



**Welsh migration and the retention  
of identity in Liverpool**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Welsh migration to Liverpool during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century does not conform to the usual spatial pattern of rural to urban migration of the period.

Proximity to the homeland and return migration were key migration themes and this study explores their significance in the satellite Welsh community that was fully integrated but only partly assimilated into its host environment.

A combination of other factors including language, the chapel infrastructure and business success interacted to create a culturally rich and politically active community in England , that was never at the periphery of Welsh life.

Drawing evidence from the personal testimony of Liverpool residents today, it maintains that a structure of contacts and institutions was so well established by the early migrants that it enabled the Welsh in Liverpool to retain a distinctive presence in the city in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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## **RESEARCH METHODS**

Evidence is drawn from the personal testimony of Liverpool residents in the form of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, combined with historical research.

Questionnaires were distributed amongst members of Bethel Chapel, Liverpool's last surviving Welsh chapel holding regular services. It has a membership of 135 with about 40 attending a usual Sunday morning service. 31 completed questionnaires were received and evaluated.

Semi structured interviews were conducted in November 2010 with six individuals who were selected because of their knowledge and experience of the research topic, but who should not be considered representative of present day Welsh residents in Liverpool. Each interviewee was asked in which language they would like the interview to be conducted and all felt more comfortable in speaking in Welsh. The replies included in this paper are, therefore, translations. All interviews were recorded and conducted in the form of informal conversations in the homes of the interviewees.

1.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **MIGRATION TO LIVERPOOL IN THE 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY**

There was a huge growth in rural to urban migration across the whole of the UK during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Boyle, Halfacree, Robinson 1998) and Liverpool was one of many towns in Northern England which experienced dynamic industrialization and rapid urban development of suburban housing and public transport.

In the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Irish, Welsh and Scots accounted for over 32% of Liverpool's population (Census of England and Wales 1801-1911). The port of Liverpool was one of the world's largest and most important seaports, known as "Europe's gateway to the Atlantic" with a financial and commercial centre that was second only to London in the UK. (Jones, Rees 1984) Migrants were drawn to the city by the prospect of employment in the docks, warehouses, banks, shipping and insurance companies. Liverpool's growing population needed feeding, clothing and housing by merchants and builders and its wealthy needed domestic servants. Economic migration offered migrants the opportunity of prosperity and advancement.

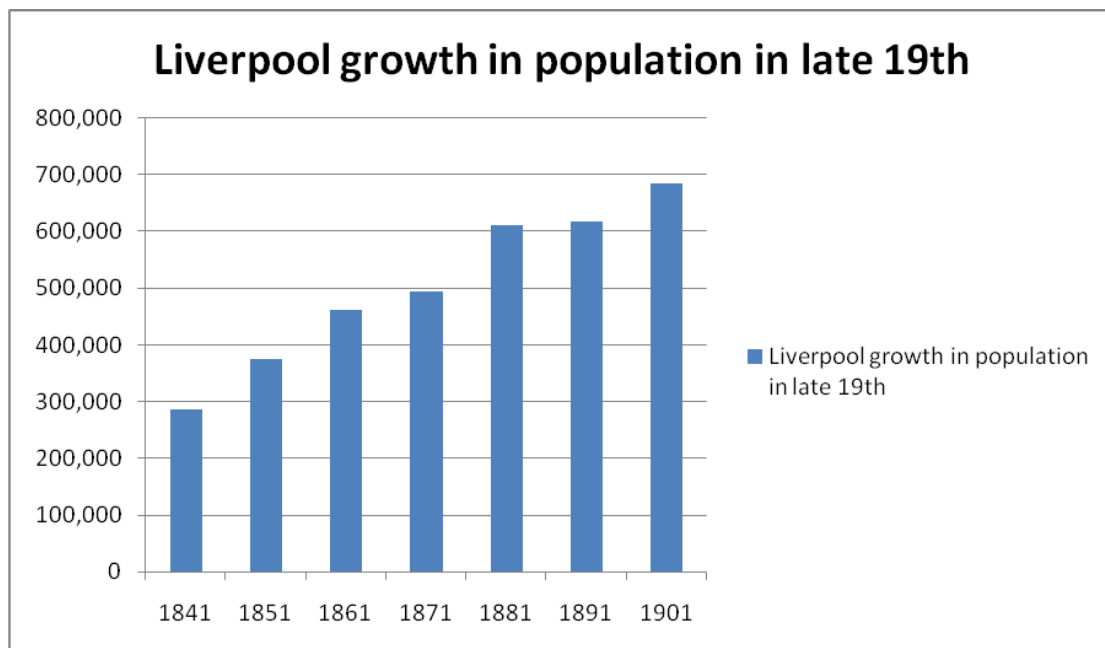


Fig 1 : Liverpool Population Growth in the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>1</sup>

