBC Alba it means that half a dozen people want to come down to the next game which would never have done so then that's got to work in our favour so.

Michael: Have we been on BBC Alba? Berwick Rangers?

Colin: I don't think so. I don't think so.

Cook: Does it not select the games from the SFL teams?

Colin: No. The games that I watched were like Partick Thistle against Falkirk.

Ron: We've never been on.

Colin: We've never been on no. Is it tomorrow…is tomorrow the Alba Cup Final?

Bill: Yes.

Ron: I lived abroad for the last three years and have lived in five different places in the last decade and the name Berwick and Berwick Rangers mean a lot to me because every Saturday during the football season I tune in to the world service to get the results and I make strenuous efforts to get that result because I didn't have access to the internet until later on and for me it was a link with home. I mean I was a supporter of the club anyway but it was very important to hear that name every week during the football season. And people would say to me 'where do you come from?' So I usually say if it wasn't an English-speaking country I say

'Britannia'. 'So ah yeah…Liverpool?' 'No', 'Manchester?' 'No'. 'Which team do you like? Liverpool? Manchester United? 'No! Berwick Rangers'… 'Rangers?' 'No! Berwick Rangers!'

All:            [Chuckles]

Interviewer:    What impact do you think watching an English-based club like Berwick would have on a Scots-speaking audience in Scotland?

AXA:            A Gaelic speaking audience?

Interviewer:    Scots…because there has been quite a big drive in Scotland with Scots with the Census.

Colin:          Yeah. Yeah. Very much.

AXA:            Well I know this thing where they have been trying to make it a European language aren't they and there's been a big discussion whether it is a dialect or whether it is actually a language.

Colin:          What impact?

Interviewer:    What it your view on Scots? How do you see Scots?

AXA:            I think that is a broader thing because I think that one of the things that is happening just because of the movement of people and the way that things are there's a lot of mutual dialects are getting diluted. And I quite like it. I quite like it.

Colin:          What AXA means is there are too many bloody foreigners in this country. That's what he means.

AXA:            No. No. I mean people from London or wherever coming up and not understanding things. I mean my partner is from Halifax and she works in the Scottish Borders and she finds often she'll come back and she say 'what does this mean? What does this mean?' Cos she's sitting there listening to a conversation between people who are proper borderers and sometimes she just misses words and therefore loses the thing but there is a strong accent and a strong thing in just Berwick itself and part of that is related to Scots but also to other words that derive from the North East as well and…and to an extent I was in Norway about three or four years ago and there was a poster on a wall showing a fire or something people coming home to the fire and it had in Norwegian 'Gan yem'

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| | which is what the people in the south of the county say. It's exactly the same words. |
| Colin: | Yep. |
| AXA: | So I think that…to maintain that sort of kinda accent and the dialects is important culturally. |
| Interviewer: | So has Berwick got its own unique dialect would you say? |
| Cook: | It has…it is known as Berwick and em…it is heavily influenced by Romany cos traditionally the eastern borders had big travelling Romany populations and um…there's actually…we actually years ago there was a Berwick Rangers end of season bash and it was a sit down meal and on the back of the menu we produced a series of selective phrases and words from the Berwick dialect. |
| Colin: | That was good actually yeah. |
| AXA: | I've got this little suitey thing…if you give us your email I'll sent it you. We were sat there in the pub one day and… em… we took fifty well known songs and tried to put them to the Berwick dialect to see if you could understand them and it was just quite interesting as with many you think well yeah that's really obvious but you know to a stranger you may not understand them. I mean when you're talking about Romany one of the common words, it's not just a Berwick word cos they use it in South East Scotland and the North East, the word 'Gadgie'. When we was in the Czech Republic we kinda said to people 'Gadgie' and they said 'Gadgie. Gadgio.' Gadgio means "white man" in Romany' and they knew the word. |
| Interviewer: | So where does Scots start? |
| Cook: | Across the border. |
| AXA: | Probably at the border. |
| Colin: | Where does it start? |
| Cook: | You go across the border to the fishing town of Eyemouth. |
| Colin: | Go five miles across the border. |
| Cook: | Their accent is completely different to ours. It is much more strongly Scots than here. |
| Colin: | Soon as you cross the border it starts. |

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| Bill: | I think one of the most striking examples of Scots is in Cornhill. |
| Colin: | Yeah. |
| Bill: | A mile apart with a river in between and a huge difference. |
| Colin: | A huge difference yeah. |
| AXA: | Do you hear a difference in the people talking here? Do you think we all talk the same? |
| Interviewer: | No. I can hear differences yeah. |
| AXA: | And we're all within what a ten-mile radius of each other. |
| Colin: | Yeah. |
| Interviewer: | Would you be opposed to the Scottish Football Association describing Berwick as a 'British' rather than an 'English club?' |
| Cook: | I wouldn't have no problem with it at all. I don't think I've ever heard them describe us as a British club but if they did it's no problem to me. |
| Colin: | Anything that the Scottish Football Association said wouldn't baffle me cos they're a bunch of dicks! |
| All: | [Laughter] |
| Ron: | I was waiting for that. |
| AXA: | I have a real problem with…I have a real problem with nationalism anyway. I don't like nationalism. I mean I've put down that I'm British but I'm also English but I would like to be able to choose my…what I choose to believe in not because of where I was born. I'd rather think that I was a bit more intelligent than that. I think nationalism is one of these things when somebody flies the flag and there is an expected thing. I mean you know the Braveheart film sort of kind of epitomised that didn't it because everybody believed that was a true reflection of history. |
| Cook: | It was Mel Gibson showing how the anti-Englishness came up. |
| Interviewer: | In that case, how does identity work when you're a Berwick Rangers supporter? Is there kind of a priority of identities? |
| Cook: | I am a Berwicker first and an Englishman second. |
| Colin: | Yeah. |
| Interviewer: | Is there a British or European…? |

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| Colin: | No. |
| Cook: | You know if England are playing an international competition…you know England against Wales the other week as an example. I want England to win but I've still got enormous problem with England as a national team. I hate a lot of the dickheads that go around with the English national team and I don't subscribe with any of that. But I am English, so England are my team and I have to support them. And I've got to be honest I mean I'm English and I went to University in Dundee. When I was in Dundee I had a real awakening because I'd always been quite ambivalent about nationalism but I remember sitting watching the Home Internationals in the hall of residences there in the hall of residences TV rooms and the anti-Englishness was so in your face it was incredible. Even my mates… |
| Colin: | And you don't get any of that down south of course? |
| All: | [Noises of disagreement] |
| Cook: | No you don't chief. |
| Colin: | Yes you do! |
| Cook: | No I'm sorry you don't. |
| Colin: | I'm sorry you do! |
| Cook: | Not in my experience you don't. |
| Colin: | No? |
| Cook: | I mean it was so aggressive…you know almost violent it was in your face and I've never experienced anything like that in my life before and it really awoke…really made me understand. |
| Colin: | We'll have to agree to disagree on that! |
| AXA: | No. I mean I went to Liverpool and at the time it was '78 '79. So that was the time England weren't doing very well and Scotland were doing very well and it was all the 'Ally's army' thing so…I mean I grew up when Scotland was doing really well and it was always in your face the whole time and that was…that was how it was then. So I went down to Liverpool and was away from it all and watching the England-Scotland game for the first time and getting really sort of het up about it…and the English lads were saying 'What are you bothered about?' It wasn't a big deal to them. |

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| Colin: | Of course it wouldn't be AXA because England is so much bigger than Scotland. |
| AXA: | No. But it wasn't cos of that. |
| Colin: | And that's what English people can't understand. |
| Cook: | But the point we're trying to make is that it is a bigger problem for you jocks than for us English people. |
| Colin: | You see, you wouldn't be saying that if I was black! |
| AXA: | [Laughter] |
| Colin: | No. No. I say that quite seriously. That is thrown around quite easily now. If you said to me: 'You sambos!' There'd be f∗∗∗king hell on! |
| Colin: | Yep. Yep. |
| AXA: | That's the problem. I work with a lad who is Pakistani origin… |
| Colin: | [Interrupts] Would you call him a Packi? |
| AXA: | Somebody called him… |
| Colin: | [Interrupts] But you'd call me Jock! |
| AXA: | Somebody who was involved on the phone today says he wants to see his boss because he said 'I'm not taking advice from a Packi'. Now everybody you tell that story to winces. |
| Colin: | Yes. |
| AXA: | Because it is a horrible thing. Now it really depends on the nature of the word. |
| Cook: | But you know this afternoon without bringing up Montrose but Queens Park have a fairly benign support let's be honest. But you know at some point somebody with a couple of drinks on board will shout 'Get into these English bastards!' |
| Colin: | That's right. |
| Cook: | You know that'll happen. |
| Colin: | Yes. |
| Bill: | It swings in roundabouts. It's not so much the English. |
| Colin: | Like Stranraer…it was Irish! |
| Cook: | They weren't anti-English but some of the Berwick support at that time called Stranraer 'Irish bastards'. So you know…? |
| All: | [Laughter] |
| Colin: | Yes. Well exactly yeah. |

AXA:            I think the thing about it is that because we grew up with it we don't necessarily…you know when people come from outside the town and if you look at it really the racism in the town is phenomenal because of the England-Scotland thing and we never notice it because we've grown up with it and it's nothing to us.

Colin:          You never used to think it was racism though.

AXA:            No you don't. No.

Colin:          But it is becoming very popular to use the word "racism".

Cook:           I don't think…I don't think that there is an England v Scotland issue in the town.

Interviewer:    What happens if there is a World Cup Qualifier and England play Scotland?

Cook:           2006 was it?

Colin:          Yeah.

Cook:           When England played Scotland.

Colin:          It is mostly good-humoured antagonism.

Interviewer:    Is there a split?

Cook:           It tends to be good-humoured because these are people whether they be English or Scots they live next alongside each other all the time. So you don't tend to get that really aggressive behaviour.

Colin:          No you don't.

AXA:            It is as if you know they're your neighbour you're not gonna fight with them.

Interviewer:    Is it case for people in Berwick that when it is England v Scotland people don't bother with either?

Cook:           People live with it. People live with it. It is much more benign.

Colin:          It is not a big deal.

AXA:            There was a good story it was an England Scotland game up at Hamden at the time of the Home Internationals and it would be the early '80s and there was about 7…no 10 or 11 of us from the pub in town went up to the game and half us were English and half of us were Scottish and we all wore the colours of our national… so I wore an England hat and scarf and my mates had Scottish ones and that. And we came off the train at Berwick and there were some other lads there that were Scottish that were coming from Berwick…and we got off the train

at Berwick and there was like…as we got off the train some lads I think they were from Leeds got off the train to attack the Scots because they saw them as a minority and they got a fright cos everybody that was English that was Berwick turned round and said 'What the f**k are you doing?' and chased them back on the train. So that…the bond with the town was stronger than it was with the national thing and I think that is right?

Colin:          That is true!

Interviewer:    Is there any bond with Northumberland?

AXA:            Na.

Cook:           No.

AXA:            I work for Northumberland County and I despise the bastards!

All:            [Laughter]

Cook:           I think that Northumberland is…

Colin:          [Interrupts] You're not talking politically are you?

Bazzy:          I don't think there is much of an identity.

AXA:            I think …when you go to Berwick why would you go to anywhere in the county? You go to Edinburgh or you go to Newcastle because they're the places you go to. Everything between Berwick and Newcastle and everything Berwick and Edinburgh is the same as what you've got in Berwick so there is no reason to go there.

Cook:           I think as well though that there is the perception as well when you say Northumberland a lot of peoples' first conclusions is that it identifies with the former coalfield area in the south east of Northumberland.

Colin:          Which is where most of the population is.

Cook:           Which is where most of the population is and where all the resources get diverted. So we're part of Northumberland as a county but that's a geographic accident.

Interviewer:    So did the Celtic game put Northumberland on the map?

All:            No. Not at all. Not at all. No.

Interviewer:    It was Berwick?

Cook:           Well it might have been with some freeloading County councillors.

Colin:          It was the town.

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| Interviewer: | So there is no kind of sense that Northumberland is part of Scotland or Scottishness? |
| All: | No. Not at all. |
| Colin: | I work down at Ashington every day and they're fiercely English. There's no doubt about that so no not at all. |
| Interviewer: | So with being Berwick fans, how far across the border do you have to be to be considered Scottish? |
| Colin: | One mile. One foot. One yard. |
| AXA: | I don't think that. I think you can be born on the English side and consider yourself to be Scottish. There is a lot of people who do that. |
| Cook: | Yeah. |
| AXA: | I'm probably vice-versa but it isn't obvious. |
| Colin: | It is all very muddled nowadays. You can go back to your great-granny's granny's goldfish. |
| Cook: | I always wondered what your problem is! |
| Colin: | It is very blurred. |
| AXA: | I think…I think again I'm against nationalism. I hate this idea that I mean…the classic one is you get folk who've been 200-years American and they say they're f∗∗∗king Irish. As far as I am concerned: what? You know the classic one…I mean I was watching *The Sopranos* the other night and they're all Italian. Then they went to Italy and saw it as a foreign country even though they count themselves as Italians… they're not they're Americans with Italian heritage. |
| Colin: | Aye. There is a lot of mixed up stuff nowadays. |
| Michael: | And yet you don't get that with Australians saying that. About a third of the white population of Australia is of Irish origin but you don't get people saying 'I'm an Irish Australian'. |
| All: | No. No. Cos they feel Australian. |
| Interviewer: | [Passes pictures of clubs using Scottish flags] |
| Colin: | Annan yeah. |
| Interviewer: | What can you see in the pictures? |

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| Cook: | The Annan pictures…I mean I look at the club and I just think that it is a club very much like us. I mean we've never had any problem well maybe with Annan… |
| Colin: | [Interrupts] Not really. No. |
| Cook: | We play in the same league same kinda status as us. |
| Colin: | Annan appears to be alright yeah. No problem with them. No. |
| Cook: | The other pictures there. I don't know. The top one there is that Hamden Park is it or is it Celtic Park? |
| Keith: | Celtic Park. |
| Cook: | Celtic Park. |
| AXA: | I think…I think… I mean if you're talking about nationalism. I'd far prefer to see a Scottish flag at a Rangers or Celtic game rather than a Union Jack or an Irish one. |
| Colin: | Yeah. |
| Keith: | What one is that? Stranraer is it? That's Stranraer is it not? |
| All: | [Indiscriminate noise and chatting] |
| Interviewer: | So what can you see in the pictures? |
| Colin: | Celtic Park and Stranraer. Hugely different grounds…both football grounds but hugely different. The other one is Annan and Cook said Annan is a club just like we are. |
| Interviewer: | What about the flags? What's different? |
| Colin: | There's a lot of Scottish flags. Annan had their own flag. |
| Interviewer: | Does Berwick have it's of own flag? |
| Colin: | Yes we do. Yes we do. |
| Keith: | We've got a black and gold Union Jack actually. |
| Interviewer: | Is it quite similar to that one [points at Annan flag]? |
| Colin: | No. No. It's a black and gold Union Jack. |
| Interviewer: | Has anyone travelled to watch Berwick against teams like Morton, Queens Park…Annan? |
| All: | Oh yeah! |
| Colin: | Extensively yes. |

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| Interviewer: | Can you recall seeing flags with Berwick Rangers' name or crest emblazoned on at domestic games? Does it tend to be something that you might take away with you? Or do you see them at Shielfield? |
| Colin: | It goes away from home much more than it is displayed. It is rarely displayed at home I think I'm right in saying. |
| Keith: | Exactly yeah. |
| Colin: | But the younger lads take it away from home. |
| Keith: | Yeah. |
| Colin: | They put it over the barriers and stuff. |
| Interviewer: | Would it be St. George's or would it be St. Andrew's? |
| Colin: | Some of them take St. George's yes. They take Berwick flags as well. |
| AXA: | The problem is that if you take a black…not so much a Scottish one if you take a Black and Gold English flag it probably looks like something else. There is a cross of St. David's that is black and gold or something? Is it something like that? |
| Interviewer: | St. David's. Yeah. |
| Colin: | Some of the lads take St. George's ones yeah…some of the younger guys. |
| Interviewer: | Is there any St. Andrew's? |
| AXA: | Now and again…now and again. |
| Colin: | No many that I can recall really. |
| AXA: | I remember Clark and them used to take them. |
| Colin: | Did yeah? Aye. There probably has been. But as I've said most of them…you know… it has nothing to do with the Berwick game we're following Berwick. |
| AXA: | One of the problems we have is…is with… I can remember many years ago…well I remember years ago we took Union Jacks to St. Johnstone. It must have been twenty years ago. |
| Colin: | A Cup tie? |
| AXA: | I was told to take them down by the police because they were offensive. And I'm thinking how the f**king hell? That's the flag of this county! |
| Colin: | That is your national flag! |
| AXA: | And how can that be offensive. |
| Colin: | Who's it offending? |

AXA:            Oh well you know… and then it got to the point ridiculous. I went to Paisley once and Smudger and them had been in Glasgow all day and they had bought a Jamaican flag…uh…uh an Indian flag and something else and put them up and they were told to take them down because they were offensive as well.

All:            [Laughter]

Colin:          Yeah. Flags are offensive.

Michael:        With the Union flag was it some link with Glasgow Rangers?

AXA:            Well I guess that's what it was but you know if people are offended by that then lets face it you need I life don't you?

Colin:          Yeah. Exactly.

Interviewer:    What's the significance of the choice of flag? Why is it that they're not put up in Shielfield but you'll take a flag away with you?

AXA:            I think away supporters are more motivated to make a noise.

Colin:          Yes they are. Yes.

AXA:            Everybody kinda comes to Berwick and say how shite is your support because we don't make any noise but when people go away they've had a few drinks they maybe want to feel like they are representing the town, supporting the team so away supporters just make more noise I think. That's it isn't it?

Colin:          Yeah. Yes.

Michael:        When Queens Park were here a couple of weeks ago they had a three-piece band. Did you see that…against the railings? I don't think they'd show that at a home game where could you put it at Hamden that's another question?

Colin:          Well exactly yeah. I think all away fans are different. They're more up for the day, they're enjoying themselves and they want to tell people where they come from.

AXA:            I mean you see some kids…some kids that come to Shielfield and they'll be what 12, 13 and they've got a bottle of vodka and they're on the bus you know. And they don't remember anything of the day do they?

Colin:          Exactly. Yeah [Chuckles].

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| Interviewer: | With taking these flags, I know you've said you'd been told to take them down, is it treated with any animosity with other fans when you take the St. George's cross or…? |
| Bill: | The St. George's flag. Definitely. |
| Colin: | Animosity? No it's just hatred. |
| Bill: | Even I object to St. George's. |
| Colin: | I object to all national flags at clubs. It doesn't play a part. |
| AXA: | I like the idea of the…the banners and stuff like that. |
| Colin: | So do I. |
| AXA: | And you see them in the likes of Germany and in Italy we see the big flags and all that sort of thing and I like that idea because I think that is really good part of football culture to have. And I think to have a stadium…and I think… I was reading about Everton last week and they've been told to take flags down within the ground. |
| Colin: | Yes. |
| AXA: | And there was a bit of grumping about that as well. |
| Colin: | Yeah. |
| AXA: | That's part of football culture to have your name and to have your badge and that's what it is about. |
| Colin: | Yes it is. |
| AXA: | So if people put English, Scottish or Dutch flags or whatever up I'm not bothered. I think that is part of what it is. As long as you're not trying to say to you 'I'm English, you're Scottish, you're a c**t'. That's wrong! |
| Colin: | Yes. |
| AXA: | You know what I mean. It's just a case of celebrating what you are. |
| Colin: | But hang on a minute you are a c**t. |
| All: | [Loud laughter] |
| AXA: | But the other thing at Berwick's level is …you're talking about the same type of people wherever they are from because they're watching their hometown team at that level. |
| Colin: | Yes. |

AXA:            And I think a lot of people have…we probably have a lot more in common with people who go watch Montrose although they are a bit of a cumulous bastards aren't they?

Colin:          They are. Montrose aye.

AXA:            Very Presbyterian town. They don't have a sense of humour.

Colin:          But you're right anyone from a small town watching their own team can empathise with the guys from Montrose and the guys from Annan or anywhere else.

AXA:            Whereas you wouldn't with say Celtic or Rangers or anybody like that from Glasgow.

Colin:          It this town us who follow Berwick look with derision at people who follow Newcastle and follow the Old Firm, or follow Man United. 'Who do you support?' 'Oh I support Berwick', 'Oh right' so a conversation ensues. 'Oh who do you support?' 'Man United', 'Oh f∗∗k off!' I think most people who follow their own club in their own town or area and somebody follows the Old Firm and I always very sarcastically say 'Oh right. So which part of Manchester did you used to live in?' They look at you quizzically. 'I never have done'. 'So why the f∗∗ck are you supporting them?'

Interviewer:    [Passes pictures around showing use of Scots on club websites]

Colin:          I can see Livingston's badge there. Boo! I don't like Livingston. As a town I don't. I've got family in Livingston. It's all to do with one individual. It is nothing to do with Livingston.

AXA:            I think that's it…you asked ten years ago which club do you hate and we had a thing

Colin:          I don't hate Livingston Football Club.

Keith:          You can see the Livingston badge there.

Colin:          Who's that?

Keith:          The Jags!

Colin:          All yellow? Ah right! The Jags in the middle yeah.

AXA:          That never struck me till ages ago that they are actually the Scottish colours…of the flag, of the lion flag init? I don't know why if the colours are used as an effect of the Scottish flag…that never struck me before until sort of ten minutes ago.

Colin:        Who's that bottom one? The Gowfers?

Keith:        Carnoustie.

Colin:        Is that Carnoustie as well is it? Partick, Carnoustie and Forfar, the red Lichties. Interesting Rob.

AXA:          They've never sort of won a trophy Arbroath.

Colin:        The Red Lichties. Course that name came from years ago from…for the local…what do you call it… lighthouse…I'm reading a book this week called Stramash it's an English guy that has gone about small town Scotland and written about his experience and it's actually quite good.

Interviewer:  So what do you notice about these pictures? What kind of stands out? Is there any kind of common theme?

Bazzy:        Lot of use of Scottish emblems within local clubs. Thistles.

AXA:          Thistles. But they're called Partick Thistle innit?

Colin:        There are very few Scottish clubs, which have got a thistle in their badge. Obviously Partick Thistle is one of them. Who is the other one? Is there any others? I struggle to name them…they all use their nicknames.

Interviewer:  What's significant about the nicknames?

Colin:        Significant about them? The Red Lichties, the Loons, the Jags and the Gowfers…what's significant?

Keith:        Scottish words.

Colin:        They're all local dialect. I think.

Interviewer:  The use of Scots?

Colin:        Ah ha. Oh! The use of Scots in the nicknames…yeah right. Yeah.

Interviewer:  The Wee Gers is not one you kind of go for?

Bazzy:        No.

Colin:        It's so bland. It doesn't a mean anything.

Interviewer:  Why do you think those particular clubs use Scots when the Scottish Football League does not kind of have a bilingual policy or suggest people use Scots?

Colin:      I think if you went to any of these communities you know…you would find they're rampant Scottish without a doubt.

AXA:        We go back to this thing of whether people actually think that they're talking a different language. I mean when I left Berwick I didn't think I had an accent until it took two weeks before anyone understood me.

Colin:      Yeah.

