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Thanks to Peter Slater for photos.
It’s time to do more to promote co-ops and mutuals to regenerate the Welsh economy, argues Andrew Davies Chair of the Welsh Co-operative and Mutuals Commission, and former AM for Swansea West.

Making the most of mutuals

“Co-operatives are a reminder to the international community that it is possible to pursue both economic viability and social responsibility.”
Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General

In July this year, Edwina Hart, Welsh Government Business Minister, announced the setting up of a Welsh Co-operative and Mutuals Commission, and asked me to Chair the Commission. The timing was appropriate as 2012 is the UN International Year of Co-operatives and also the year the Wales Co-operative Centre is celebrating its 30th anniversary.

The remit of the Commission will be “to make recommendations on growing and developing the co-operative and mutual economy in Wales in order to create jobs and wealth in support of the Welsh Government’s aims and ambitions.”

We will “consider the evidence for supporting the co-operative and mutual sector in Wales; set out a vision for the co-operative and mutual economy in Wales and provide suggestions on how the existing business advice for the co-operative and mutual sector might be strengthened and identify specific areas that might be targeted for additional support by the Welsh Government.”

It is often said that what goes around comes around. The global banking and economic crisis and the continued world economic down-turn and ongoing recession in the UK, triggered by banking and financial scandals and recent corporate failures, has led to extensive questioning of the ways in which our economy and society is run. The neo-liberal, market-driven orthodoxy that has dominated governments’ economic and social policies everywhere over the past forty years of policies years has increasingly come under attack as its failures have become only too apparent. It shouldn’t be forgotten that it was the de-mutualisation of mutuals like Northern Rock and the Alliance & Leicester that probably contributed as much to Britain’s banking crisis as Fred Goodwin’s RBS and other major clearing banks.
Levels of trust have fallen dramatically between citizens and many of the major institutions in our lives, whether that be government or business. This disillusionment has led to many people looking for alternative, more ethical ways of organising businesses and services, particularly in those run on a co-operative, mutual or not-for-profit basis.

The economic and social policy environment has also been transformed by changes in technology and a greater understanding of the ways in which people actually behave, as opposed to ways in which classical economists think we behave.

In his recent book “Positive Linking: How Networks Can Revolutionise the World”, Paul Ormerod argues that our social and economic worlds have been transformed by the internet and that as our societies become ever more interconnected and dynamic, network effects are having a profound impact at every level of our lives. Ormerod argues convincingly that the financial crisis has shown us that conventional economics is limited by its failure to understand networks, ignoring the possibilities of ‘positive linking’.

This convergence of factors has created a unique opportunity in Wales to explore new, collaborative and ethical ways of running business and public services.

It needs to be remembered that the Labour Party and wider Labour movement grew out of the co-operative and community-based mutual movement and has remained committed to this tradition and its practical implementation. It was after all the Wales TUC that in 1982 established the Wales Co-operative Centre, now the largest co-operative development agency in the UK.

Welsh Labour’s 2011 Assembly election manifesto, which I authored and which now forms the Welsh Government’s Programme for Government, stated that, “we believe there is strong case for supporting alternative forms of enterprise, as businesses or in supporting the delivery of public services. We believe that not-for-profit organisations such as co-operatives, mutuals and social enterprises have a key role to play in the economy and in complementing the provision of public services.” This came with specific commitments to explore ‘mutual’ options in the areas of economic development; housing; the governance of further education colleges; delivery and financing of public services and rail transport through the Wales & Border rail franchise. These were underpinned by a commitment to ensure that the cooperative and mutual sector had access “to appropriate and robust business advice.” This was probably the most extensive commitment Labour had ever undertaken in Wales to exploring and supporting different forms of mutually-owned enterprises.

There had been a great deal of discussion in the mid-1990s about ‘mutualism’. In a Co-op Party pamphlet published in 1998, Peter Kellner suggested that the word “socialism” be dropped in favour of “mutualism” and argued that “new mutualism” summed-up what the “Third Way” really means.

So why didn’t the idea develop more robustly after Labour took office in 1997? Partly this was because the intellectual climate was strongly prejudiced against, not least among the business and financial establishment. Further, the image of the sector was poor in the 1990s. It failed to demonstrate either greater economic efficiency or ethical superiority to its competitors.

Both the intellectual climate and the performance of mutuals have changed radically. Mutuals such as the Co-operative Group and the John Lewis Partnership are now some of our largest and most successful companies in the UK. It recently posted a 60 per cent increase in pre-tax first-half-year profits of £144.5 million, to outperform its rivals in an extremely tough retail market.

The Co-operative Group recently celebrated 150 years of trading in Wales, with a turnover of £600 million (excluding the Co-op Bank). With almost 400 stores, approximately 5,000 employees and 500,000 members, it is the UK’s largest mutual business owned by over seven million customers. The Group operates 4,800 retail outlets, employs more than 100,000 people and has an annual turnover of more than £13 billion. The recent Co-op Bank deal to take over 632 Lloyds TSB branches, with an estimated 4.8 million Lloyds customers transferring to the Co-op, along with up to 7,000 staff, will take the Co-op Bank’s high street presence to around 1,000 branches, which is about 10 per cent of the UK’s entire banking branch network.

And here in Wales, the creation of Glas Cymru, that owns Welsh Water, has shown that a commercially-run not-for-profit company, with a strong public service ethos, can operate successfully.

We have now a unique opportunity to develop a made-in-Wales approach to building businesses and public services which are not only successful but are also run on ethical and socially-responsible lines.
Learning from our past

Solutions to the current economic crisis can be found in the often forgotten co-operative and community traditions of Wales in the 1920s and ‘30s, says Wayne David MP for Caerphilly and Shadow Minister for Political and Constitutional Reform, as he urges the Labour movement to move away from ‘statist’ thinking.
About a year ago there was a great deal of controversy about Blue Labour. Since then, the dust has settled a little and it is possible to come to an assessment about Maurice Glasman’s analysis of Labour’s past and its future trajectory.

There are some aspects of Glasman’s historical interpretation of Labour’s history which I have reservations about. But one of the central ideas of Glasman’s thesis is absolutely correct. Essentially, he argues that the “dominant” political tradition of much of Labour’s politics has been ‘statist’ in character. Both traditional Fabians and those on the left of the Party have sought to create a better and more equal society through utilising the structures of the state, at the same time as increasing centralised economic planning, accompanied by varying degrees of public ownership. I would suggest that the achievement of this goal has been the dominant theme of the Labour movement’s history from the adoption of the Labour Party’s constitution in 1918 through to New Labour.

There is however a different strand of socialist and social democratic thought which has been powerful in Labour’s history and which is particularly relevant today. Alongside those who saw control of the ‘state’ as the be-all and end-all of socialism, there were others who saw and practiced their socialism in a different way. Rather than seeing socialism as ‘top-down’, it was argued that to transform the economy and society it was essential for there to be local grassroots activity and engagement, whether it be in the local community or at the place of work, accompanied by effective decentralised government.

Of course, there are always plenty of overlaps in Labour history. For example, those who believed in extensive nationalisation were often active in their local communities, and those who adhered to Marxism and “scientific socialism” often had a “moral” critique of capitalism, even though they seldom admitted it. Nowhere was this overlap more in evidence than in the Miners’ Institutes of the South Wales coalfield and in the working class adult education movement, where “students” often attended classes organised by the Workers’ Educational Association (WEA) and the National Council of Labour Colleges (NCLC) even though the two were ideologically opposed to each other.

Alongside the statist tradition of socialism, which arguably came to its apogee in the Labour Governments of 1945-1951, this counter, but in some ways complementary tradition, is varied, rich and exciting. Among its leading lights were William Morris and his ‘arts and crafts’ movement, Robert Blachford and his Clarion newspaper, Keir Hardie with his commitment to Home Rule, G D H Cole and his advocacy of guild socialism, R H Tawney and his passionate belief in equality. As well as such figures whose influence was essentially British there were others who deserve to be rescued from what the historian E P Thompson called the “enormous condescension of posterity”, whose nexus was Welsh or South Walian as well as British.

Foremost among such individuals was Ness Edwards. He was the Labour MP for Caerphilly from 1939 to 1968 and he served in the Labour Government of 1950-51 as Postmaster General. But his greatest contribution to the Labour movement was his successful fight against company unionism in South Wales in the 1930s, followed by his ‘socialist educational work’ in the South Wales coalfield. Ness was what Gramsci would have called an “organic intellectual” – someone who was very much a product of the society he sought to change. Incredibly, Ness wrote no fewer than five books which covered cultural and historical subjects, and which were all intended to further the socialist cause.

That cause however was not simply the “capture of the commanding heights of the economy”, beloved by some of his contemporaries, it was also the advancement of ‘industrial democracy’. This is another strand of socialist thinking of particular importance to the history of the Labour movement in South Wales. Ness Edwards was very much part of a tradition in the South Wales coalfield which was revolutionary in character, and also based on syndicalist ideas. For the syndicalists, state

“Ness was what Gramsci would have called an “organic intellectual” – someone who was very much a product of the society he sought to change.”
Wayne David recently completed a biography of Ness Edwards, “Remaining True”, and is currently writing a pamphlet on Morgan Jones.

South Wales had a Co-op store and the Co-operative Party succeeded in keeping alive the flame of mutualism, even when at times ‘co-operation’ became unfashionable. Nationalisation was not enough; workers’ control of industry was the real objective. The “schoolmaster” of what might be called Welsh syndicalism was Rhondda’s Noah Ablett. He was the main author of the famous “Miners’ Next Step” and coined the aphorism “why cross the river to fill the pail?” In other words, why bother with elections and nationalisation when socialism can be achieved simply by the workers taking over industry?

