

**Education and Lifelong Learning Committee**

**THE QUALITY AND THE MEDIUM**

A paper for the national Assembly's  
Review of Higher Education

With four appendixes

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## PREFACE

The main paper in this collection, THE QUALITY AND THE MEDIUM, relates to sections 2.2 and 3.5 of the Review's terms of reference. The four appendixes are relevant to the second half of the main paper, and are selected from a number of papers I have written since January 1998 on the subject of a Welsh Medium Federal College in the University of Wales. I hope that members of the committee will find these papers entertaining. There are more papers on related topics in the collection *Probleml Prifysgol a Phapurau Eraill* which I submitted to the Committee's Chairman a short while ago, and which I hope to eventually publish.

6.4.01

D.G.J.

## I THE QUALITY AND THE MEDIUM

### Introduction: The Problems.....and the Problem

I have read with interest the Terms of Reference for the Higher Education Review, and nodded approvingly as I came to some of the headings. Certainly, some of the right questions are being asked. It is for me a matter of regret, as I near the end of 34 years' teaching in the University of Wales, that some of these questions have not been asked much earlier. The existence of the national Assembly and of its Higher Education Committee – despite the basic ambiguity in the Assembly's relationship with the University of Wales – now enable elected representatives of our people, and the fledgling government of Wales, to begin addressing some of the fundamental problems regarding our methods and aims in the University and throughout the Higher Sector. The Committee may indeed, during the course of its discussion, come to consider what I before now have called "the Problem of the University", and which I have defined as the disaffection of professional Welshmen towards it. I note particularly question 1.4: "How can HE in Wales be made more attractive to Welsh students?" I have suggested the answer in previous papers, and here it is again in summary: by paying them. Make it financially worthwhile for our ablest children to stay in Wales beyond the age of 18, and we shall see how quickly the attitudes of pupils and parents will change. In this academic year for the first time the teachers' training premium was offered, in order to attract more teachers into the secondary sector; it has worked like a miracle. The same sort of answer should be applied to the agonising problem of the "Great Loss of Blood" from our schools each September. As were the sounds of Orpheus's pipes to the wild beasts in ancient times, so will be the rustle of ten-pound notes on the ear of a true Welshman. Let that suffice for today on this great issue, possibly the central issue in the discussion.

There are other headings which I was glad to see included: 1.2 (the role of partnership and co-operation), 2.2 (quality and standard in a global context), 3 (economic regeneration), 3.5 (bilingualism and the use of the Welsh language), 4.1 (strengthening the research base), 5.1 (funding) and 6.1 (accountability).

In this paper I shall concentrate on two aspects, namely THE QUALITY (2.2) and THE MEDIUM (3.5). I should be happy to think that section II (THE MEDIUM) could be of some use also as a discussion paper for those who are genuinely interested in the possibility of setting up a Welsh- medium Federal College in the University of Wales.

## I. THE QUALITY

### 1. Taking the Measure

1.1 Over the last ten years life in the colleges, as in the educational world generally, has become one marathon of inspection, observation, evaluation and assessment, together with the ancillary activities of inputting, outputting, back-feeding, trialling, mentoring and monitoring. What with getting in training for the next review and being simultaneously as inspectors of other institutions, some of us are left with not much time for things such as study, research, preparing lectures and meeting students. On the basis of the reviews prizes are awarded, in the symbolic form of stars and in the material form of large sums of money; We are familiar also with the publication of league tables of colleges and universities, claiming to show their success or failure in teaching, research, care of students and other aspects. This is one of things which, in recent years, have made the academic life less agreeable than it used to be. Doubtlessly individuals derive satisfaction from being involved in things of this sort – otherwise they would not have been devised. To the various “quality assurance” agencies, they are their daily bread, the breath of life and all that is indispensable. To the majority of us they are an imposition, and in private we express fundamental doubts to their value. I shall recount some of my own depressing experience of this useless activity:

1.11 **Teaching Review (1996).** For my own Department it was fairly innocuous because the three inspectors shared their own interests and were, as they say, “Pobl y Pethe” like ourselves. They gave us a good mark (thanks, lads, and we’ll bear you in kind come another day), but it did come to my hearing afterwards that the gentlemen who organised the review on behalf of the Funding Council (HEFCW) resented the award on some entirely technical ground of which no-one had heard before, which no-one else understood at the time and which was forgotten by all immediately afterwards. I heard some horrifying tales from other colleges: of a lecturer from college B who had a poor mark, blamed the inspector from college A, and was determined to take it out on college C the following week when it was his turn as inspector. Some inspectors believed in video, others believed in a piece of chalk, others believed that the overhead projector is the beginning and end of culture; to try and satisfy all their whims would have been folly. After a few days of flutter, the like of which had not been seen since “the day of the inspector” in the schools of Wales O.M Edwards, it all passed. We are not much worse for it. And none of us was any better. **There is, moreover, a fundamental objection to holding a review and a competition of this kind in a federal university.** At the end of the day, we all award the same degree. The degree results should be the yardstick, exactly as in the other federal universities, Oxford and Cambridge. In an institution of this kind there is neither sense nor reason in reviewing the teachers of each college separately and announcing at the end that the teachers at Balliol (or Bangor) are better than the teachers at Somerville (or Swansea). Although perhaps I should not have seen it, I saw

some of the correspondence from the review office. Its Welsh was illiterate to the point of unintelligibility. We, teaching the Welsh language to our students, were expected to maintain the highest professional standards; the authority to which we were answerable had not heard of those standards, and did not render us the courtesy of corresponding in acceptable Welsh. It was, from beginning to end, a farce. The Higher Education Committee in its report should deliver us from the body of this death.

1.12 **Internal Quality Review (1999)** It is likely that all colleges and universities in the kingdom, with the exception of the old universities, now hold some such exercise as this. When we might have been getting on with our work, each one of us spent the required day or two evaluating our own courses, and writing reports for ourselves, telling ourselves how we were doing. Then came the turn of the head of department to read each narcissistic effusion and to put together a departmental self-assessment. Also fed in were the forms filled by the students at the end of each module, giving their opinion of the courses. Students fill these hurriedly and mechanically, looking over each other's shoulders, and the same old predictable responses issue from the collective unconscious year after year: "more seminars" (from those who never say a word in a seminar), "more creative work" (from the less creative). Then off with the departmental report to some immensely important "committee for Quality Assurance". Came the day when as a department we met the panel of three which was to report back to us on our quality, and was to report also to the Committee. Two of the three were not in any way qualified to evaluate the work of our department; not to worry, perhaps we will be called one day as evaluators in a field where they are equally clueless. And in this way we went through the motions. What is beyond dispute is that nothing was done that would improve quality. It had absolutely nothing to do with quality. It was all a load of nonsense. Only the craven and the ambitious take these things seriously. The emperor has no underpants. "All harmless fun," you may say. No it isn't. It is the tyranny of the charlatan, and its effect, if continued, will be to make it increasingly difficult for us and our successors to maintain the standards we have been trying to maintain down the years.

1.13 **Research Review.** This was held under the auspices of AHBRB four years ago and another one is now under way. Stars are awarded (up to five), each star and half-star worth a considerable amount of finance for the activity of the next four years. Departments are rewarded for research done by those who are members of them **on the day of the review**. If a lecturer leaves, whether for the Great University in the Sky or for another college or department, he takes his stars with him. For this reason there grew, among the richer departments and colleges, and obscene trade in lecturers, with some attempting to buy individuals off others with promises of more money or of a life free of students, lectures and marking. Under the existing rule each individual is assessed on the basis of four published items within the stipulated period; if he has five, ten, or twenty, no-one will thank him. Here we have a rule devised by a monkey sitting in an office. One day, no doubt, it will be replaced by something equally arbitrary, but in the meantime the harm will have been done. In the context of Wales and of Welsh studies this exercise has some particularly unfortunate consequences. The practice of addressing

a fairly wide audience, outside the colleges, by means of short contributions to a variety of publications, has been one of the good traditions of Welsh scholarship; John Morris-Jones, T Gwen Jones and others did it, up to our own times. But in the scramble for stars, a short piece for **Llafar Gwlad** or **y Casglwr**, or for a community newspaper (**papur bro**), however scholarly it may be, or even an article for **Barn**, counts for nothing. Publication must be in an approved list of the “heavier” journals, and it was only after a considerable amount of persuasion that the masters, somewhere in England, recognised even those. This is a game with its rules set by people who know nothing of the character of Welsh cultural life and who, despite many an attempt to enlighten them, have difficulty in believing that Welsh is a real language. (We see the same cultural problem when the same body, the AHRB, comes to award grants for research projects. In Modern Languages it is all decided by five or six Professors somewhere in England. It’s no use saying “Twm o’r Nant” to them. They are not of this planet or of this universe.) Another highly unsatisfactory aspect is that Welsh is not a subject in its own right in these stakes. It is all “Celtic”. It is as if all lecturers and all departments in English, German, Dutch, Norwegian, Danish, Swedish, Frisian and Faroese competed together under “Germanic”. It all takes place in a Kafkaesque environment, where the adjudicators never stop to justify or to explain their standards and their premises. If there is to be an eisteddfid, there should be an adjudication, and it should be public. Instead we have this mean and sordid game, whose result is to bring out the most Lilliputian in the men and women of our profession. Even if this were not so, if the standards were unassailable and the methods foolproof and human nature other than what it is and the consequences of the Fall not with us, there would still be a fundamental objection to holding this kind of competition in a federal university. For as long as we all award the same degree at the end of the day, there is neither reason nor sense in weighing the lecturers of one college against those of another college. **If** a competition is necessary, the whole of the University should be one, in competition with other universities of the Kingdom and of the World.