Liverpool was dubbed the “Capital of North Wales” during the 1870s with its Welsh population of 50,000 (Jones 1946) and it continued to be considered as such until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to Alun Roberts, born in Liverpool in 1929

*“Bethel (chapel) was built in 1922 and I believe that’s when the Welsh society in Liverpool was at its strongest.... and I believe it was still strong till the beginning of the 60s”*

Welsh migration to Liverpool was appreciably less, but much more consistent than the Irish. The 1851 census records four times as many Irish as Welsh. However, by 1891 there were only twice as many (Jones, Rees 1984). Welsh migration to Liverpool was

<sup>1</sup> These figures do not include the growth of Bootle, of the northern suburbs of Seaforth, Waterloo, and Crosby and other outlying districts outside of the municipal boundary, as well as of the population of about 200,000 in Wirral, which almost wholly depends economically upon Liverpool. 'Liverpool: Trade, population and geographical growth', A History of the County of Lancaster: Volume 4 (1911), pp. 37-38. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=41371&strquery=liverpool> Date accessed: 01 December 2010.

steady at 20,000 each decade between 1851 and 1911. The community is considered to be at its strongest between 1870 – 1940 (Rees 2010)

Welsh migration to Liverpool does not conform to the conventional spatial pattern of one way rural to urban migration.

*“Migration is a one way trip. There is no “home” to go back to”* (Chambers 1994)

The Welsh did have a home to go back to and proximity to the homeland is a key feature in the nature of the Welsh community in Liverpool. “Home” was near enough to visit, or be visited by family and friends. A migrant from South Wales may have had to travel 200 miles to reach it but migrants from Flintshire were barely 20 miles from home. The wealthier businessmen and their families adopted an urban lifestyle in England, but retained close connections with Wales, sometimes keeping a holiday home in their home village (many examples in Jones 1946).

The rural to urban migration pattern was not one way and return migration was common. Domestic servants in particular often returned to Wales, as one of the questionnaire respondent states. Her grandmother worked as a scullery maid in Princes Road, Liverpool at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, married a carpenter working with the Welsh building firm of J.W. Jones builders and then returned to Anglesey.

There was a regular influx of new migrants. The sea passage from Anglesey to Liverpool was a popular early mode of transport but the opening of the Mersey railway tunnel in 1886 and the Queensferry crossing in 1887 facilitated closer links and cross border movement between North Wales and Merseyside.

Regular visits “home” combined with a regular influx of new migrants encouraged and sustained the Welshness of the community in Liverpool. Although the Welsh successfully adopted a new urban lifestyle they resisted anglicisation, maintaining their own cultural difference. They created a hybrid identity, which enabled them to integrate well into the economic environment of their host community but retain their distinctive traditions and customs.

This study examines the nature of the Welsh community in Liverpool which created a social and business infrastructure that displayed its Welsh character confidently .It explores the role of language, religion and the growth of nationalism in the prevention of minority integration. Even today Liverpool residents who have never lived in Wales, speak the language fluently and consider themselves to be Welsh.

E. Goronwy Owen, Calderstones, Liverpool aged 90 considers himself to be

*“Welsh 100%, even though I have lived in England my entire life. I will always have a blood connection with Wales”*

2.

### **THE CREATION OF A WELSH COMMUNITY**

The Welsh created distinctive “ethnic communities” in Liverpool, clustered spatially around three localities -

- central Vauxhall
- north-eastern Everton
- southern Toxteth Park

Welsh migrants moved around Liverpool as housing and employment conditions dictated. “Place” in Liverpool was less important to the migrants than the social and cultural elements of “community”. Networks and identities were more significant than localities within Liverpool. Alun Roberts, born in Liverpool in 1929 was born in Maghull, the family then moved to Gateacre, Aigburth, Allerton and finally Woolton because “*my family wanted to remain close to the Welsh community*”

The migrants did not create ghettos, but community networks which “*promised friends, cultural society, discipline and employment*” (Jones + Rees 1984). The Welsh integrated well into the economic structure but maintained their distinctiveness.