AXA:        I think there is that side of things. I don't see it as a definitive language and whether it ever will be or not…it's not like Welsh or Gaelic or anything like that with a different structure and everything. It's one of these things luckily coming from Berwick…I don't…I've never really had a problem understanding anybody in Britain. Yet, there's people from other areas who could sit in a pub in Berwick and not even understand a word of what is going on. It's probably the same in Duns as well.

Colin:      Yeah. Yes.

Bazzy:      I get that in work. When somebody phones up from Newcastle: 'there is a woman on the phone. I can't understand her. She's Scottish!'

Colin:      Oh yeah.

Bazzy:      And I don't even sound Scottish.

AXA:        I had a situation working with a lass from Sheffield and I was out working and this was in Berwick and a lad basically said 'Are you going out? Well if you are going out can you help us out?' And we just had this short conversation and she just looked at me and I said: 'what's wrong with ya? And she says 'I didn't get a word of that. I don't know what the hell you were talking about?' And you know we've never had that problem before. I think there's just a dialect thing.

Colin:      Course it is.

AXA:        Maybe we're just proud of it, maybe we use it a bit more, maybe we use it deliberately…you know…you make words up as well I mean some words are quite new.

Colin:      I think probably AXA one of the most pertinent facets is we speak the way we speak.

Keith:      Aye.

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| Colin: | We don't have an option really. |
| Bill: | When I moved to London I had to slow down dramatically. |
| Colin: | Yes…very much so. But generally you speak the way you speak. |
| AXA: | I mean there was one word which we used…I've used all my live was the word 'chava' and it meant kid or young lad. |
| Bazzy: | Aye. |
| Interviewer: | Is it a Scots word? |
| Colin: | It's a Berwick word. |
| AXA: | No. It's…it's again a Romany word. |
| Bill: | Aye. Romany yeah. |
| AXA: | And we used it all the time. Then next thing you hear it's for these bling lads from Corydon or wherever and suddenly it became a whole different thing. |
| Colin: | Yeah. Yeah. |
| AXA: | And I was quite pissed off with that cos everyone said 'oh this is a new word', I said 'well no…it's like…' |
| Colin: | An old word. |
| AXA: | It's an old word. |
| Colin: | A very old word yeah. |
| AXA: | And apparently when you were looking back at it…it's a word which comes from Hungarian which is again where the Romany thing comes from so. |
| Colin: | Yeah. Yeah. |
| AXA: | That was the origin of it. They actually stole that word. I was quite pissed off with that actually. |
| Colin: | [Chuckles] |
| Interviewer: | So Berwick has its own dialect but then Scots goes over the border? Where does Scots start? |
| AXA: | There will be some words that we share and some words that we don't. |
| Colin: | Yes. |
| AXA: | And some words that you understand. Sarah has come back with loads and loads of words and I've known what they are. I don't necessarily use them but I know what they are and maybe that's because I've got family in Scotland I don't know. |

Colin:          Yes.

AXA:            But I've never…very rarely come across words that I don't know the meaning of.

Colin:          Yeah.

Interviewer:    So does language, accent or dialect become a contentious issue when you travel away?

Colin:          No not really no.

AXA:            The advantage of being able to speak…

Colin:          Aye. There's a lot of bad language.

AXA:            The advantage of being able to speak this dialect is that when we go all away together we can actually talk about people in foreign countries and we find that even if they speak English they can't understand us.

Bill:           [Chuckles]

Colin:          Yeah. Yeah.

AXA:            That's always a big thing. When you go to places like when we go to Holland and that and you can say like… I made a comment about the bloke next door and you could have that conversation without them actually knowing what you're talking about.

Interviewer:    [Shows scarf with England flag on it along with a picture of a scarf with a Scotland flag on it] I understand that you've got one with the England flag and one with the Scotland flag. Is there one without as well or…?

Colin:          Yes there is. If you'd come here four months ago I would have brought my scarf, which I've had for the last…donkeys years and its got nothing on it. It's just black and gold bars. I've always had that one.

AXA:            It was just an idea because at the end of the season you get the likes of ground hoppers and they want a scarf. We sell more England scarves than Scotland scarves mainly because there's more English people coming into the shop.

Colin:          Yeah.

AXA:            Not nothing to do with the nature of the support. And they'll buy a scarf because its got England on it.

Colin:          Yeah.

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| AXA: | But eh it was…it was just a marketing thing. I think it's really something we should be pushing. |
| Interviewer: | So it's not a case of you travel away with Berwick and perhaps you wear the England flag and you wear the Scottish flag (scarf) at home. Nothing like that? |
| AXA: | Keith you've got a Scottish scarf haven't you? |
| Interviewer: | Is there one with both flags on? |
| AXA: | I asked about that… but the problem is that if you're showing England and on the other side you've got Scotland and that's next to your heart [chuckles]. That's what somebody said to me. |
| All: | [Laughter] |
| AXA: | So you don't want to be English and have a Scottish flag next to your heart and vice versa. |
| All: | [Laughter] |
| AXA: | Well there's a classic case the person said to me was Deborah…her family is born and bred in England and you call her English…she'll batter you won't she? |
| Colin: | Yeah. Very much. |
| Interviewer: | Is the other one kind of to represent Berwick's unique identity do you think for people who don't want to decide between England and Scotland? |
| Colin: | There's just Berwick scarves…Berwick Rangers scarves yeah. |
| Interviewer: | Is that for a Berwick identity? |
| AXA: | It's just a standard scarf like everybody else produces. |
| Interviewer: | So do Berwick have pre-season friendlies against English teams? |
| Colin: | Yes. |
| Cook: | Yes. |
| Interviewer: | Whom do they tend to play? |
| Bill: | We had Cardiff once. |
| Bazzy: | Blyth. |
| Colin: | We had Cardiff once. Anyone who can handle them quite frankly. |
| Cook: | Sunderland, Newcastle, Blyth Spartans. |
| Colin: | Chester City, Maidstone. |

AXA:            They've tried this thing with Blyth and this is the latest thing the Northumberland Cup.

Colin:          Yes.

Interviewer:    Have you travelled to watch them against Blyth?

Colin:          Yes.

AXA:            This season. The first time was this season yeah.

Interviewer:    What was it like? How are Berwick regarded by Blyth? Are they seen as fellow Northumbrian brothers?

Colin:          Rob it's actually interesting.

AXA:            I don't think it's that. I think if we go back to the thing about people supporting clubs at that level I mean…I know two seniors who watch Blyth home and away…well home cos it's a fair distance… but uh we were having a crack about football the other day and he was saying about this that and the other and it's the same problem. We were just having that conversation about football. I mean I would go and see Blyth if maybe on a Saturday if Berwick were away and whatever. We talked about that and he mentioned about coming up to see Berwick play. I don't think it is a brotherhood or anything.

Colin:          No.

AXA:            It's just the fact that it's that level of football.

Colin:          There's a small piece of… I perceive as sort of county unity when we've picked up some fans of Newcastle. They're sick of the Premier League nonsense. Stevie Carter being one of them.

AXA:            Yeah.

Colin:          And the occasional guy that comes up from Stannington in the south of the county that wants to watch football that isn't gonna cost him half a mortgage to get in and see.

AXA:            You never get a definitive answer.

Colin:          The one thing that we've actually discussed…the… Northumberland Senior Cup is the county competition and I think Newcastle still put in a reserve side.

AXA:            Newcastle were playing…weren't they playing Blyth?

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| Colin: | Aye. They got through to the final this year…and we as the only senior club in Northumberland, because Newcastle aren't. |
| Interviewer: | How are they allowed to enter then? |
| Colin: | Well they enter a reserve side. I don't know the ifs and buts about it but we apparently…we would have to ask the permission if I remember what John Bell told me…we have to ask the permission of the SFA to play in the Northumberland Senior Cup. |
| AXA: | Yeah. |
| Colin: | I think that was the case. |
| AXA: | I think that's the one thing when the border really gets in the way is to do with again beurocrats. We had an under 17s football team who entered into the Scottish system and we couldn't fulfil the fixtures because some of the lads who were playing for it had played for English clubs and couldn't get international clearance. |
| Colin: | International clearance. Bizarre. |
| AXA: | You could somebody if you walked out of the ground there are houses around the ground…you could get a kid who has lived in that house all his life but for some reason in the past he's played for Eyemouth or Duns and so has Scottish registration and he would have to go the same way as you sign… I don't know… |
| Ron: | Fernando Torres to Chelsea. |
| AXA: | The Fernando Torres move. It's the same process to get that kid to play for Berwick and we couldn't fulfil the fixtures because of it. |
| Colin: | It delayed the season for a number of months until the paperwork could go through. |
| AXA: | And that was a piece of nonsense. |
| Colin: | That was bizarre. That probably says a whole lot load of what you're doing. |
| Bill: | It's down to people with ties again! |
| Colin: | Oh. People with ties! |
| AXA: | The other thing that happened at the time I think it has been sorted out now but I am not 100 per cent sure was… when we… at the time when everybody was re- |

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|  | building the grounds in the 80s 90s…eh…. we couldn't access grants because the Scottish FA paid their grants on geography. The English FA did it on affiliation. |
| Colin: | Yes. |
| AXA: | So we couldn't get money from the English FA because we weren't affiliated to the English league but we couldn't get money from the Scottish league because we actually weren't in Scotland so actually we couldn't get money for that and was a thing that went to our MP and everything and nobody could give us an answer on that. |
| Colin: | No. Bizarre. Yeah. |
| AXA: | And again when you talk about the Hey Del disaster when all the English clubs were banned from Europe we had to get dispensation from that. We had to say look 'we play abroad according to you every other week'. |
| Colin: | Yeah. Yeah. |
| Interviewer: | Is that what you consider that you play abroad every week? |
| AXA: | No. No. That's what the authorities considered. |
| Colin: | Technically you could say we do play abroad every week yeah. |
| Interviewer: | Is it like an international fixture in that case? |
| AXA: | Possible. |
| Colin: | If you stretched a long way yeah. |
| Interviewer: | How aware of the border are you in your daily lives? |
| Colin: | Not at all. |
| Bazzy: | Not at all. |
| Colin: | It doesn't figure at all…it's just a road from Berwick to Duns and it crosses the border. |
| AXA: | In daily lives it isn't. Like I say I work for a local authority and I have little… I don't know anything about what goes on in my discipline across the border at all. I think when it comes to local government I think there is a big difference there. |
| Colin: | Oh yeah. Yes…if you work yes. I work for the NHS in Northumberland and we never go past the border. Never ever. |
| AXA: | My partner works in the Scottish Borders and she gets a call out and sometimes she gets call outs on the English side of the border. She got a call out from |

Berwick once and said 'well that's England! I can't come out.' So she phoned the equivalent in Gosforth and the Gosforth people said 'No. No. That's in Scotland!' They didn't even know.

Bill:     Well I did run into problems sometimes was the two different legal systems.

AXA:      Yeah.

Colin:    Yeah. Of course yeah…very much.

Bill:     You have to remember which side of the border you are on to know which way you dealt with them yeah.

All:      [Chuckles]

Coding:

R1 – Steve
R2 – Brian
R3 – Robert
R4 – Bill
R5 – Steven
R6 – Sarah
R7 – Christine
R8 – Martin

Interviewer:   Who are The New Saints and where did the name The New Saints come from?

All:   [Silence]

Interviewer:   How would you describe the club? That's just a general one.

Steve:   Well The New Saints originally, I think the actual name The New Saints came from the abbreviation TNS, which was an original sponsors name Total Network Solutions. So that's basically… it involved the business of Total Network Solutions was sold off…we looked for a new name for the football club and obviously the identity of TNS they wanted to keep because it was a well-known brand with the fact that it had had quite a bit of European exposure and so on so to keep the name there they actually you know came up with The New Saints.

Brian:   There's two angles to that Steve…um…when we were playing in Llansantffraid. Llansantffraid were "the Saints".

Interviewer:   Ok.

Brian:   So although it was TNS, Llansantffraid had always been called "the Saints" so then again it was a progression of that – The New Saints when the club was formed.

Steve:   Yep. It was…it was a carrying forward of the nickname becoming the full name of the club.

Interviewer:   Ok.

Robert:   They called it "The New Saints" because of the amalgamation of the old Oswestry Town club. You've got Saint Fraid in Llansantffraid and you've got Saint Oswald in Oswestry so obviously it was felt it fitted the initials.

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| Steve: | The full name I think is something like The New Saints of Oswestry Town and Llansantffraid Football Club. But try standing on the terraces shouting out that one…basically it's an amalgamated club between the club Oswestry Town Football Club and Llansantffraid Football Club. |
| Brian: | Yes. It was between the three clubs and as Rob has explained it now it was St. Oswald and Llansantffraid was called "The Saints" and the initials were Mike's business Total Network Solutions as well. |
| Interviewer: | So it was Mike's business? |
| Steve: | Total Network Solutions was Mike Harris' business yeah. |
| Brian: | Total Network Solutions was Mike Harris's business. |
| Interviewer: | How did the merger of Oswestry, an English club and Llansantffraid, a Welsh club… how does it work in reality? |
| Brian: | Um…we looked at it about several years before it actually took players and we talked about it. Bill was Chairman of Oswestry Town and I was Vice-Chairman of Oswestry Town and we ticked it over for a couple of seasons…um…it was getting more difficult for us to run the club…um…financially…um and…we talked about uh…speaking to Mike Harris and we had spoken to Mike Harris on a couple of occasions about Mike coming over to Oswestry…um…the reason being that the population of Oswestry is far greater than it was in Llansantffraid …um…there was a couple of thousand at Llansantffraid when there was 35-36 thousand in Oswestry. So it made economic sense um…to come over to Oswestry. |
| Steve: | And with the physical |
| Brian: | Physical yeah… |
| Steve: | Development potential. |
| Brian: | Uh…the Llansantffraid ground was a lovely ground but the potential there wasn't so economic for UEFA standard any road…um which meant that you know if you wanted to get to the level you've gone to now you had to move so hence the move cross-border took place. |

| Bill: | The reason they're at Park Hall now it's in England but Oswestry Town were founding members of the Welsh FA… a lot of people were against it they are now because the ground is in England. |
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| Robert: | I think the first…the first player to score an international goal for Wales was an Oswestry player. Williams. I can't remember the first name but I think he was an Oswestry Town player. If not he was certainly from Oswestry. |
| Brian: | It was one of the two. |
| Steve: | I think one of the big issues with the merger as well that would cause a lot of… sort of bad feeling…I wouldn't say necessarily bad feelings but a bit of upheaval was the fact that people were used to having a town a town named team. Quite like Llansantffraid they had their own identity until Total Network Solutions took over as a sponsorship deal. Oswestry Town we had a lot of…I wouldn't say a lot of support…we had a number of supporters that were quite protective of the name and didn't want to lose the name at the time of the merger. But obviously we were bringing someone in on the development side like Mike does with the finance the backing and so on then I'm afraid whatever name they wish to call that club you are gonna go with it. You know if Anne Summers hada come forward with a certain name, whatever she wanted to call this place. |
| Brian: | Sex chicks! |
| Steve: | You know. That's when the name was almost sold off on ebay at one time as a joke. |
| Brian: | It goes to prove there's still [pauses]…one, two, three, four…there is still five members of the old Oswestry Town board involved down at Park Hall one way or another… and three are here now. Steve was Director, Bill was Chairman and I was Vice-Chairman so you've got three ex-Oswestry directors here now so …so… and we don't care what it's called. We'd have stopped at Llansantffraid and played our football. We are happy that its come to Oswestry. |
| Steve: | We just want to see a good standard of football in Oswestry that's all. |
| Brian: | We are happy that it has come to Oswestry because it's a good achievement for us. But we'd have gone and followed The New Saints if it had been at Llansantffraid. |

Steve:      At the time I was very involved with youth football and coaching, my son was playing a lot of football and I saw the potential as well to bring a different standard of coaching and everything for the kids. I saw this as the opportunity from that angle as well. We've got one young member of the academy here today with us and I think we have a very, very impressive set-up now that is available for everyone in the town.

Interviewer:      There was an article, because I was looking at *The Border Counties Advertiser* online, there was an article which appeared…it was this time last year in fact talking about the Oswestry Town revival offer and the article said: *"At an open meeting hosted by New Saints Chairman Mike Harris on March 25 2010. He confirmed that he would be happy to licence the club's name and allow it to operate within the English system from Park Hall and also added that he would consider changing the name of TNS to Oswestry Town if fans went regularly to games and voted in favour".*

Brian:      That is correct!

Interviewer:      I was wondering how you would feel today changing the name back to Oswestry Town?

Steven:      I don't think it would matter what you'd call it.

Steve:      We'd follow this club I think whatever it was called.

Sarah:      Aye!

Brian:      Whatever it was called we'd still follow it!

Steve:      I would …I would like as an Oswestry person I would obviously like to see "Oswestry"…I am not a big lover of teams having a name that isn't recognisable of where they come from…um…but if we were still playing in Llansantffraid I would be perfectly happy with this club being called Llansaintffraid. If we are playing in Oswestry I don't mind being called Oswestry.

Brian:      See…you see Mike bought the rights to the name Oswestry Town when the merger took place and from day one he has offered the name of Oswestry Town to anyone that wants to come back and form another club. He's even offered them the facility to play at Park Hall if they want to set up another club…

Robert:      Which is what that news article was about.

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| Brian: | And play in the English league as Oswestry Town. He also put it to supporters if they wanted to come and vote at the turnstiles he would also honour that so…so… |
| Steve: | You get a lot of silent critics. |
| Brian: | You get a lot of silent critics. |
| Steve: | Not so much silent critics but you get sort of armchair critics shall we say. |
| Christine: | We still have people now though don't we who moan and complain like? |
| Steve: | That likes to sit at home and moan and whinge but don't actually show up. |
| Brian: | Mike is a football freak. He honestly is and he's chucked his money at it and he's done a good job of it. He runs a good club. It's a nice club, it's a friendly club, it's a family club and that's what we appreciate. We've got a good standard of football and we're always in the top two, three of the Welsh Premier. I think it's eleven, twelve years now that we've qualified for Europe on the bounce. We've played some good teams as you're aware of…um…the Liverpools the Man Citys as well as the foreign cubs…so that is the standard of football Mike has fetched to Oswestry. |
| Steve: | The chances of doing that as Oswestry Town on the financial constraints that we had… |
| Brian: | It was a pipe dream of ours to fetch European football to Oswestry…which I don't think we would have achieved in all fairness without Mike's help. |
| Steve: | We were struggling. We were fighting…our battle every year was not to win the league it was to avoid relegation every year. |
| Brian: | Yeah. Yeah. |
| Steve: | Not being funny there was once or twice we were…at one game in particular at Caernarfon if you had actually been there when we actually won that game you'd have thought we had just won the league. The celebrations on the pitch with everybody jumping up and down. And what it was we had had just avoided the drop. |
| Brian: | The season the merger took place we hadn't won a game all season. We'd got five games to go and we got to stop in the Welsh Premier League for the merger to take place. |
| Steve: | We had to win those five games to get enough points. |

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| Brian: | We needed to win the five games and we actually won the five games and three of those were down in south Wales all in the week. |
| Interviewer: | How successful do you think the merger has been in bringing fans from Llansantffraid to Park Hall? |
| Brian: | Um. |
| Bill: | Not very. |
| Brian: | Not very successful at the moment. |
| Steve: | There are a few that have come across. |
| Brian: | A few of the old ones come but there's not a lot come…um… |
| Christine: | There are still some of them playing isn't it? |
| Brian: | Yeah. There are still some that come down if Llansantffraid aren't playing themselves in their own league on a Saturday or we've got an evening game there's still one or two that will come down…um… |
| Christine: | It could be better…a lot better. |
| Brian: | I'd say that about the Oswestry supporters. There's not many now. |
| Steve: | Llansantffraid was never a hugely supported club anyway. We've not lost support. |
| Brian: | We've got a lot of new lads come in like Martin and… they've come in from the outlying villages which has swelled the gate down at Park Hall. If we'd relied on the Saints and the ex-Oswestry supporters it wouldn't have been. These lads have come in. |
| Interviewer: | [Turns to Martin and Steven] So you're new fans of The New Saints? You didn't follow Llansantffraid? |
| Steven: | No. No. |
| Brian: | No. |
| Martin: | I went to a couple of games at um…Llansantffraid. It was when they started the Academy. |
| Brian: | That's right yeah. |
| Martin: | It was the last season up there wasn't it? |
| Brian: | Yeah. |

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| Martin: | Aye. I started because Ian was his manager. I just went to a couple of games and I really enjoyed it. |
| Steve: | It's a good atmosphere. We've always aimed to try…you'll probably see tomorrow we tend to have quite a broad age group of supporters as well. We tend to get a lot of kids that'll come down here. You've got a lot of people walking around with their dogs and… |
| Brian: | You are coming to watch us win the league tomorrow are you? |
| Interviewer: | I am here for the game tomorrow. |
| Steve: | That's the idea we try to create is a kind of family atmosphere. |
| Martin: | It's not happening tomorrow. |
| Bill: | A lot of the supporters come a fair distance and I ask them 'Why have you come?' and they say 'the reason we come here is to watch the football'. |
| Brian: | The standard of football is superb. It really is. |
| Steve: | We even have people travelling from the Midlands regularly to come and watch us. |
| Brian: | They come from all over. We've got a steward from Widnes…a lad that comes as steward every game who was an ex-Liverpool supporter and when we played Liverpool he came to watch the game and he's come to watch the Saints ever since. |
| Steve: | He got friendly with us and has come down since. |
| Brian: | He comes down for every home game. |
| Sarah: | Probably five or six years now innit he's been coming? |
| Brian: | Yeah. |
| Sarah: | Since 2005. |
| Brian: | Since we played Liverpool. |
| Interviewer: | So TNS are they a 'Welsh club in England' or an 'English club in Wales'? |
| Steve: | A hybrid basically. |
| Brian: | That's a good question! [Laughs] |
| Steve: | We have to class ourselves really I think as… |
| Sarah: | Border… border counties. |

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| Steve: | I think well…to play in the Welsh system really we tend I would have thought it is more of a Welsh club…we're playing in the Welsh system. |
| Brian: | The way you've got to look at it…. |
| Steve: | But it is a hybrid club. Our affiliations are English and Welsh. |
| Brian: | The way you've got to look at it…as Rob stressed the Welsh FA and the Welsh international team were picked in Oswestry it started in this area. |
| Steve: | I don't think there are many clubs that have a special dispensation that allows them to play in two different affiliations. |
| Brian: | Wales was in Oswestry or Oswestry was in Wales. Weren't it? Oswestry was in Wales? |
| Robert: | Oh yeah… |
| Brian: | They did move the border. |
| Robert: | A few times. |
| Brian: | In those days. |
| Steve: | Over the centuries it has skipped the border a few times. |
| Brian: | And they pass us off as being English. |
| Interviewer: | How would you describe the nationality of TNS to a neutral football supporter who might be in London or Cardiff like myself? |
| Brian: | We're a Welsh club. |
| Steve: | I'd say 'we're Welsh Premier League Champions'. |
| Brian: | We play in the Welsh Premier League. We're a Welsh club. |
| Steve: | A senior Welsh Premier club. |
| Christine: | We have got both emblems on our shirt haven't we? |
| Brian: | We're a Welsh club. |
| Sarah: | Welsh border. |
| Brian: | There's no question about it. We're a Welsh club. I think Rob if you look around this table there isn't many Welsh people around this table. |
| Steven: | I'm English. Born in Oswestry I was. |
| Brian: | So it speaks for itself really. We're a Welsh club although we're playing in England. |
| Interviewer: | So what is the community that TNS serve? |

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| Steve: | It seems to be if you take the geographical area…obviously the main catchment is supposed to be Oswestry and the surrounding villages…um…the bulk of support probably does come from within uh…a ten mile radius of the town…but there are as I say some supporters that will travel 50, 60 miles to a game. |
| Brian: | They come up from the Midlands. There's a few that come up from the Midlands. |
| Sarah: | Why do they do that? There must be a reason they do that. |
| Steve: | One thing is they're seeing what is now becoming a reasonably good standard of football in the Welsh Premier and at a fraction of the cost what you'll pay to see the same standard in the English system. I think that certainly does help. You know if you go to the likes of Shrewsbury or Wrexham you're paying three, four times the amount of money. |
| Brian: | And it is going to be reduced next season to five pounds folks. |
| Steven: | Yeah. It was in the *Border Advertiser* wasn't it? |
| Steve: | Yeah. They're looking to reduce it at the gate across the board so… |
| Steven: | Yeah. But he's put it in the *Advertiser*. |
| Steve: | He's made it official now…if the league gives him permission…allow him to do it. |
| Brian: | [Turns to Robert Doman, sport reporter for *Border Advertiser*] That's your fault! |
| Robert: | What? A fiver? |
| Brian: | That it's in the *Advertiser*. |
| Robert: | You're complaining? Then you can pay the normal price. |
| All: | [Laughter followed by general chatting] |
| Steve: | It's quite funny when we actually raised the gate price up and the clubs commented we were the first one 'whoa, I'm not paying seven pounds to get in to Welsh Premier league level'. Then within the season they were all up to the same level. So it will be interesting now to see if everyone follows our lead and actually because of everything that is going on Mike's attitude is let's hope we can again strengthen it within the community and make it more accessible to people. |
| Interviewer: | So how does identity work when you're a supporter of The New Saints? Obviously, you've said it is a Welsh club but how does your identity work then supporting a Welsh club? |

Brian:      There's quite a few non-Welsh speakers that support TNS.