1.2 How did it all start? I can think of two answers:

1.21 It is part of the legacy of Thatcherism, the great principle that **there has to be a loser**.

1.22 Over the last 15 years universities in Britain have multiplied through the upgrading of many polytechnics, teachers’ training colleges and colleges of chiropody, and their redesigning as “universities”. Some realised the mistake; but without, of course, admitting that it was a mistake. The response was to try and re-establish a league of “real” universities. The various methods of “assessment” and “evaluation” have as their end the creation of such leagues. In a federal university it is absurd even to suggest that some of its colleges could or should be in a different league from the others.

1.23 Having put aside the last two reasons, is there now a real reason why we should be concerned about teaching standards in the universities, and why we should, through assessment, penalty and reward, attempt to set higher aims? If there is – and I stress the **if** – then it must arise from the uncertainty

of academics concerning their own function and their usefulness to society. Unlike a heart surgeon, a civil engineer, an installer of central heating or a mole-catcher, the university lecturer does not have to get it right first time. Nor indeed the second time, nor the third. Some of us plod on day after day for forty years without ever catching the mole. Once we are appointed we are there till we draw our pension; we can work hard or we can be bone idle, it is entirely up to us. The only known ways of being dismissed are: (a) to burn a Bombing School, and (b) to write a series of articles for a Sunday newspaper in order to earn some beer-money. When I look back upon my days as a student at Bangor, I believe it a fair estimation to say that about half of our lecturers could teach, and that the other half were quite hopeless. We the students knew the score within three weeks of registering, and it would not occur to us to complain. That's the way it was. I later spent two years at another university, conventionally regarded as more prestigious than Bangor; I soon found it to be the World's Capital for Lousy Lecturers. The proportion of the hopeless rose to around two-thirds; and the best were not as good as the best in Bangor. There were, I hasten to say, other advantages and qualities which made up for the deficiency; my affection for the old place is just as strong as my concern for the success and honour of my own country's University, but is different in quality, painless and free of care. Academics are well aware of their own weakness. Traditionally, doctors and lawyers are satirised by others; academics satirise themselves: **Tician Tician, Dan Gadarn Goncrit, Eating People is Wrong, Small World.**

- 1.3 Somewhere, there is an ideal at which we should all aim. I recently came across a good definition of it, in one of the books of the travel-writer Patrick Leigh Ferro:

“It is hard to think of anyone less didactic than my host [a scholar-gentleman of Slovakia]. Yet, without any effort, he exerted an emancipating and de-barbarizing influence similar to the mood that radiates from a few exceptionally gifted dons: liberators, that is, whose tact, insight, humour and originality clear the air and store it with new oxygen.”

There's the ideal, the gift. How it is to be possessed, I still do not know. Some have it, others do not. All the assessment, evaluation, mentoring, trialling and monitoring will not bring it any closer. Their effect, more frequently than not, will be to kill it. The same is true of all the “staff development” schemes of which we hear a great deal in the colleges nowadays. These too are the playthings of charlatans; all except those who devise them will say they are entirely valueless. Seriously, what practical advice can one man give another as to how to lecture more effectively? At the end of 34 years in the trade, I can only think of two: in a bigger room, shout louder; and don't say “um” too often. In the end, perhaps the traditional wisdom of University Councils is right: to appoint the candidate solely on his academic merit, and then let him and his students fend for themselves. He may be one of the hopeless 50%, or he may be a good one. It would be nice to think that there is a better plan. I do not what it is.

## 2. A Yardstick?

When all is said and done, is there a standard for comparison between universities? Yes, there are two.

- 2.1 The first is the entrance requirement. A university that requires three As from each new student is there and then a better university. Why do all universities not require it? Because there are only so many such students. There are still only two universities in the United Kingdom which can take their pick from among applicants with three or four A's, accept some because they seem to have that rather indefinable "something extra", and refuse others because they do not like their accent or their body-language. That is possible for them because their primary function is still to select and nurture an **elite** to lead, govern and serve the English nation – although they have other functions as well. The primary function of the University of Wales – I cannot see that it could be otherwise – must be to offer a reasonable education, at a reasonable charge, to a reasonable number of our children; this does not mean that it could not, or should not, at the same time nurture a patriotic Welsh **elite**, talented, enterprising, faithful people who will stay in Wales, work in Wales and serve Wales – we should never be coy about this function.
- 2.2 The second degree of comparison is the performance of degree students. This is a perfectly valid standard to be applied between colleges in a federal university, as is done at Oxford and Cambridge. It remains possible for them **because examination on each subject is common and uniform through the university**. It was an unfortunate day for the university of Wales when the colleges became so big that one common external examiner could no longer assess all candidates in a subject before awarding the common university degree. Most departments have long given up even the pretence of common examination, although some of the smaller ones could have retained it had they chosen. I believe I am in correct in saying that only the Departments of Welsh Language and Literature now continue the practice; even here it has lost some of its validity as the external examiner looks at two or three colleges at any time rather than all colleges together. If the University of Wales is to establish and uphold a name as a great European and international university, it must bring the student numbers down, by raising the requirements, to a point where a true system of common external examination can once again be operated.
- 2.3 We should go further. The principle of common examination should be extended to include **not only** common assessment of all candidates in a given subject by one examiner, **but also** a common element for all students in the subject, across the University, in the final examinations. Success in the common examination should be **one** path towards a grant to study for a higher degree. I envisage some such pattern as this:
- 2.31 **A common examination in the subject**, throughout the University, comprising perhaps two elements: (a) a common curricular element defined in advance by the external examiner and taught by teachers of the individual college; (b) general questions, with no preparation, set by the external

examiner; a test of the candidate's **culture** within his subject, and of his ability to correlate and to apply what he has learnt at his college.

- 2.32 **A common general examination**, through the individual college: something similar in principle to the "general paper" of entrance or scholarship exams, once again in a test of the candidate's culture and of his ability to see his own subject as part of a greater whole. The paper might be **inclined** towards either the arts or the sciences, according to the candidate's choice but the Chemist candidate should have an opportunity to say something about a book, a film, a play or a painting, current affairs and the problems of civilisation; and the student of Welsh or History should be able to discourse intelligently, if with less speciality, on the origin of the universe or the communications revolution or genetic engineering.
- 2.4 The option of instituting something of this nature would be an internal matter for the University and its colleges. The Higher Education Committee of the national Assembly can give a **nudge**. It can invite the university to **begin** thinking on these lines, by **beginning to suggest** what kind of education a Welsh government would consider it worthwhile supporting in the long run. If the Committee's report comes out and declares that this is the only real means of maintaining and enhancing the "quality", and the expense of holding the Review will have been justified.

## II THE MEDIUM

### 1. Tough Going

- 1.1 The idea of Welsh-medium university education is older than is often thought. Reading J Gwynn Williams, **The University Movement in Wales** (1993), pp. 8-19, we will be surprised to learn how many, in the formative years of the university movement, were prepared to entertain and support the idea of national colleges teaching a wide range of subjects in Welsh.
- 1.2 Between us and all that came the Blue Books Report of 1847. Their influence is still with us. Parents at a Welsh-medium school are found opposing the teaching of science through Welsh, with councillors of a nationalist party supporting them, and Assembly members of the same party wavering.
- 1.3 The University of Wales and its colleges were born in the shadow of the Blue Books. From the inception it was assumed that English would be the language of learning, education, teaching and culture. For nearly sixty years after the incorporation of the University this assumption was not challenged. At the University Court in 1951 there began a fitful discussion on the possibility of a Welsh-medium college. The only fruit of that discussion was to embark, eight years later, on a very slow process of appointing WM lecturers, nearly all at Bangor and Aberystwyth, one here and one there to the astounding figure of two dozen. The University's Board for Welsh-medium Teaching was set up in 1996, and re-formed in 1978 and 1997.

### 2. The Board's Deliberations

- 2.1 In the Spring of 1998 the new-style Board was given something to chew on, the proposal that was accepted unanimously by the conference at Bangor entitled "The Welsh Language 16+ the Way Forward" (23. January 1998). Here once more is the wording:

That this Conference requests the University of Wales Board for Welsh Medium Studies, in consultation with the Faculty for Welsh Medium Studies at Aberystwyth, with the School for Welsh Medium Studies at Bangor, and with individuals in all the colleges of the University of Wales, to draw out a plan for a federal Welsh Medium College within the federal University, to be presented to the Council and Court of the University.