*“It was the Welsh community... which showed the greatest degree of cultural coherence, especially through the chapel which united most classes of Welshmen in a desire to live and work together, and retain their “Welshness” in an alien environment”*

Pooley (1977)

Pooley argues that it was this cultural coherence, rather than socio-economic factors which prevented the assimilation of the Welsh.

*“Although well integrated into the economic structure the Welsh community was close knit and clearly defined in the nineteenth century”* Pooley + Doherty (1991)

According to Pooley, the Welsh retained a high degree of segregation until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and identifies four measures of cultural coherence that ensured this:

- Degree of intermarriage between migrant groups
- Composition of households headed by migrants
- Strength of religious organisations
- Attitude of contemporaries towards migrant communities

Pooley’s studies find little intermarriage between the Welsh and other ethnic groups and Welsh households which rarely included non-Welsh migrants. Their chapels were numerous and well attended and there was a high regard for the Welsh from the English in Liverpool. A fifth measure of cultural coherence could be added – language, which sealed the coherence of the distinctive Liverpool Welsh community.

When the head of the household was Welsh, the whole of the household was usually Welsh. A typical skilled working class Welsh household lived in a single family home, but often with extended family and/or lodgers and servants. A large proportion of migration moves took place in family groups – brothers, sisters, parents, in-law, and cousins and Welsh lodgers and servants usually gravitated towards Welsh households.

An examination of household composition in the census records reveals that the household of Owen Elias, the renowned Welsh builder from Anglesey, and his wife employed only Welsh servants.

1851 Census	Netherfield Road North	3 children	2 Welsh servants
1861 Census	106 Netherfield Road	7 children	4 Welsh servants (nurse ,cook, house servant, maid)
1871 Census	Springfield, Everton	6 children	3 Welsh servants

Fig 2 : Household composition Owen Elias

A study of the 1901 census for households in Chatham St reveals households such as that of the sisters Hannah and Martha Jones, born in Liverpool in 1851 and 1854, that included a cousin from Llanbrynmair, a nephew from Ffestiniog, another from Llanidloes and a housekeeper from Beddgelert.

*“Community is not a theoretically pure concept. Community ties may be structured around links between people with common residence, common interests, common attachments or some other shared experience generating a sense of belonging”*

(Crow + Allan 1994)

The Welsh had a great deal in common, not least their own language and the questionnaire focuses on a core group of members of a Welsh chapel in Liverpool. One would expect their feeling of “belonging” to be higher than that of other individuals of Welsh descent in the city, but not one of the questionnaire respondents regarded themselves as English, despite the fact that over 80% had been living in England for over 40 years (Appendix 1). Even those were born and bred in Liverpool considered themselves Welsh. One considered themselves to be British, 87% Welsh and 10% both British and Welsh.

Interviewees were able to elaborate further on their sense of identity. David John Williams, born in Liverpool in 1934 said

*“I consider myself to be Welsh and my wife would say the same (she’s from Bala) If someone asked me, I’d say I was from Liverpool, but I have Welsh parents and a Welsh background, therefore I’m Welsh. The children in school used to call me “Taff”*

Alun Roberts, born in Liverpool in 1929 said

*“I see myself on the fence and that’s an advantage because I can adapt to a English or a Welsh environment. I don’t see one as more important than another. I’m a Welshman as far as my upbringing is concerned. I have a Welsh spirit wherever I go. Perhaps it would be better for someone else to answer the question whether I’m Welsh or not”*

Elan Jones, Mossley Hill was born in Patagonia, but does not consider identify herself with her country of birth or country of residence. When asked about her nationality she replied :

*“Welsh I suppose, although in the eyes of the law I’m Argentinian” .*

Mair Powell, who has lived in Liverpool for over 50 years said

*“I suppose I’d say Welsh, but they never give you that option on the forms, but if there was, I’d say Welsh. I would say everyone is really proud to be Welsh, and they would like to tick the box”*

Margaret Quayle, born in Crosby in 1924 describes herself as *“British Welsh”*.

Despite declaring himself *“100% Welsh”* E. Goronwy Owen expressed his deep attachment to Liverpool and it is apparent that he belongs to more than one place.

*“I gave my wife the option of moving somewhere when we retired – the first rule was that it had to be somewhere we both agreed upon. We both liked the Gower. The second rule was that we had to have a helicopter so we could return to Liverpool. So we decided to stay – and that’s the end of the story”.*

3.