The flaws in Ablett’s analysis and proscription became self-evident. However what is important from the vantage point of the present is the fact that Ablett had a belief in the inherent capacity of working people to control those factors which impinging upon their everyday lives. That self-confidence was a feature of South Wales in its Edwardian heyday before the First World War, and it continued through the long years of industrial decline beginning in the early 1920s through to the demise of the coal industry in the 1980s.

A contemporary of Ness Edwards and a product of that same intellectual milieu was Aneurin Bevan. Born in Tredegar in 1897, Bevan was a miner who entered Parliament at a young age and of course created the Labour Party’s single greatest historical achievement – the National Health Service. Although Bevan is generally thought of as the archetypal left-winger who believed in nationalisation and the strong State, the real Bevan was a far more complex and nuanced individual. Just read his book “In Place of Fear” and you will see what I mean.

Bevan’s vision for the National Health Service was not so much a Beveridge-inspired civil service blueprint; rather it was drawn from his own experience of the Tredegar Medical Aid Society. Similarly, Bevan’s experience of dealing with housing matters when a local councillor was as important for him when he became a Housing Minister as any centrally devised plan to improve the nation’s housing stock.

Ness Edwards’ immediate predecessor as MP for Caerphilly was Morgan Jones. He had, like Bevan, a background in local government but one that was far more extensive. He was a stalwart of the radical Independent Labour Party (ILP) and was a leading member of Gelligaer Urban District Council, where he played a prominent role in bringing about a major council house building programme for the area. Morgan Jones then went on to become a leading member of the Education Committee of Glamorgan County Council before becoming an MP.

Morgan Jones’ political journey was by no means untypical and Labour’s involvement in local government in Wales is in fact a vital part of Labour’s story in Wales. Although largely overlooked by Labour historians, that tradition resulted in untold improvements in the lives of thousands upon thousands of people. Housing and education were seen as two priorities which had a huge impact on people’s current living standards and their children’s future prospects. Not for Labour councillors of the 1920s and 1930s and indeed after the Second World War as well, was the idea that socialism was only about electing a Labour government in London; just as important was being active in the local community and using the local authority to achieve tangible and immediate results.

Another important strand in the Labour movement’s pedigree is the Co-operative tradition. Following the example of Cwmbach where the first co-operative store in Wales was established, at one time virtually every community in South Wales had a Co-op store and the Co-operative Party succeeded in keeping alive the flame of mutualism, even when at times ‘co-operation’ became unfashionable.

Today, the world in which we live is very different from the world which saw the genesis of the Labour movement. But in so many frightening ways there are similarities. The crisis of capitalism today is worse than anything that we have seen since the 1930s and power and wealth is located in the hands of a truly privileged elite. More than ever before, we need to develop a vision and policies which are up to tackling the challenges we face. Those challenges must be met at a number of different levels; no longer is it appropriate for us to believe that simply capturing and utilising the British State is enough. What is needed is a politics which is designed to redistribute wealth and power by working alongside and with the people. That is why the “forgotten” traditions of the Labour movement here in Wales need to be remembered, but more importantly they need to be learnt from and built upon.
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Ebbw Fawr Learning Community is also open. Blaenau Gwent pupils have started with the first maintained 3-16 school in Wales. Ebbw Fawr Learning Community is currently located on four sites, with new state-of-the-art facilities set to open at The Works site in Ebbw Vale over the next 12 months.

In September, the new Education Achievement Service (EAS) for South East Wales began. The service aims to raise education standards across five local authorities (Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen). The integrated service supports and challenges schools.
You’d be forgiven for thinking it was carved three feet high on a large stone plinth somewhere that parents living on low incomes are happy for their children to fail at school, and that their children don’t care much about what they do when they got older.

On a daily basis, some Minister, policy maker or charismatic educationalist will argue that poorer children have lower educational outcomes than their more affluent peers because they (and their parents) don’t value education or ‘aim high’ enough. They then claim the way to narrow this gap is to ‘raise aspirations’ to transform children’s lives and open up a world of opportunity. This logic has underpinned a considerable amount of educational policy and practice for decades.

And yet, whilst some progress has been made, statistics on the attainment gap between the richest and poorest children remains stark: the gap emerges by age three, widens by age five and is all but fixed by age eleven. And children in receipt of Free School Meals are currently about half as likely as their more privileged peers to get five A*-C grades at GCSE or to go to university. Surely, if the problem was one of aspirations and the solution one of simply raising them, then this situation would have changed?

The trouble with deeply-held assumptions, beliefs and myths is that they are self-reinforcing. Even though it is clear that this simplistic response to an entrenched problem is far from the golden bullet it is often portrayed, the ‘aspirations’ industry continues apace. And it does so on the basis of ideological conviction, anecdote, partial and often questionable evidence. Very rarely is robust evidence cited to support it and, indeed, very rarely is it challenged.

Recent research and a review of the international evidence directly challenge this situation, and they do so on two levels. In-so-doing, they call into question ‘received wisdom’ and routine support for most current methods which aim to ‘narrow the gap’ by raising aspirations and changing attitudes to school.

Most poorer young people (and their parents) attach great importance to education and have realistic hopes for the future (contrary to another myth, not all young people want to win The X Factor or become professional footballers), including wanting to go to university or to attain professional, managerial and skilled jobs. Indeed, rather than it being the case that aspirations are low or engagement with school is poor, the real difficulty for many children is in knowing how to fulfil their ambitions and for many parents is not having the knowledge, skills or confidence to help their children understand what choices need to be made to do so. These needs are not currently met by a proliferation of initiatives, and organisations keen to deliver them, which seek to raise aspirations but which then fail to provide an ongoing focus on ensuring they actually reach their goals.

Many people are sceptical of this evidence. They cite specific individual cases as being equivalent to robust evidence. In the same way as Shameless and the recent Panorama programme on Estates are not representative of the lives of people living in poverty, I’d argue that it is misplaced to allow a minority of cases of disengaged children and parents to be presented as the de facto
stereotype. It simply clouds the debate on how we can ensure all children can reach their potential, and it uncritically blames people for their failure.

However, just for one second, let’s see what the international evidence says if we accept the status quo. Despite the veracity of the claims made, it is not possible to establish a ‘clear causal relationship’ between young people’s attitudes, aspirations and behaviours (AABs) and their educational outcomes. Indeed, the available evidence is actually very limited and many claims made are not supported. And yet, such initiatives are widespread, claimed to be effective and cost millions of pounds. The evidence that is currently available is clear.

Firstly, initiatives focussed on involving parents in their children’s education have been conclusively shown to improve outcomes. If we are to give children and young people the best chance of achieving their goals, they and their parents need to be helped to succeed and not simply encouraged to ‘aim higher’ (bearing in mind that we already know their aspirations aren’t low). This is particularly true where parents have come from poorer backgrounds and/or have not had positive experiences of education and thus may not be aware of the full range of possibilities open to them or understand the routes that need to be taken to secure certain occupations or routes into post-compulsory education.

Initiatives shown to have a positive impact include: improving at-home parenting; involving parents in school; engaging parents in children’s learning and their own learning; and aligning school-home expectations. It is important to note, however, that initiatives should not simply be implemented on a ‘cut and paste’ basis. Care needs to be taken to ensure that they are introduced appropriately – rather than simply assuming that what was shown to work with one group or in one place will necessarily work with or in another.

Secondly, there are many interventions where the evidence is promising but not compelling. For example, there is some evidence that extra-curricular activities and (peer) mentoring improves attainment by increasing self-confidence. However, this is not conclusive and further research is needed before these programmes should be rolled out and claimed to raise attainment.

Thirdly, there are also many interventions currently in use which are not supported by the evidence and which, despite often vested interests or anecdotal ‘evidence’ and which may be beneficial in other ways, ought not to be pursued as a means of raising attainment.

So, what does all this mean? Addressing the attainment gap is a long-term challenge and there is no easy fix. Delivering on it demands a real shift in focus. It needs a concerted effort for all involved in education to move away from stereotypical and widely-held assumptions. Moreover, it also needs future educational initiatives not simply being implemented on the basis of influential politicians’, officials’, or (head) teachers’ preferences or beliefs. They should instead be developed in light of the best evidence available so that programmes that really work can be put together.

If this does not happen, it would seem at best, very likely that the attainment gap will not be reduced and, at worst, will widen. The children of Wales deserve better.
Medications that are supplied free of charge in England regardless of age or underlying medical condition are:

- Medications administered at a hospital or an NHS walk-in centre.
- Prescribed contraceptives.
- Medication personally administered by a GP.
- Medication supplied at a hospital or primary care trust (PCT) clinic for the treatment of a sexually-transmitted infection or if suffering with tuberculosis.

There are some situations where it is possible to obtain other prescriptions free of charge in England – but only if, at the time the prescription is dispensed, the individual is:

- aged 60 or over
- under 16
- aged between 16-18 and in full-time education
- pregnant or has had a baby in the previous 12 months and has a valid maternity exemption certificate.
- diagnosed as having a specified medical condition and has a valid medical exemption

Free prescriptions – any different to free x-rays?

On the 5 July 1948 the NHS was born. For the first time, hospitals, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, opticians and dentists were brought together under a single organisation in order to provide services that were free for all at the point of delivery. The central principles of the NHS were clear: the National Health Service was to be available to all and financed from taxation, which meant that people who worked and paid taxes, paid for the NHS according to their means. So the more tax you paid the more “technically” you paid for the health service and the result was that everyone would benefit and everything was to be free at the point of delivery.