Sarah:      I'm not a Welsh-speaker but I'm Welsh. I really am Welsh!

Brian:      I was born and bred in Oswestry and I've always…English has always been my first tongue. We weren't taught Welsh in school we weren't taught anything. I'd quite often wished I had learned to speak Welsh but I…

Steve:      I've picked up more Welsh words believe it or not through the football.

Brian:      Being in the Welsh Premier yeah. You can understand…you can understand a certain amount of Welsh…because you know…

Martin:     [Whispers] Can't be off any of the players can it?

Steve:      Speak Welsh with a Scouse accent. I've learned if off the players! [Chuckles]

Brian:      No. If you see the interviews on the pitch there isn't many Welsh speakers when they're interviewing for *Sgorio*.

Sarah:      South Wales is different isn't it?

Brian:      Yeah.

Steve:      You tend to find that Oswestry as a town is a good mixture of English and Welsh…mid Wales tends to be quite…whereas you go North Wales or South Wales you tend to have shall we say more Welsh. I know that is going to sound stupid but they tend to be more… better sort of national pride involved with north and south. Wales does…Mid Wales does tend to be… this is perhaps as an English Lehman's view of it…but it tends to be a bit more multi-national within the…

Brian:      You see south Wales have got the pull of Swansea, Cardiff…and they pull a lot of players from Swansea, Cardiff that have not quite made the grade and they are Welsh-speaking players. Our catchment area is Liverpool, Everton, Manchester…so we pull players from that area that are English-speaking players. So I think we've got three Welsh-speaking players, three Welsh lads that are playing…the rest are either Mancunians or Liverpudlians.

Steve:      We do find that when you go away to other clubs…I won't name any clubs in particular…but other clubs…there does tend to be a bit of almost racial banter towards us referring to us as an English club and 'you shouldn't be here, you're English!' or we even get the odd…this will sound great on tape…this sort of

old…'you mid-Wales sheep shaggers' and all this sort of stuff. Even Welsh criticism from one Welsh lot to another Welsh lot because of Mid Wales.

Brian: I think a lot of that is jealousy in all fairness. You've only got to look at the facility we've got…it's absolutely superb. There's no better facility in the Welsh Premier League. So…you know a lot of it is jealousy. You sit at locals… the likes of Caerswys and Welshpool were in the Welsh Premier League and you used to get it there. You'd still get the same thing and they were sort of living ten, twelve miles from here and you still used to get it…its jealousy. It's nothing else but jealousy.

Steve: You do have that slight…I wouldn't say racism but it is…it is…you get that comment sometimes about being English 'oh you shouldn't even be here' and that's normally…it's quite strange. You don't normally get that sort of comment if you lose but if you win you'd get that comment. It's sour grapes.

Interviewer: Is there a strong local identity in Oswestry? A strong sense of local identity at all?

Sarah: I doubt it.

Steve: Again I think it's quite a mixed identity.

Brian: It is not a strong one.

Steve: It's such a mixed community.

Sarah: It's really half and half really isn't it?

Brian: Yes. It's…I don't know…to me it's a poor relationship Oswestry has got with the club to be honest.

Sarah: We don't have many Oswestry supporters. Do we?

Steve: Do you mean more as a community apart from football?

Interviewer: A community yeah away from the football.

Sarah: We do everything to try and get them to come to support us.

Brian: There's more and more and more using the facility down here now. But it stops there - using the facility. I'd like to see them come through the turnstiles

Steve: I think what Rob is getting at is forgetting football.

Interviewer: Football aside.

Steve: In the town of Oswestry.

Interviewer: What would be the most important identity for you?

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| Steve: | Would you regard yourself as more English, do people think of themselves as more English, more Welsh or is it quite a neutral? |
| Brian: | It's… |
| Steve: | From my side of it I see it as quite neutral. I work in a Welsh company out in Welshpool. |
| Sarah: | Yeah. It never bothers me. It's just Oswestry…well. |
| Christine: | It's because Oswestry is close to the border. It's four miles from the border. |
| Brian: | We've lived with this all our lives. We're a border town, we always have been, we're a border market town. If you come into Oswestry on a Wednesday and you walk up the main street on Wednesday and I can guarantee if you don't bump into Polish people they're speaking Welsh. So…you know…a lot of people come in from the outlying villages and outlying areas, the farmers on a Wednesday and they're Welsh-speaking. |
| Steve: | And some areas like at one time Shrewsbury and that used to have quite a bit of sort of agro between sort of cross the border English-Welsh rivalries and so on but alright yes there has been certain things with Oswestry when I can remember at school or when I was younger there was always like Oswestry-Chirk rivalries and things like that wasn't there? |
| Brian: | Well that's always been. You'll always get that. |
| Steve: | But its never been…it's always just…I don't think its been anything else…it's just been a very accepting…you know… equilibrium we've got in the town. |
| Interviewer: | Can you explain the club crest to me? |
| Steve: | A hybrid of the two…two original logos. Basically that was off part of the Oswestry Town logo that was part of the original Llansantffraid logo. So they basically was…the PR guy who does all the design work for our website and everything, Andrew, basically came up with that logo to combine the original crest. Have you got any of your paperwork Bill? Did you bring anything with you that will have the original Oswestry? |
| Bill: | I didn't know exactly what to bring like. |
| Steve: | Yeah cos basically the old Oswestry logo was basically was almost pretty much that within a shield and obviously the Welsh dragon. |

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| Brian: | I've got one at home I think I should have brought it for you. |
| Steve: | I can't remember. I think that one is the…when that was first done that logo was first done that raised the…Christine…on the Welsh people… |
| Brian: | Because the dragon was back to front. |
| Steve: | Is the dragon the wrong was around on that one? Because when the logo…yeah…that's the same as the shirt. I think when it was first actually done the logo. |
| Brian: | You'll know you're Welsh. Is the dragon the wrong was around? |
| Martin: | Yeah. It is. |
| Steven: | Yeah. |
| Christine: | Yeah it is. It definitely is. Innit? |
| Steve: | On one of them… |
| Brian: | [Interrupts] I think it is. I think it is. |
| Steve: | On one of the logos…on one of our logos… |
| Brian: | [Interrupts] I think it definitely is. |
| Steve: | On one of the logos when it was first designed and we used it for quite a while… |
| Sarah: | That doesn't look right Bri. |
| Brian: | Thank doesn't look right Steve to me. |
| Steven: | Is that right? |
| Sarah: | No. No. Should be the other way around. |
| Steven: | Not saying. |
| Brian: | I think that's wrong now. |
| Steven: | He doesn't know that and you've got a degree. |
| Christine: | What is it on the shirt? |
| All: | Same. Yes. |
| Bill: | As when they put them on the shirt. |
| Steve: | I think originally and I don't know if they're still using the one but I think they've actually swapped them around since because it was basically the dragon was pointing the opposite way to what it was on the Welsh flag. |
| Christine: | Didn't they turn the dragon round…to have the dragon facing that way? |

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| Interviewer: | The blue kit [points to youth team player present wearing blue kit] is that the old Oswestry Town kit? |
| Brian: | Yes. Oswestry Town were the blues. |
| Steve: | Oswestry Town was the blues. The nickname was…or one of the nicknames of the town was "the blues" so we tended to stick with the blue and the golds, and I think TNS had always used the green and obviously the Welsh dragon. |
| Interviewer: | So why are those two important to The New Saints? |
| Steve: | It's just keeping in the identity of the logo, the identity of… |
| Sarah: | [Interrupts] Both. |
| Steve: | The two individual clubs. The two constituent parts of the club. |
| Brian: | It's two clubs. |
| Christine: | It's joining the two clubs together. |
| Brian: | It is actually three clubs, which have merged. It's TNS, which is Total Network Solutions, Llansantffraid and Oswestry Town. So… |
| Steve: | That's why on the shirt you'll see on the sleeves of the shirt we've actually got both names. We've got Llansantffraid on the one sleeve and then…oh you haven't on that one. Oh it's on the one sleeve. So we've got Oswestry and Llansantffraid on the one shirt as well. We tend to try to keep the identity of the clubs… |
| Brian: | [Interrupts] Of the two clubs. |
| Robert: | But when you look at the old Oswestry Town badge you've got the lion on one side and he's sort of reaching…at your side…I can't remember if there is a red cross in the top left hand corner or…with a Welsh dragon. |
| Steve: | Yeah there was something wasn't it yeah? |
| Brian: | A Welsh dragon. |
| Sarah: | Really? |
| Robert: | It was a Welsh dragon yeah? So that's…that's always been on there. |
| Steve: | We've always had a Welsh kind of… side of it to Oswestry you know. |
| Brian: | We've always had a Welsh presence even when we played in the English system. |
| Sarah: | I didn't know that. |

Interviewer:   When you were playing in the English system were you treated as a Welsh team or treated as an English club?

Brian:   Um…

Bill:   We were treated…

Christine:   English really.

Steve:   Probably more English.

Bill:   We had no complaints.

Brian:   No complaints at all to be honest.

Bill:   We would go down to Llanelli and we were welcome there and…in south Wales.

Steve:   That's where there was no jealousy. A team you're beating you're not worried about criticising. If you're losing to them then you start criticising don't you?

Brian:   It's a lot of jealousy. Jealousy of what we've got and what we've achieved to be honest and there's no club in the Welsh Premier that has achieved what The New Saints have achieved.

Interviewer:   No. No.

Brian:   And there isn't like. You can look back like the Barry Towns. They didn't achieve what The New Saints have achieved.

Christine:   And they were good. They were good Barry Town weren't they?

Brian:   We've had eleven or twelve years of it. You know we've been spoilt.

Steve:   Well it's our success that is attracting us new supporters and that all the time now. You say we've got quite a few that have come through now because of the European angle because they were watching you know the Liverpool supporters, Keith is a prime example. Being a Liverpool supporter he suddenly saw a club in the Welsh Premier league which was effectively only down the road and sort of seeing…a different…it's a different kind of football which is more grass roots which you can get involved with a bit more. Get to know the players…you know you can actually hurl abuse at the players you know on first name terms and they'll hurl it back at you in first name terms.

Brian:   When the merger first took place…

Christine:   [Interrupts] When the final whistle goes they'll turn around and shake your hand and say 'that's a good bit of banter there'.

Brian:       When the merger first took place…um…we were Oswestry Town and the relationship we had with the players was second to none. But when we came to TNS and the merger took place it was totally and utterly different…um…the players wouldn't be bothered to speak to you, they'd would just walk off the field.

Steve:       No. Not all of them. There were a few that didn't.

Brian:       Well when we first took over Steve it was. There wasn't many would speak to you.

Sarah:       It's different now innit?

Brian:       It's gradually gone like a family club. The players will come out and they'll mingle with you. They'll come speak to you after the game. They go to the kids, they do everything. They go up to the local hospitals; they go round everywhere they work into the community.

Sarah:       They go in the schools innit?

Brian:       They go into the schools. It's a family club.

Steve:       They're gonna be doing more of that to make it more community wise. It's gonna be part of the thing that.

Brian:       That's the nice part of it. Even down to the players involved everyone is involved it is a family orientated club. And that's what we're trying to encourage is families down to Park Hall. We're starting to get there. It's been a long process but we are starting to get there.

Steve:       You still will always find for some unknown reason no matter what happens you get hostility against some of the…um…we've tried to put our finger on it a few times to say…well people…'Well I'm not going down to watch them, why should I go down and watch that bunch?' And you think 'Why? Have you ever been down to see it?' They criticise from afar and you can't understand why. You say 'come down and watch a game and then criticise and say it's a poor standard'. But it's strange they just won't do it.

Sarah:       Perhaps every club has this I don't know.

Steve:       But that's the same with everything in life sometimes.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Steve:       It's so easy to criticise what you don't know.

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| Bill: | If Oswestry Town had been relegated the merger wouldn't have took place. |
| Brian: | There'd be no TNS. |
| Sarah: | Really? |
| Brian: | Really. We had to win the last five games. |
| Bill: | When we went into the Welsh Premier we won the first four games and were top of the league for a number of weeks… and things started to go down a little bit like and then further down like and me and Brian we could see what was happening and we were the first after a match, I forget where it was, we met Mike Harris at Welshpool. |
| Brian: | We met him in Welshpool didn't we? |
| Bill: | And we asked him well…what he would do…would he take over. He didn't give an answer but it was very promising. |
| Brian: | This was three years prior to the merger-taking place. |
| Steve: | It's quite funny because people often think it was the other way round that Mike actually came in and actually swallowed up Oswestry Town, took over. It wasn't actually that way round. |
| Brian: | We approached Mike on a couple of occasions…um… |
| Steve: | Cos he knew if was gonna be of benefit to him as well as us really. He was gonna be getting us out of the mire and… |
| Brian: | We were coming back from Wales the first time and we stopped in the hotel at the crossroads near the traffic lights in Welshpool didn't we? But uh…we instigated it um…Mike… |
| Steve: | [Interrupts] We had inherited an awful lot of problems from the past financially and whatever and basically we were struggling from week to week to field a team. |
| Brian: | Oswestry Town went out of business…uh…it didn't go bankrupt…it went out of business. |
| Steve: | We were very fortunate. We had a very good band of players at the time…uh…a couple of them you know were even sort of forgoing their wages to carry on playing for the club you know…. I don't think there were many…you get some players are very mercenary well we had a good band of players. Alright obviously |

some of them wanted their money, cos they relied on it they needed it…but uh…you know….

Brian: We had the assets to pay our creditors so we were okay we didn't go bankrupt…um…. there wasn't a lot of money left over after we paid our creditors but we did, we went out um…in good faith not owing anybody any money which is not very often done like that these days…um…but it wouldn't have been like that if we had carried on another season.

Christine: How many supporters did you have?

Brian: 600 or 700 then Chris.

Steve: Not when Oswestry …not the latter parts of Oswestry Town we didn't have that many. We probably had as many as we've got now.

Christine: Did it drop off?

Brian: No we didn't. We had a lot more than that Steve. In the Cymru Alliance we were getting 700.

Bill: When Oswestry Town…

Brian: [Whispers over] In the Cymru Alliance we were getting 700.

Bill: First played Llansantffraid as TNS, we would get over 700 there wouldn't we?

Steve: Local derby games we would always get 600-700 hundred.

Brian: We would get 600, 700 hundred in the Cymru Alliance

Steve: But if we were playing Llanelli or something we'd probably struggle to get 150 the same as we do now.

Brian: But when we were playing in the English system down at Victoria Road we'd get 2000. So the pull…the pull is still there in the town to get that sort of numbers.

Steve: When we were actually in the English system there was a lot more pull and a lot more catchment.

Christine: If we entered the English league we'd get 2000 people do you reckon?

Brian: No! It is nothing to do with the English league Chris. We…we played in the Welsh system since we reformed Bill didn't we and we used to get six or seven hundred down here and if we had the likes of Rhyl or Llansantffraid we'd top 1000 people possibly. So I don't think it's that at all. We get them…we should get them in the Welsh system.

Christine:     I know.

Brian:         It just annoys me. I get that frustrated by it.

Christine:     We try and try don't we Bri?

Brian:         Yeah. I get that frustrated by it.

Steve:         The thing is as well you have to try and take in it will have affected every football club…um…no matter what level…alright perhaps the elite top end it doesn't affect so much…but the county as a whole is going through a recession…or even though supposedly we're not…you know money is hard come by these days everybody is struggling…um…a luxury like an away trip to a football match down to south Wales, alright at our level it is still gonna cost you twenty quid for a bus.

Brian:         But we do it!

Steve:         Yes I know. But…

Brian:         Martin does it with kids with young kids.

Steve:         Yeah I know. Some people do but you will never going to get masses of people I don't think. It's gonna take a long time to build that sort of…you know it's a luxury isn't it?

Steven:        We need that at home games really.

Steve:         Home games we need to focus on a bit more.

Brian:         That's what we need to be focussing on is the home games.

Steven:        On a Saturday you gotta bring your games on a Friday and a Saturday night…Friday and a Sunday.

Robert:        Sunday.

Steven:        Sunday yeah. We should forget about Saturdays.

Brian:         There's too much on the telly.

Robert:        Your live games…your evening games should be against teams from North Wales.

Steven:        Yeah.

Robert:        Where fans don't have to travel after work.

Steven:        Like Airbus. We go to Airbus.

Martin:        Yeah.

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| Robert: | Play your weekend games on your Sundays when the family can go down there and everyone can go around. The logistics of it has got to dictate when certain games take place. |
| Steve: | When you think of it Wales is not a particularly huge country. You know if you're in the English system, if we were playing in the English system we could be travelling four, five times as far to some of our away matches. |
| Martin: | Four times quicker though. |
| Steve: | Very true. There are no good roads through Wales are there Rob, as you'll testify? |
| Interviewer: | [Picture of *Soccer Saturday* presenter Jeff Stelling passed around with catchphrase: "They'll be dancing in the streets of TNS tonight!"] |
| Steve: | Oh yes….Dancing in the streets. |
| Brian: | Dancing in the streets of TNS. |
| Interviewer: | Dancing in the streets of TNS. So what does he mean? |
| Steve: | Sarcasm. |
| Brian: | Sarcasm because we were at Llansantffraid then. |
| Steve: | Yeah well basically what he was being…. purely because we happened…we were using a company logo…a company name literally as a football name. So it was just sarcasm because we haven't got…we couldn't say 'dancing on the streets of Llansantffraid.' He was purely being sarcastic. It is the lowest form of wit. |
| Robert: | There was another commentator that done that years ago I think with a Scottish club and I can't remember. I think he made a genuine mistake in that like what he had said and I think Jeff Stelling picked up on that and applied…applied the same thing to TNS. |
| Steve: | Yeah. |
| Robert: | I think it's a bit quirky and it sort of caught on but I think it stemmed from another commentator making a genuine mistake. |
| Martin: | In fairness there is no place called TNS. A lot of people don't realise is there is no place called Arsenal either. |
| Robert: | Aye. |
| Brian: | Exactly. |
| All: | [Laughter] |

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| Interviewer: | How do you feel about his comments? Do you just take them tongue in cheek? |
| Steven: | You take it with a pinch of salt don't you? |
| Steve: | At the end of the day it's exposure and advertising. |
| Sarah: | Yeah. |
| Brian: | It's just good PR for us in all fairness. |
| Steve: | And wanting to keep the initials TNS is quite a useful thing because people know of TNS: 'That the Welsh club that played Liverpool a few of years ago.' |
| Brian: | It put us on the map basically. |
| Steve: | It's how our identity is known |
| Sarah: | Anderlecht. |
| Interviewer: | How would you describe Oswestry as a place? |
| Steve: | Um… |
| Steven: | It used to be a good place long…years ago when they used to have the squadies here didn't it? |
| Steve: | Yeah. Because I don't know…the background to this place this actual stadium. |
| Brian: | It's an army stadium. |
| Steve: | An ex-army stadium. It used to be a garrison stadium it was junior leaders. |
| Steven: | An army camp. |
| Steve: | It was actually an athletics stadium with a football pitch in the middle for the junior leaders. |
| Steven: | They had a big swimming pool up there didn't they? |
| Bill: | There has been as many as six thousand plus supporters watching the army team here. |
| Brian: | Watching the army team. Bobby Charlton used to play here for a while. |
| Bill: | Bobby Charlton, Duncan Edwards. |
| Brian: | Duncan Edwards |
| Bill | Graham Williams. |
| Brian: | Yeah. |
| Bill: | Local…he played here. |
| Brian: | Graham Williams is still local… a Welsh international. |
| Sarah: | Frank Buff. Frank Buff is another one isn't it? |

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| Steve: | Oswestry as a town I think to be honest is becoming a bit of a commuter town now the employment is not around Oswestry…there are a lot of people living in Oswestry and going off the work elsewhere because there is not a lot around here for Oswestry. You walk into Oswestry town centre… |
| Steven: | [Whispers] Where do you come from? |
| Steve: | Yeah a lot of places in Oswestry now you go in the town centre it's either pubs, charity shops or art galleries, which are basically in the windows behind boarded up shops. |
| Brian: | That applies everywhere now. |
| Steve: | Yeah. It is…it is…it used to be a fine farming, agricultural, market sort of community. |
| Brian: | It's a market town. |
| Bill: | One of the biggest in Europe. |
| Steve: | One of the biggest problems is there are certain people who want to keep it as a quaint little market town and are not allowing it to develop and move on a little bit. |
| Brian: | But yeah…the market…the market has gone. Like I can remember that the street market in Oswestry where there was two hundred stalls now it's down to twenty-five. |
| Steven: | There always used to be… used to be the market years ago. |
| Brian: | Used to be an indoor market. |
| Steve: | It's a town that is sort of struggling to keep up with the times. Almost. |
| Steven: | We used to have fifty-two pubs in town didn't they years ago? |
| Steve: | You know like now a simple example it's a reasonably big town but we haven't even got a cinema so there's not an awful lot for the youth. Even something like this now because of that as a result people in Oswestry tend to do a lot of their leisure activities out of Oswestry which makes it harder to try and find a catchment to bring them down to do something here. |
| Bill: | The problem that I found when I was Chairman of Oswestry Town was the Olympic were here. |
| Steve: | That's the athletics club. |

Bill:        And if we did something wrong we were in trouble with the county council. The Olympic to them could have anything.

Steve:      That's when you share a facility.

Bill:        They wouldn't let us have a penny.