### **THE WELSH LANGUAGE**

Herder (1744-1803) was the first to consider language to be an essential part of identity. His perspective

*“led to the view that language imparts a certain way of seeing, feeling, and even, perhaps, behaving”* Gade (2003)

As one of the most important indicators of identity, their language set the Welsh apart in Liverpool. The majority of the early migrants spoke little English. An Anglican Church committee, established in 1813 estimated that 10% of Liverpool residents were Welsh born and

*“a great part of them, owing to an incompetent knowledge of the English language, are debarred the benefit of attending divine service”.*<sup>2</sup>

Welsh speakers gravitated towards one another. Gade (2003) refers to language as *“symbolic glue”*. It was at the core of the Welsh ethnic identity, creating a powerful sense of belonging to Wales, rather than England as Saunders Lewis (1893-1985)<sup>3</sup> the Welsh nationalist and founder of Plaid Cymru explains in a television interview recorded in 1960. In a conversation about his upbringing in Wallasey, he is asked whether he considers himself to be without roots.

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<sup>2</sup> Minute book St David’s Church committee April 2<sup>nd</sup> 1813

<sup>3</sup> Saunders Lewis was named Saunders after Rev David Saunders, Princes Rd.

*“The notion that I was born outside Wales is totally incorrect. I’m fairly certain there was a Welsh population of about 100,000 in Merseyside during my boyhood and I would say that at least half of those were monoglot Welsh speakers. For example, girls came to us as maids from Anglesey and Caernarvonshire speaking only Welsh. They went to chapel with us for a few years and married, before returning to Wales, with as little English as when they arrived. There was a Welsh only community in Liverpool, similar to that which you would find in a small village on Anglesey.*

*I remember learning English well in school but the other boys used to poke fun at me because I used to use Welsh words to fill out my poor English vocabulary. I wasn’t born in English England but in a totally Welsh society”<sup>4</sup>*

An illustration of the prevalence of use of the Welsh in the Liverpool economy is the bilingual launch of the Chatham Building Society in 1862. Two prospectuses were printed, one in English and the other in Welsh (Jones 1946).

*“No city in the world heard more Welsh spoken on its streets between 1850 and 1902 than Liverpool” (Rees 2008)*

Dr D. Ben Rees is the present minister of Bethel Chapel and can personally testify that Welsh remained widely heard on the streets of Liverpool in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century

*“When I moved to Liverpool from Abercynon in 1968, on my first day I overheard a small group chatting in Welsh on Allerton Road. I heard more Welsh in Liverpool, than in Abercynon.”<sup>5</sup>*

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<sup>4</sup> Saunders Lewis interview transcript from BBC Wales television archive interview recorded in 1960. See appendix for original Welsh interview

All six interviewees in the study chose to conduct the conversations in Welsh. It should be noted that their spoken Welsh was of a similar quality and accent to a person of the same age born and educated in a Welsh speaking part of Wales, even though they had never lived in Wales (apart from Alun Roberts who lived in Abersoch during the Second World War, and Elan Jones, who spent a short amount of time working as a nurse in Bangor)

David John Williams, born in Liverpool in 1934, could not speak English when he went to school. He said

*“My parents realised their mistake and they spoke more English to my sister and she has become an Englishwoman - she understands Welsh but doesn't speak it.”*

Margaret Quayle was born in Crosby in 1924. Her English speaking father, an officer in the Merchant Navy died when she was five years old and she was brought up by her mother's extended Welsh family in Liverpool. They made a similar decision to David John Williams' parents and decided to speak English to Margaret after elocution lessons for her Welsh cousin, also living in Liverpool had proved expensive. The chapel and the community associated with it, not her family, were responsible for Margaret's ability to speak Welsh. Margaret said

*“Even today, if I'm doubt about a correct mutation, I refer to the Bible”.*

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with Olwen Morris-Jones on 2.11.10

The situation is obviously very different for a first generation migrant. Mair Powell, originally from Dyffryn Nantlle moved to Liverpool at the age of 15.

