

#hanescymru2020

New Directions in Welsh History - Trywyddau newydd mewn Hanes Cymru

24 October / Hydref 2020

9.00 Croeso / welcome	
9.15 - 10.15 Panel A: Migrations and Assimilations Chair: Paul O'Leary (Aberystwyth)	Sam Blaxland (Swansea), The Invisible Immigrants? The need for a history of the English in Wales since 1945. Thomas Davies (Bangor), Keeping up with the neighbours: Identity and the duality of Welsh and English in medieval Wales Lucy Taylor (Aberystwyth), Can settler colonial theory help us to think about Wales?
10.15 – 10.30 Egwyl / Break	
10.30– 11. 30 Panel B: Impacts and Memories Chair: Euryrn Roberts (Bangor)	Caroline Bourne (Reading), Reassessing the impact of the Normans: An interdisciplinary approach to Gower before the thirteenth century. Dewi Alter (Cardiff), Epistol at y Cembra and Welsh Cultural Memory Brooke Martin (Bangor), Tracing the Tour of the Forgotten 1890s Welsh National Opera Company
11.30 – 11.45 Egwyl / Break	
11.45 – 12.45 Panel C: Communities and individuals Chair: Steve Thompson (Aberystwyth)	Ashley Morgan (Cardiff Met), Boyos Stuck in the Land of Their Fathers: The Legacy of Welsh Oppression. Michael Lambert (Lancaster), Undernourished and not fit to cope with home duties": 'Problem families' and the welfare state in North Wales, 1945-70 Louise Miskell (Swansea), Deindustrialization not Dereliction: the experience of steel communities in post-War Wales
12.45 - -1.45 Cinio / Lunch	
1.45 – 2.45 Panel D: Material and visual sources Chair: Stephanie Ward (Cardiff)	Bethan Scorey, New Perspectives on the History of Ironworkers' Housing in Merthyr Tydfil Colin Thomas, Picturing the Past: The Role of Film in Reflecting and Affecting the Past Paul Cabuts, New Vision: Photography and Wales
2.45-3.00 Egwyl / Break	
3.00 -4.00 Panel E: Peace and pacificism Chair: Tomás Irish (Swansea)	Gethin Matthews (Swansea), Welsh soldiers' thoughts on the question of conscientious objection in the First World War Stuart Booker (Swansea), Welsh Internationalism and the Establishment of the League of Nations Union in Wales, c. 1918-1925. Craig Owen (Aberystwyth), "Inspired by Annie": The Story of the 1924 Welsh Women's Peace Petition to America
4.00-4.15 Egwyl /Break	
4.15-5.00 Panel F: History and the public Chair: Martin Johnes (Swansea)	Matthew Rowland (Bangor), Country Houses in Wales: The Future According to Public Opinion James Phillips (Cardiff), Respecting the Past, Responding to the Present – Reflections on the Llafur Summer Series 2020

Panel A: Migrations and Assimilations

Sam Blaxland (Swansea University), *The Invisible Immigrants? The need for a history of the English in Wales since 1945.*

The 2011 census revealed that in some of the local authorities of north-east and mid-Wales, less than half of the population considered themselves Welsh. Similarly, in most of these areas, only around half the population had been born in Wales. Even though this data does not tell a straight-forward story, in all other parts of Wales significant numbers did not consider themselves Welsh either. The vast majority of the 'others' in this case were from England, the bonds between the two nations being tight for reasons of geography, history and economics. English migration into Wales is a long-term trend and the impact it has had – and continues to have – on local community dynamics, the economy and workplace, and on Welsh culture and national identity is very significant. English immigration is therefore a crucial part of the history of modern Wales, especially when seen in light of events like Brexit, devolution, and the rise of independence movements, especially in Scotland. Yet, apart from the work of Day, Drakakis-Smith and Davis, who focused specifically on the English in north-west Wales, very little has been written about by far the largest flow of immigrants into Wales in the twentieth century. This paper will focus on the earliest ideas for a project that seeks to explore the topic. It will suggest some ideas for how to approach telling the history of the English in Wales, especially in the years after the Second World War, modelling part of the approach on Murray Watson's pioneering study of the English in Scotland. However, the primary aim is to listen to the thoughts of fellow attendees about how these preliminary ideas could be refined.