Brian:     No. They never help us along the council. Other than the stadium, we wouldn't be playing here today really because the Oswestry Town ground was council owned and Mike bought it off the council…uh…and that proviso was there…with Oswestry Town…um…Mike picked it up and carried it over and bought the stadium.

Steve:      He was planning at one stage initially when they started looking at the developments they did look to build the stadium as part of the new leisure centre developments in Oswestry because there's a new leisure centre which has just been built…um…but for one reason or another that I think we'll discuss that…

Brian:     The council dragged their heels.

Steve:      The council was sort of non-committal and they wanted him to basically or wanted the football club to invest heavily in the football development, the stadium development the dry changing room areas but then they would only grant a very short lease. So you're not gonna invest 3-4 million of your own money in something that in ten years' time you may be asked to vacate. So…

Brian:     So we spent the 4 million down here.

Steve:      So he put the money down here and developed this facility.

Brian:     He's got 23 acres of woodland here as well…which…which um…the long term plans are is putting training pitches and grass pitches in areas of the woodland.

Steve:      I heard the other day that possibly by the end of this season we will have the stand up.

Brian:     Yeah.

Steve:      I'm not sure how much truth is in that but uh…

Brian:     Yeah. I heard that as well.

Interviewer:  [Shows supporters video of TNS versus Rhyl on *Sgorio*]

Steve:      One good thing that *S4C* have now done as well they've actually put English…you can actually press the red button or whatever now and get the

English…get the English…which has… I think has helped with a lot of clubs being on borders. Yes so you can actually get English commentary on them now.

Martin:      Are we on telly on Monday?

Steven:      Yeah.

Brian:      Yeah.

Steve:      I don't know what the actual viewing figures are now for the matches on *S4C*. I've never actually looked at the stats but I wonder how many people do actually watch the games?

Sarah:      That's my flag in the background [Laughs].

Brian:      I just seen you…there.

Steve:      I've never met that bloke Ally Hanner or whatever his name is. His name keeps flashing up at half time of every game.

Brian:      Ahh quality.

Steve:      It's always…always extra rewarding when you beat a team like Rhyl by a substantial score line. There is obviously rivalry between the top clubs there always will be.

Brian:      You always get that anyway don't you? You've only got to look at the Man Uniteds and the Man Citys and the Liverpools and the Evertons. How much bloody rivalry is there?

Steve:      A bit of healthy rivalry you need, it generates interest don't it?

Brian:      You've got to have rivalry haven't you? I hope you don't get the rivalry you get in Scotland with bombs flying about and everything else.

Sarah:      Oh God!

Brian:      It's more than awful.

Interviewer:      I just wanted to ask you a couple of questions. How many of you are familiar with TNS' *S4C* coverage?

Christine:      Most of us are aren't we?

All:      Yeah. Yeah.

Steve:      I've been interviewed on it a couple of times…when we were up at Llansantffraid.

Brian:      Yeah.

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| Interviewer: | Why does *S4C* have coverage of TNS? |
| Steve: | I think it is because it is the Welsh Premier League that they felt you know… |
| Brian: | Why does Sky have the English Premier League? |
| Steve: | Yeah. Yeah. I think it was just good to have it. |
| Brian: | Why does a chicken lay an egg? |
| Martin: | They have the Irish as well don't they? |
| Steve: | Yeah. |
| Martin: | They have Linfield games on in the week. I've seen Linfield. They have it on Sky Sports 1. |
| Steve: | At the end of the day it is supposed to be the top league of football in Wales. So… |
| Brian: | It's the Premier League of Wales. So if Welsh television is gonna… |
| Steve: | If they don't show it nobody else is. One time we used to also have, I don't know if you're aware, we used to have a BBC sponsored cup as well, the Premier Cup, and that was always a good competition because… |
| Brian: | It was on BBC Wales wasn't it? |
| Steve: | The so-called Exiles were invited into that as well so you'd have your likes of Newport… |
| Brian: | Your Cardiffs, your Swanseas. |
| Steve: | Your whole lot. The other four were invited as well. |
| Brian: | And we won that. |
| Steve: | We won that the last year it was played we actually beat Newport County. |
| Brian: | Newport. We beat Cardiff in the build up. |
| Steve: | We beat Cardiff in the semi and Newport in the final. |
| Brian: | Newport in the final. |
| Steve: | But that was a good one that was BBC and that was… |
| Interviewer: | When was the last year of that? |
| Steve: | It would be about three…years ago. |
| Brian: | [Turns to Christine] How long as it been since we beat Newport? Three years ago innit? |
| Steve: | It's gotta be three years. |
| Bill: | Three years yeah. |

Sarah:          Yeah.

Steve:          Because they pulled the sponsorship because BBC funded the sponsorship. But apparently I have heard that now…

Christine:      [Interrupts] 2006/7 season.

Brian:          2006.

Christine:      Since we were cup winners.

Steve:          The latest news is that the league have now extended the… next year for the Welsh Cup they are talking about allowing the Exiles into the Welsh Cup.

Steven:         An invitation. Invitation.

Steve:          They've had an invitation to so…

Interviewer:    If you win the Welsh Cup will you go into Europe?

Martin:         Europa.

Brian:          Yes.

Steven:         They won't be able to go into Europe will they?

Steve:          I don't know. That is one of the contesting parts.

Brian:          Grounds not there. They haven't met the criteria have they or what?

Steven:         No they have.

Steve:          They won't be able to represent Wales.

Brian:          Who's that?

Steve:          The Exiles…they wouldn't be allowed to represent Wales because they don't play under the Welsh affiliation do they so…

Sarah:          They have invited them in haven't they? Cardiff, Wrexham…

Brian:          They've invited them in haven't they?

Sarah:          Newport and Swansea.

Steve:          But at the end of the day if they are allowed to play in a Welsh Cup it would be nice to have us involved in the FA Cup you know?

Sarah:          Yeah.

Martin:         Shrewsbury used to play in the Welsh Cup and win it. And they weren't allowed in Europe were they?

Steve:          No. No.

Brian:          They used to think it was their passport into Europe didn't they?

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| Martin: | They weren't allowed to play in Europe though were they? |
| Steve: | Because at one time there was talk that a couple of the Exiles wanted to play reserve teams… |
| Brian: | [Interrupts] Wrexham, Cardiff. |
| Steve: | In the Welsh…to see if they could get them into the Welsh Premier League…um…with the idea of it being the route into Europe. Of course they'd put in stronger teams occasionally just to keep…um…but that…that was sort of quashed before it was allowed to happen. |
| Interviewer: | What do you think of the coverage on *S4C*? Do you think it is good? |
| Martin: | I can't understand a word of it. |
| Steven: | I'm English I can't understand a word. |
| Steve: | I think it is good that it is… |
| Steven: | You have got the red button! |
| Brian: | Press the red button. |
| Steve: | When it was first put out it was Welsh only. So it was a case of watching it…you could watch it but you wouldn't understand a word. |
| Christine: | 888 innit? Ceefax. |
| Steve: | You could pick up players names and so on. I think it was a very good move to put it because there are a number of clubs that are borderish and there are an awful lot of people in Wales, we've got a lot of people in the ground and here at this club, that don't speak Welsh…um I think that having the option to now listen to it in English was a very, very good move because it's broadened their audience. |
| Brian: | When…when we've got televised games I always record it because you miss half of it when we down here playing at home. I only see perhaps a third of the game…um…because you're always busy you are always doing something so I always record it. I take advantage of it in that respect…you know… and I even record all the away games that is televised as well and sit down and watch them again because it is surprising what you do miss. |
| Christine: | Yeah. I do as well. |
| Interviewer: | What impact do you think watching an English-based club would have on *S4C*'s Welsh-speaking audience? |

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| Steve: | I think at the end of the day fifty per cent of the players on that pitch are Welsh, are still a Welsh team so…I don't really think it would make much difference it's still the Welsh league that they're watching. |
| Brian: | Yeah. The opposition are gonna be Welsh anyway. But you…you go to a lot of clubs and we went…we went up to Prestatyn…uh…last week and Liverpudlians were playing in Prestatyn and that's a Welsh club. |
| Steven: | Yeah. |
| Steve: | As stupid as it sounds… |
| Brian: | [Interrupts] South Wales is the same…you've got two or three… |
| Steve: | [Interrupts] You go to certain places and people show you their ignorance when they say 'Oswestry? Is it in Wales or is it in…? They're not even sure for definite that Oswestry is English or Welsh so I don't think it makes any difference. |
| Brian: | No. But you go down to Llanelli…there's players from this area playing in Llanelli. So you know…you get it wherever you go. |
| Interviewer: | Yeah. |
| Brian: | Look at the English Premier League. How many English people is playing for Arsenal? |
| Martin: | Mmm. |
| Steven: | Yep. |
| Brian: | There weren't any. They had a complete team of foreigners so…of six different nationalities. That's the way the games gone. |
| Steve: | And half of those can't even speak the language. |
| Brian: | No. That's the way the games gone. Managers are foreign they can't even speak the language. |
| Steve: | You've got managers who can't even speak the language. |
| Interviewer: | Yeah. |
| Brian: | So that's the way the game is going. |
| Steve: | I don't think it makes an awful lot of difference to the viewing. |
| Brian: | And we all still switch it on whether it's Arsenal… |
| Steve: | I think it's a universal language football you know it's… |
| Brian: | I think language goes out of the door with football. No matter what it is. |

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| Interviewer: | How do you think the nationality of TNS is viewed in Welsh-speaking Llanelli, Bangor, Aberystwyth and Wales as a whole? |
| Steve: | South Wales never really tend to have much of an issue with it at all. South Wales tend to…North Wales we tend to have more sort of comment but again that perhaps would be more some of the rival clubs. |
| Brian: | It's more rivalry I think. We used to get it with Rhyl and Bangor didn't we? |
| Steve: | But South Wales we don't…. we have the odd…it's like anywhere you have the odd individual. |
| Brian: | Go down at Port Talbot…superb. Go down to Llanelli…superb. You don't get that there. |
| Steve: | You get the odd idiot. |
| Brian: | You're always gonna get the odd one no matter where you go. But we're always made welcome. You know we're never not made welcome wherever we go…um…I don't say we haven't been. |
| Steve: | We get a bit of hostile banter but…um…when I shut my dad up then he's alright. |
| All: | [Laughter] |
| Interviewer: | I had a look at what the Mayor was saying when you were playing Anderlecht and what the Council were saying. Keith Barrow, the Shropshire County Leader said that 'TNS have put Shropshire sport on the map through their efforts in this years European Champions' League'. Mr Barrow said that: 'Whether the team had won or lost against Anderlecht, the Park Hall based club had done Shropshire proud'. He said 'I've been following their progress with an interest and I think what they have done is great for Oswestry and Shropshire. They are flying the flag for Shropshire and I'm sure everyone here will hope they do well.' The Town Mayor said that: 'I wish them every success. It's nice to see Oswestry and Shropshire represented on the European stage.' Ian Williams added 'we are in the unique position of being able to play in England albeit through the Welsh League system to bring European football to Oswestry. It has been fantastic for the region and for Shropshire and there has been a lot of interest'. So what I wanted to ask was: would you be opposed to UEFA describing the club as a British club rather than saying…? |

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| Brian: | We represented Wales in Europe not Shropshire, nor Oswestry, we represented Wales. |
| Robert: | Keith Barrow is the leader of Shropshire Council. |
| Brian: | County Council. |
| Robert: | As far as he goes if he can raise the image of Shropshire in any way and jump on the back of any bandwagon that is going and any success then that's what he's gonna do and he's gonna mention Shropshire as many times as he can. |
| Brian: | He did do. |
| Robert: | Exactly. He wouldn't be doing his…you know…he wouldn't be fulfilling his role to his potential. |
| Brian: | We represented Wales as TNS. |
| Robert: | If he is getting publicity for Shropshire and good publicity for Shropshire that's what he's gonna do. |
| Steve: | At the end of the day it put Oswestry on the map, which at the end of the day is always a good thing. |
| Brian: | And if it wasn't for us playing in Wales, we wouldn't have got into Europe in any case. |
| Interviewer: | No. |
| Brian: | So. |
| Bill: | It's the football we play which is getting us into Europe. |
| Brian: | Exactly. |
| Bill: | Mike Harris wants to get us into the Champions League. |
| Steve: | He wants to get into the group stage. |
| Bill: | We're getting a lot of money. |
| Brian: | We're getting closer. |
| Christine: | Every time. |
| Brian: | We're getting closer. |
| Martin: | It's the business' money. It's not his money is it? |
| Brian: | You've got to stand back and admire Mike Harris for what he's done for…for …for local football. The money he's put in local football. |

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| Steven: | He's put the town back on the map hasn't he? Oswestry. Cos how long did the football ground shut? Thirty years? |
| Christine: | It was closed when I moved down in 1986. |
| Brian: | He chucks his own money at it and you know as I said previously he's a football nut. He lives and dies for it…you know…he'd have me here every day of the week if he could get away with it. |
| Interviewer: | I was looking at one football website and Mike Harris is attributed with saying something along the lines of this: 'TNS represent Great Britain when they play in Europe, rather than Wales'. So I was just wondering what your thoughts were about that? |
| Brian: | I just versed my thoughts. I think we represented Wales. |
| Steve: | I don't know. I think…I put on the form we filled in before for you know I put that I was English and British. |
| Christine: | Wales is part of Great Britain so…we're in Britain. We are. |
| Steve: | You know I would consider myself British. |
| Christine: | We are. |
| Steve: | I think…it always annoys me when people get you know when you get like Scottish-English or like Scottish saying we'll…we'll…if England are playing anybody…we could be playing Afghanistan and the Scots would support Afghanistan and that always annoys me. |
| All: | [Laughter] |
| Brian: | You're right there Steve. |
| Steve: | You know I will always support a Home Nation side. |
| Brian: | Yeah. |
| Steve: | I am a Home Nations person so if we are representing Great Britain then great. |
| Interviewer: | Yeah. |
| Sarah: | Yeah. I'd agree with you. |
| Steve: | I don't just necessarily just focus it down to have to represent England, have to represent Wales. I don't care. We are representing our league in Europe. |
| Christine: | Which is the Welsh Premier League innit? |
| Brian: | Which is the Welsh Premier League so…so… |

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| Martin: | You can't get away from that. |
| Brian: | You can't get…there's no getting away from it whichever way you look at it. We represent ourselves TNS and Wales. |
| Martin: | Basically it's our club in Europe innit. |
| Steve: | Yeah. That's all it is. |
| Brian: | You can't say that about the Chelseas and Man Uniteds, they represent England in the Champions League. We represent Wales in the Champions League. That's…that's…we're the only clubs in the Welsh Premier League that can do it. |
| Interviewer: | So you think that the European Cup put Oswestry rather than Shropshire on the map? |
| Robert: | It's an advert for the Welsh Premier League and the club itself. I don't think it's about putting one place or another on the map. |
| Brian: | No. |
| Robert: | It's the league you represent. |
| Steve: | It put Oswestry on the map as far as exposure but not necessarily as anything else. |
| Brian: | It's good PR for the club. It's good PR for the Welsh Premier League…um… |
| Robert: | It's credit to the club as well…you know…don't take it…to say it's one thing or another…it's…it's TNS representing the Welsh Premier League and the standard of Welsh Premier League football and that's what the Welsh FA wants to try and sell and that's what TNS want to sell themselves as well you know and if everything else comes with it then fair enough you know and that's credit to their achievement and the standard of football played in the league really. |
| Steve: | Mike has always been keen on raising the standard of not just of us, but basically the standard and awareness of the whole league. He's not just focussed on ourselves…if he can bring the whole standard up then it's good for everyone innit. |
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| Brian: | That's been his philosophy all the way through hasn't it? |
| Interviewer: | Do you think the standard has definitely been raised with high profile signings like Trundle last season especially? |
| Steven: | Oh yes. |

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| Steve: | It is starting now…you're starting to notice quality players moving into clubs. They maybe players that have been around and seen a lot of games…but…there are some quality players moving in. |
| Brian: | As you said before you get a lot down South Wales you get a lot of ex-Swansea, ex-Cardiff players. You've only got to look at Llanelli with their manager…um…he's one lad that's come down and he's still playing at 46 in the Welsh Premier League. |
| Steve: | It's financial constraints that restrict a lot of clubs in this league because a lot of them are…they're literally hand to mouth all the time. |
| Steven: | Struggling. Struggling. |
| Steve: | It is a struggle to be competitive to attract the players. |
| Martin: | It's been more competitive since they split the league as well aint it? |
| Steve: | Yeah. |
| Martin: | It's been more entertaining football as well. |
| Interviewer: | Down to the twelve is it? |
| Martin: | Down to the two sixes it's been a lot better football. |
| Steve: | Yeah. It has from last season. I was against the idea to start with but now we have done that it has made it you know every game over the last few games has been a tough game. You know you don't expect anything. That game the other night at Prestatyn was one of the best games of the entire season. |
| Brian: | When you play the top six they're all cup games. |
| Martin: | Yeah. |
| Steven: | Yeah. |
| Brian: | Because there's no easy bloody game. Every game is a hard game. There's no question about it. |
| Martin: | And if you're a better team then suits you as well don't it? |
| Brian: | Every team in that top six is capable of beating each other. |
| Robert: | There is no mismatch in the top six and there's no mismatch in the bottom six either. |
| Brian: | There isn't. |
| Steven: | They're fighting for Europe as well. |

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| Brian: | I don't like the structure of it now at all. |
| Steve: | If you look at the clubs we've dropped points to at this time most of them have been in the bottom six. |
| Bill: | That will always happen in any league. |
| Interviewer: | Does the club intend to play in the Shropshire Cup next year? |
| Brian: | No. |
| Steve: | I don't know. The idea was if the…if the Shro…according to the forum the fans' forum they were going to. |
| Robert: | I think it is. |
| Christine: | Yeah. They are. |
| Martin: | They've been invited. |
| Robert: | They've been invited to play. |
| Christine: | Last month Mike Harris said. |
| Brian: | [Interrupts] No they're not because… |
| Christine: | At the fans' forum Mike said that if we're in Europe…right… |
| Steve: | They'd possibly put a reserve team in. They'll put a reserve team in. |
| Christine: | Mike Harris said 'no we'll cancel the game. I want to be in that'. |
| Robert: | He said he wanted to put the strongest team out possible. |
| Brian: | Yep well… |
| Robert: | And we've been invited to play in the Shropshire Cup along with, I think, Market Drayton. |
| Brian: | If you read…if you read our opposition the date has been set for the cup for the final of the Shropshire Senior Cup between Telford United and Shrewsbury Town at Greenhous Meadow because they're both top of the leagues and chasing the leagues. |
| Christine: | The final? |
| Brian: | The final! |
| Martin: | Yeah but Bri if you start back from the beginning of the season it had asked that many teams to play in the final because nobody wanted to play in it. It's gone to Telford this season to play in it. |
| Brian: | No. The final has been set for… |

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| Martin: | Tuesday. |
| Robert: | Then that's it then there's only two teams playing in it. |
| Steven: | Next season! Next season! |
| Brian: | It's gonna be the season after. |
| Steven: | He's on about next season aint he? |
| Sarah: | Yeah. He must be yeah. |
| Steven: | What you should have are…them friendlies…like we had a conversation… like the Home Internationals. |
| Brian: | Cos they're both saying it's the final. |
| Steven: | Could that be as a group? Playing each other at home for one game and the winner gets the lot? |
| Steve: | I'd like to have seen us play in the Shropshire Senior Cup to put us up against the local big sides Shrewsbury, Wrexham even Chester. I'd like to see us… |
| Sarah: | That's true. |
| Brian: | It would give us a couple of decent competitive games before Europe. |
| Martin: | Usually Market Drayton is in it |
| Brian: | Market Drayton. |
| Steven: | Shrewsbury Town. |
| Martin: | But there's been no games this year because they've all said 'we can't play in it'. |
| Brian: | We played Market Drayton in a friendly didn't we a couple of seasons ago and they gave us a good run. |
| Steve: | With friendly games you can never tell the difference can you? |
| Steven: | I know. We played Telford down here didn't we? |
| Brian: | Yeah. We beat Telford and we never ever played them after that. |
| Interviewer: | Do you have to get special dispensation from the Welsh FA to play in it? |
| Steve: | We…we…because of being a founder members as we said, it's like a joint nationality as it were. That's the best way of putting it. |
| Brian: | We're affiliated to the Welsh and the English FA. |
| Interviewer: | What happens with things like funding, you know applying for funding? |
| Steve: | It works in your favour sometimes because like with the development of the ground here and putting the pitch in we applied I think it was to Sport England |

you know to help with the funding. But it does help obviously…there are… you can apply for grants in the different…but the majority of the funding will come from whoever you are affiliated to

Brian:	Welsh.

Steve:	The Welsh system. That's my understanding of it. So with the ground improvements we applied to the Welsh FA.

Brian:	We had funding didn't we from Sport England when we did it?

Bill:	Sport?

Brian:	Sport England. When we developed the ground to Welsh Premier League standard. This is before the Venue was here.

Interviewer:	Yeah.

Brian:	But it was a grass pitch then. We had Sport England grants and we were playing in the Welsh system.

Interviewer:	Do you think there is a strong bond with Shropshire, being in Oswestry?

Steve:	I think Oswestry has played for so long in the Welsh system now…but Oswestry as a town with Shropshire yeah. What are we the second or third….

Brian:	[Interrupts] I honestly wouldn't like to play in the English system again.

Steve:	But as a town I think we're the second or third biggest town in Shropshire.

Brian:	We'd have never had got to the standard of football we've had. We'd never have seen the Man Citys, the Liverpools, the Anderlechts if we were in the English system.

Steven:	No.

Brian:	We wouldn't be going to Europe.

Steve:	The only time you'd have any chance is if you'd gone the FA Cup route and that's one chance in a million.

Brian:	There's just no way. The standard of football we've got and can look forward to now is second to none and you know where else do you get it out of the English Premier League? You don't. You just don't. So…

Steve:	And each year we're creeping that bit further forward. Last season we had a fantastic run. You know the sides that we played.

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| Brian: | The standard of football we've got here now we owe to Wales because if we weren't in the Welsh Premier League we wouldn't be playing at this level. |
| Steven: | That's a good idea though that winter break innit? |
| Brian: | Yeah. |
| Steven: | I think that's very good. |
| Brian: | That's not a bad idea actually. |
| Steven: | Have a break for all of January. Then they can have one or two friendlies and get all the players to fitness again. |
| Brian: | The problem is if the players are on contract and their not playing they've got to be paid. |
| Steven: | Yeah. |
| Brian: | No matter whether it's a full-time professional club or it's a part-time club. That's gonna crease a lot of…if they're gonna have to pay them for a month without any revenue then that's gonna take its toll. |
| Steven: | Yeah. |
| Brian: | And I think that's what'll stop it going ahead. |
| Steven: | Yeah. |
| Interviewer: | Do TNS fans view Shropshire as being part of, or part of Shropshire particularly this area, being part of Wales? Does it work like that? |
| Steven: | We're two mile from the border. |
| Brian: | Yeah. |
| Sarah: | We're a border town. |
| Steve: | It's such an amalgamated society you know. |
| Brian: | We're right on the border. |
| Steve: | As I say it is very…I think it is probably the same as most borders these days…um…the fact that you have a real mixture of…if you go along the border you've got English people living in Wales, Welsh people living in England…so…the border is really to be honest the border is just a line on a map these days. |
| Interviewer: | Yeah. |

Steve:          The border is not…you can't say well you're on that map all you people are Welsh and these are all English…it's so dilute along the border so…the identity is quite a neutral identity.