However in 1952, only 4 years from the launch of the NHS, charges were introduced for prescriptions - the cost for a prescription at that time was a shilling (5 pence in today's money). This cost remained until 1965 when prescription charges were abolished, and they remained free for three years until June 1968, when prescription charges were reintroduced. However across the UK there were several exemptions at this time and in England these exemptions are still in place today.

As the spending on NHS medication soars

Tina Donnelly
Director of RCN Wales, argues that the NHS’s founding principle of free treatment is logical and makes medical and financial sense.
patients – with each prescribed item now costing prescriptions as did the Scotland Government in 2011. Yet in England, charges still apply to some head of the population has increased by 61 per cent and the cost of those items has risen by more than £206 million since 1999. The net cost of GP year prescribing costs have fallen by £7 million. However over the last total cost of £587.2 million, however over the last year prescribing costs have fallen by £7 million.

In Wales, the number of items dispensed per head of the population has increased by 61 per cent and the cost of those items has risen by more than £206 million since 1999. The net cost of GP prescriptions has increased by 29 per cent to a total cost of £587.2 million, however over the last year prescribing costs have fallen by £7 million.

Given that people are living longer with more chronic conditions and many of these conditions have very severe symptoms and would be life threatening without medicines management, it is not surprising that we are and will continue to see a rise in prescribing if we believe that we should prolong life expectancy.

It is extraordinary that some people believe that those who are in need of medication should be charged for the privilege of being prescribed it, yet do not comment on the fact that if an individual requires surgery they are not required to pay – where is the logic? As a clinician I fail to see how a surgical need should be met free at the point of delivery but a medical need should not.

Providing free medication helps to keep people out of hospitals by reducing frequent attendances or admissions to hospital and so reduces the overall cost to the NHS. Medications are important for patients and mean many people can live relatively normal lives, able to continue to work and sustain the economy. Many people who have life-long conditions such as diabetes, asthma or even cardiovascular diseases such as hypertension can now continue to work and live relatively normal lives, sustained by prescribed medication to treat their incurable illnesses. All of these conditions are often managed without having to be admitted frequently to hospital, and as such cuts NHS costs by keeping patients in their own homes under the care of their GP.

One question that is often raised is why don’t we charge people who can afford to pay? I believe that people with high incomes already pay more, via the higher tax rate. In Wales we do not have a huge number of high wage earners, nor do we have an exceptionally healthy population so we have to accept that the only way to enable equity and fairness is to have free prescriptions for all.

Clinicians should not have to answer patients’ questions about which medication on a multiple prescription they really need and which ones they could do without, as was the case when they had to pay. This affected compliance with treatments and often the consequence was that patients were not fully “medically controlled” and needed further attendance and investigations, usually by incurring an overnight stay or more in hospital.

Why should an individual who has a chronic health condition and needing life-sustaining medication be charged for prescriptions if they are in the higher tax bracket or indeed any tax bracket? Why should they have to pay at all for medications that they require on a daily basis to keep them alive?

I am so pleased that in Wales we recognise that there are too many difficult situations that would have to be taken into consideration – the cost of implementing such a systems would outweigh the benefits. Let’s hope free prescriptions are here to stay, like free suturing, or free X-rays or free ultrasound investigations.
The Equality and Human Rights Commission is urging every employer in Wales to introduce a workplace policy on domestic abuse. We see this as playing a critical role in supporting staff and maintaining productivity.

Last year we published “How Fair is Wales?”, which provides independent evidence to measure progress towards equality, good relations and human rights. It offered a new perspective on some persistent inequalities and identified some new challenges. “How Fair is Wales?” identified the need to reduce incidents of domestic abuse as one of the seven specific challenges that face Wales.

One in four women will experience domestic abuse at some point in their lifetime, so this is an issue that has a significant impact on workplaces. Our aim is that every employer in Wales understands the scale of the problem and adopts policies to support staff. We want to enable employers to identify the indicators of domestic abuse, understand its implications for the individuals involved, and know how best to deal with it in a sensitive and practical way.

For some women work can be a safe haven, a place to escape the abuse and identify avenues for help and support. For others it is the one place when the abuser knows where they are. In fact seventy-five percent of those who experience domestic abuse are targeted at the workplace by their partner or ex-partner. This can be through abusive telephone calls, abusive texts and / or emails, turning up at the workplace unannounced or actual violence in the workplace. Let’s not forget the tragic news report in 2010 of Jane Clough, a nurse at Blackpool Victoria Hospital, who was murdered by her ex-partner in the staff car park as
she arrived for her shift.

We also know that colleagues may be affected. They may be followed to or from work, or subject to questioning about the victim’s contact details or location. They may have to cover for workers while they are off, try to fend off the abuse or actually fear for their own safety. What’s more they simply may just not know how or what to do to help their colleague and friend.

Unfortunately people experiencing domestic abuse are often subject to disciplinary action and lose their jobs as their behaviour – when being late, for example, is misinterpreted. In the UK, in any one year more than 20 per cent of employed women take time off because of domestic abuse and 2 per cent lose their jobs as a direct result of the abuse. However, a steady income is often key to a survivor’s economic independence and their opportunities to escape from abuse relationships.

There is also the business case to consider as a lever for action. Domestic abuse can cause employees to be distracted at work, arrive late, leave early or miss work. Every year domestic abuse costs businesses in England and Wales £2.7 billion a year due to unplanned time off, lost wages and sick pay. This begins to demonstrate how domestic abuse can for some women limit the degree to which they are able to work, earn an income and independently make decisions. It can also be a massive barrier to development.

At the Commission we have worked with a range of partners committed to tackling domestic abuse to develop our ‘domestic abuse is your business’ toolkit. Workplace policies help to prevent domestic abuse by raising awareness and tackling attitudes and behaviour.

Employers are given the tools to ask the difficult questions and ensure processes are in place to enable staff to feel safe and supported in the workplace. Together we have developed a range of practical support for both employers and staff. This includes guidance on an effective workplace policy; the business case for taking action; a digital story from a domestic abuse survivor; and lots more.

Not knowing what to do can often be a barrier to helping someone dealing with domestic abuse in the workplace. On average a woman will be assaulted thirty-five separate times before seeking assistance. Yet further research shows that what a woman wants is for someone to notice that something is wrong and ask. Providing support on this issue does not mean that employers or colleagues suddenly have to become experts on domestic abuse and deal with the abuse itself. The most effective role that an employer or colleague can play in this situation is to signpost to the experts that are already out there.

Some of the practical tips the guidance sets out include giving the employee time off to consult a lawyer, moving the member of staff away from a window and out of public view, giving the individual a safe parking space or changing their phone number. These are low-cost steps that workplaces can take which will prove to be highly beneficial in terms of productivity and staff retention.

For those in the public sector the Public Sector Equality Duty and Human Rights Act both offer levers to effectively prioritise domestic abuse in the workplace. Under the Human Rights Act, all public bodies have an obligation to protect the human rights of individuals and to ensure that their human rights are not being violated. Implementing a workplace policy can help authorities meet their human rights duties in relations to domestic abuse. The public sector equality duties in Wales offer an opportunity to take action on domestic abuse. We welcome the fact that a large number of public bodies have identified action on domestic abuse as an equality objective.

There are other legal imperatives too. Health and safety laws ensure workers have the right to work in a safe environment where risks to health and wellbeing are considered and dealt with efficiently. There are a number of health and safety laws relevant to violence at work and an effective workplace policy on domestic abuse can ensure that employers are complying with these laws.

Take-up of our policies has been broad in the public sector and we are making headway in the private sector as well. Our guidance, business case studies and digital story can be used by trade unions and human resource practitioners to ensure that workplaces across Wales are a safe place where people can discuss, disclose and ask for help if they are experiencing domestic abuse. This is an ambitious aim but one that we can achieve if we all take some small steps in the same direction.

You can begin here www.equalityhumanrights.com/yourbusiness

In any one year more than 20 per cent of employed women take time off because of domestic abuse and 2 per cent lose their jobs as a direct result of the abuse.
Working Links’ own ‘Getting it Right’ corporate responsibility (CR) strategy has been informed not only by our experience of helping nearly a quarter of a million people into work but also by two online surveys of 150 human resource managers across businesses of all sizes. We also spoke to a number of experts in CR functions and in employability.

Working Links commissioned this research to explore the extent to which businesses are engaged in programmes which help people from disadvantaged groups into sustainable employment, and how such programmes fit into their wider corporate and social responsibility. We did so because we believe that if more businesses were to offer employability programmes (sometimes referred to as work inclusion) this would benefit not only the businesses themselves but the communities in which they operate, and Wales as a whole.

Our original research, together with existing research and the interviews and conversations we have had with a range of experts in CR practices, have shaped the content and conclusions of this report, which has three clear aims:

• to show the business and reputational benefits of employability as a component of CR;
• to explore how businesses can overcome some of the barriers that make it challenging to actively recruit from disadvantaged groups; and
• to assert that employability as a component of CR has the potential to bring wider economic benefits to the UK by addressing the causes and consequences of long-term unemployment, especially youth unemployment.

The results of the research were striking. They showed that effective employability schemes have the potential to have an impact beyond the individuals helped into sustainable employment. The HR managers we surveyed overwhelmingly consider it a duty for employers to help the UK address economic and societal challenges. Youth unemployment is a good example. Aside from the measurable costs in pounds and pence, there is a huge social cost from unemployment as the violence of the riots in London and elsewhere in 2011 alarmingly revealed.

The employers were also asked to rank what they believed were CR priorities. They said: environment and sustainability; supporting the local community; ethical sourcing; charitable giving in the UK and abroad; and recruiting from disadvantaged groups. Only 12 per cent of the businesses we surveyed considered recruiting from disadvantaged groups to be their top CR priority. However, our research showed over two fifths of businesses are engaged in it and, of the rest, a majority see the potential benefits.