Sam Blaxland is a Post-doctoral Fellow and Tutor in Modern History at Swansea University. His recently published first book is *Swansea University: Campus and Community in a Post-war World, 1945-2020*.

Thomas Davies, Bangor University, *Keeping up with the neighbours: Identity and the duality of Welsh and English in medieval Wales.*

The medieval Welsh marches are often portrayed as a place of duality, of Welsh and English, a battleground where cultural identities clashed: In this paper, however, I explore cultural emulation and integration. How did cultural interaction lead people to present an image based on both Welsh and English cultural aspects? How far did people base their image on those of their neighbours? Can we see the formation of a hybrid identity or identities? Through a case study of members of the princely dynasties in southeast Wales, we consider how they may have been influenced by their neighbours – both Welsh and English – in the way they presented themselves to others. Through their use of titles, seal design, charter layout, and poetry, what image did they seek to portray? By incorporating various cultural elements, how does this fit into our concept of cultural identities, of Welsh and English, and into historical paradigms around Anglicisation or Europeanisation? Through this paper I hope to provoke more thought on the way identities were expressed in medieval Wales, and how we, as historians, can explore them.

Thomas Davies is a fourth year PhD student at Bangor University, studying cross-cultural emulation and integration in medieval Wales. Before studying at Bangor, Thomas completed a BA at Aberystwyth and an MA at Cardiff, before working in archives, museums and as an archaeologist.

Lucy Taylor (Aberystwyth University) *Can settler colonial theory help us to think about Wales?*

Settler colonial theory (SCT) is deployed in locations such as Australia, the Americas and Palestine/Israel as a counterpart to indigenous thinking and struggle. Taking an explicit political stance, SCT describes and critiques settler colonial regimes, examining their institutions, policies and, most importantly, logics. Clearly, Welsh history is distinctive but SCT perhaps offers conceptual tools which might aid analysis of Wales' 'colonial' relationship with England. Previous theoretical approaches have borrowed postcolonial concepts associated with British Imperial experiences of extractive colonialism (Bhabha; Said), rather than settler colonialism where 'the colonizer comes to stay'. One important concept is the logic of elimination (Veracini, Wolfe), whereby the purpose of the settler is to 'eliminate' the original People. While 'total' elimination is rare, it also manifests as assimilation: social, cultural, linguistic, etc. This is combined with a second logic: racialization, whereby markers such as language are linked by the settler regime to negative characteristics (backward, dirty, devious) and the depreciation of indigenous knowledge and life-ways. Both logics might be useful tools, providing an intellectual structure to politicize

assimilation and Wales-England relations by helping to identify the logics which underpin not only domination but also resistance to absorption and pragmatic strategies of accommodation. Additionally, they suggest ways to link Wales' story of colonial domination to global experiences and dynamics.

Lucy Taylor is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of International Politics, Aberystwyth University. She researches on Y Wladfa, indigenous politics and Welsh identity

Panel B: Impacts and Memories

Caroline Bourne (Reading) Reassessing the impact of the Normans: An interdisciplinary approach to Gower before the thirteenth century.

The question of what happened in Gower before the thirteenth century has not been fully addressed, especially in the context of Welsh history as a whole. Those scholars who have tackled the issue of the history of Gower have largely done so in a localised way and when faced with the problem sparse documentary sources prior to the thirteenth century, they have generally either ignored the period altogether or used later sources to try to fill the gap which has led to a distorted narrative of events. This paper summaries my ongoing research by using the Gower peninsula as a historical source and through studying the landscape, combined with what documentary sources exist and archaeological data regional development can be determined. I argue that it is possible to reconstruct the early history of Gower through an interdisciplinary approach, furthering understanding of why this region developed differently to the majority of Wales. In conclusion, my research by using an interdisciplinary approach to examine the impact of the Normans on the Gower peninsula, sheds new light not only on the importance of Gower to the overall history of Wales, but also contributes to the field of Anglo-Norman Studies.