Interviewer:    In that case, how far across the border would you say you have to be to be considered Welsh?

Brian:          I gotta be honest…um…I sometimes have to wonder when people ask me the question. I mean I have to think about it whether I am Welsh or English because I've lived here all my life and…you know…it's debatable really because um…I think the cultures are the same.

Steve:          It's actually what is it four mile to the border…the border it's actually four mile.

Brian:          Yeah but…I like…ahh…my father farmed in Chirk, which is over the Welsh border…um…although he was an English…he was English. So you know it's…you've always had that sort of joint nationality really. It's funny.

Steve:          If you sort of go to what like Four Crosses and areas like that and then the schools get to start to teach Welsh…um…I don't know do the Chirk area and that teach?

Brian:          Yeah Chirk do.

Sarah:          Yeah. They do yeah.

Steve:          You're probably going around…probably four miles outside of town, four or five miles before you're starting to get Welsh taught in the schools so…

Brian:          I work with Welsh people all day everyday and I'm visiting Welsh people all the time. That's why it would be an advantage to me to move there.

Steve:          If you look at the border area it sorts of wraps very much around Oswestry as well. The border is not a straight line on a map.

Christine:      You climb over that mountain over there and you're in Wales aren't you?

Bill:           I've been to over the years around the local area and been here to the market, Oswestry market and there is a lot more Welsh spoken in Oswestry market than Welshpool in Wales.

Brian:          That's what I'm saying you hear it on a Wednesday yeah. You hear it on a Wednesday. You've only got to walk up the main street in the town market day.

Bill:           And we're on the border.

Brian: There is a more Welsh spoken in Oswestry on a Wednesday on a market day than there is in a lot of Welsh towns.

Interviewer: What about the town itself? Is Welsh being spoken because people are coming over across from Welsh-speaking villages or is it because there is quite a strong Welsh-speaking community in Oswestry?

Brian: I think the population of Oswestry has changed dramatically because as Steve stressed before um…we've got a base for British Telecom here which is one of the leading bases in the country and a lot of people are coming in and they're coming to work in the town and you're getting a lot of sort of London people and all these coming to work in the area.

Steve: We're on a commuter route here as well. Shrewsbury, Telford, Wrexham, Chester.

Brian: We're on a commuter route…um…we've got one of the main orthopaedic hospitals in the world here which is a mile up the road…um…there is a lot in there that come into the area to work…so…. the population in Oswestry has altered dramatically in the last few years. It really has you know?

Interviewer: This is what someone has written on a website and I was just wondering what you thought about it so I'll just read it out if that's ok? "*The New Saints Football Club who despite doing Wales so proud in the Champions League Qualifiers play their home games at Park Hall in Oswestry, Shropshire. Perhaps that it the reason BBC Radio Wales and S4C do not bother to cover The New Saints European games. Previously as Total Network Solutions Llansantffraid*", were they called that?

Brian: Yeah.

Interviewer: "*The club met Liverpool and that was shown on ITV2. But today to hear live commentary of the Welsh Champions European Cup games, TNS supporters, if not going to the game, have to tune into Radio Shropshire. You would think that the nation's premier broadcaster and S4C would consider it part of their remit to cover the Welsh football champions' European Cup games.*" So I was just wondering do you think that BBC Radio Wales and S4C should be covering TNS?

Brian:         Definitely.

Sarah:         Yes.

Interviewer:   Is it their responsibility?

Steve:         Yeah. They should have a responsibility to their own national league and I think that is the problem in Wales.

Brian:         During those…those…European games I had a difference of opinion with um…some reporters and some of the media down at Park Hall because we never see em anytime unless we're on a big stage. We don't see them week-to-week when we're playing in the Welsh Premier and I'm talking about Radio Shropshire now.

Sarah:         *Shropshire Star*.

Brian:         The *Shropshire Star*. And I had a difference of opinion with the *Shropshire Star* reporter. I'm not saying that because Rob's here, Rob's our local reporter for our local paper. I'm not saying that because Rob is here. I did have a difference of opinion with him down here. We never see em.

Interviewer:   Yeah.

Steve:         That's the thing people are always glory hunting.

Brian:         Our local paper is here week in week out. The *Shropshire Star*, this is where the Shropshire bit comes into it again.

Steve:         Shropshire is Shrewsbury, Telford.

Brian:         Once we got knocked out of it…it was a full page when we were in it and when we got knocked out it was a little bit like this.


Sarah:         It was on the front page wasn't it?

Brian:         Yeah then that was it.

Sarah:         'Dream's over'.

Brian:         Full stop. Because we got knocked out…'Dream's over'…final…forget. You know the club still exists and we've had nothing from them.

Steve:         I think that's the same with an awful lot of I think news at the end of the day.

Brian:         Yep. But they are talking about it being a Shropshire club. Your Councillor said there 'Putting Shropshire on the map' and this and that. We haven't, we've put

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| | Wales on the map. We've put TNS on the map. We play in Wales. We're a Welsh club. You know people have gotta get used to that. |
| Steve: | People will always try and jump on the back of it for, as Rob said, for exposure. |
| Brian: | Yeah. |
| Steve: | That's his remit at the end of the day. It is to raise the exposure of Shropshire. |
| Christine: | He's trying to make himself look good innit? He's trying to make himself look good and try and… |
| Steve: | You notice how people always jump on the back of a winning club, they always will do…you know…glory hunters…all these people will always jump on the back. The media are exactly the same at the end of the day. When a club is doing really, really well they will follow them. When a club is on a good run you'll get more supporters turning up, supporters you've never seen before. |
| Interviewer: | Do you think it was BBC Radio Wales' responsibility rather than BBC Shropshire? |
| Steve: | I think possibly there was a bit of a connection…Oswestry…um… |
| Robert: | I don't see a reason why they can't be both to be honest with you. I don't see any reason at all. Shropshire has got as much right to report on Oswestry' things as Wales have to report on the Welsh Premier League. You know I don't think there should be a closed-door policy on whether you can or you should. I think that anyone with a claim to be able to justify doing that should be doing it basically. |
| Steve: | It should definitely be shown in Wales. |
| Brian: | Yeah but my point was Rob that they jumped on the bandwagon when we're playing the big games. |
| Robert: | Oh yeah. |
| Brian: | And when we're playing in our run of the mill bread and butter games you don't see nobody. |
| Robert: | No. |
| Brian: | They don't want to know. |
| Steve: | Their argument I think is that their time is precious and they've got a limited amount they can put in. They have to put on their programme list what their listeners want to listen to and the fact of the matter is probably 99 per cent or 90 |

odd per cent of their listening base is not really…is not interested in listening to TNS playing football on a Saturday.

All:        [Noises of agreement]

Steve:      If they were they'd actually turn up and watch us because we're on their doorstep.

Martin:     Most radio stations are pre-recorded now anyway.

Steve:      Radio Shropshire have given us a lot of exposure in the past but one of their main presenters…one of their presenters was involved with Oswestry quite a lot as well so…

Brian:      Rob's had a story off him this week. It's in the *Advertiser*.

Steve:      They do give us…they do give us a bit of exposure like that so…and he does come round when we have various other fund raising functions on he'll always do…but it should be English and Welsh…you should be getting it on BBC Wales as well. I do have to agree with what that article said.

Interviewer: [Passes pictures of Bohemians flags at Park Hall] What can you see in the picture?

Martin:     Advertising boards.

Steven:     Flags.

Martin:     There are flags up there.

Brian:      There aren't any Welsh flags.

Interviewer: What flags are there?

Martin:     Irish.

Sarah:      Irish.

Interviewer: What I did notice…

Steve:      Our supporters never make themselves known. Our supporters tend to hide. Yes there are some supporters.

All:        [Laughter]

Steve:      But you'll notice that quite often…uh… that we do tend to be quite low profile. We've had the comment before, I remember it was a few…two or three years back we went to Airbus and somebody made a comment in the paper afterwards that it was a pity no TNS supporters came to watch the match. Well I'd probably say that three-quarters of the supporters there were TNS supporters. But because

we weren't all dressed in green and white and parading green and white flags you couldn't tell they were TNS supporters.

Interviewer: [Passes pictures of Welsh flags used by Carmarthen Town FC in Europe]

Steve: I think we do need to follow the example of certain …there are a few people around this table with flags now and that's starting to get a bit more…you know.

Christine: And air horns.

Steve: Don't you start saying get hair.

Christine: Air horn I said.

Interviewer: Why do you think Bohemians used these flags?

Robert: Why did they use those?

Interviewer: Why do you think they chose those ones?

Steven: Because they're Irish.

Steve: Yeah but…they were…they felt they were representing Ireland in…

Steven: [Interrupts] The European championship.

Steve: European competitions. So they were proud to be Irish.

Brian: And they're not all Irish neither.

Interviewer: Did any of you travel to watch The New Saints away in the European campaign?

Steve: Na I didn't

Steven: We went…we went to Bohemians.

Interviewer: You went to Bohemians?

Sarah: My brother went to Belgium.

Brian: Where did you go to mate?

Robert: I was at Anderlecht.

Brian: Anderlecht Rob went.

Interviewer: Can you recall seeing any TNS flags being put up?

Martin: Yeah.

Brian: Yeah.

Robert: In Anderlecht. Yeah.

Steve: There were Welsh flags on the TV weren't there?

Interviewer: Did the supporters take any?

Robert: Yeah. Yeah

Interviewer: What did they take? I did come across this one. I think it was at the Anderlecht game.

Brian: The New Saints…green and white.

Interviewer: There was a bit of a mixture.

Martin: Yeah.

Steve: There are a couple of hybrid flags going around, George cross and Welsh dragon… that's the thing you see when we go to these away games, the continental games like this cos we're playing clubs that have got huge support in their places compared to ours. We've probably got a dozen people standing in a corner whereas they've got two or three thousand…. minimum you know.

Martin: Did we always put flags up?

Steven: Um…yeah in Anderlecht

Interviewer: What is the significance of TNS' choice of flags compared to Bohemians?

Steve: I think yet again it's because we've got that split supporter base…we've go the English-Irish…I mean English-Welsh so you've got the mixture of the two flags. You've got the England supporters that like to wave the English side of the club and you've got the Welsh supporters that like to highlight the Welsh side. So there are like I said a few different flags that have been made up by people.

Brian: I've not seen any of the flags that are on here.

Steve: I've seen a few of them at home games and away where they've got the George cross with a dragon in the corner and the TNS badge or something.

Interviewer: Is that a club one at the end there [points to green and white flag]?

Sarah: Yeah.

Steve: There's always a flag hanging from upstairs here isn't there?

Brian: Always on the balcony.

Steven: Green and white army.

Brian: Green and white army.

Steven: That's it. Exciting about Monday innit? We're gonna be champions!

Steve: If it goes to Bangor on the last day of the season we're gonna have certain green and white flairs going off there so…

Brian: Green and white flairs [Laughs]

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| Interviewer: | [Passes around pictures displaying the use of Welsh in the Welsh Premier League] |
| Sarah: | Llanelli are gonna come all fired up aren't they thinking that they can beat us but they're just gonna fall flat on their face. |
| Brian: | I hope they get into Europe. They will if they win the Welsh Cup won't they? They'll beat Bangor won't they? |
| Sarah: | I hope they do. |
| Brian: | They've beaten them once 5-2 anyway. |
| All: | [Look at pictures] |
| Brian: | Welcome to Bala. |
| Interviewer: | What do you notice about these pictures? |
| Steven: | They're all well done aren't they? And they've played in Europe. |
| Christine: | They're in Welsh and English. |
| Interviewer: | Yes. They're in Welsh and English. Based on that, why do you think those particular clubs use Welsh when the Welsh Premier League does not have a bilingual policy? |
| Martin: | It's more…it's more tourism than the club innit? |
| Steven: | Yeah. There's a big lake up on Bala isn't there. |
| Christine: | Bala is further over the border isn't it? |
| Martin: | Oswestry hasn't got a Welsh anywhere…Oswestry hasn't got anything Welsh has it? |
| Steve: | Na. You literally go out of the town before you get even into Welsh road signs. There isn't much. Whereas I think if someone…you go down to like South Wales. North Wales there are probably a good 50-50 mixture of…if you stop and talk to someone in the street you'd probably have a good 50-50 chance whether they… |
| Steven: | They can speak both. |
| Steve: | A lot of them would be first tongue Welsh…uh…whereas around here even if you go to say Welshpool, you speak to someone and more often than not their first language will be English. You don't…I think it's mostly with the North and South clubs you do tend to see a bit more…they tend to do… they run through team lists in both languages… |
| Brian: | [Speaks in background] You speak Welsh don't you Bill? |

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| Bill: | [Speaks in background] What? |
| Brian: | [Speaks in background] You speak Welsh? You were born in Wales. |
| Steve: | Whereas we don't tend to we've never done that. …there's no particular reason. I think it's geared to the public and the majority of the supporter base. Most people round here their first language would be English so we announce in English. |
| Interviewer: | How would you feel about the TNS website and Park Hall having some bilingual signage? Do you think they should be doing it as Welsh Champions? |
| Steve: | One time I think we had a couple of supporters that did actually used to put things up, they used to post things in Welsh and so…it wouldn't hurt having a button on there that…you know even the club history whatever…certainly wouldn't hurt. |
| Brian: | I think you've gotta. |
| Robert: | I don't think necessarily a bilingual website but having bilingual signage when you…it's just an open handed gesture to other clubs in the league as well I mean there's supporters in Oswestry that speak Welsh you know…so I don't see why not. |
| Brian: | We've got bilingual signage anyway. There's some on the side of the turnstile. |
| Sarah: | Most Welsh can understand English anyway. |
| Interviewer: | How Welsh is Oswestry anyway…. in terms of history? |
| Brian: | You'd feel at home there. Honestly you would. You'd feel at home there. |
| Steve: | It's a real good mixture of… because being literally you know a market town. The market does draw people in… because where we are here central uh…we are one of the bigger towns so of course we pull people in from the surrounding villages and towns and for a lot of the Welsh villages this is their nearest shopping centre albeit poor but it is their nearest shopping centre. So if you were to score a poll in the town you'd probably get a good 50-50 mixture of people of both nationalities. |
| Robert: | The borders changed that many times I mean you could…you could have been born in Oswestry at one point and… |
| Brian: | Be Welsh. |
| Robert: | Never left the town and be Welsh and died in England you know what I mean? |
| Interviewer: | Yeah. |
| Robert: | That's the way it goes. |

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| Brian: | That's the way it is innit? |
| Steve: | That's some real history. For many, many years when you look around in Oswestry you've got the old hill fort which is an old Bronze Age hill fort and that was you know…and over the years we've got various different castles and that around here that were literally protecting the border when it was swinging backwards and forwards over the centuries. |
| Brian: | Offa's Dyke. |
| Steve: | Yeah. |
| Interviewer: | Can you think off any sportsmen or women who were born in Oswestry? |
| Robert: | Alan Ball. |
| Brian: | Alan Ball. |
| Martin: | Alan Ball. |
| Sarah: | Frank Buff. |
| Brian: | Frank Buff. |
| Steven: | Glen James. |
| Brian: | Sports Commentator. Sports Reporter. |
| Interviewer: | Are they treated as English or Welsh |
| Brian: | Frank Buff was born and bred in Oswestry. He opened…he actually opened the stadium here…the army stadium when it was here but he was not fluent in Welsh. |
| Interviewer: | Do they treat their nationality as…? |
| Steve: | It's dependent on their parentage. |
| Brian: | Obviously. A lot of them…a lot of them look towards having dual nationality cos a lot of them…perhaps their mother or their father were Welsh but living so close together… so they'd have one parent as a Welsh…Welsh person. But we just weren't…like Bill was born and bred in the Welshpool area…now he was never offered the chance to speak Welsh living in Wales. |
| Interviewer: | Yeah. |
| Brian: | And we were…we were never ever offered the chance living in Oswestry…so…you know. |
| Steve: | I was born and bred in Oswestry and I always consider myself English, I always say I am English…but…if somebody you know…whereas sometimes…you |

go…you use the Scottish example again sometimes you refer to a Scot as an Englishman or whatever they'd probably tear your head of you know? That…around Oswestry I don't think there is so much national pride in that respect or so much bigotry.

Brian: I got called Taff.

Sarah: I think it's because we're so close to the border they class you as Wales. Even my cousins down south say that.

Brian: I worked away a lot and I was always classed as Welsh…. by my accent.

Steven: Because you're living by the border.

Brian: Yeah.

Sarah: Most of my family are from Hampshire.

Brian: They used to call me Taff all the time.

Interviewer: Ian Woosnam, is he from Oswestry, the golfer?

Steve: Ian Woosman yeah.

Martin: St. Martin's.

Brian: He was Welsh.

Interviewer: He's from Oswestry?

Brian: Yeah.

Steve: His parents are Welsh so he represents Wales in sport so…

Brian: His parents were Welsh. He was born five mile up the road here.

Steve: I'm trying to think of the others. There's been a few hasn't there? I'm trying to think.

Interviewer: Do you ever hear Welsh being spoken at Park Hall?

Brian: Yeah.

Martin: Oh yeah…every day at work.

Steve: What here at Park Hall? We do get some…not an awful lot. It's just basic greetings and stuff like that when Welsh people come through the turnstiles and whatever.

Interviewer: So being in Oswestry you are aware of the Welsh language?

Steve: Yes.

Brian: Yeah you hear it every day…every single day.

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| Interviewer: | So where geographically do you think the Welsh language start? |
| Brian: | You just have to step over the border into Chirk which is… |
| Steve: | About four miles out of Oswestry then you're getting into where the schools will teach Welsh uh… |
| Robert: | There are no defined borders to where one language will start and another will end sort of thing. It is where it is and you'll obviously find it more plentifully further into Wales than towards its borders than when you go with England but…you know…you can…you can live in London and meet a guy who speaks Welsh and that like so there's no border where…they speak it in Argentina. |
| Brian: | [Laughs] Exactly. |
| Interviewer: | Does language ever become a contentious issue when you watch certain TNS' games? When you travel away to Bangor? |
| Steve: | No. If they want to insult you in Bangor they want you to know what they're saying. |
| Brian: | Yeah. They speak English because part of them do…you know…they don't…you don't hear them shouting and cheering their team on in Welsh it's always in English so… |
| Interviewer: | [Passes picture of TNS green and white stripped kit and blue kit] |
| Steven: | Rangers and Celtic. |
| All: | [Laughter] |
| Brian: | Celtic and Rangers innit? |
| Interviewer: | Can you just explain the two kits? |
| Brian: | The green and white is the historical TNS kit. |
| Steve: | Llansantffraid. |
| Brian: | TNS have always played in it. The blue comes from the Oswestry…Oswestry Town played in the blue shirts. It's not quite the same colours we had. It's a little bit lighter but that's where the blue shirt comes from and that's why we have the blue shirt as our second kit. |
| Interviewer: | Do they wear the green one at home and the blue one away? |
| Steve: | It is supposed to be a home and away kit. |
| Brian: | It's supposed to be. |

Sarah:        But not always is it?

Steve:        By rights they're joint first kits but the green and white tends to be preferred.

Brian:        We always look towards the green and white one being our home kit and blue being the away kit but it doesn't always work that way.

Robert:       We always lose when we wear blue.

Brian:        I think…I think if you speak to the players they'd prefer to play in the green and white.

Interviewer:  They'd prefer the green and white?

Steve:        Green and white kit with white socks. I can't bloody stand it when they put it with green socks.

Robert:       They played in blue in Anderlecht didn't they?

Brian:        Yeah.

Steve:        We can't stand anybody who wears the blue kit.

All:          [Laughter]

Interviewer:  Would you like to see the blue one worn when playing in Oswestry?

Steven:       We won the league with it last year.

Brian:        We won the league aye.

Steve:        Out of the two games played this weekend you'll see it worn one of them. Chances are we'll wear green and white for one and blue for the other.

Brian:        We thought we were gonna have pink strips at one time when Mike put the name up for auction, up for sale, we'd come back as *** chicks and we were gonna be playing in pink.

Steve:        That's it he put it up for auction and somebody bought it on ebay.

Brian:        Just a joke innit?

Steve:        And we had sex chicks put a ridiculous bid in for it.

Brian:        A dating agency.

Steve:        Quite comical.

Brian:        A hundred and fifty grand weren't it?

Steve:        Some people took it so dam seriously it was unreal. We got all this comment you know 'lowering the standard of the league putting your name up' for…you know…somebody was doing it as a joke…you know wise up.

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| Interviewer: | Obviously you've got a dragon and a lion? |
| Steve: | On either side of the kit yeah. |
| Interviewer: | UEFA have said that you have to take one off? |
| Steve: | Take both of them off. |
| Interviewer: | Take both of them off is it? |
| Steve: | You're not allowed you have to have them plain. |
| Interviewer: | You don't have a club shop. Can you buy online and on a match day? |
| Steve: | You can buy stuff here but you have to ask staff behind the bar or the counter. |
| Interviewer: | What kind of stuff do they sell altogether? |
| Steve: | Mmm. |
| Sarah: | Tracksuits. |
| Brian: | Shirts, scarves. |
| Steve: | Replica kits, hats, scarves, caps, badges. |
| Sarah: | Jackets…rain jackets. |
| Steve: | Rain jackets, ties. |
| Christine: | Polo shirt. |
| Interviewer: | Do they sell anything with an England and a Wales flag or anything like that? |
| Steve: | No they don't tend to be anything with nationality, national identity type stuff. Perhaps they ought to have flags and we'd see a few more being waved around you know. |
| Interviewer: | Have you travelled to watch TNS in England and Wales? Do you have some pre-season fixtures in England against English opposition? |
| Steve: | Yeah…quite often yeah. |
| Martin: | We've been to Ireland. |
| Steve: | We've been to Crewe before; we've been to Telford, Market Drayton. We tend to go to quite a few different places round here. |
| Interviewer: | I assume you have been to quite a few games away? |
| Steve: | Almost every one of us. |
| Interviewer: | What were your experiences like? |
| Steven: | Ireland was good wasn't it Bill? |
| Brian: | He [Martin] can't even remember. |

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| All: | [Laughter] |
| Brian: | He can't remember. Can you Martin? |
| Martin: | That the best way isn't it? |
| Steve: | It's a sign that he enjoyed it. |
| Martin: | It's a good day out isn't it? |
| Interviewer: | How many of you went over to the Bohemians game? |
| Steven: | Me. Martin. |
| Martin: | Not many of us went to Bohemians more went to Anderlecht. A bus went to Anderlecht though didn't it? |
| Brian: | Yeah. |
| Interviewer: | Do you think travelling with TNS in European competitions is any different to the domestic games? If so, how different? |
| Martin: | It's just the thrill of going. Put it this way what we have with TNS I reckon your Man United, Liverpool, Everton supporters will never have the same as they have with their club as what we have with you know with Mike Harris. It's close |
| Brian: | It's closer…a closer net. |
| Steve: | Because you know the players, you're there with the players; you're not just there supporting your team. |
| Sarah: | You're living the dream with your team. |
| Brian: | You're speaking to…. you're with the MD you're having a drink with the MD, you're eating with him. |
| Steve: | You're eating with the players and drinking with the players. |
| Brian: | It's a family club. |
| Interviewer: | Yeah. |
| Martin: | When you go into Europe. I've been lucky enough to go a couple of times. It's just…just a different ball game again. It's absolutely…you'd never think…five years ago I'd never think I'd be going to watch…. I'm an Everton supporter but I can't afford to go and watch Everton. |
| Interviewer: | Yeah. |
| Martin: | But I'd never go into Europe with Everton. I can go into Europe with TNS with the Managing Director…go have a meal with UEFA delegates. |

Brian:      Yeah. Where else would you get it?