The Board chewed for about a year, letting it be understood on more than one occasion that it favoured such a development. "The idea of a federal college was agreed to," we read in the minutes for 30 June 1998. The Executive Committee of the Board was asked to bring a report, presented to the Board on 29 January 1999, there was no recommendation in favour of a federal college.

- 2.2 From that time on the Board and the Executive hesitated even to record that they had been discussing the matter. The three words "Welsh federal college" became something of an embarrassment, and if we look at the various drafts

of the Board's document "Ehangu'r Ddarpariaeth – Y Ffordd Ymlaen" (Extending the Provision – the way forward) we can observe their alternate appearance and disappearance:

October '98	-	out
January '99	-	in
August '99	-	out.

Readers of my earlier papers may recall the comparison with "Trotsky's photograph". The versions of January and August '99 proposed a WMT **consortium** rather than a **college**; that was then the "buzz-word" and the answer to all problems. Since then **consortium** became **consortia**, and then disappeared altogether.

2.3 So far, the only concrete thing to emerge from the Board's deliberations was the creation of the post of Co-ordinator, to which an appointment was made in September 2000. This was something I had been calling for, and I have welcomed it.

2.4 I have no confidence that the Board will take any further steps to change the situation. The weakness of the document "Ehangu'r Ddarpariaeth" reflects the weakness of the Board itself, its constitution and its membership. Among its members there are very few who regularly hold WM classes. Or who are engaged in producing WM materials on their own subjects. It is a collection of educationists, bureaucrats, representatives of other quangos and delegates of colleges which hitherto have not been distinguished for their commitment to WMT. (It would be interesting to learn whether the Board, in its submission for this review, will have included a recommendation in support of a Welsh Federal College; or whether it will have included the three words at all. If it has, I might even withdraw some of the things I have said about it.....).

### 3. Onward

3.1 If there are, within the University and the higher sector generally, a sufficient number of individuals who are truly committed to the setting up of a Welsh federal college, they should as a first step, come together and constitute themselves as a provisional and voluntary college under some appropriate temporary name. It seems to me that this is the only way forward.

3.2 But let us heed a warning from the past. It was on this very principle that **y Colegiwm Cymraeg** (The Welsh Collegium) was formed in the mid-1980s. The founders then hoped that the **-WM** would in time disappear and that this body would come to be accepted as a WM college serving the University and part of its structure. Some individuals worked hard to set it up, and the work began of publishing educational materials in its name. For the privilege of being allowed to do this work the members paid a membership fee, while the Priest and the Levite passed by on the other side. I did not hear anyone say anything against it; the self-important and the ambitious had only to keep their distance and pretend they had not heard of it. "And next unto them the Tekoites repaired; but their Nobles put not their necks to the work of their

Lord” (Neh. 3, vs. 5). Not a single university body recognised the existence of the Collegium, neither did the Collegium reach the point where it could put pressure on them. What with one thing and another, the activity and the interest lapsed at some point in the early 1990s. Despite that, the Collegium still exists, just as the Parliament of Owain Glyndwr still exists, in the sense that it has been constituted and never dissolved.

3.3 This mistake must not be repeated. There is today, however, one factor which makes a difference, the existence of the national Assembly and its Higher Education Committee, and the fact that the Committee has chosen to hold this Inquiry, and that the Terms of Reference include sections such as 1.4 and 3.5. It is my earnest hope that it will now be possible for the core of a Welsh federal college to hold a dialogue, first with the Assembly, and a little later on with the appropriate bodies of the University of Wales.

3.4 The core of Provisional Welsh Federal College should be formed. Its existence should be announced and a Website set up. The Website should report on the progress of the discussion between the WFC, the Assembly and the University, and could also report on the growth of membership – who has joined, who was too busy to reply &c.

3.5 I see two possible ways of forming the core:

(a) To bring together the school of WM Studies (Bangor) and the Faculty for WM Studies (Aberystwyth) **either** under the joint chairmanship of the two Directors **or** under a neutral chairmanship; and to extend an open invitation to individuals from the other colleges.

(b) Individual membership only.

I tend to favour (b). I believe the core would be stronger if each member had made a personal decision and made a commitment.

3.6 The first step would require a steering committee with **some** representation – it does not matter how small – from Bangor and Aberystwyth. This committee should:

(a) draft a very rough outline of procedure;

(b) choose a temporary name for the body;

(c) draft a temporary aim, so that the members when they join could be asked to commit themselves to **something**.

3.7 There would have to be a hard-working secretary dedicated to the concept and the vision.

3.8 The steering committee should then, through personal contact, bring together a **core membership**. I believe 20-24 would be a suitable number at which to

aim, indeed a necessary number for the credibility of the undertaking. The membership should be sought from among the following:

- (a) Full time [? And part-time] members of the staffs of institutions of the University of Wales and the University of Glamorgan [? And other institutions of the HE sector in Wales] who have these qualifications:
  - (i) A higher degree (Mastership, Doctorate or any other recognised higher qualification) [with the exception of the Oxford and Cambridge MAs, which are initial degrees] in a subject other than Welsh or Celtic Studies;
  - (ii) An honours or joint-honours degree in a subject other than Welsh or Celtic Studies, together with any other higher degree. (The aim of this requirement would be: (i) to ensure the necessary academic weight or substance; (ii) to ensure the new body did not appear from its inception to be an appendage of the Departments of Welsh.)
- (b) Representatives, e.g. one from each section of the Guild of Graduates of the University of Wales. There are two important reasons for including this element:
  - (i) to establish, from the outset, a formal but flexible relationship between the WFC and a recognised University body; (ii) to ensure, from the beginning, a voice for the only university body which has down the years responded to the desire and the need for WM teaching; moreover a body which was overlooked – or was shown the door – when the Board was reconstituted in 1997.
- (c) (?) Ex-officio membership, e.g.
  - (i) (?) The Co-ordinator
  - (ii) (?) Heads of Departments in the University [? And other HE colleges] which teach a minimum of WM modules per annum in a subject other than Welsh.
  - (iii) (?) Members of Departments of Welsh Language and Literature.

3.9 All those in categories (b) and (c) would be expected to declare a commitment to the aim, just like those in category (a); this would have the value of excluding the frivolous and the inconstant.

#### **4. Starting to Walk**

4.1 What would be asked of the core, members? To support the idea and to exert their influence in its favour, without veering on either the left hand or the right; to lend their opinion and their ideas on how best to extend the membership and to gain recognition for the WFC within the University system.

#### 4.2 The work of the core would be:

- (a) To draw up a draft constitution, for ratification or amendment by a wider membership, defining the structure and operation of the WFC and its relationship with the University and with the geographical colleges;
- (b) To initiate a dialogue with the national Assembly through the Higher Education Committee with view to obtaining recognition and funding for the WFC.
- (c) To plan the stages of discussion with the Court, Council, Academic Board, and Vice-Chancellors' Board of the University of Wales, and with the Councils and Senates of some of the constituent colleges, and possibly with the relevant authorities in other colleges of the higher sector in Wales.
- (d) To decide upon ways of extending its own membership, e.g.: (i) open membership for any members of staff at colleges of the University of Wales [? And other HE institutions] who wish to join and who are prepared to accept the aim; (ii) associate membership for others who might wish to contribute on a part-time basis to the work of the WFC; e.g. individuals working outside Wales but who might be able to offer modules either by visiting or by means of the video link. There are considerations both for and against these two categories of membership, and they should all be carefully considered.

4.3 NB: the whole aim of establishing this voluntary and provisional membership would be that, with support and funding from the government of Wales, it would be able, within a comparatively short period, to add to its own membership a goodly number of scholars qualified and prepared to work through the medium of Welsh. What is "a goodly number"? From the beginning I have suggested the figure of 200, and I stand by it. What is the "comparatively short period"? I suggest five years.

### 5. Fellows

5.1 All the members should be Fellows, equal in principle, as are the Fellows of the old universities.

5.2 The work of the Fellows would combine (a) the teaching of students and (b) the publication in Welsh of the fruits of their research. It would all be according to the opportunity and the demand, but without over emphasis on **the demand by students**. "Staff-student ratios" in the sense we have been familiar with would have to be forgotten. If **one** teacher can teach and inspire **one** pupil through the medium of Welsh in **one** significant branch of learning, his appointment would be fully justified. That pupil may in time come to teach and inspire ten or a hundred. Perhaps he will not. But it must all be seen as an investment for tomorrow.

5.3 I envisage three categories of Fellowships:

- (a) **Senior Teaching Fellowships** which would involve all the usual duties of a university lecturer in teaching, training, overseeing, assessing, examining and research; a higher degree would be a required qualification.
- (b) **Senior Research Fellowships**, for those who have already shown themselves equipped and qualified; an opportunity to undertake further research and to publish, with an exception to publish a quota of research in Welsh and/or to prepare WM teaching materials in their field of speciality.
- (c) **Junior Research Fellowships**, for new graduates; an opportunity to work for a higher degree, with an exception **either** to submit and to publish in Welsh **or** just to publish in Welsh.