Caroline Bourne is a second year Medieval Studies PhD student at the University of Reading studying the impact of the Normans on Gower

Dewi Alter (Cardiff) Epistol at y Cembu and Welsh Cultural Memory

This paper will argue that Richard Davies' 'Epistle at y Cembu' (1567) is a vehicle of Cultural Memory. Drawing on Jan and Aleida Assmann's seminal concept 'Cultural Memory' that the past is a cultural artefact, it will be argued that Davies defines the Welsh as a Protestant nation thus justifying contemporary religious change. I will analyse this text mnemohistorically, showing what Davies wants the Welsh to remember from their past. This explains why his narrative champions the Protestant Reformation by using historic justification for it drawing on myths that the ancient Britons were Protestants – having received the Apostolic faith untainted shortly after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ from Joseph of Arimathea. Within the turbulent religious context of the Reformation, Cultural Memory, it is argued, is used to invalidate Catholicism, and claim that the Reformation is in fact a return to the original faith of the Welsh, or Britons.

Dewi Alter is an AHRC funded PhD student at Cardiff currently in his final year. His PhD analyses how Welsh Cultural Memory was created and mediated through national narratives about the past in Early Modern Wales.

Brooke Martin (Bangor), Tracing the Tour of the Forgotten 1890s Welsh National Opera Company

It was previously believed that opera was neither a popular nor successful genre in 19th-century Wales. However, my research into the Welsh National Opera Company [WNOC] reveals that there was actually significantly more operatic activity taking place in Wales in the 1890s than was previously attributed. Managed by Joseph Parry's son, Mendelssohn Parry, the WNOC gave two tours of South Wales and performed Joseph Parry's operas, *Arianwen* and *Sylvia*. While the company gave performances in the larger industrial cities, it primarily traveled to smaller rural towns across Wales and performed in village halls. According to newspaper accounts, these performances were highly successful and several towns were revisited due to prior success. The 1890 tour alone lasted four months, during which *Arianwen* was performed 100 times. This research into the WNOC has not been previously examined, and the level of detail I have been able to achieve is unprecedented. Not only does this research change our understanding of the role in opera in late 19th-century Wales, it also provides deeper insight into the musical taste and culture of 19th-century society in Wales.

Brooke Martin is a second year PhD student at Bangor University. Her research examines operas by Welsh composers in the first fifty years following the premiere of the first Welsh-language opera, *Blodwen* (1878) by Joseph Parry.

Panel C: Communities and individuals

Ashley Morgan (Cardiff Metropolitan) *Boys Stuck in the Land of Their Fathers: The Legacy of Welsh Oppression.* Arguably, Welsh identity is historically contingent on masculinity (John, 1991). This in turn, is dependent on responses to both the real and imagined oppression of Welsh people in the past by English people and Englishness. Arguably oppression is represented through the English Monarchy, embodied by The Prince of Wales, historical denial of the Welsh language, second homes, partial devolution and power enacted from Whitehall, referred to as 'internal colonialism' (Hechter, 1975). Much has been written about Wales as a country (Williams, 1985, Jones, 1992), and more contemporary research addresses the legacy of post-industrialization (Walkerdine, 2012, Walkerdine and Jiminez, 2012) and education, on working-class Welsh men (Ward, 2018). I wish to contribute to existing research by examining the oppression of Welsh masculinity through the Jungian theory of the collective unconscious (1995). Arguably, feelings of oppression are experienced collectively, despite being an ancient memory, and are compensated for through displays of male 'hardness' such as violence, hard drinking, playing and supporting rugby. This leads to the notion that Welsh men are perpetually 'stuck' in a system which oppresses and infantilises them, they are 'boyos' – a term which removes accountability for hardness from which they cannot remove themselves because to do so would mean they would lose power.