The research also showed the main commercial benefit to businesses from employability programmes is their impact on the workforce. 51 per cent of respondents said that employability policies led to “a more reliable workforce”, 47 per cent said that their policies helped create “a more loyal workforce” and 44 per cent said they have experienced “improved employee retention”. We also asked what other benefits were felt by companies which actively recruited from disadvantaged groups. 67 per cent cited the contribution that their recruitment schemes made to the local economy, 58 per cent cited the positive impact on the local community and 49 per cent cited improving the local image of the business.

However, the research also revealed a discrepancy between attitudes of people in HR departments and those with responsibility for CR. A very high proportion of CR managers do not see the value in actively recruiting from disadvantaged groups (73 per cent said this). This is at odds with the views of HR managers who have implemented employability programmes and enjoyed the benefits. More worryingly, 73 per cent of CR managers did not
think that their company might benefit from a CR strategy that actively recruits from disadvantaged groups. There remains some way to go in linking the two issues consistently.

Social divisions were brought vividly to the forefront of politicians’ minds in August last year, and should be a wake-up call to businesses too. The urgency of the global economic crisis means that companies which are seen to be tackling problems head-on will see more benefit to their reputation than in the good times. In short, now is the time to engage in recruitment solutions which will help disadvantaged people – businesses achieve maximum impact in terms of reputation and in terms of contributing to economic recovery. If employability as CR can be expanded across the UK, many more businesses could replicate this success.

Working Links believes that large employers have a vital role to play in helping to address high levels of unemployment and youth unemployment. We also believe that large employers which opt to channel their work around CR into employability schemes will benefit commercially and in terms of reputation. If employers, large and small, are persuaded of the case for including employability then CR investment could have a transformational role in addressing high levels of unemployment and youth unemployment in the UK. However, just as is the case with other forms of CR activity, consistency through the supply chain will be critical to ensuring that CR is not a mere cosmetic exercise indulged at the behest of the marketing team rather than ingrained through business practices.

Indeed, at times of economic trouble, the benefits of programmes that help disadvantaged people are more keenly felt. By bringing employability programmes under the umbrella of CR, a business can truly integrate its business processes and have a positive impact on society. The need for businesses to promote themselves as responsible employers is greater now than in recent years, and the scale of the challenge in addressing the causes and consequences of unemployment has been more acutely felt in this recession than at any time since the 1930s.

A number of our clients run their own Ready for Work programmes and supporting a cause that they also believe in demonstrates that we share similar CSR values and enhances our reputation. Working with them to share knowledge and best practice allows us to connect with them on a level other than provision of legal services.

James Daffurn, Head of Corporate Responsibility, Freshfields
Radical changes to the social security system will discourage women from working and could deny access to vital cash for their families, says Victoria Winckler, Director of the Bevan Foundation.

The UK Government is in the process of one of the most radical changes to social security benefits for decades. These changes will have a far-reaching impact on every single person in Wales and the UK. Some people will lose entitlement to benefits altogether, if for example they are found fit for work or are found to be ineligible for the new Personal Independence Payment. And while the Department for Work and Pensions states that some people will be better off under the new benefits system, it is clear that many others will be considerably worse off.

It is estimated that about one in four people of working age in Wales will be affected by these changes. As is widely known, the claims of people who are out of work because of unemployment, ill health or disability will be re-assessed and put on a new footing. But the help with housing costs, council tax and living costs claimed by people who are in low-paid employment will also be re-assessed and brought into the new benefit system.

Concern about the cumulative impact of these changes has grabbed the most attention to date, hardly surprisingly as estimates suggest that the poorest families could lose up to 12 per cent of their incomes by 2014/15. But that is not the only issue - as well as affecting the income of hundreds of thousands of people in Wales, the new social security system is also likely to have an impact on equality between different groups of people and in particular between women and men.

Universal Credit is the new benefit that will replace Job Seekers’ Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance, Income
Support, Housing Benefit and Working and Child Tax Credit. It is being introduced gradually from 2013. There are many ways in which Universal Credit is different to the benefits it replaces, but until the rates of benefit are announced, most probably in the Chancellor’s Autumn Statement, it is difficult to calculate how much benefit different types of household will receive. There are, however, some changes that have already been announced that suggest that Universal Credit will reshape household dynamics.

First of all, Universal Credit will be assessed for each household rather than for individuals. So, unless an individual is entitled to a contribution-based payment (which will be, in any case, limited to one year) people who are unemployed or too ill to work will not receive a benefit in their own right - the benefit assessment will be based on household income. If household income is too great, no Universal Credit will be payable. Not only could individuals face a significant loss of income, they could also face a loss of independence within a household.

On top of this, household assessment means that one family member is held responsible for the behaviour of another – for example if one partner does not comply with requirements to search and accept work, the whole household could be ‘sanctioned’ and lose benefit.

Second, and following on from household assessment, Universal Credit will be paid only to one member of the household. At the time of writing, it is not expected that couples can chose to split Universal Credit between them. So, even if a household’s total benefit claim is made up of entitlement by several household members, only one person will actually get the money.

Many studies of how families manage their money suggest that income is not necessarily equally distributed within it. Typically it is the male in the household who will take charge of income, with women often having unequal and sometimes no access to the family cash. As Universal Credit will be paid into a bank account, unless a couple has a joint account the partner who does not get the payment will be entirely dependent on the generosity of the one who does. Despite this, both members of a couple will have responsibilities in respect of Universal Credit.

The third significant change is the switch of benefit payments to monthly, the purpose of which is to simulate the payment of salaries. However, research shows that people on very low incomes often manage their budgets on a weekly basis and it is not clear how families will adapt to having to make money stretch over a longer period. In addition, benefit payments will include help with housing costs, which for many claimants was previously paid direct to their landlord. Unfortunately the arrival of an unprecedented large sum at the start of a month could prove too tempting for some.

And last, but by no means least, there’s the question of second earners. Universal Credit has been explicitly designed to encourage one-earner households, as its aim is “to ensure that as many households as possible have at least someone in work and that work will pay for that household”. The consequence of this is a considerable disincentive for second earners in a family. The Resolution Foundation has found that a second earner working 16 hours a week on the minimum wage would, on Universal Credit, take home £17 a week after childcare costs – around £1 an hour – compared with take-home pay of £46 a week under the current system.

Of course Universal Credit doesn’t prescribe who are primary and secondary earners, but the weight of tradition means it is unlikely that many men will stay at home. The idea that partners might want to be equal within the household seems off the agenda.

The impact of changes to social security benefits on equality between women and men would be worrying at the best of times. But it is of even greater concern in the current economic climate. The opportunities for women to avoid the benefit system altogether – surely the aim of government and women alike - are shrinking, with the public sector employment contracting and the private sector under pressure. Women’s average earnings lag behind those of men, and both men’s and women’s average earnings are static.

Taken together, the assumptions on which Universal Credit is based could turn back the clock by 30 years. Whilst Universal Credit is itself gender-neutral, in that it can be paid to either partner and either gender could be the primary earner, it will operate in a society which is not. The disincentives to work faced by a second earner, the household assessment of eligibility and monthly payment to one household member could have a significant effect on women. The fear is that Universal Credit will not only reflect existing inequalities in society but will reinforce them.

"The new social security system is likely to have an impact on equality between different groups of people and in particular between women and men."
Why is Cardiff so unloved? Not that such ambivalence to capital cities is uncommon. For years Dublin was seen as English by many republicans and it was not until the 1970’s that the city’s magnificent Georgian architecture received a level of protection. Other, more contrived, capitals have struggled for acceptance: Abuja, Brasilia, Canberra and even, for a while, Washington DC. These cities did not capture the essence of their respective nations. And this seems to be the trouble with Cardiff.

Although it has an impressive Roman and Medieval heritage, Cardiff as we know it is a creation of the industrial revolution. Instead of celebrating its modernity, we often see it as foreign and imposed. Cardiff was created by the carbon of English capital, not the camaraderie of Welsh culture. The charge sheet is old and long. Too English, Tory, aloof and always taking the main chance at the expense of the rest of Wales! And it seems we must now add the strange phenomenon of the Cardiff ‘bubble’ which has cocooned the National Assembly and compromised the success of devolution. There is just not enough Caerdydd in Cardiff.

These accusations are mostly unfair. It is a wild exaggeration to claim that Cardiff actively hoards resources that should be spread around Wales. But there is a germ of truth in the criticism that Cardiff is not yet fully the champion of Wales. This sells the nation short and we all need to do something about it. But those of us who live or work in Cardiff have the prime responsibility to promote the full potential of the city. For too long we have buried a great treasure.

Cardiff has to belong to the whole of Wales, particularly when it comes to economic development. Many nations and regions around Europe have been regenerated using the city-region model. Here the principal city in a nation or region is seen as having general responsibilities for the nation’s prosperity. Perhaps the most striking example is Barcelona and its mission to be the hub for Catalonian regeneration. The Welsh Government is finally looking at the issue seriously. Unless this approach is pursued there is a danger that a capital city becomes an island of prosperity pulling in talent and resources from its national hinterland.

Cardiff is far from dilatory in grasping this challenge. But there is a need to do more to develop cultural, business and education networks across Wales and to use them as a resource to attract investment to Wales. For example, Cardiff University is now one of the leading universities in the world. It is probably the only higher education institution in Wales that can hope to sustain such status. However, it must surely retain a wider
It is little wonder so few outside Britain have the first idea about Wales and its exhilarating history.