Steven:     You were the fitness hygienist.

Martin:     Nutritionist.

Brian:      Nutritionist [Laughs].

Martin:     I was there with a fag. 'What do you do for TNS?' 'I'm the nutritionist mate!"

All:        [Loud laughter]

Martin:     I couldn't even stand up.

All:        [Loud laughter]

Martin:     No…no football fan I don't think would ever have that.

Brian:      No.

Martin:     What I've had. What I've had the last five years with this club has been absolutely tremendous.

Steve:      When we have had European games…unfortunately I have never been away, but when they come here they…there has never been any agro or anything like that when we had Irish supporters over here, when we had them from Anderlecht and everything. When they're here everything is so…

Brian:      Impeccable.

Steve:      We have more sort of rivalry between us and say Bangor than there ever was in the European games. It just seems to be almost accepting this small little club and thinking it is…I don't know.

Brian:      They gave us a standing ovation in Anderlecht.

Martin:     The difference you get as well…you're travelling … the away travellers you get from like Anderlecht and that, they're your ardent travellers aren't they? They're proper supporters aren't they?

All:        Yeah.

Steve:      They're not just the locals.

Martin:     They're not riffraff. Riffraff aren't gonna pay 400 quid to come over to watch a game of football. They are proper ardent supporters.

Brian:      We used to have proper rivalry down here when Rhyl were in the Welsh Premier League and there was rivalry like. You never see those supporters at home games. They only come for away games.

Steve:          They're lone travellers.

Brian:          They never went to any home games. They just come for the day out.

Martin:         Well let's go to Oswestry, spend a couple of hours in Oswestry, trash round there and we might get to watch the football.

Brian:          The Chairman openly told me 'they don't come to home games'.

Sarah:          It's amazing that isn't it? How can you not go to a home game?

Brian:          They go to all the away games cos…cos they go for the day out.

Interviewer:    Obviously England has recently played Wales in the Qualifiers. What was it like in the town?

Brian:          Mixed.

Steve:          Pubs have probably got quite a good mixture of people again…some screaming for England, some screaming for Wales.

Brian:          Quite a bit of rivalry…. quite a bit of rivalry really.

Steven:         They get that with the rugby don't they? They get that in the rugby.

Brian:          You get it with the rugby.

Steve:          I get it at work because I work in predominantly a Welsh company. I get it at work all the time you know?

Interviewer:    What would you say is the nationality split in the town?

Brian:          In the town itself?

Interviewer:    Yeah.

Steve:          It's probably still is 60-40 isn't it English I would have thought? But… you know it is…it depends some days it will be one way some days it will be the other you know? Sort of Market day people tend to pour in from the Welsh villages.

Brian:          It is as you say it's all to do with people coming in the town to work with the likes of Telecom and places. I just said at one time it would be nearer 50-50 but now as Steve said it's probably 60-40 perhaps a bit more I don't know. But…um…you still get the rivalry when it's England-Wales. You really do.

Interviewer:    Do you all support the English national team?

Martin:         I won't watch them.

Steven:         I'll watch them aye.

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| Steve: | At the same time back earlier this year I went to watch Wales in the rugby against New Zealand. So… |
| All: | [Indiscriminate noise] |
| Steve: | I was there screaming for Wales. |
| Interviewer: | How aware of the border are you in your daily lives? |
| Steve: | What border? |
| Christine: | I don't really think about it really. Do you? |
| Steve: | I drive to and back across it every single day of my working life. |
| Brian: | And me about forty times…a day. |
| Robert: | I doubt anyone could pinpoint the actual running line where it was. |
| Brian: | No. |
| Robert: | When they drive to work. They are aware it is there somewhere. |
| Steve: | The only reason I could do that is probably because on my route to work there is 'Welcome to England' 'Welcome to Wales'. |
| Brian: | You have a county stone on the Chirk boundary. There is a county stone. That's it. That's where you take it as. |
| Steve: | If you're going out into Llanymynech. |
| Sarah: | I'm not sure if I exactly know where it is to be honest. |
| Brian: | No. |
| Steve: | Llanymynech. |
| Sarah: | Llanymynech it is. Innit? |
| Steve: | Just at the bottom of the banking. |
| Brian: | At the bottom of the banking yeah. |
| Sarah: | I'm trying to think if there is a marker. |
| Brian: | There is a stone there. |
| Steve: | You see the gritter. It goes all the way through Welshpool, it sees the sign 'Welcome to England' and turns round and goes back. |
| Brian: | There is a pub in Llanymynech where we're talking about now and its half in England, half in Wales. |
| Steven: | Yeah. |
| Brian: | Half of it...when they had the Sunday Closure half of it was shut. |

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| Steve: | Dry weren't it? |
| Brian: | That was dry that was in the same pub. |
| Steven: | What did they call it? By the church weren't it? |
| Brian: | The Dolphin weren't it? |
| Steven: | No. |
| Martin: | The Lion? |
| Steven: | The Lion! |
| Brian: | Half of it was dry and half of it was wet on a Sunday. |
| Steve: | For a border town we are quite sort of intermingled round here. It's sort of…there's not…I suppose I might be fortunate I've never experienced a lot border rivalries. But uh… |
| Martin: | We go on about the border and the football in Wales and that… I bet you'd only have to think… about twenty miles east of here…people wouldn't even…where as they say TNS, Oswestry and the Welsh Premier they wouldn't even know if you're not… in England. |
| Steve: | As I said before people don't always associate Oswestry as being English or Welsh. They never know. |
| Martin: | Twenty mile away because Oswestry is in the Welsh Premiership I bet they'll probably obviously think Oswestry is in Wales innit? |
| Brian: | Course they do. Course they do. You speak to anyone in Telford and Oswestry is a Welsh…in Wales. |
| Martin: | It's the teams at the top of the league with us that know we're in England. |
| Steve: | But you get that with Oswestry all the time. Even when you ring people up you know and give them your details like an insurance company. They'll say 'is it in Wales?' 'No. It's England' |
| Robert: | I've been down in Cardiff and have been asked where I'm from and I've said 'I'm from Wrexham' and they ask, I've been asked 'Is that in England or in Wales?' So…you know? |
| Steve: | Because they play in England. |
| Martin: | Yeah. Same difference innit? |
| Robert: | Yeah I know but I know Cardiff is in Wales, I know Swansea is in Wales. |

Steven:     I bet they don't know where Queens Park is.

Brian:      Bill's just come up with a point now. Oswestry Town won the Welsh Cup three times…that was when we were playing in the English system.

All:        [Laughter]

Brian:      It was.

Robert:     You get more border rivalries when you go Wrexham-Chester or Wrexham-Shrewsbury. I mean Wrexham-Chester games when Chester had a team were played at 11.45 on a Sunday come rain or shine before the pubs opened because it was nasty. I've been to a lot of them games myself.

Steve:      Shrewsbury-Wrexham used to have issues with sort of racial sort of troubles. Oswestry people tend to think the English aren't really sure if it's English, the Welsh aren't sure whether it's Welsh so we slip in under…. nobody really knows.

Coding:

R1 – Martin
R2 – Filip
R3 – Chris
R4 – Stuart
R5 – Sean
R6 – Daniel
R7 – Josh
R8 – Sue
R9 – Sammy

Interviewer:    Okay. The first question then: who are Hay Saint Mary's Football Club? If you were asked to describe the club.

Martin:         Um… I would class us as a Welsh club. Yep…you know…end of. Don't matter where you're based. [Phone rings]. Great start. Um as far as I'm concerned we're Welsh. Our first team at the moment are playing in England, our reserves are playing in Wales…um…we live in Wales…we're a Welsh club.

Filip:          Essentially Hay Saint Mary's is a community football club that spans from junior to senior members and as Martin says has its roots in Welsh football…uh… culture.

Chris:          That a good way of summing it up really.

Interviewer:    Okay. So where did the name of the club come from?

Martin:         I would say um…with a lot…like most clubs a hundred odd years ago when they were invented and named after the local church. I think that's pretty much…I mean I don't know I couldn't exactly tell you but our church is Saint Mary's the church in Presteigne is Saint Andrews's and several other clubs so I would say we're named after the church.

Interviewer:    Is there a strong relationship with the church now…. or?

Martin:         No.

Filip:          No.

Interviewer:    What denomination is it?

Filip:          Church of England.

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| Martin: | Church in England. |
| Filip: | Church in England. |
| Chris: | Yeah. |
| Interviewer: | So why is the nickname "the Saints" important to Hay St. Mary's? |
| Martin: | I don't know really that's just we've always been called the saints ever since I've been involved, since I was a kid coming here, my grandfather was Chairman before me…um we've always known as the Saints. I think again. |
| Stuart: | And it's easy to make up a club song. |
| All: | Yeah. |
| Filip: | [Chants] You've only got one song! |
| All: | [Laughter] |
| Chris: | To be fair before I didn't know it was the Saints. |
| Filip: | I didn't know. The junior club wasn't. |
| Chris: | Exactly. It's been more recently isn't it? |
| Martin: | It was always called the Saints! |
| Chris: | I never heard it as much like. |
| Martin: | Yeah we're more now…we're know as "the Saints"…that's our nickname in local papers and things… whereas perhaps you would have read years ago. |
| Chris: | Possibly twenty years ago it wasn't? |
| Martin: | Yeah. |
| Sean: | A different era expression. |
| Martin: | That's right. |
| Filip: | And certainly the Junior Club doesn't have Hay St. Mary's attached to it. It's Hay isn't it? |
| Daniel: | It's Hay. |
| Josh: | It's Hay. |
| Interviewer: | Okay. So you've already touched on this anyway Martin. Are Hay St. Mary's a 'Welsh club in England' or a 'English club in Wales'? |
| Filip: | Welsh club in England. |
| Stuart: | Welsh club in England. |

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| Interviewer: | How would describe, again, the nationality of Hay St. Mary's to a neutral football supporter? |
| Filip: | Same way really. We're a Welsh club but we play in England at the minute. I mean I know of our history they've played in Wales, England, Wales, England, England, Wales and now in England. It just happens to this time in the history of Hay St. Mary's that we're in England. I think… |
| Interviewer: | Did you say the reserves play in Wales? |
| Stuart: | The reserves play in Wales isn't it? |
| Martin: | Of course we're a Welsh affiliated club we have to field a side in Wales. So if we went down to one club side that side would have to play in Wales. It's an argument that a lot of us are annoyed about because it seems the bigger clubs are treated different, like two clubs you've been and seen yourself. |
| Interviewer: | Yeah sure. |
| Martin: | You know…it seems to be one rule for one and another rule for another. |
| Filip: | There's always been uh…um…a certain um…almost um…I can't think of the right…a derogatory look on Hay St. Mary's because we're the furthest club towards the border people don't like us in Mid Wales, in the bigger part of Wales because they've got further to travel…and they don't realise they only have to do it once a year and we have to go all the rest of the places so…and it never bothered us did it…really? |
| Martin: | No. |
| Chris: | No. |
| Filip: | But there has been a derogatory thing from the board of Central Wales. This is my personal experience and opinion that I am expressing so I don't necessarily say it on behalf of the club. But I always felt they were treated by the Central Wales and um…particular officers of the Central Wales…so there. |
| Interviewer: | So who is the community that Hay St. Mary's serve? Is it just Hay or is it…? |
| Martin: | No. No. No. |
| Interviewer: | Who would you say it was? |
| Filip: | It's Hay and district innit really? |
| Martin: | Yeah. Yeah. We get players from all around. |

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| Stuart: | Players from everywhere. |
| Martin: | It's a very local run club, community run club mainly, which is what is great about the club. |
| Filip: | It's within relatively a ten-mile radius innit really? |
| Daniel: | Yeah. |
| Filip: | 15-mile d'ya think? |
| Martin: | Yeah. |
| Filip: | I mean there is the odd one that comes from outta that but the other local areas have got there… Talgarth has got its own teams and so have Kington, Knighton and all that sort of thing. |
| Martin: | Like I was saying Hay St. Mary's teams… all first teams and reserves have come through our juniors. |
| Filip: | Through the juniors. Exactly. |
| Martin: | Which is great. That's what it's all about. We had this discussion a couple of years ago when we were a Spar Mid-Welsh side 'Look do we wanna go the step further, do we wanna get involved in paying players which over local clubs do or would we like to keep it local community?' And we chose the latter. |
| Interviewer: | [Passes picture of club crest] |
| Filip: | Let's have a look. |
| Interviewer: | So I just wanted you to explain the club crest for me if you could? |
| Filip: | There's a number of…uh…of aspects of it. There's obviously the football. It's split into three quotas really. It's a town that has got the church, so Hay St. Mary's Church at the bottom, there's the castle because the castle if for the Book Town of Hay and all that sort of thing with Richard Booth…um…and then there's the clock tower…um…the bowling club had a very similar crest but they've got some books in it…um…and a bowling ball instead…but it was designed really to give us an identity which we hadn't really had before really. |
| Chris: | Has the school got a similar sort of thing to ours? |
| Martin: | Yeah it's quite similar again the school crest. |
| Interviewer: | Okay. You were talking about the Central Wales FA and what you thought of them and this part is to do with that. |

Filip:          I used to sit on it.

Interviewer:    [Passes around comments] It's comments by Phil Woosnam, the Secretary, in the *County Times.* What do you think he means?

Filip:          Well it depends what year he's talking because the year before Phil Woosnam came here and said 'if you wanna play in Hereford you can do that'. He said that to us up there [points towards the pitch]. You know, 'Don't worry because you'll get our support cos we don't really want you in the Welsh league'.

Martin:         Rob it's an awkward one for us because it's still got it ongoing, we've got solicitors involved and some of the courts.

Filip:          Oh sorry. I am not part of Hay St. Mary's Football Club at this point so please do not do that.

All:            [Laughter].

Filip:          I won't retract it. But don't say…I didn't say it on behalf of the football club. It's a personal opinion.

Interviewer:    This is solely for my research.

Martin:         Sure. Well basically they wrote a load of comments in an article which are not, are not true right so one of our committee members who was the one who said 'do you wanna come down my house? You can do'. He's on the committee he's a solicitor. Now a couple of points on that is they said that we withdrew a team and entered the Hereford league. Not true. We were already in the Hereford League. We were fielding three sides. How long have we been in the Hereford Leagues?

Sean:           What do you mean? How many years?

Daniel:         Three years.

Chris:          Three years yeah.

Martin:         We've been in the Hereford Leagues for three years. What we did was pull a side out of Wales and obviously yes they did promote us cos it was our first team going in. So we were already in the Hereford Leagues…that's not true…what…um…another thing they said about basically insinuating that we had gone in had the grant money and done a runner. We did the work with um…some local builders… they've been paid. We've never had the grant money. You know

that's another ongoing argument of ours. The money was from the season we were in the league and fulfilled all our fixtures… Blah, blah, blah…

Filip:      And we've still got a Welsh team.

Stuart:    And we've still got a Welsh team innit.

Filip:      Benefiting from Welsh football.

Martin:    So we feel we've done nothing wrong but due to players going to university and we named all these players at the meeting moving away from the area and leaving to go to other clubs, being offered money, we couldn't field three sides no more and we couldn't field sides to travel all over you know…?

Chris:     In an ideal world we would still be in the South Wales Mid League.

Martin:    We did enjoy it didn't we lads?

All:        Yeah.

Martin:    It was a great…a great experience.

Chris:     We just weren't able to field a team in it.

Martin:    You know it was hard when you had all those players being sent to places like Llansantffraid on a Wednesday night…84 miles.

Filip:      Well…exactly and that was down to the fixtures secretary which is what I said about them not wanting us there. It was quite clear to us at the time that they didn't really…they tolerated us put it that way. Then all of a sudden… we're in shit.

Martin:    Like you said every team would come here and so 'oh my god how far is this?'

Filip:      'How far as well? Hang on, we have to come to all of you lot!'

Martin:    It's every week…every other week for Hay.

Filip:      But we enjoyed it… I enjoyed.

Interviewer:  So obviously you feel his comments were unfair?

Martin:    Yes.

Interviewer:  So how would you describe Hay-on-Wye as a place? Hopefully you all might have something to say.

Martin:    Josh you start.

Josh:      I'll just say what springs to mind. For me its somewhere people come for second-hand books.

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| Daniel: | It's a very close town. Everyone knows everyone. The football club is a big part of the town along with the books and the Hay Festival…but…that's all I can say really it's just a very close town…it's a nice town to be in. |
| Chris: | It is a nice place to be in. |
| Stuart: | You know what's going on because people always talk…everyone talks to each other. You know what's going on don't you? There's not much that you sort of… |
| Chris: | If you get in trouble you'll guarantee everybody knows about it. |
| Stuart: | Everybody knows about it. |
| Chris: | That's how close it is to be fair. |
| Martin: | I think it's a beautiful, idyllic place to live. I mean I work at the festival in my half term and the amount of famous people who come in and say 'you are so lucky to live in this area. I feel safe.' It is a very safe place to live. Obviously I know anything can happen at any time…but…yeah…if I left my front door open and went to work my neighbour would be ringing me up within ten minutes…that sort of thing…um…and like Dan said I think for locals the football club is big because there is so many, we're talking with the juniors as well, you know it's a big part of the town the football club probably the biggest social club in the area I would say with the amount of members. |
| Chris: | Yeah. It would be yeah. |
| Martin: | Without a doubt. |
| Sean: | From my perspective I might have moved here twenty years ago and I didn't know anybody in Hay I just moved here because of work commitments. I think it is an incredibly welcoming place because it's also cos of the book trade there's also quite a large transient population that moves through Hay. People who move here for a few months, move away as well so in that respect it's not a closed shop you know what I mean? People are sort of very open-minded. Do you know what I mean? So… |
| Chris: | If you're open everyone else will be. |
| Sean: | That's the thing yeah. |
| Martin: | I think you're seeing that now. We're a tiny, small town club and we'll all here for you now when we could have said 'bugger off'. |

Interviewer:   That's true.

Martin:   I mean the other two sides you've gone to…well TNS are pretty much professional aren't they?

Interviewer:   Yeah.

Martin:   Berwick Rangers obviously play in the Scottish Football League so obviously they've got a decent side club and things.

Filip:   I mean Hay. Like Sean I came here twenty, twenty years ago as well and um… I would say Hay is an absolute wonder, an idyllic place to bring your kids up… and the football club benefits from junior level etc. but it's also a place where there are so few opportunities for your kids once they've grown up…you know? Tradesman don't get me wrong and I am not being disrespectful there is a limited number of jobs for them so it's a place where I think young people… there's a ceiling and only a certain number of young people can stay and the rest move away and that's why the senior club tends to think 'oh shit!' You know we've got this cohort, they get right up to this level and then half of them have gone because they need to go somewhere else to get jobs for a start…uh…and there is nothing wrong with that…there is nothing wrong with people who stay either. I mean it's a wonderful place…wonderful place.

Chris:   All it's missing is a university.

All:   [Laughter].

Chris:   We have plans you know?

All:   [Laughter].

Filip:   It's all part of the master plan. It's a very welcoming place, a wonderful place to be.

Sean:   But could I just say it has some renown as well cos I used to work all over the UK. You know I probably worked…I was on the road for maybe ten years. And a lot of places I went wouldn't know it at all but one in five places you'd go they'd say 'where do you live?' And I'd go 'this small little place, Hay-on-Wye'. And they'd go 'god you live in Hay?' And it almost gave me a status as such. Like I say it does have some renown for a place of its size throughout the UK.

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| Filip: | And that's because of Richard Booth because Richard Booth put Hay on the map with his second hand bookstores. And Richard Booth would be the first to say [tries to imitate Booth]. |
| All: | [Laughter]. |
| Filip: | He had a brain tumour. He would tell you it's nothing to do with books, books are merely a way of getting people into Hay and he was massively successful. He is a massive publicist…he was. |
| Martin: | A lot of people have come to the festival, the literature festival and then that's why is not very cheap to live in Hay. You go ten mile that way or ten mile that way you could knock fifty, sixty grand of a house. |
| Sean: | Easy. |
| Martin: | Some famous people come here and buy. Chris Evans the DJ came here for the first time last year and wrote then on his blog 'ten things to do before you die' and one of was visit Hay and blah, blah, blah. And he came back he held his show from here he loves the place. I actually think he will buy a house in this area in the next three years. I really think he will. |
| Filip: | And the caveat to that of course is that photographs of Martin with all the famous people can be seen on his website. |
| All: | [Laughter]. |
| Interviewer: | [Passes around pictures showing coverage of Hay on FA and FAW websites] |
| Chris: | Yeah. I'm in that one. |
| Martin: | Hey that's copyright isn't it that off my website? |
| Chris: | No it's not. |
| Stuart: | FC Phoenix. FC Phoenix. |
| Filip: | That was in Merthyr wasn't it? |
| Chris: | I remember that yeah. |
| Filip: | Press coverage? The Powys County Times are a bunch of t***s number one. |
| All: | [Laughter] |
| Martin: | How many pints has he had? |
| All: | [Laughter] |

Filip:          It's true! The year we won the league, the Mid Wales League South…the year we won it the headline on the back page was 'Rhosgoch come Runner-Up'.

Martin:         Yeah it was.

Filip:          And you had to go to the ass end of the back page to find out 'oh by the way Hay won it'.

Martin:         That's true that is yeah.

Filip:          So I don't like Brecon or Radnor for the coverage they give us.

Sean:           Can't spell for a start.

Filip:          And they're shit at spelling all the names…um…*The County Times* promised us every now and again we would get in it, and they said when you get into the Spar then you'll get regular. Saw more of our reserve team in *The County Times* than we did of our first team in the first year we played in the Spar. You've started me off you know that don't you?

Interviewer:    So how many of you are familiar with those (points to FA/FAW coverage)?

All:            Yeah.

Martin:         We played FC Phoenix in the Welsh Trophy. The actual…in fact I think something like *Sgorio* were there that day because they were the lowest ranked side in it.

Daniel:         They only got in it because Den's father was on the Welsh board.

Filip:          That's right yeah.

Martin:         On the plus side they did have a nice curry after the game.

Josh:           Aye that was a really nice pub yeah

Filip:          Great pub yeah.

Interviewer:    The reason I chose both of them is because I wanted to ask why do the FA and FAW have coverage?

Martin:         What was the question sorry?

Interviewer:    Why do the FA and FAW have coverage?

Filip:          Because we played in the South Wales Mid Spar League in that one and in Hereford in the other.

Interviewer:    So that the first team then and that's the first team now?

All:            Yeah. Yeah.