Dr Ashley Morgan is a senior lecturer in the School of Art and Design, Cardiff Metropolitan University. Her current research interests are about masculinity, sex and representations of the male body, especially but not limited to representations of masculinity in popular culture. Ashley has published on male geek identity, sexual asceticism as a viable form of male sexual behaviour, and the presence of mediated toxic masculinity. She is especially interested in the intersections between masculine identity and clothing, and has published on men in skirts, and the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and men's suits. She has a book chapter pending on Sherlock Holmes as the provenance of discursive toxic masculinity in popular culture for the Routledge International Handbook for Communication and Gender. Furthermore, Ashley is about to start working on her first monograph on Welsh masculinity and a culture of oppression.

Michael Lambert (Lancaster), "*Undernourished and not fit to cope with home duties*": 'Problem families' and the welfare state in North Wales, 1945-70

In summer 1951 the case of a mother living in a rundown cottage in the Nant Ffrancon Pass was brought before the Caernarvonshire County Council Problem Family Committee. She had been brought to its attention by a phalanx of statutory and voluntary officials who traipsed through the family home, which was regularly criticised as 'untidy and dirty'. The Medical Officer of Health who chaired the Committee found her 'undernourished and not fit to cope with home duties', leading to her referral to a rehabilitation centre for 'problem families'. Her case was one of hundreds brought before similar Problem Family Committees across North Wales throughout the 'golden age' of the 'classic' welfare state. Using the case files of 16 mothers referred to the Brentwood rehabilitation centre in Marple, Manchester, from local authority Problem Family Committees across North Wales between 1945 to 1970, this paper presents a critical re-examination of poverty, affluence and the local state during the period of post-war consensus. It shows how divisions of class, gender and race were used to shape access to limited welfare resources, and how intimate geographies of place and space exerted an influence on who came to be considered a 'problem family'.

I am currently Postdoctoral Fellow in Social Inequalities and Research and Engagement Lead for the Centre for Alternatives to Social and Economic Inequalities at Lancaster University. Before this I was a Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Governance of Health at the University of Liverpool studying the history of the National Health Service on Merseyside from 1948 to the present day. I completed my PhD in history at Lancaster University in 2017 on so-called 'problem families' and the local welfare state from 1945 to 1974, upon which this paper is based. I have also been a Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow in Early Childhood Studies at Liverpool Hope University as well. I've papers published in *Children and Society*, *Social Policy and Society* and *People, Policy and Place*, as well as the editor of several witness seminars relating to the history of the NHS.

Louise Miskell (Swansea), Deindustrialization not Dereliction: the experience of steel communities in post-War Wales

This paper examines processes of deindustrialization in Wales's steel communities. In some recent studies, of the north American 'rust belt' for example, works closures tend to be viewed as catalysts for deindustrialization. Abandoned mills, factories and other sites of industrial dereliction have become a focus of analysis as potent symbols of deindustrializing societies. Studies of Welsh steel towns suggest that if we examine only those communities dealing with the consequences of industrial closure, we are likely to acquire only a partial picture of deindustrialization. New research conducted as part of the 'Social Worlds of Steel' project, suggests that places where residents have lived with long-term economic uncertainty, or absorbed incremental workforce reductions over time, also exhibit many of the characteristics of social trauma and identity crisis that afflicted places where industry had packed its bags for good. Preliminary findings of an online survey conducted with Port Talbot residents will be used to illustrate this, along with a review of previous research undertaken by social scientists on this subject in Wales.

Louise Miskell teaches history at Swansea University and researches urban and industrial history from the eighteenth- to the twentieth centuries. She recently edited a volume of essays entitled 'New Perspectives on Welsh Industrial History' (UWP, 2020) and has co-written (with Chris Evans) a new book on the copper industry entitled, 'Swansea Copper: A Global History' (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020). Her current research project 'The Social Worlds of Steel', looks at the impact of the steel industry on towns and communities in twentieth-century Wales.