It is in marketing that performance has to be most radically improved. Cardiff is one of Europe’s finest smaller capitals. It amazes me that when people visit Cardiff from England or further afield they frequently say how utterly surprised they are to discover such a stunning city. Cardiff is the most popular venue in the Six Nations championship; it hosted six FA cup finals with alacrity; and the Ashes test match could not have gone better. In fairness, Wales plc did get its marketing act together for the test match. But this was a rare triumph. We need to make such best practice common practice.

Where to begin? Let’s have more statues! And some of the statues we’ve got need to be relocated. I am not suggesting some post-Soviet purge where every statue is suddenly shunted off to a suburban park. But statues tell you a lot about a city’s priorities and self-image. Can anyone tell me why the Hayes is presided over by John Batchelor, the man often seen with a traffic cone on his head? Have you ever heard of him? What did he do of national significance?

Now that the splendid St. David’s 2 development is complete, why not replace this obscure Victorian with St. David? Our national saint can boast amongst his many achievements the fact that he actually existed – unlike, to take an example at random, St. George. What better way to adorn Cardiff’s most prominent square?

We must learn to think well beyond city limits and focus on the nation. So let’s shift David Lloyd George who is presently hidden away in shrubbery, his back to the city, near the National Museum. I would put the greatest politician that Wales has produced – the last PM to be the leader of the western world – in the Hayes to keep St. David company!

Before statues become a complete obsession, let me commend the recently unveiled statue of Ivor Novello outside the Millennium Centre. Why not make the Oval Basin an alfresco pantheon to great Welsh artists? My nomination for the next statue to join Novello is Iolo Morganwg. It says it all that this colossus of Welsh cultural life is unrecognised in the capital – and Iolo a local boy to boot. It is little wonder so few outside Britain have the first idea about Wales and its exhilarating history.

More vital still is the need to recognise Cardiff for what it is: Britain’s greatest Victorian-Edwardian city. Cardiff is to Victorian architecture what Dublin is to Georgian. But why don’t we say so? You could spend all day walking up and down Cathedral Road, probably the greatest Victorian street in Britain. The city has only recently acquired a museum dedicated to its history, but there remains no regular tour of Cardiff’s stunning architecture (a truly astonishing omission).

So let’s shout about Cardiff Castle and its world-class pre-Raphaelite interior design. Why be modest about Cardiff’s ethereal and beautifully spacious arcades? Am I the only one enchanted by Bute Park at the very heart of our city? It is even more prominent than Central Park in New York. Cardiff’s carefully planned civic centre can stand comparison to those of grander scale in Washington DC and New Delhi. And the city is home to some of Britain’s finest Victorian pubs.

But just put yourself in the position of, say, an American tourist visiting the city. If you have prepared well you would have read about Cardiff’s many wonders in books like the Rough Guide or Lonely Planet. Just as well, because if you relied on Welsh marketing you would be struggling.

When Cardiff takes itself seriously and stops being embarrassed by its riches, it will play a blinder for Wales.
Promoting Wales to the world is something that really matters to me. Since retiring from a sporting career in which I had the privilege and honour to lead my country’s team, I have worked in the communications industry and been a Member of the Ministerial Advisory Group on the Economy and Transport, and a Board Member of Ryder Cup Wales and the Wales Tourist Board. I know the value that a strong Welsh brand can bring on the international stage – and now is a key time to make that brand even stronger as Wales has a real chance to get distinct branding on the internet.

In June 2008, ICANN (the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers), the international body which controls the naming of internet domains, announced a reform of the rules and regulations that would allow for the expansion of the domain name space by offering any company, country or city the opportunity to apply for new Top Level Domains (TLDs).

Much work had of course already been done on the issue, with DotCYM, a leading pressure group, calling for a Welsh TLD. This work was built on by Nominet, who decided to bid to run the domain for Wales and to develop an application. Nominet operates at the heart of e-commerce in the UK, running the world’s fourth largest Internet registry and managing over ten million domain names. They have a long and significant track record in Wales and through the managing the .uk registry.

The bid was developed with the input of the Nominet Wales Advisory Group, which I chair. The Group is a talented and varied group of people including former e-Minister Andrew Davies; the
former broadcaster and communications expert Aled Eirug; tourism expert and former politician Lisa Francis; and Clive Grace, who is a member of the BT board for Wales and was formerly both Director-General Audit Commission in Wales and Chief Executive of Torfaen County Borough Council.

An integral part of the work we did was examining economic benefit and impact. A study commissioned by Nominet in Autumn 2011 showed widespread support for a Welsh TLD with 69 per cent of Welsh consumers and 59 per cent of Welsh business saying they believed that Wales should have its own domain space. The survey showed a new Welsh TLD would boost the economy, helping to attract inward investment, and promote Welsh exports.

Choosing between two possible domain names, .wales and .cymru, was not easy. In meetings with political and other stakeholders during the preparation of the bid, we remained open minded as to which domain to choose. Based on survey results and stakeholder dialogue, Nominet decided it was most appropriate that two TLDs were applied for - both .cymru and .wales. This will have the positive effect of delivering domains that are inclusive of the whole community, bringing economic and cultural benefits and encourage greater use of the Welsh language online.

It is also a not for profit company, and any surplus is reinvested into the internet community through Nominet’s independent charitable organisation, The Nominet Trust. The Trust has received £20m in donations from Nominet, some of which has been invested in projects here in Wales. Any surplus generated through .wales or .cymru will be reinvested in Wales through an independent Trust.

Nominet will also open a bilingual office in Wales. An internet registry for Wales requires a base in Wales. That office will not necessarily be in Cardiff – our aim is to maximise the benefit of the bid for the whole of Wales. Nominet has also honoured a pledge to make sure no public money was required for the bids, and has paid the £230,000 application fees to ICANN for the two domains.

All of these factors helped persuade the Welsh Government and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport in the UK Government to back Nominet’s bid, which was delivered to ICANN in April 2012. Letters of support for the bid were also received from a range of key Welsh organisations and accompanied the bid to ICANN as supporting statements. These included the Federation of Small Businesses, Wales Council for Voluntary Action, Welsh Language Board and S4C.

The application also included a Statement of Opinion signed by all 48 eligible Assembly Members (Ministers could not sign). To get this cross party support from all eligible members is almost unprecedented in the history of the National Assembly for Wales. Our political work culminated in a motion supporting Nominet’s application being passed in the Siambr of the National Assembly, which has also now resolved to adopt .wales and .cymru domains when they become available. This will be a significant boost to usage and shows our Welsh politicians once again leading by example.

Indeed, both the First Minister and Business Minister Edwina Hart have expressed strong public support for the bid. Carwyn Jones has said:

“The new domain names would create a fantastic opportunity for Wales that would support the development of businesses, communities and the Welsh language online. If successful it means we could use the top level domain names to establish a strong on-line presence which truly reflects our national identity.”

On June 13th ICANN confirmed which companies, organizations, start-ups, geographical regions and others have applied for generic top level domains and which domain names they are seeking. They have received more than 1,900 applications and .wales and .cymru is one of 67 designated geographical names applied for. Nominet hopes that both bids to be considered as a pair; not as two separate applications. We want the two domains to be considered as a single, indivisible whole.

We are optimistic that the bid will be amongst the first batch of domains designated, so that during the course of 2013 both can become live. There is still work to do, but we are closer than ever to getting our country properly recognised on the biggest communication medium of the future.
‘Honno’ is a Welsh word that means ‘her, who is elsewhere’ But as academic and author Angela V. John wrote in Planet magazine recently, “Honno Press has successfully challenged its very name and placed women at the centre of Welsh history and literature.”

A little over twenty five years ago a group of women from different parts of Wales, connected by various political and social networks, met to discuss establishing a press to increase the opportunities for Welsh women in publishing and to bring Welsh women's literature to a wider public. Working from their kitchens and spare rooms this inspirational group of women established Honno as a working co-operative and published their first two books, one in Welsh, one in English, in 1987. One of Honno’s founder members, Rosanne Reeves, remembers the

Putting women at the centre of literature

As Honno a co-op that publishes Welsh women’s writing, celebrates its 25th birthday Helena Earnshaw reflects on what it’s taken to get women’s voices heard in Wales's literature.
atmosphere that inspired them:

“It was in the 80s that Greenham Common started, when women from Cardiff marched to the base; Welsh Women’s Aid extended to rural Wales; the Miners Strike brought women of the valleys out of their kitchens, to return to their old kitchens empowered; … and a political branch of the Women’s Section of Plaid Cymru was developed.

The opportunity to sell women’s literature became a possibility – the influence of Virago, The Women’s Press, Spare Rib and Onlywomen, and the Attic Press in Ireland led the way. But of course Wales was different from England and there was a gap in the market in Wales for books which were relevant to the women of Wales, in both languages.

None of the publishing houses in Wales were particularly interested in promoting Women’s literature or writers, especially not in English. There was a tradition of publishing Welsh language material by winners of competitions in the National Eisteddfod by the traditional presses, who would then pursue these particular authors. But the thought of going out to look for new female talent and female voices was not a priority.”

Honno’s initial funding came from an appeal to the women of Wales – over 250 women responded and £4,000 was raised in twelve months. All editing, design, admin, storing and transportation work was done for free and from the women’s homes. The early years – and the later ones too – were difficult financially, but in 1988 Honno won the Pandora Women in Publishing award for the most impressive new women’s venture. Honno’s titles continued to win awards, gain recognition and in 1993 Honno was granted funding that allowed us to employ our first paid staff member – well-known writer and poet Elin ap Hywel. Since then Honno has gone from strength to strength and now employs four staff from an office at Aberystwyth Arts Centre, has published over 100 titles and over 450 women writers. Honno’s continuing existence owes much to financial and other support from the Welsh Books Council.