5.4 The aim and the hope would be to nurture, over a period of time, a fellowship of Welsh thinkers in all branches of learning, the task in which the University has failed so abjectly down the years – a failure mainly due to not trying. **It may be too late.** It may be that the decline of the Welsh language in the community at large has gone too far. It may be that the community itself has been impoverished beyond repair through immigration and the disaffection of the ablest young people. Still, it must be given a try. The WFC should review its own situation every five years, and should be prepared to dissolve itself if it is not making progress. We should think ten times before we create another institution which is going to drift along aimlessly, achieving nothing.

5.5 Proliferation of administrative posts should be avoided. But there would have to be strong secretarial support, because the work would involve the provision of much new WM material, and because the geographical colleges have so far failed to provide that support. (I see a hope of improvement at Bangor with the implementation of section 3.4 of the new language policy recently approved by the Welsh Language Board.)

5.6 In the election of Fellows not **too much** attention should be paid either to their speciality or their distribution. The basic qualification should be the ability and willingness to treat the subject *TMW*. If, at the end of the first year, or the second, or the third, some imbalance were seen to remain between subjects, it would not be the end of the world. Say that 200 had been appointed by the end of five years. Five each in 40 subjects, or seven each in 28 subjects, would look neat. But it does not have to be as neat as all that. The aim should be kept continually in mind: to secure the service of each and every one who is qualified and prepared to study and to teach his subject *TMW* at a high academic level.

## 6. Building up Strength

6.1 Having said all that, there remains a case for building up strengths in certain areas; (a) core areas which can serve and support other areas; (b) areas

where we already have some speciality and something of a tradition; (c) at the other extreme, areas which have been woefully neglected. Some four main areas come to mind on which to concentrate in the first years:

- 6.11 **Mathematics.** The handmaid of all the other sciences; a subject that can also overlap and combine with arts subjects; and a subject that can be taught cheaply!
- 6.12 **Comparative Literature.** Today the amount of modern languages and literatures – French, Spanish, German &c – being taught TMW in the University is less than ever before. Everything is dependent on the good will of individuals. In earlier papers I have referred to the complete disappearance of Welsh-speakers from the school of Modern Languages at Bangor over the last five years. The only way forward that I can see is that languages and literatures (without forgetting the Classics) be taught under a school of Comparative Literature in a Welsh Federal College. The challenge would be to take a comparative approach and at the same time to teach the individual languages and the national literatures to a standard equivalent to that of a degree in French, German, Italian, Spanish etc. Who knows but that there might also be an opportunity to restore, in these areas, some of the traditional language-an-literature emphasis, wasting less time on EU Institutions, the workings of the **Bourse** and the timetables of the **Metro**?
- 6.13 **The combination of Politics – Sociology – Economics.** When **Sociology** was launched at Bangor in the late 1960s it was the strongest of all the subjects taught TMW – almost without the exception of Welsh itself. There were 6-7 lecturers able to teach it TMW, some appointed under the University's scheme, others doing it voluntarily. Since then there has been a calamitous decline in the number of lecturers, but the memory remains of what can be done when the will and vision are there. The Department of **Politics** at Aberystwyth is the only area in the whole of the University of Wales where the last ten years have seen a steady growth with purposeful planning. Somehow or other (it is not mine to say how) we should try to build upon these two foundations, and also to branch out towards **Economics**, which overlaps with both fields. There is some danger that Economics in the University may become a subsidiary of the occupational subject, Banking; it would be no bad thing to restore some of the status of Economics as a traditional pseudo-science. There would also be a unique opportunity here for the gradual re-introduction of **Philosophy**, ignominiously discarded in the collapse of traditional subjects in the mid-1980s. Some branches of Philosophy, namely the social, the political and the moral, would combine well with modules in Politics, Sociology and Economics. PPE (Philosophy, Politics, Economics) is a traditional combination at the University of Oxford, and one which continues to fulfil a need and to attract students through many twists and turns. The University of Wales should aim to set up a similar combination TMW under the Welsh Federal College.
- 6.14 A good selection of WM modules should be available from the outset in **at least one real science**. I can say nothing of the other colleges, but at Bangor there is a certain amount of precedent alike in the electronic sciences and the

biological sciences, to the extent that individual students have, in the past, presented work in Welsh and that there has been some discussion in Welsh during tutorials and practical work. I cannot comment any further on this aspect, and I should be glad to hear the opinion and the experience of such scientists as saw fit to become members of the “core”. But every opportunity should be seized to prove wrong the obstinate supposition that the sciences cannot, or should not, be taught TMW.

- 6.2 In the above comments a distinct emphasis may be discerned on the **academic** and the **traditional**, which some will contrast with the emphasis on the **occupational** in the WM Board’s document “Y Ffordd Ymlaen”. WM occupational education is extremely important, and it should be the chief concern of some HE sectors. But the chief concern a university is to train **thinkers**, and because it has not done that the University of Wales must accept its share of the blame for the intellectual poverty of Wales today. Let me make two observations here: (a) A thinker is not necessarily the same as an intellectual; but when we say “thinkers” we include intellectuals are not the chief glory of a nation; even so, we must have them.

## 7. Softening and Hardening

- 7.1 Three years have gone by since I began to produce papers on this topic. On some aspects my attitude has hardened; on other aspects I have been convinced by the arguments of one or two colleagues:
- 7.11 I originally thought of the WFC as first and foremost a team to serve the University as whole and to increase the number of WM modules in the geographical colleges. I now see more clearly the dangers inherent in placing the Fellows of the WFC, here a one, there a one, to serve the existing departments, like a handful of currants in a pudding. They would be swallowed up by the systems of schools and departments which would remain fundamentally indifferent or hostile, and they would become apathetic like their colleagues. The aim should be to place a strong team of Fellows (say 6) in each centre of activity, answerable to each other as Fellows rather than to a hostile head of department. The same logic leads us to think that the WFC should, in the not too distant future, set up its own degree schemes under the University.
- 7.12 I now find the argument more convincing that the WFC should have a visible centre in each of the places where it has a branch; a centre for some of the teaching, and also for some socialising. This in no way contradicts the great principle that each member of the WFC should at the same time be a full member of the geographical college. I have a strong mental image of a possible centre at Bangor. As for the other university towns, let their residents think.
- 7.2 While considering this development my thought has veered north-westward. I envisaged branches at Bangor and at Aberystwyth, with Trinity College (Carmarthen) and St. David’s College (Lampeter) possibly contributing to the

activity. But a WFC will be incomplete unless, sooner or later, it has a presence in Swansea and Cardiff.

- 7.3 With questions being raised again concerning the future of St David's College, it may be an apt time to ask whether there might be a role for this college as a permanent centre for WM activity, with all or most members of the WMC spending a term under its roof.

## 8. Name, Motto, Symbol, Aim

- 8.1 Name. Two and a half years ago I suggested the name "Coleg William Salesbury", and no-one in the meantime has made any other suggestion. I refer to the reader of what I wrote about Salesbury in **The Welsh Language Today**, ed. Meic Stephens, second edition (1979), pp. 287-91. Salesbury, without any doubt, is no 2 in the table of "Welshmen of the Millennium". This is the batting order:

1. William Morgan – for completing the task.
2. William Salesbury – for defining the task and placing it in a cultural context.
3. Griffith Jones – for laying the foundations for a popular awakening.
4. Llywelyn the Great – for surviving; the success story of mediaeval Wales.
5. Owain Glyn Dwr – for keeping alive the idea of Welsh statehood.

- 8.2 Motto. Two of Salesbury's phrases are so good, it is hard to choose between them: (a) Oll synnwyr pen Cymro I gyd (All the sense in a Welshmen's head); (b) Mynnwchddysg yn ych iaith (Insist on learning in your own language). The second perhaps.....?

- 8.3 Symbol. A logo for the website: initially, the head and shoulders of a man in Elizabethan dress, but wearing a balaclava. Why? Because this would be the **provisional** WFC. The day the WFC is recognised and incorporated as the ninth University institution, the balaclava can come off revealing W.S with the light of the Renaissance in his eyes.

- 8.4 Aim or aims. In the age of "Mission Statements" which mean virtually nothing, I favour something simple and definite. It **may** be that (1) will suffice:

Wales To improve the quality and quantity of WM teaching in the University of  
[? In the colleges of the HE sector in Wales].

There **may** be an argument for a second aim (2):

Wales To seek to ensure that every subject is taught TMW in the University of  
[? In the colleges of the HE sector in Wales].

The value of this second “harder” condition is that it would separate some of the sheep from the goats, and would induce the frivolous and the faint-hearted to think twice before joining.

**9. Great Hope**

For three years I have been trying to encourage discussion of this subject. It is my fervent hope that the report of the Higher Education Committee at the end of the Inquiry will include clear recommendations on the inclusion of a Welsh Federal College within the structure of the university of Wales, and on its funding.

## APPENDIX 1

### A UNIVERSITY PROBLEM

I

“Look Back in Anger” is not a good principle on which to base one’s way of life, but occasionally an angry look backwards may be necessary in order to take some steps forward.