Panel D: Material and visual sources

Bethan Scorey, New Perspectives on the History of Ironworkers' Housing in Merthyr Tydfil

When public attention first turned towards the poor living conditions in ironworkers' houses in Merthyr during the early Victorian period, it was as though they had been discovered for the first time: there is an abundance of information about the failures and shortcomings of this type of housing, but very little about how it was designed and built in the first place. There is also a common misconception that the 'terraced house' type was simply imported to Merthyr by incoming ironmasters and speculative developers, and it is often perceived as the antithesis and even the demise of vernacular architecture because it conformed to national rather than regional or local influences. This perceived break between pre-industrial vernacular buildings and 'alien' workers housing is further emphasised by the current literature, which can be categorised into material that focuses on the farmhouses and labourers' cottages of upland Glamorgan, and material that exclusively discusses industrial buildings. However, the period between 1750 and 1850 was a period of enormous transition in south Wales, when Merthyr grew from a small, isolated village with an agricultural economy to the largest town in Wales, and it seems only logical that dwellings in the area were evolved in parallel with these societal changes. Exploring extended farmhouses, 'squatter' settlements, and the first company rows, this paper will demonstrate that the earliest ironworkers' houses in Merthyr were evolved from farmhouses and agricultural labourers' cottages and were heavily influenced by vernacular styles and traditions.

I am an early-career building historian from Cardiff, currently working at St Fagans National History Museum. I just graduated with an MSt in Building History from the University of Cambridge, where I wrote my dissertation about the history and evolution of ironworkers' housing in Merthyr Tydfil. In October this year, I will be joining the Institute for the Study of Welsh Estates at Bangor University with a doctoral research project on 'St Fagans Castle and Estate: its Architectural and Landscape History.

Colin Thomas, Picturing the Past: The Role of Film in Reflecting and Affecting the Past

Most historians include references to a nation's literature as a way of understanding a nation's past but sometimes overlook the film and television programmes that, in the last hundred years, have reached a far wider audience. There are notable exceptions – Gwynfor Evans was certainly aware of the importance of what appears on our television screens and John Davies went so far as to assert that Wales could be described as an "artefact produced by broadcasting." Next year the Welsh Books Council/Cyngor Llyfrau Cymru will be launching *Picturing Our Past/Fframio'n Gorffennol*, a free enhanced ebook on the history of Welsh film and television. Its author Colin Thomas and contributing author Iola Baines have had the difficult job of choosing which films and programmes, five

per chronological chapter, best represent the period – and which are best forgotten. This presentation will include film extracts and will look at the way in which films both reflect and effect the history of the period in which they are made.

Colin Thomas is a television producer/director whose history programmes include *The Dragon Has Two Tongues*, *Hughesovka and the New Russia* and *Excalibur – the Search for Arthur*. He is a three times winner of BAFTA Cymru's Best Documentary, a Celtic Film and Television Festival Jury Award and a Prix Europa.

Paul Cabuts, New Vision: Photography and Wales

It seems that we are all photographers now, busily engaged with the proliferation of digital platforms for sharing visual imagery that portrays various aspects of contemporary life. Importantly, the story of photography itself, as a global phenomenon, is deeply rooted in Wales. Yet photography largely remains an adjunct to established disciplines that use the photograph's documenting capacity to tell their own stories of Wales. There have been attempts to realise some form of organisation dedicated to photography's relationship to Wales, one that could interrogate the history of the medium whilst developing new critical approaches to the nation's photographic present and future. Whilst this ambition is yet to be fully realised there are national bodies that currently advocate photography as part of their broader focus. As such, there is limited attention given to the development of a sophisticated national discourse that could articulate the past, present and future of this important aspect of visual culture in Wales. This paper considers:

- How a greater understanding of the relationship between photography and Wales could be used to bring new perspectives to the history of Wales and its place in the world?
- What resources are currently available to contribute to the development of new knowledge in terms of the relationship between photography and Wales?

Dr Paul Cabuts is an Honorary Research Fellow at Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales and former Director of the Institute of Photography at Falmouth University. He completed his PhD at the European Centre for Photographic Research following an MA in Fine Art at Aberystwyth University and a BA (Hons) Documentary Photography at the Newport School of Art & Design. The University of Wales Press published his monograph *Creative Photography and Wales* in 2012. He has photographed in Wales over several decades and his work has been exhibited nationally and internationally. The monograph of his Rhondda photographs *Not Still* was published by Tirnod Press in 2020.