Honno has published children’s writing, poetry, fiction, autobiography and classics over its 25 year history. The Welsh Women’s Classics series, publishing neglected and virtually forgotten literary texts by great Welsh women writers of the past and making them available for a new generation of readers, has received great critical acclaim – Kirsti Bohata in New Welsh Review said that it is “difficult to imagine a Welsh literary landscape without the Honno Classics series” The first title in the Classics series was An Autobiography of Elizabeth Davis, the story of Betsy Cadwaladyr, a ladies’ maid who travelled the world and became a Crimean War nurse, working with Florence Nightingale. The republication of this book has in part brought Betsy Cadwaladyr back into Welsh public life, such that she is now taught about in schools and has a Welsh Health Board named after her.

The Honno Voices autobiographical series is an equally important conduit for women’s experiences. With accounts of women’s lives – from the inspiring and remarkable Ann Pettit, progenitor of the march on Greenham Common, one of the 20th century’s most iconic expressions of grass roots political will, and political activist Elizabeth Andrews’ memoir A Woman’s Work is Never Done which gives a rare insight into the struggles of women and the working class for a better life to collections of ordinary women’s experiences in different parts of history. In Struggle or Starve: Stories of everyday heroism between the wars Edith S. Davies writes of how her mother was determined that her two daughters should be educated – making such sacrifices that she had to share a single pair of shoes with her daughter while she was at university, and remained indoors while Edith attended lectures.
Honno are investing more energy in the Voices series and commissioning new research on the stories of the amazing women of the past. As Stephanie Tillotson says, “This is terribly important: a body of women’s work, past and present, helps to build a sense of identity and self-belief.” As part of the series Honno have commissioned a new collection of women writing about their experience of campaigning.

Identity can be composed of many things, including gender and nationality. The year Honno published its first books, an anthology of Welsh poets features only six women out of 170 poets, and a set of 16 postcards produced by Literature Wales with the Rhys Davies Trust in 2010 to honour some of Wales’s best-loved writers depicted only one woman. The Edinburgh Festival is rife with jokes about rape and domestic violence, and Irvine Welsh has lambasted the Man Booker Award. It is, he says “based on the conceit that upper-class Englishness is the cultural yardstick against which all literature must be measured”.

Joyce Carol Oates, in the Guardian commented that “It may be that if a woman writes about something like domestic life, it’s the subject matter that denigrates it. Men tend to write about hunting and exploring and travelling to dangerous parts of the world. If women wrote about those, I think they’d be taken more seriously.”

The Honno Voices series demonstrates that women writing about their experiences of domesticity are equally as legitimate as experiences of hunting and exploring. Until recent decades it was a rare woman who was able to experience much of the world beyond their community – but that does not mean that the ideas and feelings of those women are less valid and complex.

We don’t want to exclude men, we just want women to have the opportunity to have their voices heard, their experiences shared. These will be different to men’s, not better or worse, and it is only when the world is able to hear both equally, and see each for its value, that we can truly have an equal world.

Stephanie Tillotson, co-editor of Honno’s anniversary anthology All Shall be Well, writes: “One thing the new anthology All Shall Be Well shows, however, is just how that life has changed for women over the past century and a half, and how women’s writing has responded to the changes that have taken place. Honno has mapped that changing landscape. The sense of lives half-lived has receded, powerlessness and poverty has diminished. We, as women, don’t appear to be under the impression that all social, religious and political odds are stacked against us any longer. Yet, though much has altered, much still remains the same. We may have grown in confidence as women writers – thanks in great part to women’s publishers such as Honno – but there is still more to say. And just as importantly, more to enjoy by readers, both in Wales and beyond her borders.”

Honno still feels strongly that women still need an advocate, someone to say that their experiences are legitimate, that they need not be merely there to be attractive, but have their own voices. Luned Meredith, one Honno’s committee, was at the first meeting, around that kitchen table in Cardiff. She describes the feeling at that time:

“What I remember … was the real sense of urgency that we felt. We were actively involved in the politics. We wanted to make a difference and we wanted to do that today. The issue of women’s rights was as hot as all the others. Establishing Honno was part of that – it was vital to us not only to promote women’s writing, but also to promote images of strong women who were in charge of their own lives and not dependent on the whims of fathers or husbands or the grey suits of society. It was urgent. It still is. I said in 2008 that Honno has made a significant contribution to the changing social conscience which has given prominence to the woman’s voice. That is still true.”
The March
Gillian Clarke

Boots and rain drummed the tram-roads,
that bitter night in eighteen-thirty-nine,
potholed and stumbled with mud and stones.
Five thousand men, workers in iron and coal
from mine and furnace, Sirhowy, Ebbw, Rhymni,
heads bowed against the storm like mountain ponies.

Their bones ached from the shift, wind in the shaft,
heat of the furnaces, yet on they marched,
their minds a blaze because their cause was right,
through darkness from Ebbw Vale, Blackwood, Pontypool,
faces frozen and stung by the lash of rain,
trudging the roads to Newport through the night.

At the Welsh Oak, Rogerstone, betrayed by daylight,
Frost's men from the west, Williams's from the east.
Jones's men never arrived. The rest struck on
to stand united, of one heart in the square
before the Westgate. Had they stood silent then,
had they not surged forward, had not been shaken

by rage against injustice, had they muzzled
the soldiers' muskets with a multitude
of silence, had reason spoken,
those steely thousands might have won the day.
But they stormed the doors to set their comrades free,
and shots were fired, and freedom's dream was broken.

A score dead. Fifty wounded. Their leaders tried,
condemned, transported. The movement, in disarray,
lost fifty years. Then came, at last, that shift
of power, one spoonful of thin gruel at a time,
from strong to weak, from thin to poor,
from men to women, like a grudged gift.

Gillian Clarke is National Poet of Wales. ‘The March’
was written to commemorate the 170th anniversary
of the chartist’s uprising in Newport.
Public service broadcasting matters. For news; for civic and political discourse; for challenging creativity in drama, comedy, music; for our knowledge of the world and worlds around and inside us. But public service broadcasting, as we know it, exists in a context of a multiplicity of sources of information and entertainment. The Olympic summer, with unprecedented viewing figures on conventional television for the big moments, was also a summer of unprecedented multi-platform, multi-channel experiences; the apotheosis both of an older form and of an appetite for the new.

Wales does not exist on its own outside a global context. Welsh families live in a world of games boxes, YouView, You Tube, Facebook, Twitter. Individuals have always multitasked: ironing while watching soaps, painting to the sound of Radio One or Real Radio. Now individuals are on multi-devices and they expect to interact with the programme or one another: they view and tweet; they download and comment. Paul Lee, director of technology, media and telecommunications research at Deloitte said recently: “Second screening may well end up with a similar status as eating in front of the TV: an everyday experience for some; absolutely unthinkable for others. One thing is certain, it is here for good.” (Broadcast, 21/08/12) The BBC’s new DG George Entwistle, in his first major speech on September 18th, challenged the corporation to prepare for the second phase of the digital world. The BBC has been at the forefront of offering traditional content on new devices. During the Olympics there were 111 million requests for video online. The challenge is to offer new creative content that future devices can support and enhance. This means the debate in Wales on our broadcasting future has to be widened and, paradoxically, narrowed in focus.

So far, for the obvious reasons of devolution and the shockwaves of S4C, we have been concerned with structures and institutions. Accountability has been equated with the independence of structures, quotas in finance and psb content, and the central role of the Assembly. These debates will and should continue. But regulators, Assemblies and Parliaments, think tanks, individuals and academics need to engage with the modernity of distribution and content.

Internet-connected television will allow us to search, pause and retrieve with much more sophistication. This September, BT bought the Aviva Premiership rights outbidding Sky. Obama’s You Tube Channel established in 2006 received its 200th million views in July 2012 and will be a major factor in raising money for his campaign from small contributors. As local television starts up on conventional transmission, internet connected television may bring down the cost of access for new channels substantially. It will also challenge the traditional reliance on known channels and scheduling whilst foregrounding a reliance on big brands to be the storages and search engines of new content.

Wales’s broadband offer must be strong enough to allow this interconnectivity. We might also want to explore how the bigger brands can carry audiences to us. The Digital Wales group within the Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science Directorate and the new Advisory Committee set up by the First Minister under the Chairmanship of Tinopolis’s Ron Jones, need to help drive through this agenda. Seminar calls for a regulatory authority over our own channels in Wales will be meaningless if Welsh audiences are not part of the means of modern distribution.

Even within the old models of distribution, Wales has some substantial problems. The Audience Council in Wales has been concerned about Radio Wales’s FM coverage which only reaches 81% of the population (80,000 listeners were added this year.) As for Radio Cymru, the commercial sector has shown little appetite during the recession to build the commercial multiplex in North West Wales that will carry its signal. For both radio stations, the new commercial DAB mux in North East Wales will be a welcome addition. Every broadcaster in Wales knows that the “Welcome in the hillsides” does not extend to transmission. Every hill is a new challenge.
and each community progressively more expensive to reach. The Audience Council will continue to inform the BBC Trust of audience expectations which include access to new technologies.

Traditionally, Wales has been good on protest and reaction. When the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport decided that one way of reducing Departmental expenditure was to move the funding of S4C to the BBC, the reaction was swift and hostile. However, when opportunities do arise for proper consultation beforehand, the reaction is often muted or indifferent. Professor Hargreaves's report to the Welsh Government on the Creative Industries speaks of the lack of consistent engagement with Government, regulators and broadcasters on media consultations.