After more than 30 years on the staff of UW Bangor, and not much less than 40 years of association with the college, disappointment, frustration and bitterness fill my thoughts as I look back on the history of Welsh Medium Teaching.

When I joined the staff at Bangor in the mid-1960s, I assumed and anticipated, as I am sure others did, that things would get better in time. They have not got better. They have got worse.

Everything that was gained in Bangor, it was gained in spite of – and partly **because** of – the opposition of the late Sir Charles Evans. Since 1985, with Nixon not here to kick around any more”, we have gained NOTHING.

I would challenge anyone to prove that it is in any way better at Aberystwyth.

In the year 1958 the University made the first appointment to be designated for WMT; then also the policy was adopted of concentrating WMT at Aberystwyth and Bangor. After 40 years it should today be possible to study for an honours degree **TMW IN ALL SUBJECTS IN THESE TWO COLLEGES AT LEAST**. There is no indication that anyone anywhere has even begun to consider it. This is dismal, pitiful and pathetic.

At the turn of the new millennium we should be thinking anew of a bold plan and strategy which will lift us out of this misery and shame. But remember, whatever plan we devise, and however hard we strive, there will remain the **PROBLEM** to which I refer in Section II: the central problem of the University, which is also the problem of Welsh society.

**A Welsh Medium College must be established. It should be a federal institution with more than one branch, overlapping with two, three or more of the geographical colleges in the University.**

The idea of a WM College has been intermittently discussed since 1951, when the University Court accepted a motion that ways should be explored for establishing it.

Afterwards, whenever the matter was raised, the question would be asked “Where?”.

If WMT were to be confined to one location, the Welsh-speaking student would be deprived of **CHOICE**, and the result would be to intensify, rather than to solve, the true **PROBLEM** to which I refer in Section II. One of the traditional strengths of the University of Wales is that its colleges are so varied and so different from each other,

different in character and tradition, different architecturally, and different in their relation to the town and community where they are located. The student who desires to take WM courses should continue to have the CHOICE.

The University should set up a Welsh Medium College. Let us call it, for the time being, “Coleg y Tatws Llaeth” – a better name may come later. The students, according to their choice, would be members of “CTLI Bangor”, “CTLI Cardiff”, “CTLI Aberystwyth” & c, and **simultaneously** members of the geographical colleges of the University in the same places. The condition for membership of CTLI would be to **take a minimum number of WM modules**. CTLI should be the ninth constituent institution of the University. It should have its own Senate and Council. It should have a Deputy Vice-chancellor, who should have his turn as Vice-chancellor of the University. Lecturers at the existing colleges **who teach a minimum of WM hours pa** should be members of it, and it should also have additional members directly appointed from its own funding, placed at some of the geographical colleges by agreement with the respective college councils. Its function would be to expand substantially the WM provision, through the exchange of lecturers and through regular use of the video link. CTLI’s WM modules should be integrated, by agreement, in the degree courses within the geographical colleges.

I cannot see any other way forward. Meanwhile, the PROBLEM remains. All brave endeavours and all new devices will be in vain unless we get to the root of this problem. Indeed, without first addressing this problem, there is no point in trying. Now read Section II, and read also my three articles in :

**Llais Llyfrau**, Autumn 1997, p. 12.

**Taliesin**, Winter 1997, p. 50.

**Llais Llyfrau**, Spring 1998, p. 10.

## II.

Everyone who has soldiered on with WMT in the University over the last 40 years knows the heartbreak of the indifferent response and the small classes. This is the biggest obstacle. The rate of take-up **should** not alter the principle; WM education **should** be available to all who desire it, even though they be only a handful. But getting up the **hwyl** with tiny audiences is not easy. Behind it all lies the PROBLEM OF THE UNIVERSITY, which is also the problem of the Welsh people and the nation.

At the end of September each year come the WEEK OF THE GREAT BLEEDING. Community and local papers will be full of good wishes to this lad and this girl who have just completed a course at Ysgol Cwm – or Dyffryn-Something-or-other with laudable results, and who are now departing to study for a degree at ..... Nottingham, Liverpool, Birmingham, Bristol. London, Glasgow, Exeter, Sheffield, Southampton, Keele, Dundee., Leeds, York, Durham, Lancaster, Canterbury..... all corners of the Kingdom except poor old University of Wales. Let us not deceive ourselves. With very few exceptions, we shan’t see them again.

We are familiar enough with the principle: Wales, the Welsh language, Welshness are all for children, and the time comes for them to be put aside, with other childish

things. When they are small, many of these children were trundled in their push-chairs through the mud of the Eisteddfod. They were reared on Rala Rwdins, T Llew Jones, the Urdd, Welsh Nursery Schools, Bilingual Schools, Sbondonics, Chapel, Ysgol Glanaethwy. Then, at the age of eighteen - farewell. This is the rule of life for that class of Welsh-speakers who are socially mobile, who have left behind the pick and shovel, or are in the process of doing so. As a class, it has its finger permanently on the self-destruct button. It **believes** it knows what is best for its children as **individuals**; it may or may not be correct. What is certain is that it is heading for perdition as a **class**.

So often, this is the pattern over four generations. 1. Grandfather: the smallholding, the pit or the quarry, "the great University of Life", as they say. 2. Father: old University of Wales. Son: a university in England. 4. Grandson: The University of God-knows-where – the most suitable choice would be Atlanta, Georgia, because the old family's motto is now "Gone with the Wind".

"It's a good thing for them to go, " say teachers, headmasters, parents. "Horizons..... experience..... broadmindedness" &c &c. It is not for me to argue otherwise. It is not for any of us to argue over the motives of individuals. Every one of us has some skeleton or other in his cupboard. "Not one of us, " as W J Gruffydd commented, "knows in what wretched way he will meet his end". A parent's we have very little control over our children's choices, and if the Welsh parent is happy to send his cheque at the beginning of term to Newcastle upon Tyne, he has every right. A Welshman does not have to remain a Welshman. He is at perfect liberty to become an Englishman. And – why deny it? – there is something of "Isio bod yn Sais" (I want to be an Englishman) in every Welshman's making.

As individuals, I say again, non of us has any business to say what's good for another individual. **But, as members of it, many of us graduates of it, and therefore charged to be at all times mindful of its success and its honour, it is our business to consider what is good for the University of Wales.** Students make a university. Is anyone here going to stand up and maintain that losing the best of our young people, year after year, is good for our University and its colleges?

"Adref, adref, blant afradlon" ( Homeward, homeward, wayward children) was the heading of an appeal by Alwyn D Rees in the 1960s. Today, hardly anyone under forty would recognise the allusion or be able to quote the next line. Not much can now be gained by an appeal to the heart and conscience. Nor is the publicity of the individual college – whether it be good or bad – going to count for much. This battle will not be won by producing more glossy prospectuses or more catchy video presentation. What we have here is a deep psycho-sociological problem, or – to put it in everyday language – a big nut loose.

Getting to the root of this problem will be a task for the Welsh government in-embryo which can grow around the Assembly, if indeed an Assembly is established. It will do it – it will have to – if it is to consolidate its own position as an embryonic state and to grow into something better. We do not yet know what the relationship will be between the University and the Assembly; we do not know whether there will initially be a relationship at all. But we ought now to be starting to consider new ways of supporting and financing university education under a Welsh government. The

government of Wales should, by some means or other, make it possible for the University of Wales to offer especially favourable terms for all who are born and brought up in Wales and who desire to study for a degree in the University and who are suitably qualified. We are not talking about favourable academic terms, and I hope that everyone understands this. Academically, we ought to be raising the requirements, not lowering them. Every student from Wales, Welsh speaking and otherwise, because he is from Wales, should be offered an education in the University of Wales at a very advantageous price, with no means test or any repayment, a price that may induce him to consider that his father's or mother's old university might be all right after all. This should be done quite openly, in a bold attempt to break the bad habit and to build up a strong, varied and interesting community of Welsh people in the University that was intended for them. There should first be a trial period of five years. Then another five years.

The English in the University of Wales would be hopping mad. But this is not a matter for them. It is a matter for the government of Wales.

We should accept that Wales's central problem today is the lack of stable and self-perpetuating native governing class. A Welsh government, at the first available opportunity, should take bold, open and decisive steps towards the resolution of this problem. We, as members and graduates of the University, have a right and an obligation to start thinking what steps these should be.

*[At the end of the conference, the proposal quoted in Appendix 2 was discussed and passed.]*

*[A paper presented to the conference Y GYMRAEG 16+ (The Welsh Language 16+), Bangor, 23 January 1998; published in **Y Traethodydd**, April 1998, p.71.]*

## APPENDIX 2

### A WELSH-MEDIUM FEDERAL COLLEGE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF WALES

#### 1. THE PROPOSAL AND ITS BACKGROUND

1.1 When the question is asked: "On what universities in the world is there an obligation or a reasonable expectation to teach their subjects through the medium of Welsh?" we can name only two: The University of Glamorgan and the University of Wales. This paper is concerned exclusively with the latter.