Panel E: Peace and pacificism

Gethin Matthews (Swansea), Welsh soldiers' thoughts on the question of conscientious objection in the First World War

When conscription was introduced in the spring of 1916, that led to the identification and punishment of those eligible men who refused to serve for reasons of conscience. Some serving soldiers came into direct contact with these conscientious objectors and of course those stationed on the fighting fronts could also venture their opinions. So what did servicemen think of the COs who refused to 'do their duty'? This issue has been clouded by recollections that were shared in later decades. On the one hand, the CO Ithel Davies recalled in the 1980s how much support he had in the barracks from soldiers who admired his stand; on the other, Robert Pugh declared that had he encountered a CO he would have shot him: 'A man who's not prepared to fight for his country should be killed straightaway'. This paper will go back to letters written by soldiers at the time to explore how they expressed their opinions of men who refused to fight. Although some write of their contempt for COs, some more thoughtful soldiers consider the complexities of the situation and grapple with the moral ambiguities of whether individuals should have the right to opt out of the military campaign.

Dr Gethin Matthews is a Senior Lecturer in the History Department at Swansea University, where he has been since 2011. His doctorate looked at the Welsh in the Gold Rushes to British Columbia in the 1860s, but for the past decade most of his research has been focussed upon the impact of the First World War upon Wales and the Welsh. He edited the volume *Creithiau* (2016), and his most recent book *Having a Go at the Kaiser* (2018) was nominated for the Wales Book of the Year Award in the creative non-fiction category.

Stuart Booker (Swansea), Welsh Internationalism and the Establishment of the League of Nations Union in Wales, c. 1918-1925.

This paper will explore the formation of the League of Nations Union (LNU) in Wales during the interwar years. In October 1918, the British LNU was created as an organisation that promoted the League of Nations and its principles. However, in Wales a separate organisation was formed in 1923. Acting independently, the LNU in Wales developed its own distinctive identity. The creation of its own events, such as Daffodil Days and the 1923 Women's Petition of Wales to the Women of America, illustrated the unique approach of the Welsh LNU's work. This paper argues that the creation of the Welsh LNU was the result of a growing national consciousness and investment in Welsh based institutions. It will show that the formation of the Welsh LNU came from a desire for Wales to be viewed as a country that dealt with the League on its own terms. Its formation was endorsed by individuals who were involved in the pre-war construction of Welsh nationhood. These Welsh 'nationalists', like David Davies, used the League as a means of asserting their sense of national difference. Ultimately, the paper shows how internationalism was part of the promotion of national identity in the interwar period.

Stuart Booker is a PhD student at Swansea University. His thesis explores the history of internationalism in Wales by focusing on the League of Nations in Wales during the interwar period (1918-1939). His research is funded by Swansea University's College of Arts and Humanities. He has collaborated with the Wales for Peace Heritage Lottery Fund Project, through digitisation of Welsh LNU materials.

Craig Owen (Aberystwyth), "Inspired by Annie": The Story of the 1924 Welsh Women's Peace Petition to America

In 1923, the horrors of World War 1 having galvanised a generation against conflict, women of Wales organised an unprecedented campaign for world peace. 390,296 women signed a memorial petition, through the Welsh League of Nations Union (WLNU), calling for 'Law not War' – for America to join and lead the League of Nations – through appealing to the women of America 'from community to community, home to home'. A beautiful gilded Moroccan leather and vellum Memorial was created, and a great oak chest carved to contain the signatures for presentation, alongside US Women's movements, to President Calvin Coolidge – to be held 'for all time' in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington. The New York press noted that the final Welsh Women's Peace Petition was over 7 miles long. A delegation led by WLNU Chair Annie Hughes-Griffiths, travelled from Wales to America in March 1924 for a 2 month 'Peace Tour' of the United States, building support through American women's organisations who went on to work together for peace. Annie kept a diary of her trip, recently rediscovered and digitised by WCIA volunteers, alongside a range of resources in Wales' Temple of Peace Archives - where the memorial binding remains to this day. As the Women's Peace Petition Centenary approaches in 2023-24, WCIA and the Wales Peace Institute hope to involve researchers, students and community groups in uncovering the story behind this remarkable campaign.