*“People ask how long have you lived in Liverpool. Your Welsh is good. It would be a disgrace if it wasn’t, wouldn’t it, after being born and educated in Wales. It would be different for the Liverpool Welsh who were born here. I had 15 years in Wales”.*

42% of the questionnaire respondents were generally more comfortable speaking Welsh, 38% felt equally comfortable in Welsh and English and 20% in English. However, when asked about their preference when writing 42% had no preference, 38% preferred English and 20% Welsh. (Appendix 1)

Five questionnaire respondents were the third generation of their family to live in Liverpool. The 45 year old internal auditor, whose grandparents left Wales more than a century ago, considers herself to be Welsh, is equally happy speaking either Welsh or English and considers chapel to be of the utmost importance in the social, business and cultural life of the Welsh in Liverpool. The 86 year old whose parents were born in Liverpool prefers speaking Welsh to English and considers herself Welsh.

One of the respondents, a retired university lecturer, when asked which language she felt most comfortable speaking, wrote

*“There is a psychological dimension when choosing which language to speak with people. There are some people who I feel uncomfortable speaking Welsh with, others when speaking English”.*

Alun Roberts said

*“I’m more comfortable speaking English by today, but only because I use it more. I speak Welsh with my wife. My children don’t speak or understand Welsh but they haven’t got a strong Liverpool accent. Language is something you have to use daily”*

The intrinsic importance of language to identity is well illustrated by the exceptional family history of Elan Jones, Mossley Hill. Two generations of her family have been born outside Wales, yet the language has survived in both a South American and an English environment. Elan was born in the Welsh ex-patriot community in Patagonia after her father migrated from Dolwyddelan to Liverpool, and then to Argentina. She was brought up speaking Welsh and Spanish and attended Welsh chapel in Patagonia. Her culture and language was not limited by national boundaries as connections with more than one place were the norm for the Welsh diaspora in Argentina. Elan considers both Patagonia and Liverpool as “home” but describes herself as Welsh.

She worked as a nurse in Buenos Aires before migrating to Wales to work briefly as a nurse in Bangor, marrying a Welshman and settling in Liverpool. Elan now spoke fluent Welsh, Spanish and English but Welsh was the language of the home and her four children, born and raised in Liverpool, all speak Welsh.

*“My daughter lives in Liverpool...and still speaks Welsh. My three sons also speak Welsh and Welsh is still the language of the family, although they live in Haverfordwest, London and Norfolk”*

Only two of the 18 questionnaire respondents with children born in Liverpool have not passed any Welsh to the next generation. Language competency is particularly difficult to quantify but 12 claimed that at least one of their children both spoke and understood the language. Preserving the language can be a difficult task for parents as David John Williams explains

*“My eldest spoke Welsh until she was three, but then she went to play with her friends, spoke Welsh and nobody understood her.... so we decided to speak to her in English”*

E. Goronwy Owen has three sons who all understand but don't speak Welsh, although

*“ if you squeezed him into a corner, the eldest could speak some Welsh”*

The Welsh were able to retain their language easily in Liverpool when their numbers were at their greatest and there was plenty of opportunity for social interaction in Welsh for both adults and children. Once numbers began to diminish after the Second World War, the opportunities for speaking the language lessened.

Mair Powell, who migrated to Liverpool after the Second World War recalls many members of the chapel congregation who

*“spoke English, but understood every word of Welsh, and they could take part in everything... but they felt a bit embarrassed speaking Welsh. They would turn to speak English to each other, but they were so proud to be Welsh even though they spoke mostly English.”*

Even though their language capability had diminished, their sense of identity had not.

4.

### **THE WELSH CHAPELS**

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were at least 90 Welsh chapels and mission halls on Merseyside (Rees 2010). Welsh speakers naturally gravitated towards other Welsh speakers with whom they shared a common identity to create social networks, but it was the chapels that provided the structure and organisation for these networks. Today's chapel members consider that the chapel has been crucial in retaining Welshness in the social and cultural life of Liverpool, but not as important in business. (Appendix 1)

Chapels provided the organisation within which individuals felt part of a larger "family". They were community centres where individuals met others like themselves, but also acted as job centres and dating agencies. Individuals became defined by their chapel membership. According to Dr D. Ben Rees

*"Obituaries would often mention that the deceased was a deacon or member of a specific chapel, before mentioning their profession"*

The Welsh chapels in Liverpool were bigger and wealthier than their counterparts in Wales (Jones, Rees 1984) and attracted the most charismatic and talented ministers including the brothers William and Henry Rees. They created an environment where the Welsh could remain Welsh within an English environment. Religion offered spaces where migrants could demonstrate their affiliation and display their Welshness and the architectural traces of the Welsh migrants can be seen throughout Liverpool today.