1.2 At the end of the conference YGYMRAEG 16+ - YFFORDD YMLAEN (THE WELSH LANGUAGE 16+ - THE WAY FORWARD), held at Bangor 23 January 1998, this motion, drafted by myself and proposed by Dr Geraint Wyn Jones, was accepted **nem.con.:**

That this conference requests the University of Wales Board for Welsh Medium Studies, in consultation with the Faculty of Welsh Medium Studies at Aberystwyth, and the school for Welsh Medium Studies at Bangor, and with individuals in all the colleges of the University of Wales, to draw up a plan for a federal Welsh Medium College within the federal University, to be presented to the Council and Court of the University.

Members of the Board may well have seen the paper PROBLEM PRIFYSGOL (A UNIVERSITY PROBLEM), which I presented to explain the background to the motion. The entire paper has now been published in **Y Traethodydd**, April 1998. There has also been some public discussion.

1.3 Let us briefly recap. It was in 1951 that the Court of the University, on a proposal by Dr Gwynfor Evans, agreed to examine ways of setting up a WM College. Seven years went by before there was made the first appointment designated for WMT. From that time until the mid-1980s, there were a few more appointments here and there, increasing the numbers very slowly and hesitantly. How many lecturers are there today in the University? Not many fewer than five thousand. And how many are officially teaching TMW? The answer (leaving out the Department of Welsh Language and Literature, and also those individuals who have taught TMW voluntarily) is: not many more than two dozen. WMT is still confined to a small number of "safe" subjects, while some of the academic core-subjects are still untouched. **We are not making any progress**, that is the truth of it.

1.4 It is time that we admitted that the present system is a complete failure. It is a system which depends upon the enthusiasm and good will of heads of departments in the individual colleges. I shall say nothing of their good will, but the extent of their enthusiasm can be summed up as NONE. That's the world we live in. There is still very little we can do to change it. But eventually, through the National Assembly, someone should ensure that it is **changed from top to bottom**. The method of financing the University and all the

conditions of its existence must be altered. This is a task for a Welsh government.

- 1.5 In the meantime, The Board for Welsh Medium Studies should support the setting up of a WM College.

## **2. THREE KINDS OF COLLEGES**

- 2.1 In principle, a “WM College” can be one of three kinds:

- (a) A college or a university entirely separate from the University of Wales, a “capel sbliit” (a rival chapel) in every sense. It is as well to admit that some of us, during the past twenty years, have turned some such idea in our heads from time to time.
- (b) One of the geographical colleges designated for the purpose. There might be a case for this if one of the colleges were clearly ahead in its WM provision. But none of them is.
- (c) A federal college, overlapping with two or more of the geographical colleges. This is the option which the Board is now being asked to consider, according to the motion which the conference accepted on 23 January. The argument in its favour – and it is a very strong one – is that it would continue to offer the Welsh-speaking student a CHOICE. If that choice were to be limited, by taking options (a) or (b) above, the result would be to intensify the central PROBLEM which I outlined in my first paper.

## **3. WHAT IS A COLLEGE?**

- 3.1 On the day of the Bangor conference, and a few times since then, I heard it said that what I had in mind was a “Digital College”. I can assure the Board’s members of one thing: the day I wrote the paper, I had never heard the phrase “Digital College”. I heard it soon afterwards, and by now I have some sort of notion of what it means. It has not altered my idea of what makes a good college.

- 3.2 A college is a society. A collection of people. Developments in Technology are not going to alter this in any way, clever though some of them are and appropriate though it be that they be made use of. It may be a good thing for us to remind ourselves of the purpose for which, originally, the video link was obtained between the colleges of the University some ten years ago: it was to facilitate WMT. I believe I am right in saying that, so far, NO use has been made of it to this end, although it has proved useful enough for other purposes. The technical means is nothing without the PEOPLE, the ORGANIZATION and the VISION.

## **4. WHAT IS THE SIZE OF A COLLEGE?**

- 4.1 The smallest college in the University of Wales has a teaching staff of around one hundred. Is anyone going to argue that a WM College should be smaller?
- 4.2 As a first step, a WM College of around 200-25- teachers should be formed. It should not be given its charter, or formally launched, or any of its courses advertised, until some such number will have been reached.
- 4.3 A time should be fixed to try and reach this number, say five years.
- 4.4 The 200+ should, in the beginning, be divided fairly evenly between the colleges of Bangor and Aberystwyth; they should be ready to serve the two geographical colleges and the University as a whole through visits and through regular use of the video link. We are talking about A FEDERAL COLLEGE IN A FEDERAL UNIVERSITY.

## 5. A NAME

- 5.1 It will need a name. The name “Coleg y Tatws Llaeth” entered my head in a blinding vision. In sober retrospect, I see what a good name it is, and I am sorry to hear that some members of the Board do not like it. It is a means of reminding us of **where we all come from**. The root of the PROBLEM to which I referred in my first paper, the “Great Loss of Blood” each September, is **coming up too quickly on the world**. Old University of Wales was good enough for the mother’s and father’s, but she’s not good enough for the children. I shall not here expand on this problem: but let us recognise it as **our biggest single problem as a people and as a society today**. I should welcome **a small sign that some of my senior academic colleagues are aware of its importance and are seeking an answer to it**. I have proposed an answer, one which a Welsh government will have to consider implementing: that the University, with the support of the government of Wales, should offer a thumping good financial bargain to those Welsh people who choose to study in the University of Wales. This would be a general, impersonal answer which would by-pass every argument over the motives of individuals. Before they cast it aside, let the Board’s members, and all others besides, think of a better answer.
- 5.2 We may eventually come to feel that we want a more august name than “Coleg y Tatws Llaeth”. We shall return to this. In the meantime let us continue to use it (CTL).

## 6. PUTTING COLLEGE TOGETHER

- 6.1 The first step will be to form a **Provisional CTL1**, an association of individuals who can come together in (say) five years to form the college **IF TWO CONDITIONS ARE BY THEN MET**: (a) that there is funding available: (b) that the PROBLEM has been tackled, at least in part, and the bad habit broken and the Welsh beginning to stay at home.
- 6.3 The work of the Convener and his Committee would be to establish the core of the WFC, and then build around the core by finding individuals

**INTERESTED** (no more could be asked) in becoming members of the College when it formally came into existence. This would be done through advertising, through the computer networks and through personal inquiries.

- 6.4 I am willing to believe that there are some subjects and some specialised fields in which there is not a single Welsh-speaker working, anywhere in the world. But I refuse to believe that there are not TEN people, somewhere in the Kingdom or in the world, who could teach, for example, Mathematics to degree standard TMW; and likewise Botany, Zoology, Physics, Chemistry, Biochemistry, Electronics, Geography, Modern Languages, Economics, Psychology, Linguistics – academic core-subjects which hitherto we have managed to overlook when planning WMT. It would be the work of the Convener and the Committee to find these people among:

New Graduates with good degrees;

Undergraduates who already have a good record;

Individuals in other professions, but with good degrees, who would be willing to re-train for university work.

- 6.5 Opportunities should be sought to create new inter-college and inter-subject combinations. For example, “Modern Languages” should be offered as a subject, bringing at least three languages from among French, German, Spanish and Italian. The time may have come to begin teaching Literature as a subject, crossing language frontiers. There are resources which might be brought together in Drama (Aberystwyth) and the two subjects (a) Literature of the media and (b) Communications (Bangor) and Politics (Aberystwyth)? And should we not be thinking of restoring some elements of Philosophy as part of some such combination.

- 6.6 Taught M.A. and M. Sc. Courses should be considered as well as undergraduate courses. Some of these might prove to be a means of attracting back to the University of Wales students who have initial degrees from other universities.

- 6.7 The Provisional College would gradually expand, a fellowship of people with an **understanding** between them, no more. Some would withdraw because of other commitments. But the number should be maintained at around 200.

## 7. EVENTUALLY.....

- 7.1 All other things concurring, the time would come for the college to be formally incorporated by charter, as the ninth institution of the University. Branches of the Federal College would be formed in at least two of the geographical colleges (CTL1 Aberystwyth, CTL1 Bangor & c). And its work would begin.

- 7.2 It is assumed that members of staff at the geographical colleges who already teach a certain number of modules TMW (whether that be officially or voluntarily), would become members of CTL1, additional to the 200.

- 7.3 Branches of CTL at Bangor and at Aberystwyth could then replace the School and the Faculty of WM Studies at those two places, and the Federal College could replace the Board.
- 7.4 Members of CTL1 would be the two things simultaneously (a) Fellows of CTL1, (b) staff members at the geographical colleges. Each student taking a minimum of modules TMW (the number to be decided upon) would be a member of CTL1 as well as of his geographical college, and would be no different from any other student of the geographical college. All the academic and social life of his geographical college – including its English life – would open to him in exactly the same way.
- 7.5 By then the Convening Committee would fall away like a rocket, and CTL1 would fall away like a spent rocket, and CTL1 would become responsible for its own government, with its own officers – Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Registrar and whichever ones would be deemed necessary by the membership in consultation with the University bodies.
- 7.6 Topics for further consideration:
- 7.61 The place of CTL1 within the government and administration of the University, i.e. whether the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of CTL1 should have his turn as Vice-Chancellor of the University.
- 7.62 The government of CTL1 itself: would it need a Court and a Council? Or would it be simply an association of Fellows, answerable to the Court and Council of the University?
- 7.63 The suitability of creating chairs within CTL1, which would be different from chairs in the geographical colleges (the precedent for this is the existence of chairs within the Faculties of Theology).