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| Sean: | But officially that's not…. well… just as tricky. Officially we are supposed to play our first team in Wales. |
| Interviewer: | Yeah. |
| Sean: | Or the best team that we can field in Wales. |
| Chris: | Which we do yeah. |
| Martin: | That's how we worded it at the meeting. |
| Sean: | But unofficially it's not the first team and everyone knows it there's no point in denying it. |
| Chris: | But it is… it is the best team we can field in Wales because no one else will play in it in that standard of league…so…well they will but…. not everyone. |
| Interviewer: | Is this coverage important to Hay? |
| Martin: | Yes. |
| Sean: | Very. |
| Chris: | Definitely. I look at it a lot especially the league table. |
| Daniel: | Absolutely. |
| Interviewer: | So how do you feel about the FA's English-language coverage? |
| Filip: | Uh…say that again? |
| Chris: | Why it's not Welsh? |
| Interviewer: | Yeah. |
| Filip: | I'm sorry I really don't understand the question I'm don't mean to be awkward. |
| Interviewer: | That's fine. Obviously in different places the Welsh language might be more of an issue. |
| Filip: | Yeah. |
| Interviewer: | So if it's not an issue then…? |
| Martin: | No it's not an issue. We're an English-speaking town. |
| Interviewer: | Would you rather Hay received coverage on the *S4C* website? |
| Martin: | No I don't think it…no…I don't think it…no…we…we…I'll tell you a funny story…um…we beat a side up here in the Welsh Cup. We did really well we had a couple of wins didn't we and we were then on the live draw. |
| Filip: | [Laughs]. |
| Martin: | So I had everyone around my house, got the booze out, remember this boys? |

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| All: | [Giggling]. |
| Martin: | And it came on and it said uh… 'Y Gelli' and we all went 'who's that?' |
| All: | [Laughter]. |
| Martin: | We were all googling this bloody team we had drawed. |
| Filip: | [Laughing] That's us! |
| Sean: | It took me ten years to realise that was the name. |
| Chris: | I would have got that. |
| Martin: | That was because none of us knew whom we'd drawn like. |
| Interviewer: | Have you received coverage in the local media including newspapers in England and Wales? |
| Martin: | Yes. |
| Interviewer: | Which ones? |
| Josh: | *The Hereford Times*. |
| Chris: | We wouldn't go much further than the English than that. |
| Martin: | You get the *Hereford Times*, the *Brecon and Radnor*, the *Mid Wales Journal*. |
| Filip: | *The Mid Wales Journal* is really good to us. They always have been. |
| Martin: | *The County Times*…uh…another newspaper…what's the Aberystwyth one we used to be in when we were in the Spar? |
| Daniel: | *The Cambrian*? |
| All: | *The Cambrian*. |
| Martin: | *The Cambrian News*. |
| Filip: | We have been in the *South Wales Journal* as well on occasion. |
| Martin: | Yep. And there's another newspaper which I've seen us in called 'My Welshpool'… I think that's what it was called…*My Welshpool*… which again covers local but the Spar League mainly. |
| Interviewer: | Did some of the ones on the Welsh side just cover the team that plays in Wales or do they cover the team that plays in England as well? |
| Chris: | The Radnor covers both and the Mid Wales Journal. |
| Martin: | Because we are in it. |
| Filip: | The Mid Wales Journal are good they cover everything. |

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| Martin: | There's a local guy basically Rob who is called Paul Worsley who does loads, he is the Welsh…what's the league called? |
| Filip: | Mid Wales League South. |
| Martin: | Yeah. He's the Secretary and he does loads of match reports and things and he's very good so. |
| Filip: | And he writes specifically for us. |
| Martin: | He takes quite a bit off our website and things. |
| Interviewer: | Okay. So how do you think the nationality of Hay is viewed in places like, is it Hinton, Ledbury and throughout England as a whole? |
| Martin: | We're Welsh. Well it's unfair to say everybody. With quite a few people you'll get comments like 'F*** off back to Wales, you Welsh bastards' if we start winning at teams. |
| Chris: | That's just the referees innit? |
| All: | [Laughter]. |
| Martin: | That's unfair to say everyone. Would you agree Sean? |
| Sean: | There's been the odd comment. |
| Filip: | Not many. |
| Martin: | No there's not as much as I expected to be fair. |
| Sean: | Well cos I mean a lot of the time in terms of football terms we can sort of match most teams so they have a certain respect for us. |
| Martin: | The teams that finished first and second on there were two of the teams that gave us a lot of abuse but I think that was because they were pushing for the title, were pumped up and they had bloody hard games, in fact we won at the one team, in fact we probably stopped them winning the league didn't we Sean? |
| Sean: | We did yeah. |
| Martin: | So it's there…and there abouts because I asked a referee after a game that 'if one of my players had said to one of the lads…you know…you black so and so what would you have done?' And he said 'straight red'. So I said 'what's the difference? Their centre mid was calling us – do you remember their number 8 for Westfields? |
| Chris: | I know him yeah. |

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| Martin: | And he was Welsh this and Welsh that and then he was really abusive you know about it? |
| All: | [General chatter] |
| Chris: | It was also the other one. I can't remember his name. He plays for the first team. |
| Martin: | Anthony Rivet or something like that? Anthony… anyway he went 'Oh you're right…I…I… didn't hear it'. I thought 'shut up'. |
| Sue: | Oh my god that's terrible. Sorry…it's unfair. |
| Martin: | I asked him if he would take it to the referees meeting cos it was something that was bugging me at the time…you know…really out of order. |
| Interviewer: | How would you feel if the FA described Hay as a 'British' rather than a 'Welsh' club? Would you be opposed to that? |
| Martin: | No because I think personally I'm British and Welsh. Dan? |
| Daniel: | Yeah British and Welsh. |
| Interviewer: | Which is most important to you first and foremost? |
| All: | [Silence] |
| Interviewer: | Is it Welsh then British? |
| Chris: | Yeah in the local area we're Welsh aren't we? |
| Filip: | I'm an Englishman…I'm an Englishman but I think Hay St. Mary's is Welsh first and foremost. We don't object, we wouldn't object to being called British, but I think we would certainly object to being called English. |
| Chris: | Yeah. |
| Interviewer: | So do you think that Hay's exploits in Herefordshire have put this part of Wales on the map? |
| All: | [Silence] |
| Interviewer: | Do you play in the Radnorshire Cup? |
| Martin: | Yes. Yeah. |
| Interviewer: | Do you feel like you've put Radnorshire on the map? |
| Martin: | No I don't. If you said to Hereford players…the trouble is a lot of the Hereford players play cross-border, they get paid; I mean it's a loophole, you can't do that in Wales, but you can…you can play for Hereford and you can play for say |

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|  | Newbridge-on-Wye or Prestiegne or you could play…they could play for us, when we weren't in the Herefordshire League I should say. |
| Interviewer: | So are you affiliated to, first and foremost, the Welsh FA? |
| Martin: | Yes. |
| Interviewer: | Are you affiliated to the English FA at all? |
| Martin: | No. |
| Interviewer: | Do you have any issues with kind of this international clearance thing? Any problems like that? |
| Martin: | Yes. It can be an absolute nightmare at times. |
| Interviewer: | How does it work? Can you give me an example? |
| Martin: | Okay…um…well when we were then say, if we go back twelve months, forget that we're now in England…um…we could have signed a player from say Kington to come and play for us and get him international cleared by the Saturday if he didn't have a game then he would have gone back the other way and had himself internationally cleared to play back. Does that make sense? |
| Interviewer: | Yeah. |
| Martin: | Whereas now, again it does annoy people, because we're Welsh playing in England that we don't have to…we don't have to internationally clear anyone. |
| Filip: | It goes back to what I said before at the start of this meeting innit? The bottom line is the tier system, the pyramid system in England where the level we're playing at is like thirty or forty levels below the Premier League, in Wales we're three or four levels below it so the league becomes more important in Wales to have the international clearance than it does in England. They don't actually care. It's a bureaucratic piece of rubbish to them whereas in Wales it's important. |
| Chris: | We stick to the rules. |
| Filip: | We always have haven't we? |
| Interviewer: | Is there a strong association with Powys? Do you feel strongly associated with the county? |
| Chris: | Well I think with Powys you know. |

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| Martin: | Yeah I mean as kids… you know… when you represent football as a junior you would have played for Powys round here. Powys is what we come under the banner of. |
| Sean: | At particular ages though then there are some that tend to drift into the Herefordshire system. |
| Martin: | That's right yeah. |
| Sean: | Because it seems to run out at a particular age. |
| Martin: | 15 I should think. |
| Chris: | There was that problem. |
| Filip: | In the schools innit …school football in Powys has never had a high profile. There had been county sides which had traditionally been picked from the north of the county, so very few people from south county, south Powys got into Mid Wales teams…very few. In fact in the ten, fifteen years I was there I don't remember barely any of them other than Ian Rush where we did get players in…what you laughing at? |
| Martin: | Nothing. It was the same thing we were saying. We had a letter twelve months ago saying 'did you want to nominate anyone to play? |
| Chris: | Yeah. I was just about to bring that up actually. |
| Martin: | To play for Powys I think it was something like that |
| Chris: | Yeah. |
| Martin: | We said, Derek said 'we've got two boys down here, cracking players, Will Goodwin' |
| Chris: | Toby Johnson was the other one wasn't it? |
| Martin: | Yeah and Toby Johnson and we sent their names off and then about a month later the team come out which was selected – they hadn't even looked at them. |
| Sue: | Awww. |
| Martin: | Yeah. We rang them up, fair play to Derek the ex-Secretary, he said 'look, how can you pick a side when you haven't even looked at our players?' And this guy said 'Oh but I know all these lot from up' and he basically picked Aberystwyth. It was Myrene Appleton. |
| Sue: | That's so unfair. |

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| Filip: | That was always the case because he was from up there. |
| Sue: | It's so prejudiced innit? |
| Martin: | So he basically picked players he knew, he didn't look at ours. I'm not saying they would have got in but they weren't even given the chance and I think we are…the trouble is we are over this way so you see why like Sean and Sue's lads was a cracking player, Chris, and these guys they represented football for Herefordshire when really they should have been playing in Wales being this side of the border. |
| Filip: | Under 11s you played Powys didn't you? |
| Chris: | Yeah. Yeah. It was yeah. Well like Brecon weren't it and North and South Powys. |
| Sean: | There's definitely a sparcity of population isn't it? There's a sparcity of leagues as well you know because the structure is more sporadic so when it gets to more a senior-junior level as in a late-junior level the leagues tend to peter out because there is not enough of us so people then invariably then try get their kids in across the border or further down the valleys don't they? |
| Filip: | They do and we do have of course people who represented uh…at a higher level even. Sammy played for the under 19s didn't you? |
| Sammy: | Under 18s yeah. Welsh Under 18s. |
| Filip: | Welsh Under 18s so. |
| Martin: | The Juniors…basically our juniors play in Powys until about the age of fourteen then there's no….which we have to do…cos we're Welsh… and then once there's no leagues on…afterwards we tend to send them that way cos you've managed teams haven't you Sean. |
| Sean: | Yeah. |
| Martin: | 15s, 16s they tend to go that way then. |
| Filip: | I think the other thing is [coughs], excuse me is that the coaching, the standard of coaching within areas tends to drift towards the centres population. So for example when this age group was growing up there was a bloke with a B licence in Brecon you know who developed a Brecon development centre. |
| Chris: | Yeah. |

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| Filip: | And that's what they went to and he did a great job at it. You know if you wanted to go to a centre of excellence, the next level up you went to Hereford because there wasn't one. It was Cardiff, Swansea and you know with the greatest will in the world it's just too far so people went, then drifted to Hereford…uh…and that age group. |
| Chris: | Like how many teams were in our league well in the last year before me and Josh went that way? Probably four was it? |
| Filip: | Four. Exactly. |
| Chris: | We played them four times a year. It was a farce like. |
| Sean: | It's the sparcity of the leagues. |
| Filip: | Sparcity of population. |
| Interviewer: | Obviously we are in Hay-on-Wye tonight, which you said is certainly in Wales. How far across the border do you have to be to be considered Welsh? Is there another village a bit further on? |
| Martin: | No it's Hay. |
| Filip: | Hay is Welsh. |
| Martin: | 'Welcome to Wales', 'Welcome to Hay-on-Wye'. |
| Interviewer: | What's the next village after? |
| Martin: | Cusop. |
| Interviewer: | Is that England then? |
| Martin: | Yep. |
| Stuart: | I can see it from my window. |
| Martin: | I can step out of bed into Cusop. It's a brook. |
| Filip: | And to be fair most of us shop in England because the Co-op is on the corner. |
| Martin: | That's it. There's a brook. That's like Wales, that's England. It's got 'Welcome to Wales', 'Welcome to Hay-on-Wye' as you're coming in from that way. |
| Interviewer: | Are there houses next to each other with persons on one side and others on the other? |
| Martin: | Yeah cos Dick Davies down there has got his bungalow, it's the last one; there is a brook then outside it. |
| Filip: | [Turns to Stuart] Are you (living) in Wales now? |

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| Stuart: | England I'm in. But if I jump over the brook I'm in Wales. |
| Chris: | You're English! |
| Filip: | No. He didn't say he was f**cking English. He said his house is in England. But we've all got English postcodes; we've all got Herefordshire postcodes. |
| Stuart: | You can go quite a way into Wales and still have HR? |
| Filip: | Yeah. They do. |
| Sue: | Can you? |
| Filip: | Yeah. Yeah. |
| Daniel: | My mum lives up in Grainsbury, that's HR. |
| Sue: | Really? Grainsbury's HR? |
| Daniel: | Yeah it is. I think it's Three Cocks it changes. |
| Sue: | Does that become Powys then? |
| Daniel: | LD is Three Cocks yeah. |
| Sue: | That's quite a way though |
| Daniel: | Because they get their post from Brecon don't they? |
| All: | [General chitchat] |
| Interviewer: | [Passes around pictures of Welsh Cup with national flag in the background along with pictures of supporters of Welsh exile clubs holding the Welsh flag] |
| Filip: | What's that? The Welsh FA Cup is it? |
| Interviewer: | Yeah. |
| Filip: | Have you got the Emrys Morgan because I have a picture of it here? We did win it once [Laughs]. It's like the FA Cup for our level of football and that's the team that won it (points to signed Hay St. Mary's club shirt from 2008/09). |
| Interviewer: | Where do the other teams who participate in that come from? |
| Filip: | Uh…Emrys Morgan… Martin where do they come from? Where do the teams come from…in the whole of Mid Wales…and Ceredigion and Montgomery? |
| Martin: | The whole of Mid Wales. |
| Filip: | Aberystwyth. It's basically central Wales. |
| Martin: | It's a cup, which every single club plays in. It a very, very, prestigious cup to win that…it's the dog's. |
| Interviewer: | And it was two years ago? |

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| Filip: | Yeah. Well three I think. |
| Interviewer: | Oh yeah. |
| All: | [Indiscriminate chatting]. |
| Interviewer: | What I was gonna ask was…[Interrupted] |
| Filip: | Can I have a look at the other one? |
| Interviewer: | Of course…what can you see? |
| Chris: | FA Welsh Cup |
| Sean: | Dragon's the theme. |
| Chris: | Colwyn Bay. |
| Martin: | Welsh teams. |
| Interviewer: | What I was going to ask was: why do you think the flags were used? |
| Filip: | National identity innit. It's national identity innit. |
| Interviewer: | So you've all travelled with Hay to Ledbury and Hinton? |
| All: | Yeah. |
| Interviewer: | Can you recall seeing flags with Hay's name? Do you take flags? |
| Filip: | Actually we don't know really do we? |
| Martin: | No. Maybe the odd supporter will wear scarves. |
| Filip: | They do wear scarves and stuff. |
| Martin: | We've got several supporters who've got green and white-hooped scarves. |
| Chris: | Jackets as well I suppose. |
| Interviewer: | Based on the green and white is it? |
| Martin: | Yeah. That's the thing. We've got the jackets with the badge on which a lot of supporters have got. |
| Chris: | They've taken flags to finals and things. |
| Filip: | When we're showing off. |
| Interviewer: | When you played in the cup, that you won, did you take flags? |
| Chris: | Oh yes. |
| Filip: | Oh yeah…a coach load. |
| Interviewer: | Which ones did you take? Did you take the green and white? |
| Martin: | Yeah. That sort of thing [points at green and white flag on clubhouse wall], loads of different flags and scarves we had up there. |

Interviewer:   Can you remember which ones?

Filip:   They're at my house [Raucous laughter]. They didn't have the Welsh dragon on if that's what you're getting at. They don't.

Interviewer:   They don't?

Filip:   No. Not for any great reason we just preferred green and white at the time.


Martin:   It's just what we decided to use at the time.

Chris:   It's cos it's our colours I suppose.

Interviewer:   Do you feel it's because Hay has a strong sense of local identity?

Martin:   Yeah. Absolutely.

Filip:   I think to be honest it's only the last five or, maybe ten years that there's been…um…an identity that the town associate with the club in terms of the paraphernalia, the badges, the scarves, the flags and the jackets and stuff like that. Previously it was team only. You know the team wore the kit and were proud to wear it don't get me wrong and the community sort of were involved in it because they went to watch…um…and then I think there's been more in the last…please tell me if I'm wrong…there's been more of the paraphernalia that goes around it because at the end of the day it's business innit? It's about branding and stuff.

Interviewer:   Do you have a club shop? How would people get hold of the…?

Martin:   We don't have a club shop we do it from my garage. Yeah we have got…um…we've got sweatshirts which people wear…um badges…um ski hats. I'm trying to think what else…we have scarves.

Chris:   Badges.

Filip:   Ties. Club ties.

Sue:   It should be in here really shouldn't it?

Martin:   The trouble was Sue I had things in here hanging up for sale and next thing they went missing.

Filip:   Next thing you see Mushka's wearing them out in town [Laughter].

Martin:   People were wearing them.

Sue:   I think it's safest. I understand.

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| Martin: | What I get is cos it's such a small community you'll get, someone will go 'can you get me a jacket?' 'Can you get me one of those? That small you know? |
| Chris: | About five years ago juniors used to wear all different colours like we had yellow, blues but now all the…all the club is green and white. And that's what people see when they come to Hay. |
| Martin: | I had that argument for years and years. |
| Filip: | We did yeah. |
| Martin: | It was this thing of the seniors and the juniors. Well you changed to blue…no we're green and white and in the end we got there… which is nice from five years of age right through everyone wears the Celtic you know? |
| Interviewer: | Yeah. |
| Martin: | The green and white colours…sorry the Hay colours I shouldn't say Celtic. |
| Filip: | The Celtic, Celtic. |
| Martin: | But if you said 'what kit you wear?' It's Celtic' colours even though they copied us. I tell people at our school that, we've got a couple of Celtic supporters Sean from Pentwyn and I said we played them in 1870 and they liked our kit so they copied us…and they're like 'really? Really? 'Yes'. |
| Filip: | I think you'll find we started before Celtic did. I've got a photograph somewhere. I'm not sure we had hoops at the time. |
| Interviewer: | What is the significance, if any, of the choice of flag or colours? |
| Martin: | I just think ever since I've been watching as a little kid we've played you know back…we've gone back to being green and white now because we have had different odd kits over the years but I remember basically in the 70s as I was growing up watching, they always played in green, green and white Hay…yeah…it was just about getting ourselves an identity all the way through the whole club I think. |
| Filip: | I think it came to a point didn't it when a number of people came together who all shared the same vision for the club and the vision was that we played consistently from youth or juniors right through to seniors in a particular style. FA Cup football required a standard of dress; we had ties we then got them made and then |

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| | the jackets. It was just a group of people weren't it at the time that just came together. |
| Chris: | There was a lot more interest at that point wasn't there? |
| Filip: | Yeah and it was difficult to say whether it was at the same time we were successful or which came first. And the end of the day it doesn't really matter at the end of the day it was just a whole group of people, players, managers, chairmen etc. and I think it worked really well. |
| Interviewer: | [Passes pictures of use of Welsh Language in Welsh Cup and match report of Hay on S4C website] |
| Filip: | They can't spell can they? |
| Martin: | I said Phoenix. Brunswick it was. FC Brunswick. |
| Chris: | Brunswick. |
| Martin: | Y Gelli Gandryll. There [points at Welsh spelling on *Sgorio*]. |
| Josh: | That's Hay St. Mary's in Welsh is it? |
| Daniel: | St. Mary's in Welsh. |
| Martin: | St. Mary's innit. That's what come up on that thing. |
| Josh: | Come up on that draw innit. |
| Interviewer: | What do you notice about the pictures? |
| Filip: | They've all got some Welsh nationality involved in them. |
| Chris: | That one's the rugby ground…Scarlets. |
| Josh: | Welsh language is that what you're getting at? |
| Filip: | Yeah. We don't have a culture for the Welsh language in Hay. |
| Sean: | It's also bilingual as well isn't it? |
| Filip: | Cos it's Welsh policy; it's all levels of re-organisation innit? Uh…but we don't take any notice of it…no…seriously we have never produced anything at the club…our badge as you quite rightly point out says 'Hay St. Mary's Football Club' not what it said on *Sgorio*. |
| Chris: | Do they share now, the football club and the rugby club? |
| Filip: | Scarlets? |
| Chris: | The Scarlets yeah. |
| Josh: | No they don't play at the same place. |

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| Chris: | I didn't think they did no. |
| Interviewer: | It was the venue for the Welsh Cup Final. Were you in the Welsh Cup two or three years ago? |
| Martin: | Yeah. We played this year. |
| Interviewer: | That same cup [points to picture of Welsh Cup draped in Welsh flag]? |
| Martin: | Yes. Absolutely. It would be a very interesting argument mind because we play in England, but we're a Welsh club so. |
| Stuart: | How far have we got in it? |
| Martin: | We did really…the one year we got to about the third… |
| Josh: | We went down to that team down by Cardiff didn't we? |
| Martin: | Dinas Powys. |
| All: | Oh yeah! |
| Filip: | No it wasn't Dinas Powys it was Caeurau Ely. Caeurau Ely, which is down Cardiff way. |
| Martin: | Well they're quite high up now, they're one off the League of Wales. |
| Filip: | We won 1500 quid I think it was. Once you get past a certain…yeah. |
| Interviewer: | Why do you think the FAW Cup Final programme contains Welsh when the FAW does not have a bilingual policy? |
| Filip: | Don't they? |
| Interviewer: | No. |
| Filip: | Well I'm gob smacked. The Welsh Assembly allows the FAW not to have…well I didn't realise that. |
| Martin: | I didn't know that either. |
| Chris: | No nor me. |
| Interviewer: | So does Hay-on-Wye have a Welsh name? |
| Filip: | Hay has, Hay-on-Wye as a town has but the club doesn't. |
| Martin: | It does. It's on there [points to Welsh language name used on Sgorio website]. |
| Filip: | Na…that's their Welsh interpretation of our name. |
| Martin: | Ahh right okay. |
| Filip: | We don't have 'Y Gelli'. |
| Martin: | No. |

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| Interviewer: | So how important do you think the Welsh language is to the identity of the town, if at all? |
| Martin: | I think it's not at all. |
| Chris: | To the town or the football club? |
| Interviewer: | Either, or both. |
| Chris: | To the football club probably not but I think to the town it probably does doesn't it? |
| Martin: | Is there many Welsh-speakers in the town? |
| Josh: | I don't know. |
| Filip: | I think there are significant Welsh-speakers in the town who would be really pissed off to hear us say it doesn't matter. |
| Daniel: | When you drive in you get that twin town and all that thing that come into it, Timbuktu and all that. Maybe comes into it then the language. |
| Interviewer: | Being twinned with Timbuktu, is that quite important for the town do you think? |
| Filip: | Most recently…it's been recently. |
| Martin: | A lot of publicity it's given the town because Timbuktu is famous for god knows what but... |
| Daniel: | Books is it? |
| All: | [Chuckles] |
| Filip: | It's the pattern as you well know, you studied it, it's the pattern of Welsh-speaking…um…communities from the eastern borders through to the west and the further west you go the more, apart from Pembrokeshire, it's a bunch of English people anyway, but you know the more you're likely to meet Welsh-speaking people as more of a case than here. Maybe one in twenty are happy to speak Welsh to each other here, probably more than that, uhh… less than that I should say, one in fifty…but Brecon it gets…and certainly in Carmarthen. |
| Martin: | But I used to go out as a kid to watch, 18, 19, to watch rugby when Wales…when Wales would play England. I would say 95 per cent of the people in the pub supported Wales right. If I go now I'd say it's fifty-fifty. |