The first Welsh chapel in Liverpool was established in 1787. The Pall Mall chapel was situated in an area known as “little Wales” centred on Old Hall Street, at the heart of the old town. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Welsh migrants were mainly employed in dock and canal building, quarrying and well sinking. The Union Mill, a large cotton factory on Vauxhall Road was known as the “Welsh factory”. (Williams 1927) Because of the availability of work, according to Williams, there was “*ceaseless migration from Wales to Liverpool*”<sup>6</sup> and the Pall Mall chapel was the first to offer the migrants a spiritual home in Welsh.

The efforts of the Anglican Church committee established in 1813 were finally rewarded when the first Welsh church in England, St David’s Church, was built at the bottom of Brownlow Hill in 1827. (Williams 1927) Welsh churchgoers could now listen to services in their own language. However, it was easier for Welsh speaking members of the Anglican Church <sup>7</sup> to be assimilated into existing congregations as the religion, if not the language was the same.

E. Goronwy Owen, aged 90 has never lived in Wales and believes that the “*Welsh language has survived so long (in Liverpool) mainly because of the chapel, and the social activity associated with it, but the chapel has been the foundation*”

According to the Liverpool Mercury in 1826 (cited in Williams, 1927)

“*at least 20,000 of the inhabitants of Liverpool are of Welsh origin, and like the natives of the principality generally, they are distinguished by orderly habits and a strong sense of religion*”

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<sup>6</sup> Translated from original Welsh “ymfudo yn ddibaid o Gymru i Liverpool”

<sup>7</sup> Church in Wales was not formed until 1920, following the disestablishment of the Church of England in Wales

It was the non conformist chapel buildings of the Calvinistic Methodists, Independents, Baptists and Wesleyans that dominated the Liverpool landscape from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Migrants of all these denominations were able to continue a familiar pattern of worship in chapels within walking distance of their homes. As the suburban housing areas extended further north, east and south the chapels followed.

E. Goronwy Owen recalls

*“when Edge Lane Chapel was at its strongest, it was as if there was a Welsh village surrounding it – a very Welsh area. At one time Stanley Road Chapel (Bootle) had around a thousand members, all socialising, attending chapel and living near one another”.*

Pall Mall, the first Calvinistic Methodist chapel was dominated by Anglesey born members who outnumbered the rest by more than 2 to 1 (Jones 1946). The denomination was particularly strong in Anglesey in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the preponderance of Calvinistic Methodist chapels in Liverpool may reflect not only the number but the influence of Anglesey-born migrants in Liverpool.

The largest Calvinistic Methodist chapel was built in Princes Road, Toxteth in 1868. The “Welsh cathedral”<sup>8</sup> was the largest religious structure in Liverpool and a public proclamation of Welsh faith and identity in the town<sup>9</sup>. It was a magnificent structure with a 70m spire and 30m aisle with a 1200 capacity which proved inadequate on occasions when extra benches had to be brought into the aisles. Its membership of almost 900 by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> was equivalent to a small Welsh village.

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<sup>8</sup> Known locally as the “Toxteth cathedral” after becoming derelict, following its closure as a Welsh chapel in 1982. The freehold was bought in 2009 by the Preservation Trust and Heritage Trust for North West for £1.

<sup>9</sup> Liverpool was afforded city status in 1880

Mair Powell's father migrated to Liverpool from Caernarfon to become the minister of Garston Chapel

*“The chapel was very important to the Welsh in Liverpool, because they felt a part of something.... without the chapels the Welsh community wouldn't have existed”*

The chapel was the centre of the social, as well as their spiritual life of the Welsh inhabitants of Liverpool. After evening service, the congregation often paraded along Princes Rd in their finery - a social gathering following a religious meeting. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the minister of Princes Rd Chapel, Rev John Williams began the practice of providing tea on Sunday afternoons for the young girls who worked as domestic servants in large Liverpool households. Sunday was normally their half day off work and the teas provided an opportunity for them to socialise with other maid servants before attending evening worship.

One of the questionnaire respondents stated that her grandmother came to Liverpool from Dolgellau at the age of 14 in 1899 to go into service and another stated that her mother was also in service after migrating to Liverpool from Anglesey in 1924. A large city can be a lonely place and prayer meetings, bible classes and hymn singing contributed in providing a “home from home” environment as newcomers were embraced into the chapels. Chapels and their associated activities also provided an opportunity to meet future spouses. It is likely that the young maid from Dolgellau met her future husband, a quarryman from Rhostryfan who came to Liverpool to work in the cotton industry, in one of Liverpool's chapels. The maid from Anglesey married

a builder who had migrated from Anglesey in 1922. Their daughter is now 82 years old and has attended chapel all her life.