## 8. ONCE AGAIN THE NAME

- 8.1 Excellent though the name Coleg y Tatws Llaeth may be, there are other possibilities which might be considered. It would be appropriate, for example, if the Federal college were named after one of the benefactors of the Welsh language – someone from the league which includes William Morgan, Griffith Jones, Lewis Morris, O.M. Edwards, Emrys ap Iwan. To come to the point, I believe it should be named after “the man who started it all”: William Salesbury. His family were originally newcomers, but they became excellent Welshmen. Here we have a name that should please all those who favour “civic patriotism” rather than “ethnic patriotism”: his life and work is an advertisement for the capacity of Welsh-language culture to attract individuals to itself and to engage their loyalty. William Salesbury was the morning star of the Renaissance in Wales, and the day when we have realised the cultural programme which he outlined in 1547, we will have got somewhere. The title of his first book would supply a motto for the College: **Oll Synnwyr Pen Cymro I Gyd** (All the Sense in a Welshman’s Head); no less appropriate would be his

exhortation in the famous preface to that book: **Mynnwch ddysg yn ych iaith** (Insist on learning in your language).

- 8.2 “Coleg William Salesbury” would be a suitable name for a Welsh Federal College in the University of Wales. But a name as noble as this should not be wasted on something paltry. Up to now “Non-event”, “Dad’s Army” or “Fred Karno’s Circus” would have been a more fitting name for us and for our efforts. Let us first find that two hundred.

*(A paper for a meeting of the University Board for Welsh Medium Studies, 26 April 1998. Published in **Y Traethodydd, July 1998.**)*

## Appendix 3

### MORE ABOUT THE WELSH FEDERAL COLLEGE

“Or what man is there of you, whom if this son ask bread, will he give him a stone?”  
(Matthew 7 9)

#### 1. **ANOTHER SPRING**

- 1.1 Once more it is Autumn, which is the Spring of the academic world, and once again my thought turn, for the third time this year, to the great matter of the Welsh Federal College – Coleg y Tatws Llaeth, Coleg William Salesbury, or whatever it eventually come to be called.
- 1.2 The University Board for Welsh Medium Studies will meet again on 13 November 1998 to consider the possibilities; it will receive a report and (if my understanding is correct) a recommendation from its Executive Committee. I hope that the Board’s decision will be bold, radical and far-reaching, making sure that the next half-century will not witness a repetition of the sham, shame and scandal of “WM Teaching” as we have known it since 1950. The Success and Honour of our University and our Country (Llwydd ac Anrhydedd ein Prifysgol a’n Gwlad) demand this.
- 1.3 Members of the board will by now have seen my two previous papers in the form of articles in **Y Faner Newydd** and **Y Treathodydd**, July 1998. In this short paper I shall note (a) where I have changed my mind, and (b) where I have not changed my mind.

#### 2. **A CHANGE OF MIND**

- 2.1 I refer specifically to section 6.2 of my second paper (“A Welsh Federal College in the University of Wales” – 23 April 1998) There I suggested: “The Convener and the Committee would serve voluntarily, with expenses according to the usual rate.” When I wrote these words, I had forgotten the great truth that institutions and public bodies are more likely to set a value to something **if they have had to pay for it**. I now believe that the Board should from the outset obtain the funding to pay a Convener (perhaps on secondment from teaching duties), for a trial period whose length may be open to discussion.
- 2.2 **As for the Convener’s qualifications**, I suggest that the board should look for some such person as this:
  - Not too old;
  - With an excellent academic record;
  - Ideally, a graduate of the University of Wales, but a candidate with the degree of another university might be considered;
  - With experience in university teaching, and ideally in a subject other than Welsh;
  - With a good list of publications in Welsh on his subject.

### 3. STILL OF THE SAME MIND

- 3.1 Once more I want to remind the Board that the conference on 23 Jan. 1998 called not for a “Digital College” but for a “Federal College”. When I framed the motion which was accepted unanimously by that conference, I had not heard the phrase “Digital College”. I am now perfectly prepared to believe that a digital provision can contribute something towards the solving of our problem; but the Board should not take this as an excuse **not to appoint people**. A college is a society of people. Are all the universities in the Kingdom going to go digital in order to save a little on the salary bills? Are we going to see a “Digital University of Oxford” or a “Digital University of Cambridge?” Nearer home, if a digital provision will service instead of ... say 200 lecturers TMW in the University of Wales, is there an intention that it should serve instead of 4700 lecturers TME?

### 4. A LITTLE TALE FROM BANGOR

- 4.1 This year two lecturers retired from the School of Modern languages at UW Bangor, two who were able to teach French TMW and had been doing it down the years. One post was advertised. Bangor does not officially teach French TMW and the Appointment Committee was not under any obligation to appoint a Welsh-speaker. On the short list where two candidates with excellent qualifications, with the difference that one was a Welsh-speaker who had already published in Welsh on her subject, and the other non-Welsh-speaking. It went to the second candidate, and let no-one quote this paper as saying that an injustice was done. The panel no doubt acted correctly within the guidelines. It was not a WM post. The point is this: a University which was serious about maintaining its WM provision **would have grabbed the Welsh-speaker as well.** “There wasn’t the money to appoint two.” No, but a University truly committed to the use of Welsh would have made sure of the money. It may be that well-qualified candidates for WM posts are scarce; but when one of these rare animals comes by, we have not the means to make an appointment. I understand that the Welsh-speaker in question has now gone to Nottingham. That’s the way it is. Here is a lesson for us, just in case someone wants to claim that a Digital College will no instead of a Federal college. We must have a central body – a college – with its own funding, to find, to recruit and to appoint men and women qualified to teach TMW in the University. Otherwise they will not be appointed. This consideration counts as NOTHING in the minds of Heads and Boards of Departments in the geographical colleges. It will come only through the Federal College. A Digital college would not touch upon the problem.

### 5. WHAT ABOUT THAT NUMBER?

- 5.1 Perhaps I should not have heard, but I heard, that there was “much opposition” from certain members of the Board to the figure of 200 which I suggested in my second paper following a very quick calculation. Opposition on the grounds that it was too small, let us hope. Is anyone going to say that his figure is too big – too good – for the Welsh and the Welsh language? With that inward ear I can hear the huffing and the excuse-making ..... “hm, hm ... bit by bit ...”.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have been going slowly since 1950. So slowly that the snail is stuck immobile in the tar. Is that slow enough for you?

- 5.2 I am as aware as anyone of the difficulties. It is quite possible that there are some subjects with **no-one in the world**, at the moment, who could teach them TMW. That is a measure of the University's failure. I too have heard, and from a good source, no UW Aberystwyth recently tried to appoint one lecturer TMW in Law. **Not one** applied. Still, who knows but that it might have been easier to appoint a team of six, starting together, than to appoint one to be a lonely pelican in a hostile environment? Some instinct tells me that, once we get going, the right people will come in batches.

## 6. UNDERGRADUATE OR POSTGRADUATE COURSES?

- 6.1 During a discussion in **Golwg** (20 August 1998) this was quoted as an option for which there is believed to be support within the Board: "to try and get the colleges to offer courses at the end of the degree period which would place an occupational emphasis on the Welsh language, especially in fields such as medicine and accountancy, rather than press for full courses TMW". Yes, alright up to a point. From the point of view of the outside community, and the demand for people qualified to work TMW in a variety of fields, it does not matter so much at what point the qualification was obtained, whether during a degree course or later. I can certainly see possibilities here. At the same time I hope that the Board will not regard this as the main option and thereby provide the University with another excuse to avoid the **central and basic obligation to provide degree courses TMW**.

## 7. A LONG WAY

- 7.1 After being accepted in principle by the Board, the Federal College will have a long way to go before it is a reality. The Board's members will know better than I do which steps would need to be taken, and which bodies would have to decide – the Court and Council of the University, the Academic Board, the courts, Councils and Senates of the geographical colleges &c &c. It will be asked – and no doubt it will have to be asked – "What does the Funding Council say?" And I suggest rather different questions: "What is going to happen to the Funding Council itself under a new system for the government of Wales?" or "What should happen to it?"

## 8. COLD FISH

Let the Board go forward, veering neither on the left hand nor on the right, to set up what the conference in January asked it was set up: a Welsh-medium Federal college. The choice for the Board's members is either to support this principle unequivocally, or else to line themselves up with those cold fish who did their utmost in the early 1950s to ensure that "WM Teach", for a period of fifty years in our University, would be no more than another name for a farce.