One opportunity where Welsh audiences need to engage is the forthcoming BBC Trust consultation on the BBC’s online offering. This does not just mean BBC Online, the web content pages; it also includes those areas where the BBC’s content is carried online, such as i-player. Are national pages easily accessed and given prominence? What sort of unique content would we want on Welsh pages in both languages? People need to engage in order to provide the best custom-made service for Wales.

In a world dominated by search engines, individual programme titles and strands will be more important than ever. Content therefore needs to be more distinctive and to have the maximum impact for its target audience. If we are to engage a younger audience, that content also needs to be newly formatted so as to maximise the possibilities of multi-device viewing. The Deloitte study of a sample audience of 4,000 showed half of all 16-24 year olds using more than one screen simultaneously. (August 2012). Over time, we will all view more socially, and with more interactivity and Welsh content needs to reflect this change.

As S4C and the BBC engage together on trying to maximise efficiencies, one hopes that the new co-operative spirit will lead a heightened creativity in the commissioning ambition of both companies. That would be the single most desirable outcome from this painful birth of the new funding structure. Both companies have new leaders, Rhodri Talfan Davies as Director Wales of the BBC and Ian Jones as CEO in S4C, who have signaled their concern with new content and technology in their lectures at the National Eisteddfod. They lead with our good will and with our hopes for a new decade of change and heightened ambition. They should also expect from us a heightened discourse centred not just around institutional structures but on the wider issues of distribution and the narrowly-focused issue of the nature and expectations of the audience.

We need television reviewers who are as literate in their own fields as book reviewers. Debate needs to be promoted around issues such as how we grow our audiences? How do we engage a new generation of viewers and listeners? What is a Welsh speaking audience these days? Should English language viewers be content with the distinctly local or can the world be viewed through Welsh eyes and would that be different?

Lampedusa got it right: “In order for things to remain as they are, everything has to change.” We need the courage of change so that Welsh public service broadcasting can remain at the heart of our public and private discourse.

Elan Closs Stephens is Emeritus Professor at Aberystwyth University’s Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies and is BBC Trustee for Wales
Times have been pretty tough for those working in the media in Wales for the past decade. The reasons are various – the digital / multi channel era, technology – where it’s easier to use low-end camera and editing equipment and the move from permanent work to freelancing.

Following the launch of S4C in November 1982, the broadcasting industry was booming and producers and directors left the BBC and HTV Wales to establish their own niche independent production companies mainly around the Cardiff and Caernarfon areas, but also in Aberystwyth and other small towns. Production staff, technical and craft crews also left the larger organisations to become freelance – joining the small number of already established group of self-employed creative workers. By the mid eighties broadcasting in Wales was booming, and it boasted the largest independent production sector outside of London and the South East. The independents were not only passionate about the programmes that they made but were also entrepreneurial and won commissions from Channel 4 and the BBC network.

The biggest winner over these early years was the Welsh viewer, including Welsh speakers, learners and the parents who were sending their children to Welsh schools in droves – they feasted on a wealth of high quality productions that were recognised on the world stage from dramas such as Oscar Nominated Hedd Wyn and animation including Superted, Gogs and the Mabinogion.

S4C’s digital policy of the early noughties has arguably had a huge negative impact on the industry in Wales. Rather than commission from a broad range of innovative independent production companies, the broadcaster decided to offer a development fund that led to the establishment of five large companies. Numerous small innovative niche companies went to the wall and the large companies undertook a massive recruitment drive taking on inexperienced graduates. The emergence of the larger companies has in some cases resulted in very high salaries for the company directors and very poor terms and conditions for their staff. There

Behind the scenes in broadcasting
was a huge blow to the freelance workforce as a result of the cuts, with work becoming scarcer due to much of the production being undertaken in-house to be done by poorly-paid and poorly-trained graduates. The daily rates of freelancers dropped significantly too.

Now the broadcasting industry in Wales is in crisis. The new Coalition Government’s decision in 2010 to freeze the BBC’s licence fee and impose a 36 per cent cut on S4C is devastating to the media in Wales. Morale within the workforce is at an all time low. The BBC and S4C are making significant redundancies as have two of the five large production companies.

Recent freedom of information requests by trade unions from the BBC has identified that in 2011 the UK broadcaster made 1,230 posts redundant but took on a significant amount of new staff (the vast majority on fixed term contracts.) Fixed term contracts are harsh on working people as they make it difficult to plan for the future and almost impossible to get a mortgage. The impact on women, especially those of childbearing age is particularly hard, as they don’t have access to the full maternity package available to their colleagues on permanent contracts. In 2011 of the 5,750 freelances leaving the industry, 5,000 were women.

Whilst the Executive Chair of one of the biggest production companies earns £240,000 a year and the Chief Executive Officer earns £160,000 a year plus receiving additional benefits, many of the staff are working extremely long hours for £16,000 a year or so with no additional hours payments, pension entitlement or the other benefits received by the Executives and some are unable to take their holiday leave due to work commitments. The culture of fear of losing their jobs in some of these non-unionised workplaces means that many people are too frightened to even question let alone complain about their poor working conditions. For tax-payers and viewers the question should be how much of the money going to the programme makers is actually reflected on the screen.

Many freelancers are finding things tough. Even major broadcasters such as the BBC are offering lower rates of pay for longer hours. Many freelancers haven’t had a pay increase in over 10 years and experienced professionals are leaving the industry in droves and taking their expertise with them. For those with caring responsibilities, it’s particularly difficult especially in drama production where an 11 day fortnight including 12+ hour days is common. No wonder so many women are leaving the industry and family breakdown is common. BECTU, the media and entertainment union, is very concerned about the poor working practices in the industry.

In spite of the long hours and lack of security, there’s a huge number of young people wanting to enter the creative sector. Many become totally disillusioned following a few years working for free and finding out that in spite of their efforts they are still unable to secure the job that they want. Unfortunately for many of those without the personal contacts or the Bank of Mum and Dad to support them during these early years, the future is bleak. The Chief Executive of Creative England stated in the Cyfrwng Conference earlier this year that due to the high cost of university education the future influencers in creative media are likely to be former public school pupils as they are the only ones that are likely to be able to afford to enter the industry.

The Welsh Government has rightly identified the creative industries as one of the nine key sectors for growth, however there’s very little understanding within the Business Enterprise Transport and Science (BETS) department of the industry including creative media. As well as the independent production companies that produce the programmes, there’s a whole host of other niche companies operating in Wales including set designers and prop makers, special effects and costume makers and animators to name only a few, and there’s potential for more creative entrepreneurs.

However, they appear to be invisible both to those that have the potential to offer them work due to their lack of knowledge of the talent available, but also to the business support infrastructure. Surely rather than lending an ear to and supporting some of the big companies whose key interest is to make a profit and pay huge salaries to their executives at the cost of their workforce, a better return on investment would be to engage with those who are driven by a passion for their craft and their industry and are committed to high quality production and to treating their staff and suppliers fairly.

The culture of fear of losing their jobs in some of these non-unionised workplaces means that many people are too frightened to even question let alone complain about their poor working conditions.
Dance as a force for change

Ffin Dance was founded in 2003 as a result of a growing demand for high quality dance in Wales. After having performed to a sell-out audience at the prestigious Resolution! season at The Place, London and wowing the audience at The Open Space, the company began touring its work to a larger field, completing a successful tour of north and south Wales venues in Spring 2007. 2008 saw the company launching itself as an arts business, expanding the company both in terms of dancers and board members. The company now executes a considerable education and community programme via the dance faktry, reaching many people by way of projects and performances.

The work created by Ffin Dance is inventive and entertaining and appeals to all ages and tastes. Since founding Ffin Dance I have been able to further my love of choreography and share it with a wider audience. Greatly inspired by the work of Siobhan Davies and Richard Alston, my work mixes improvisation methods with a love of musical form. In 2006, I was granted a training bursary by the Arts Council of Wales to undergo choreography mentorship with Siobhan Davies. This saw a great turning point in the way the company worked. Siobhan Davies Dance Company were making In Plain Clothes at the time. The piece is constructed using fragments of dance, giving unlimited connections. Watching this process took my choreography in a completely different direction.

2009 saw very exciting developments for the company. Sheron Wray, performance architect, made a new piece for the company and we were invited to perform this work in France, a first for us. In 2011, the company began to collaborate with a number of artists to make a new double bill entitled Connections for touring in 2012. These included composers Jenny Jackson and Ronen Kozokaro, designer Steve Denton and choreographer Gary Lambert. This work is now touring the UK and Germany.

Ffin Dance is a company in residence in Abertillery at the Met Cultural Centre, situated in the heart of the community. When the company isn’t touring, it runs an extensive outreach programme (the dance faktry) in the community, working in partnership with community organisations like Communities First and also working alongside the Blaenau Gwent County Borough’s arts development team. The dance faktry provides the community with high quality professional dance activity in the form of weekly dance classes, free holiday dance clubs for children, after-school clubs and various projects where children and young people can learn dance techniques alongside professional dancers in order to gain confidence and raise self-esteem.

The community in which Ffin Dance works is one that has a real passion for the arts, together with a lot of exceptionally talented youngsters. Over the past five years, there has been a massive increase in the uptake of the dance faktry activities, which has also led to a similar increase in theatre attendance for our dance performances. We feel very strongly that our dance outreach programme has a direct link to making a real difference in the community via engaging and lively dance activity. Parents keep telling us that their children have gained so much confidence since coming to dance classes, and this has transferred into heightened enjoyment at school and higher levels of academic success.