View feature and supporting materials: <https://www.wcia.org.uk/peace-heritage/womens-peace-petition/>

Craig Owen is currently starting an MPhil project on the 'History of Welsh Internationalism' with Aberystwyth University's Department of International Politics and Swansea University's Department of History, in partnership with civil society through the Welsh Centre for International Affairs and the newly formed Wales Peace Institute. Over 2015-19, Craig headed the 'Wales for Peace' programme, a Heritage Lottery Funded WW100 centenary partnership that involved 100 community organisations and schools. Over 800 volunteers were engaged in uncovering 'hidden histories' around peace building from WW1 to today – many resources from which can be explored at Heddwch.Cymru. Craig previously worked in a range of roles in Wales' international sector with Oxfam Cymru, Make Poverty History, Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) and the Wales for Africa programme. Having been undergoing Cancer treatment since 2017, he decided to take on the new challenge of postgraduate study with the aim of writing up Wales' rich Internationalist History for future posterity.

Panel F: History and the public

Matthew Rowland (Bangor), Country Houses in Wales: The Future According to Public Opinion

The proposed paper will consider the futures of country houses in Wales, drawing upon the findings of a recent public opinion questionnaire relating to significance, identity, relevance, and the future of country houses in Wales. Responses to the questionnaire enable an understanding of the current position of country houses in Wales in terms of their current significance, and how they relate to contemporary notions of identity among the general population of Wales and beyond. The proposed paper will identify and contextualise the current position, whilst considering the historic significance of country houses in Wales so to understand the possibilities of the future for these significant properties. At a time when threats to the futures of these sites are both, mounting and varied, it will be argued that this is a crucial moment in considering the future and understanding what the visiting public expect to receive and hope to receive from them.

Matthew is a doctoral researcher based at Bangor University, studying as part of the Institute for the Study of Welsh Estates (ISWE). He is working towards establishing best practice recommendations for country houses in Wales, relative to the interpretation and marketing of sites. As part of this, he is assessing the position of country houses in modern Welsh culture and has undertaken a major public opinion study and an analysis of social media practice and engagement.

James Phillips (Cardiff), Respecting the Past, Responding to the Present – Reflections on the Llafur Summer Series 2020

Between 11 July and 29 August, in its fiftieth year of action and activity, Llafur: the Welsh People's History Society organised its first series of online events. The society's objective has always been to sustain the labour history tradition, both in terms of uncovering the hidden and forgotten pasts of the Welsh working-class and in preserving historical source material conducive to that pursuit. It also maintains a belief that history can not only inform a wider collective of the past but it can also illuminate our understanding of the present. The Llafur Summer Series of 2020 represented an extension of those ambitions. Facing technological hurdles during lockdown, and realising the need to respond to the surge of the Black Lives Matter movement, organisers were tasked with constructing a series of webinars, roundtable discussions, and talks, on the timely themes of race, racism and memorialisation. Through a consideration of the issues raised during each of the six events, and a reflection on the organisational challenges confronted, this paper will provide an insight into how historical societies can potentially open up Welsh history debates to a wider public audience, while pointing towards the future direction for Llafur in 2020 and beyond.

James Phillips holds a PhD in History and Welsh History at Cardiff University on the political culture of interwar Monmouthshire ('From Culture to Tradition: The Political Landscape of Monmouthshire, 1918-1929'). He has recently presented papers on the political culture of Newport and the 1922 By-Election (NAASWCH Conference, 2018), and 'Mass Democracy and the Impact on Political Identity' (AWEN Event – Suffrage and the Aftermath of WW1, 2019). His research interests are: Nineteenth and twentieth century Welsh and British political and social history; trade unions, the labour movement, and labour history; political parties, non-party organisations, and political culture; suffrage and citizenship. He is the Llafur Event Secretary.