*(Presented to the University Board for WM Teaching, 13 November 1998; published in Y Traethodydd, January 1999.)*

## Appendix 4

### COLEG WILLIAM SALESBURY – PRESSING ON

I am pleased to accept the editor's invitation to say a few more words on the matter of the Welsh-medium Federal College in the University of Wales. We shall look back a little, and forwards a little.

Readers may remember that the story, or at least this chapter of it, began with a conference held in Bangor, at the end of January 1998, on the subject "The Welsh Language 16+ - the Way Forward". The conference was organised under the auspices of three bodies: Canolfan Bedwyr (a centre for the development of language resources at UW Bangor), Cymdeithas Ysgolion dros Addysg Gymraeg (Cydag) (The schools Association for WM Education), and the University Board for WM Teaching. Its aim was to confront one depressing fact, and to try and see what could be done about it, namely a tendency among school pupils to discontinue their WM education once they have obtained a few GCSEs – either because there is no further provision for them, or because of that something which has impelled Welshmen over many generations to lay aside their language as one of the things of childhood. It was a conference with a good cross-section, representing the University colleges and other colleges in Wales, secondary schools and tertiary colleges, local authorities and a number of other bodies. That was why I saw it as an opportunity to present this motion:

That this conference requests the University of Wales Board for Welsh Medium studies, in consultation with Faculty of Welsh Medium Studies at Aberystwyth, with the School of Welsh Medium Studies at Bangor, and with individuals in all the colleges of the University of Wales, to draw out a plan for a federal WM college within the federal University, to be presented to the Council and court of the University.

In support of the proposal I wrote the paper "Problem Prifysgol" (A University Problem), which was later printed in this journal as well as in **Y Trraethodydd**. In the closing session of the conference, the motion was formally proposed by Dr. Geraint Wyn Jones, and was passed **nem. con.** Over, then, to the Board for WM Studies.

By all accounts, the Board's initial reaction was favourable. The press was able to report following meetings in April and July, that the Board supported in principle the creation of a Welsh federal college. That is confirmed by the minutes of the June meeting: "the idea of a federal college was agreed upon".

At the same meeting, the Executive committee of the Board was asked to prepare a report to be presented by mid-September to the Board, and then forwarded to the Academic Board of the University, the Vice-Chancellors' Board and the Council.

In early October (1998) I saw a draft of the report, **Datblyqu'r Ddarpariaeth: Y Ffordd Ymlaen** (Extending the Provision – The Way Forward). Perhaps I ought not to have seen it, but it was shown to me by a member of the Board who had been given to understand, like myself, that an invitation was still open for me to be present at a meeting of the Board in mid-November. (That invitation was withdrawn within a week of the meeting; this I fully accepted, as I am not a member of the Board.)

I read the report. Then I re-read it. Then I cleaned my spectacles and read again. Not only was there no recommendation on the principle of a Federal college, I could not discern either any trace of the three words “Welsh Federal College” (or “Federal Welsh College”, which would have been just as acceptable). The opening paragraph (“Introduction”) referred to the January conference at Bangor, its aim, membership &c. But somehow or other, the report had omitted to mention the only important think the conference did. The comparison which came to my mind was that of an old Soviet photograph from which Trotsky had somehow vanished overnight!

I am glad to say that one or two members of the Board noticed the omission and drew attention to it in the November meeting. In a draft which was ready by January of this year (1999), Trotsky has reappeared. The two words “Federal college” are to be seen three times on the first page of the report, together with a promised “that the discussion is to continue on a Federal College to take responsibility for Welsh Medium teaching”. But in the same paragraph we note the phrase “working within the existing structures”, a fairly clear sign that among the final recommendation we shouldn't expect to see one in favour of a Federal College. This is confirmed when we turn to the concluding section.

I do not believe that I am acting improperly when I now quote the report's recommendations as found in the final draft. They were accepted by the Board, unanimously as I understand, and since then approved by the Academic Board of the University, the Vice-Chancellors' Board and the Council. This is now the basis of the University's policy on WM Teaching:

“The Board urges the University:

- (1) To recognise that the need in Wales for university students educated through the medium of Wales for university students and bilingually is greater than ever before, and that the present period offers unequalled opportunities to supply that need;
- (2) To recognise that new ways must be found of developing and extending the Welsh-medium provision, including academic and occupational fields;
- (3) To recognise the need for central planning and marketing in conjunction with the institutions for higher education and to authorise the Board to perform these functions;

- (4) To ensure the continuation of an adequate development fund, which will be under the authority of the Board and answerable to the University's Central Services Boards, so as to meet the need for research projects and pilot schemes;
- (5) To initiate discussions with the Funding Council and with other relevant bodies so as to meet the need for research projects and pilot schemes;
- (6) The board urges the University to make sure that this will be the first step towards the creation of a consortium for Welsh-medium Teach which will co-ordinate WMT and developments in life-long learning."

I should have preferred it, and I believe it would have been better for all, if the report had included a clear recommendation in favour of a Welsh Federal College. I had an opportunity to speak my mind on this immediately after the Board's meeting at the end of January. For that reason I shall expand but little, only to answer a couple of questions which I can imagine the readers asking. What am I complaining about? Hasn't Trotsky been restored? Does not the report include the words "Federal College" three times, and record the resolution of the Bangor conference, and promise that the discussion will continue? The answer each time is "Yes". But just about. I happen to know that there was a brazen attempt within the Board to alter the whole course of the discussion so that a Federal College would not be on the agenda at all. And that attempt succeeded in so far as there is no recommendation in it favour at the end of the report. I was invited to consider whether or not a Consortium would do just as well as a College, and it was explained to me that "Consortium" was the in-phrase of the day and the hour when the Board met. I could have said "Right, fine, great, excellent, I'll change my mind"; but I could not change my mind on behalf of all those who had voted for the work "college" at the Bangor conference a year earlier. I heard also the reasons why "Federal College" was finally deemed not to be an acceptable wording. "College" was rejected on the grounds that "A college is an association of people, and everyone connected with a college should know that. "Federal" was rejected on the grounds that the federal do not like to hear it mentioned. I know quite well where this objection comes from; from the city which said "No" to the Assembly, and then refused it a home.

The reference to "life-long learning" is something of a red herring. It is one of the slogans of the day, and does not mean very much. A century ago it meant something, because our great-grandparents educated themselves for life as preparation for another world. In a secular society there is not the same inducement to go on learning "for life"; and as everyone knows who has been involved with the WEA or with "Continuing Education" under the University, only a very small minority now bother at all. In calling for "A Welsh Medium University education", we mean, first and foremost, an education in the traditional academic subjects, for a period which is usually three years and sometimes a little longer, for people mostly between eighteen and twenty-one years old, to qualify them not for any particular craft or profession but rather for membership of a professional class in a bourgeois democracy. A university's service to a nation in the modern world is to supply this class; the University of

Wales has failed in this, or it has refused, for reasons that can be traced back to its foundation. One day it will be the task of a Welsh government, through an instrument stronger than the Assembly, to reform the University from top to bottom.

The reader can now ask me: “Do you see nothing positive in the Board’s recommendations?” And I can reply, “Yes I do”. So far as they go, the six recommendations are commendable because they touch upon some fundamental needs. There is another very positive thing to report, and it may have become public knowledge before this article appears. In the body of the report there is a call for the University to employ one full-time executive officer with responsibility for WMT. This, hitherto the most important development of all, has been approved by all the University bodies. They tell me that the problem is now to find him a salary. Since nobody has asked me, I shall not suggest in what department of Worldly Vanity some money could be saved in order to create this key post; but believe you me there are plenty of such departments in the University and its colleges.

The creation of this post will be justified when the person appointed goes on to form the core of a Welsh Federal College. That will be his work. Great is his opportunity and his responsibility.

Having noted one or two encouraging signs of this nature, may we venture to look forward? At some point in the first decade of the new century – and all right, we’ll say the second half of the decade” – a Welsh Federal College should be set up. It should connect with, and it should serve, two, three or more of the colleges of the University of Wales, and eventually all of them, and perhaps other HE institutions. It should have about two hundred teachers; I cannot see it functioning effectively on less. It would have to deal with “all the sense in a Welshman’s head” – History, Geography, Law, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Biochemistry, Music, Religion, Electronics, Agriculture, Politics, Philosophy, Economics, Sociology and a variety of modern languages (together with one or two old languages, it would be nice to think) and their literatures. No doubt readers can think of a few more – ics and –isms that they would like to add. In addition to the teachers there would be a need for a strong editorial team of the best available writers of Welsh, to prepare basic materials in all subjects. A course in the use of Welsh should be available to all students, together with a certificate for those who do well in it.

It would be nice to have some indication that the name “Coleg William Salesbury” means something to the policy-making bodies of the University and to their members, and that the exhortation “insist on learning in your language” can yet call forth a response.

P.S. (7.11.00) Writing this article I had before me a draft of the report **Datblygu’r Ddarpariaeth: Y Ffordd Ymlaen** as revised on 20.1.99 Within days after the appearance of the article there came another draft of the report, dated 20.8.99 Behold, Trotsky has vanished once more! In this game you need a pair of eyes in the back of your head.

*(Published in Y Faner Newydd, Summer 1999)*