People have always danced in the community: the rites of passage in birth, life and death all celebrated with people dancing right throughout history. 2012 is no exception. Dance is a force for change – it makes you happy, healthy, a great outlet for expression. To find out more visit...
To find out more visit: www.ffindance.co.uk
‘Shot From The Hip’ is contemporary lifestyle photography run by Cardiff based photographer Gethin Nadin. His photography is based around the principles of ‘point and shoot’; he doesn’t use the most expensive equipment or training as he believes photography exists in the eyes of the photographer.

In early 2012, inspired by their work towards social justice in Wales, ‘Shot From The Hip’ made the decision to donate 100% of his profits to The Bevan Foundation. Gethin Nadin says “Having read about and seen the work the Foundation does to help the poorest and most overlooked people in Welsh society, it really made me appreciate what I’ve got and how lucky most of us are. Soon after I read a quote by Edward Everett Hale which says “I am only one, but I am one. I can’t do everything, but I can do something” and that was it, I decided I would simply do what I could to help”. The first gallery arranged by ‘Shot From The Hip’ raised more than £500 for The Bevan Foundation and as a result, a new gallery has been commissioned by Café Calcio in Cardiff.

You can visit the latest gallery and buy limited edition framed prints from ‘Shot From The Hip’ by visiting Café Calio, 145 Crwys Road, Cardiff, CF24 4NH. The gallery runs from 3rd September to 3rd December 2012. [www.shotfromthehip.co.uk](http://www.shotfromthehip.co.uk)
Last month saw schoolchildren in their brand new shoes and smart uniforms heading back through the school gates. It saw teachers and teaching assistants arrive back to the classrooms ready to meet the new pupils. It also saw catering staff ready to keep pupils fed and watered, administrative staff ensure that the day-to-day running of the school went smoothly and the school librarians and IT technicians supporting new students to find the information they need. It also saw school cleaners mop the halls at the end of a busy day and the caretaker fix that leaky tap.

The success of any school depends on the drive and commitment of the whole school workforce. Whilst the role that teachers provide is vitally important to the standards of any school, the roles of non-teaching staff must never be underestimated. The functions undertaken by teaching assistants, catering staff, librarians and cleaners are all essential in the drive to improve standards in schools. Yet it is often these roles that are undervalued.

Whilst teachers had enjoyed a six week paid summer break, most – if not all – other school staff have not been paid for the summer period. Bearing in mind that most school support staff receive relatively low pay, it is unsurprising that many have had to take on seasonal or second jobs in order to support themselves and their families. Others have simply had no option but to make ends meet. This is by no means saying that teachers should not be paid during the summer period, but UNISON believes that the entire workforce should be treated fairly and equally.

Teaching assistants, for example, are consistently being expected to deliver more. The Welsh Government has publicly recognised the important role that teaching assistants play in school life and have acknowledged the contribution they make to education in Wales. Teaching assistants are increasingly being expected to be more professional, yet the gap between the pay and conditions of teachers and teaching assistants continues to grow.

There is a current recommendation that teaching assistants should register with a professional body. Clearly this would entail some form of registration fee as well as undertaking additional professional duties. UNISON is not opposed to the registration of teaching assistants in principle, however, if school support staff are to undergo the same professional strictures that formal registration would entail, they should also enjoy the same professional benefits – including, the discontinuation of term-time only pay.

UNISON knows that ending term-time-only pay makes sense, not just for those directly affected but for the school as a whole and the pupils who attend that school. Paying some of the workforce for a whole year and others for term-time only is divisive, demoralising and unfair. Staff who are treated on a par with teachers are more likely to work outside of school hours on planning and preparation, or attend staff meetings or training. In addition, by treating staff fairly it will be easier to recruit and retain high calibre staff.

Good education is the key for the future and we know that good education is not provided by teachers alone, but by the entire education workforce and that every member of that workforce should be equally valued.

Mark Turner is the regional lead for school support staff at UNISON Cymru
Aspirations, attitudes and behaviour in education

The role of aspiration, attitudes and behaviour in education has become increasingly important and was the subject of a recent research report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Working with JRF this Bevan Foundation conference introduced the report to a Welsh audience. Additionally speakers working in primary, secondary and community education in Wales gave a welsh context to the report. A follow up is planned in December 2012.

Smoking cessation

The Tobacco Control Action Plan for Wales was launched in December 2011. Local Health Boards are currently working on their plans for implementation, and in this they face a huge challenge.

This seminar gave those with responsibility for implementation an opportunity to hear the findings of new research on tobacco policy across the U.K. including how to engage with hard to reach smokers.

Speakers Helen Poole (Cardiff and Vale UHB), Lisa Fendall (Rotherham Ante Natal Service) and Tony Jewell (then CMO for Wales) at the seminar

Green Man fundraising fun

A big thank you to everyone who helped to make Green Man festival 2012 a roaring success for the Bevan Foundation!

Foundation staff and a team of fantastic volunteers met hundreds of festival goers who were keen to find out more about the Green Man charity partner and support our work through donations, mentions on stage and helping to spread the message by wearing a badge.

We raised a brilliant £4,200 – but it’s not just about the money (although it all helps), we raised our profile and reached new audiences too.

A special thanks to Fiona Stewart, MD of Green Man, for making it happen. Thanks also to Green Man staff, thanks to our volunteers and thanks to to everyone at the festival who supported us! See you next year...
In action...

Fundraising photography
Thanks to Gethin Nadin of Shot from the Hip (see page 32) for his donation to the Bevan Foundation.

In print...
Growing old in Wales
2010 was the year that, for the first time ever, there were more people over the age of 65 than under 16. This shift in demographics brings enormous challenges. Already too many older people live in poverty and isolation, fobbed off with uncaring services. This report, written by the Bevan Foundation for Age Alliance Wales, highlights the current plight of many older people as a baseline for monitoring action. The report is available at: www.bevanfoundation.org www.agealliancewales.org.uk

Coming Up...
AGM 2012
12th October 2012,
South Wales Miners’ Library, Swansea
All members are welcome to join us and help shape the future of the Bevan Foundation

Annual Lecture 2012
12th October 2012,
South Wales Miners’ Library, Swansea
Sir Deian Hopkin will offer his perspective on the future of libraries in a digital age.

Dementia Friendly Communities
17th October,
Future Inn Cardiff
In partnership with Joseph Rowntree Foundation this seminar will discuss the reality of creating dementia friendly communities in Wales

Social Care Conference
2nd November,
University of Wales, Newport
A flagship conference to discuss the future of social care in Wales

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The Green Man tweakster

NAME Fiona Stewart
JOB TITLE Festival tweakster
ORGANISATION Green Man Festival

In less than 140 characters describe Green Man Festival
In the words of Mojo “10 years on and Green Man remains a festival apart as a corporation shunning weekend in the Welsh mountains and continues to thrive”.

What is your role at Green Man?
I have an idea of where I would like the festival to go to and I work with a team of clever, gifted people who work with me to get it there. Along the way I tweak it constantly and annoy them.

What is the best thing about working there?
I am lucky enough to work with a lot of talented people I admire so that in itself is a pleasure. But what I really love is seeing people involved or attending enjoying the festival and getting something out of the experience which they can take with them.

Why are Green Man members of the Bevan Foundation?
Aneurin Bevan is one of my heroes. His actions in life and social observations seem particularly relevant at this time. The Bevan Foundation has these at its core and the large number of organisations and individuals it supports is incredible.

Do you have a favourite Green Man memory from the last 10 years?
Green Ghartside from Scritti Pollitti asking me nervously if their show was alright completely unaware that behind them the audience was screaming for them to get back onstage. Stewards dancing in the rain with the audience in front of the Walled Garden stage and laughing that the rain was Welsh kisses. A card on the wishing tree with I want a boyfriend on it and on Sunday seeing it crossed off with this works I got a boyfriend written on it instead. Bon Iver before they got famous - you could literally hear a pin drop and knew something great was happening. Seasick Steve playing an impromptu set in the box office slugging back whisky as surprised people took double takes as they arrived at the festival. Driving into Crickhowell and seeing a banner from the Cricket club with Crickhowell home of the Green Man on it. To ask for one best moment is too hard, I’m afraid I have far too many to choose from.

If you could pick anyone in the world, dead or alive, to play at next year’s festival, who would it be?
What a question! Well it would have to be a once in a lifetime experience – something you would smile about on your death bed – so what about John Lennon in collaboration with Johnny Cash. Both had the quiet charisma of genius so the stage presence would raise the required tingle. Hearing that melodic beauty, plus insightful lyrics stir in a little mischief – that would be soul-scorchingly awesome. Of course the fact they are both dead would be very press-worthy.

Let us know if you'd like to be featured in a future issue of Review – email daneka.norman@bevanfoundation.org
Injured? An apology won’t pay the bills,

but compensation will.

Injuries can cost a lot more than accident victims initially realise.
The costs can seem small initially, but soon start to mount up. As can the emotional costs.
Mark (right) broke his neck in an appalling car accident that nearly killed him.
"The day I was told I would be paralysed from the chest downwards," says Mark "... was the day I determined not to break..."
During my time in hospital, my family and I discussed the degree of support and treatment I need, the very considerable costs involved and claiming compensation..."
Mark and his family then pursued their claim with Thompsons Solicitors.
"The solicitor mostly dealt with my mam," continues Mark. "He was really thorough... and talked to my carers at length about my current and future needs and their costs."
Today, I'm getting on with moving forward in my life in a variety of ways."
Thompsons Solicitors was established over 85 years ago and is the most experienced personal injury law firm in the UK.
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And Thompsons' services are always free to our clients, who keep 100% of any settlement.

Mark got compensation with Thompsons Solicitors

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