

Letters to the Editor

10 YEARS OF CAMBRIA

EDITOR

Llongyfarchiadau - congratulations!

CAMBRIA has made a significant contribution to building our sense of nationhood over the past ten years.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM

Minister for Heritage

Y Senedd

Caerdydd

EDITOR

I wish you every success as the new editor of CAMBRIA, I'm sure the torch has been passed to more than capable hands. You've brought to life a long held dream of mine, that Wales would have a sophisticated magazine that can compete with glossies in England, France, the U.S. You have achieved that in CAMBRIA.

I look forward to many more years of your endeavours and those of your contributors.

Lynne H. Fox

Vancouver.

Canada

YET ANOTHER CAMBRIA CAMPAIGN WINS THROUGH!

EDITOR

Several months ago (CAMBRIA June/July) I pointed out that all the information I had received by post from Cardiff International Airport had been in English only and the same applied to the signage at the airport itself, which I found to be totally unacceptable in a bilingual country. As CAMBRIA's Research Editor I also contacted the airport directly to register my complaint.

I have just received a comprehensive information booklet and winter schedule from CIA which are both totally bi-lingual and would like to congratulate the airports managers for their welcome change of attitude.

Why should we always be forced to campaign for things that should be taken for granted? The Welsh Government obviously has much to do if they hope to change the ingrained monolingual mind-set that still pervades the private sector.

I hope other major companies, agencies, organisations and businesses will now adopt the same foresight and willingness to accept the reality of bilingualism without excuse or rancour.

Now, what about the airport's signage?

Rhobert ap Steffan

Llangadog

Sir Gar

NORTH&SOUTH/EAST&WEST

EDITOR

I read C.Ward's letter on the matter of a north-south rail link with interest. It contains one central assertion which I would like to draw attention to. The following sentence typifies a simplistic assertion which is common in Wales: "The general idea would be for a railway to keep as close to the spine of Wales as possible to be available to customers to the east and west of the line." Has Mr Ward thought seriously about this? Take the A470 north-south road link. It starts promisingly in the Conwy Valley. It then cannot continue due south because there are mountains in the way. It curves off westwards through Dolwyddelan and is faced with a bottleneck in Llan and Blaenau Ffestiniog, which, according to the map of Wales, is far too much to the west to carry a 'central' route; and so on; the road goes this way and that, avoiding mountains. The Cross Foxes route, above Dolgellau, sees it going up over a mountain pass, there being no other way. The point being that there is no viable 'central' route that a road/rail north-south route can take. And even if there were, it is very doubtful whether it would be viable in regard to revenue because it would be too far to join from where people actually live. The place of greatest population density in north Wales is Wrexham. If you had a central north-south rail route, the people of Wrexham would take half an hour of travelling before they got to it. There is another dense area along the coast from Rhyl to Bangor. Bangor has around 20,000 population: to get to Cardiff from there, in what direction do you head - southwards (by road) or eastwards (by rail)?

The problem we have is that we too easily think of single solutions, single entities. Just because the word 'Wales' is a single lexical term (it stands for one place/country) we tend to extrapolate from this to assuming single entities/solutions. The above argument based on topography is sufficient to give the lie to this. Alternatively, we should think laterally and think of multiple, not singular, patterns and solutions. Take the Wrexham population. The best way to get from there to Cardiff and back is by train, and the service, supported by the Assembly, has improved greatly in the last four years. The train link is faster, generally, than the journey by car, which is slowed by heavy lorry traffic in the two-lane mode, and by the bottleneck at Hereford. What if you live in Bangor and want to get to Cardiff? The best way is by air, and the new service from Anglesey could supply this. Train links across Wales are not by themselves the real solution; the solution (because of our awkward landscape) is grounded in multiplicity of supply - of road, rail, buses and air.

Remember that about half the population of Wales lives within 50 miles of Cardiff; so this area lends itself to fast, lightweight, train service.

Also remember that north Wales contains only approximately 700,000 residents, so we cannot expect to have the best and most of Welsh investment. Wales, with its population approaching 3m, will inevitably have more of everything, and

the greatest need, in die southeast.

The buses initiative from the Assembly in the last few years, with free travel for die over-60s, has been a success, improving many people's quality of life. And for die under 60s, local bus services, organised by Local Authorities, have resulted in some cars not being used, and helped to invigorate local communities.

'Wales', surely, should be interpreted as a multiple, not as a singular concept. We have diversity of population, economy, topography, education, and so on, and we should welcome diat. We have a bilingual nation, where both languages are equally valued. We should be aware of the self-destructive nature of simple solutions to complex problems. We should begin widi complexity and variety and find die solutions to suit,

knowing that it is impossible to please everybody. We have a happy diversity in Wales and we should value that.

John Idris Jones

ACWELE'RMOCH...

EDITOR

The Welsh Assembly has allowed the windpower industry to seize great tracts of Welsh forest land. Ned Thomas, in his 1971 book *A Culture in Crisis*, summed up such a dreadful act of cultural vandalism by quoting a translation of Saunders Lewis's lines from *Buchedd Garmorr*.

My country of Wales is a vineyard,

given into my keeping,

To be handed down to my children

and my children's children

As an inheritance for all time.

And look, the pigs are rushing in

to despoil it.

Therefore I now call upon all my

friends,

The common man and the scholar,

Come to me now, stand with me in

the breach

That the beauty of the past be kept

for the times that shall come.

Renewable energy may usefully contribute to electricity generation, but this must not be at the cost of ruining the countryside of Wales and the rest of Britain, whilst overseas developers watch their bank balances grow with "subsidies" taken from every electricity consumer.

Another extract from this book took me aback. The particular chapter was about D.J. Williams, who sold his family farmhouse and donated the money to Plaid Cymru. "He came to the conclusion that without some self-government Welsh people would never be

able to protect and develop their moral and material resources. Near Rhydcymerau, where DJ. was reared, the land, improved by the labour of centuries, and now sold by English landlords to the British Forestry Commission and grown

over with trees, reinforces his conclusion." How would DJ. feel if he could see the carbuncles being placed on our countryside today? How would he feel if he knew that the land his father and fathers father had worked so hard for, was now being replaced, not by forests, but by wind development industrialisation, with huge metal towers filling the pockets of huge developer's and landowners, and in this case, The Welsh Assembly Government.

As a nation we have suffered a great deal in decades gone by, just one example being the drowning of villages so that cities in England could have drinking water. Why on earth doesn't the Welsh Assembly work to produce clean renewable energy for Wales from other sources rather than ruining our landscapes? And what about England giving something back to Wales for destroying those villages? The people of Wales deserve the right to keep their land, their peat, their forestry, their landscapes and their dignity.

I suggest we re-read the first line of the our National Anthem: "Mae hen wlad fy Nhadau yn annwyl i mi". Knowing what we know now, I wonder if DJ would still give Plaid Cymru that £2,000 for selling his family home?

Lynwen Evans

Mydroilyn

Ceredigion