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| Filip: | Do you know Martin I didn't know anything about Wales when I was growing up and in the 70s as an Englishman in England I supported Welsh rugby cos they were great at that time. |
| Martin: | I think my point is with Hay I think lots of people have come here and stayed and loved it, and moved here…lots of tourists and a lot of tourists are English. |
| Chris: | Definitely now. |
| Martin: | You two. |
| Sue: | No. No. I had never saw the place…I didn't even know where the place was…until we moved here through Sean's job and next we got a place to rent in Clifford and next day I had to get a loaf of bread and I said to our landlord who was Malcolm Lindsey 'where do I get a loaf of bread?' 'Oh go to Spar in Hay'. Never been there in my life…never…can I just say that…I didn't say 'oh Hay's a nice place'…I never knew it in my life. You know it was not…but anyway there you go…so not everybody does that. |
| Martin: | I think its more…lots of nationalities in Hay now. |
| Sue: | Yes. |
| Martin: | Because of the tourists… because of the books and people come here, love it and want to live here. |
| Chris: | House prices as well have gone up a bit. |
| Martin: | Definitely. |
| Sue: | Prices have gone through the roof. |
| Martin: | I'd probably say 50-50. |
| Interviewer: | What period is that? |
| Martin: | I'd say uh…from the 80s until now I'd go as far as saying. Yeah. |
| Filip: | What's that? I missed that sorry. |
| Martin: | Where it was say 90 per cent full of Welsh, whereas now it's probably 50-50 or… |
| Chris: | As your gran always says innit? 'You used to know everyone. You used to know your next-door neighbour in Hay. You go round now you don't know no one'. |
| Filip: | But there's still…there's still uh…what's the word for it? Uh…the actual population in Hay hasn't expanded much has it? |
| Martin: | No. |

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| Filip: | The population of Hay is still small. |
| Sean: | Yeah. |
| Filip: | And yet people like me and Sean are immigrants and I accept that. |
| Martin: | But you're not. |
| Chris: | You're not. No. |
| Filip: | We said right at the beginning…one of the questions at the beginning was you know whether it was a welcoming and open community and at the end of the day I would say if you're prepared to come to Hay and put something into the community. |
| Sue: | Yeah. |
| Filip: | Then the community will give you everything back and more and that's the bottom line. |
| Sue: | People who moved here and just moan and just…that kind of attitude is terrible. I think so. It's awful. I hate it. |
| Martin: | That's one way of doing it. It you move to Hay come and get involved with the football club because all of a sudden you'll have a big massive family. |
| Filip: | Absolutely. |
| Sue: | Having two boys helped. |
| Chris: | But even now you wouldn't have to have boys would you? |
| Filip: | You've got girls football or whatever…. people need to see people join in and if you prepared to join in you'll get it back. |
| Chris: | You'll make friends. |
| Interviewer: | Have you heard Welsh being spoken in the town that you can recall? |
| Filip: | Dew dew…fuck me. No. No. |
| Chris: | There's a couple of 'butt's' here and there. |
| Filip: | A couple of 'butty bachs', a couple of 'Nadolig Llawen'. |
| Martin: | My friend's dad speaks fluent Welsh but it's not something you tend to hear a lot. Only every now and again you know? |
| Interviewer: | Where would you say geographically it starts in this part of Wales? |
| Filip: | [Whispers] Yeah Brecon and beyond innit really? |
| Sue: | Brecon. |

Josh:        Brecon to be honest.

Filip:       Builth…there's quite a large…I mean the school…the high school in Builth has a Welsh uh…section, a Welsh stream so they provide their education in the medium of Welsh.

Martin:      Same as with Brecon. Ysgol y Bannau.

Filip:       And they do it with Ysgol y Bannau in the Primary School and at Secondary.

Chris:       You've got Llanutin as well.

Filip:       Llanutin.

Interviewer: Where do children go in Hay? Is there a Primary and Secondary School here?

Martin:      There's a primary school in Hay.

Sue:         The primary school is excellent in Hay. It's fantastic.

Martin:      And then there's a secondary school six miles that way

Sue:         Gwernyfed.

Martin:      Which is in Wales and one that way which is in England…. 10 miles.

Filip:       Fairfield.

Interviewer: Where do children tend to go to secondary school?

Martin:      I would say 85 per cent would go to Gwernyfed.

Sue:         Yeah.

Filip:       Because it is a problem…high school education in this area is a problem because notwithstanding all the local politics but Hay doesn't have enough population to have a high school in Hay so Gwernyfed which is six miles that way or whatever it is drains from…it's in the middle of nowhere…it isn't in any centre of population so it drains from a number of places…and by the nature of the business then the high schools gain a good standing in the community and attract more kids in… or they go down in peoples' estimation and all of a sudden people look to Builth and Builth was very popular for a decade and then all of a sudden that gets a bad name and so they looked to Gwernyfed and then all of a sudden they're going from Builth to Llandod to Brecon… it does tend to move around in generations I would…I would argue.

Interviewer: Are they teaching Welsh in the local primary school?

Sue:         Yeah. Yeah. I think Hay School is fantastic. I have to say it was brilliant…still is.

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| Chris: | Saying that we did Welsh for about probably about eight years and then all of a sudden we had to drop it at the end. |
| Filip: | You didn't have a chance. You had no choice but to drop it. |
| Chris: | Well yeah. |
| Filip: | Not just eight years. |
| Chris: | Probably more than that. |
| Filip: | Because my son when to school with this lot. |
| Chris: | It was the biggest joke ever really to be honest. |
| Filip: | They got to Gwernyfed they did five years at primary school, fours year at high school and when it came to GCSE they had a teacher missing so they said…'Uh…. right we're gonna concentrate our Welsh languages courses… with Year 7. And Year 11…um…we'll put you in for it if you want.' |
| Chris: | So you had a chance to drop it after all that time of doing it. |
| Interviewer: | So there was no kind of like once a fortnight thing? |
| Josh: | I did it as a second language at GCSE. |
| Filip: | You were in the year above weren't you? The year above…but their year weren't didn't have a choice to sit it. They could sit it they just couldn't have any lessons on it because they didn't have a teacher. They allocated the teaching hours elsewhere. That wasn't normal. Its just bullshit! |
| Sue: | But it is compulsory. It is compulsory. |
| Filip: | It is compulsory. It is. |
| Sue: | It is at primary and secondary. |
| Josh: | But I took it as a short term not a long-term thing so. |
| Filip: | Na. So you did it every year and at the end of Year 10 you took your GCSE? |
| Josh: | Yeah. |
| Interviewer: | Did you do short-course Welsh? |
| Josh: | Yeah I got a GCSE in it. |
| Filip: | Can you speak it? |
| Josh: | No. |
| Filip: | Exactly [Laughs]. |
| Chris: | I think I dropped it. |

Stuart          I think I didn't do it.

Josh:           You would have had to do the exam surely?

Daniel:         I don't think we did. No I honestly don't think we did.

Interviewer:    Does language ever become a contentious issue when you travelling?

Martin:         No.

Josh:           Uh…no.

Daniel:         When we played some of the team up north in the Spar they were speaking Welsh.

Stuart:         They were speaking Welsh yeah.

Daniel:         And to the ref.

Martin:         Ahh…that's interesting comment saying that.

Daniel:         To the ref as well.

Martin:         Did you have that Sean when, because I know you were the manager of Builth and you went to Bont a couple of games before us?

Sean:           Yeah. Yeah.

Martin:         And we found that when we got there they were speaking to us in English, a real lovely friendly club, really nice and as soon as we started playing them and were winning and 'och, och, och' to the ref and I thought that was really wrong.

Sue:            Yeah.

Martin:         Personally.

Chris:          It's confusing as well when they communicate in Welsh…you…because you can understand in English what they're gonna do.

Martin:         The ref to me should have said, answer them back in English, you know?

Filip:          Why?

Martin:         Cos he was talking back to them in Welsh.

Filip:          I don't mean to be rude…but it's the Welsh league.

Martin:         Yeah…but they could have been saying 'look c'mon ref, we'll give you twenty quid if you give us a penalty'

Filip:          Just because you don't understand their language it doesn't make it wrong for them to speak it does it?

Martin:         I think it's rude, I'm not saying it's wrong.

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| Filip: | Ahh… different thing…well ok. |
| Martin: | It's rude. It's rude then. |
| Filip: | Well I accept that if you don't speak it or understand it then it is. I accept that. |
| Martin: | They were speaking English to start with it, when we started winning that it was all 'och, och, och' and that. What were they saying? We don't know what's going on there and they seemed to know him didn't they? Like you get allocated local refs. |
| Sean: | I mean I can see your point of view and that. You don't expect the referee to be some sort of interpreter for the opposition. You know what I mean? |
| Martin: | Yeah. |
| Filip: | Na. No fair point. |
| Sean: | There's two sides to it really isn't it? He's perfectly obliged to answer back in Welsh if he wants. If there is any suspicion then that's our suspicions isn't it? |
| Filip: | I think so personally…you can get paranoid about it can't you? |
| Sean: | Yeah. |
| Filip: | And I suppose sometimes I think what you're saying is sometimes they do it deliberately, they, the Welsh, being English, they do it deliberately because they want you to know what they're saying. So I mean we've always counter balanced it by chucking in the odd word between us in Welsh and think 'f**k, they might know what we're talking about'. |
| Martin: | What…un, dau, tri, pedwar, pump? |
| Filip: | No S4C Sgorio. Nadolig Llawen…f**k me, dew boy! |
| All: | [Laughter]. |
| Interviewer: | How would you feel about the use of Welsh on the website for some parts or signs at the ground? |
| Chris: | Do you want us to read it or what? |
| Interviewer: | Would that be something you'd do as a club? |
| Filip: | Our website? |
| Interviewer: | Do you design the website? |

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| Martin: | I had it designed for us. I write most of it, I mean we've got Dan, two or three people write bits and bobs on there…um…I don't think there's the need for it to be honest with you in our club. Stu's got a GCSE in it but that's about it. |
| All: | [Laughter]. |
| Filip: | I think that's a bit harsh that. I think it was harsh. |
| All: | [Indiscriminate arguing] |
| Stuart: | I could make out the odd word but nobody would read it. |
| Martin: | If someone played for the side who was Welsh-speaking and said 'I want to do a match report in Welsh' then I would be more than happy for them to do so. We have no problem with that at all but there's no point me doing it. I'd have to do 'pedwar, un'. Oh no that's French isn't it? |
| All: | [Laughter]. |
| Filip: | We rest our case. |
| Martin: | Exactly. |
| Chris: | There is no need for it. Is there? |
| Filip: | You can guarantee that the number of hits the Welsh language version of the report would get concurring to English one would be… |
| Josh: | 98 per cent. |
| Chris: | Find me a Welsh person that can't speak English. There's no need for it is there? |
| Filip: | You're a Welshman. You said it. |
| Chris: | No there isn't, there isn't a need for it. |
| Martin: | No. I don't think there is no. |
| Chris: | If you can't understand it then fair enough. |
| Interviewer: | Have you travelled with Hay in Wales and England? |
| Filip: | Yeah. |
| Interviewer: | You've all been haven't you? |
| Filip: | Yeah. |
| Interviewer: | What were your experiences like? Do they differ at all? |
| Josh: | This season we've mainly drove in carloads but we have done like minibus trips before now. Mainly to the further afield and the big games I suppose. |

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| Martin: | I think the standard of football we're going to is the same…but whereas before we had to drive further to get that standard of football hence why we are playing this on the doorstep really. Whereas to get that standard in Wales, what have we got, we got to go hour an a half? |
| Filip: | Two…two sometimes two and a half hours. |
| Martin: | On average Phil? |
| Filip: | On average an hour and a half. An hour and a half on average yeah. |
| Martin: | An hour and a half I'd say to get that standard which we can get there… |
| Sean: | 40 minutes average. 40 minutes. |
| Chris: | Yeah. |
| Martin: | Yeah…so. |
| Interviewer: | What the kind of furthest distance for the Herefordshire League? |
| Martin: | Ledbury. |
| Sean: | Bromyard. |
| Martin: | It would be Bromyard. Yeah. |
| Chris: | What that about 45 minutes is it? |
| Martin: | About 50 minutes away. |
| Interviewer: | How are Hay treated by English and Welsh clubs and their supporters? Is there any animosity with certain clubs you've found? |
| Filip: | Sorry…I am gonna cut across here because it has always been my opinion that you are treated the way you treat people and if Hay St. Mary's set out to be polite and welcoming and all-embracing then that's exactly how we're treated back. If we set out to be a bunch of arseholes then we'd get treated like a bunch and that's the way you get treated from my experience all the time, with the odd exception of the odd dickhead on the pitch, who wants to take somebody or whatever…but I think that we are very well respected throughout England and Wales in our football. |
| Martin: | Yeah. |
| Filip: | That's by no accident that's because people at the club who do the right things. |
| Chris: | We never really upset anyone do we? |

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| Filip: | No. |
| Chris: | I don't think we ever have. |
| Martin: | I think we get lots of comments of 'you're the best club we've been to', 'best bunch of lads'. |
| Filip: | It's not by accident. |
| Sean: | It's not to suggest that we're not competitive. |
| Filip: | No. Absolutely not! |
| Sean: | We're competitive in a sporting nature. We've never any sort of… |
| Daniel: | We haven't had a red card this season. |
| Sean: | Well yeah I don't think we have but I mean we don't…there's never any sort of you know…duals between us and other clubs do you know what I mean? |
| Filip: | We've got local rivalry…no there's local rivalry between Builth and us because there always is. There's local rivalry between Llandod and us and out of everybody in the twenty odd years I've been here Llandod are the horriblest people in the world. However, you know there's not…no. |
| Chris: | You always walk off and shake their hand afterwards. |
| Filip: | Exactly. |
| Martin: | I think teams like coming here. I think we've got a really nice football ground, a nice pitch…you know we play football. |
| Filip: | Yeah. |
| Martin: | Our sides always play football. I mean we don't huff the ball. We play in from the back don't we Chrisey? |
| Chris: | Yeah. |
| Filip: | Sometimes a bit too much. We don't go out to kick people. |
| Martin: | We're a footballing side. Sometimes we might show a dam bit of steel who hoof it over the top and whatever but rightly or wrongly we always try to play football. So my sides are not horrible teams to play against. You know you get some sides and you think 'god, I'm gonna get kicked all over the place here today'. Hay have never been like that. |

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| Chris: | A good point about the Spar League again…at least the clubs could travel down here and get a nice pitch. We had to travel an hour and a half and play at right shitholes. |
| Filip: | Yeah that's true. It's true. Dolgellau. |
| Martin: | One of these websites did a survey on the best pitch in the Spar League and we got a lot of mentions and when you consider there were teams four or five…or four that use League of Wales pitches…Aberystwyth was there…who else? |
| Daniel: | Newtown? |
| Martin: | Newtown, Caerswys. |
| Stuart: | Caerswys. |
| Martin: | We had a lot of votes we did saying it was the best pitch. |
| Josh: | Was it? |
| Interviewer: | Does a lot of people from Hay come to watch the games? Do you get decent crowds? |
| Martin: | Depends on the weather I would say a lot of really. |
| Chris: | And it depends on how you are playing a lot of it as well. The interest does go obviously you know when you support your own club don't you? If you're playing Manchester United if you're losing the interest goes don't it? It's not quite as strong. |
| Filip: | No. No. |
| Chris: | It does go. |
| Filip: | No. It doesn't go. |
| Martin: | And also when you go back to the community thing if we…we thought if we went and got players in from all over, paid, you lose your supporters. |
| Filip: | Yeah. |
| Martin: | Because it's uncles, aunties and friends and brothers who are coming to watch Liverpool boys play. |
| Sean: | It depends…sometimes it depends on where you are in the league as well. |
| Filip: | Oh absolutely course it does. If you play crap people will come for two or three weeks and then they'll say 'uhh…we've lost the last three games and we've played terrible. I don't think I'll bother. |

| Sean: | But even if you import players in…if you're second you know…you're in between the top teams and there's two games to go they'll come and watch. |
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| Martin: | Yeah they will. That's right. |
| Sean: | At the end of the day they're not really …they are concerned who the players are to an extent but If you're a winner. |
| Chris: | But you get their family there as well don't you? |
| Filip: | We have had that haven't we where people have travelled. |
| Chris: | Yeah. |
| Filip: | And they bring their family with them. |
| Interviewer: | Do you charge admission? |
| Martin: | Yes. |
| Interviewer: | Is there a gate as such? |
| Martin: | No that's a nightmare thing for us because there is several entrances. It's a new…it's just been built up there it's a new ground. No basically we wait till everyone gets in…I usually go around about half time and if we let two quick goals in I go around after about quarter of an hour. |
| All: | [Laughter]. |
| Martin: | No. Joking aside. No. We go around with a bag. It's an absolute nightmare. I hate it. I mean it would be perfect if there was a gate 'it's two quid'. Cos you get soon as go around 'I haven't got any money'. What can you say? |
| Interviewer: | Yeah. How many people are you collecting money off? |
| Martin: | Anything from twenty to eighty, hundred on a really good day…um I've seen two hundred here when we played Talgarth for the league. I mean when we went to the Emrys Morgan we took what two hundred people there? |
| Interviewer: | What happens in Hay-on-Wye when England play Wales? Obviously they are in the same group for the football. Is there any difference between the football or the rugby? |
| Chris: | Definitely. Yeah. |
| Filip: | When England are playing Wales in the football, in Wales, then the Welsh FA allocate us tickets to go…but they say 'don't bring English people with you'. So, for example, I declined to go because I am an English person and in the Welsh |

end they'd they be jumping up when England score so I'm best not to go…and I did say that…but when England are play Wales in England we won't get any bloody tickets for Wembley that's for sure. So I am actually praising Wales in that sense.

Interviewer:     So would you all be rooting for Wales in the football?

Martin:     No. Not at all…I'd say it's probably.

Chris:     In that game I'd root for Wales but then again I'd watch England if they go to a World Cup. Then again I'd support Scotland and probably Ireland at a World Cup as well.

Martin:     Yeah same here, same as me…but if Wales…if Wales play England I want Wales to win. But I'll cheer Ireland on cheer Scotland on.

Chris:     On the other hand if England are in a World Cup playing rugby I would not support them.

All:     [Indiscriminate chatting].

Chris:     Never, ever…I would support New Zealand before them…and the French.

All:     [Indiscriminate chatting]

Interviewer:     Does it change with the rugby at all?

Chris:     Uhh.

Interviewer:     What happens then?

Chris:     I'd support the French over the English.

Filip:     F**k you Panda! [Quickly apologises] Sorry! I'm sorry.

Chris:     Christ. I can't stand English rugby.

Filip:     You can't support the French.

Martin:     I'd support anyone who faced England.

Filip:     Oh my god…anybody but England.

Sue:     If they're up against Ireland or Wales I feel more allegiance to them. Sorry. Rugby and football are so different. If it's football England always, if it's rugby then I'm sorry.

Stuart:     There's more passion about.

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| Chris: | It's strange because you'd think it would be the football because the fans are different there's more hatred in the football isn't there? In the rugby it's more relaxed I think for the fans. |
| Sean: | There's a slight dilution in the fact that you know England-Wales in the football a lot of people who have clubs and all that will support English players. |
| Chris: | Yeah. That's what it is you support an English club; a Premier League club don't you? |
| Sue: | I'd rather support Ireland…I'd definitely support Ireland. |
| Interviewer: | What's it like in the pubs is it a 50-50 with the football if they're both playing? |
| Martin: | Yeah but again because we're such a close-knit community it's more banter, it not a violence thing is it lads? |
| All: | Na. |
| Martin: | It's mates...I mean half the football team could be English half…it's banter. |
| Josh: | It's no Swansea-Cardiff rivalry. |
| Stuart: | Yeah. It is just banter. It's light banter isn't it? |
| Daniel: | Yeah. |
| Interviewer: | To what extent does Hay's status as a Book Town impact on the identity of Hay St. Mary's? |
| Martin: | I don't… |
| Stuart: | Does it? I don't think it does. |
| Daniel: | I don't think it does. |
| Martin: | I don't think it does…. no…you might get the odd tourist down here to watch but it's very rare…maybe if somebody's come for a week's holiday who is in to football might sort of say…um…actually we have got a couple of supporters who come here on holiday and end up watching us and they still come. That one who stays at your uncle's across the road he's is a Scouser and he comes every year to watch us. |
| Chris: | It might help…it might help the name of the football club. |
| Sue: | Yeah. |
| Chris: | It puts probably the football club a bit more on the map. |
| Sean: | Yeah. |

Chris:          But in terms of supporters it probably wouldn't would it?

Stuart:         No.

Sue:            No. It wouldn't I would say.

Interviewer:    Due to the town being 'the town of books' and the international profile the festival has given the town do you think the club is in some sense 'international'?

Josh:           In terms of the festival maybe it is.

Filip:          But the club isn't is it?

All:            No. Na.

Sue:            It's a creative audience.

Filip:          In the sense that the people involved in the club are multi-national then yeah…it's multi-national but it's not an international identity. No.

Daniel:         It's more local innit?

All:            Yeah.

Daniel:         It's just local innit.

Filip:          I would say 'we're more Hay'.

Interviewer:    How aware of the border are you in your daily lives?

Sue:            Fairly yeah.

Filip:          I don't have to go through passport control and every time I go across the border I don't sort of go 'back in England'.

Sue:            It has an effect though doesn't it? I think it does. Don't you?

Filip:          Yeah.

Chris:          There's nothing is there?

Martin:         When you drive back in you're aware of it because you see a sign saying you know 'Hay-on-Wye, Wales'…so it's right in front of you.

Filip:          'Hay-on-Wye, Y Gelli'.

Chris:          Especially when you've been away for a couple of weeks and come home. Do you know what I mean?

Stuart:         You have to pay to come back in when you go over the toll.

Filip:          We won't go into why that is Stuart.

Martin:         They used to have a passport in Hay-on-Wye didn't they?

Filip:          Aye. I've got one.

Chris:     I've got one of them.

Martin:    This guy called Richard Booth who Phil was doing the impression of earlier, crudely so.

Filip:     [Impression of Richard Booth]

Martin:    He made the town independent and forth which is why Hay's quite a lot to do with books…he bought passports for everyone and you could buy a Hay-on-Wye passport for 50p and get it signed by the King. He made himself King of Hay. In fact he's just sold his castle now.

Sue:       Yeah.

Filip:     Two million.

Sue:       To Mrs Haycocks.

Filip:     And he's declared himself 'Emperor of Book Towns'.

Martin:    Is that true is it?

Filip:     Yeah. At the end of the day it's all about publicity. He's a massive publicist and he put Hay-on-Wye on the map.

Chris:     He was skint to wasn't he?

Filip:     He sold his bookshop to um…for a million…one point two and then the castle for two million.