The parents of David John Williams, born in Liverpool in 1934 met in Princes Road chapel and their background is typical of many young Welsh couples. His mother migrated to Liverpool from Anglesey at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to work as a maidservant for the family of a wealthy Welsh builder in Allerton. Her future husband was a carpenter from Montgomeryshire. Their son has been a member of Bethel chapel for 65 years.

The parents of Alun Roberts who was born in Liverpool in 1929, also met in chapel. Alun's father migrated from Nefyn, Caernarvonshire before the First World War to work for a food wholesalers, his mother migrated from Ederne, Caernarvonshire in the early 20s to work as a secretary. They met in Douglas Road chapel.

Margaret Quayle recalls four Welsh chapels of different denominations within a space of quarter of a mile in Bootle - Stanley Road (Methodist), Trinity Road (Wesleyan), Merton Rd (Independent) and Balliol Road (Baptist). Her only experience of religion as a child in Bootle was a Welsh one and she remembers being shocked when she learnt that it was possible to worship in languages other than Welsh.

The Minister and his wife were the most respected and revered members of Welsh society, according to D. Ben Rees. The Liverpool pulpits offered Welsh ministers the opportunity to address large and challenging congregations and attracted charismatic orators such as John Williams, Princes Road and William Rees (Gwilym Hiraethog).

Rev. Henry Rees, who migrated to Liverpool in 1836 and ministered in Mulberry Street and Chatham Street chapels was the most famous Calvinistic Methodist minister of his day and the first moderator of the General Assembly.<sup>10</sup>

Chapel hierarchy and rules dictated conformity on its members, which reinforced their community membership. The chapels exercised a strong degree of control over their members and if an individual was seen drinking in a tavern he was likely to be reported to his chapel's elders.

*"The Welsh chapels provided a focus of community involvement and social control"*

(Pooley + Doherty 1991)

Chapel society was inclusive, but only up to a point. It encompassed the range of socio-economic groups – from unskilled workers to wealthy businessmen. Many chapels had nearby "mission halls", smaller buildings where the poorer members of Welsh society who were too embarrassed by the poor state of their clothing to attend the chapels could take advantage of the clothing clubs.

The Welsh community was not classless but all chapel goers prided themselves on being respectable members of the community. There was a feeling of superiority as Welsh speakers imagined themselves to be "*people of the chapel*" not "*people of the tavern*". The Temperance Movement was strong in Liverpool (D. Ben Rees interview) and the chapels not only provided spiritual support but created a moral framework.

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<sup>10</sup> While in Liverpool he visited America in 1839 and Berlin in 1857

Welsh “the language of heaven” became a language of moral sentiment not material interests (Manning 2004) and became synonymous with respectability as Thomas Gee<sup>11</sup> (1866) wrote

*“Let English be the language of the market, and Welsh the language of religion. Let English have the word and Welsh the sacred.... Let us keep our language, our pulpit, and national religiousness. If we are poor in money, we will be rich in the wealth of an infinitely higher nature”.*

The chapels in Liverpool were much more than centres of worship. They were the foundation of a community infrastructure that provided social order, cultural and social activities and, perhaps most importantly, a feeling of “belonging”.

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<sup>11</sup> Thomas Gee was an influential and well known campaigner for non-conformism and the owner of Gwasg Gee Printing Press, Denbigh

5.

### **WELSH CULTURE**

The Liverpool Welsh community was rich in its cultural activities – most of them emanating from the chapels. E. Goronwy Owen recalls

*“an eisteddfod in almost every chapel, tennis clubs, choirs, sports, youth club, hymn singing each Sunday night, plenty of activity, lots of young people and most were chapel members”.*

The language obviously restricted the impact of these cultural activities on Liverpool itself, instead the impact was on the culture of the homeland as Liverpool’s cultural gatherings influenced Welsh culture. Benefiting from the wealth and ideas of its Welsh population Liverpool could provide a richer cultural experience than Wales. Recalling Liverpool society before the war, Alun Roberts said

*“There was a strong Welsh society in Liverpool at the time, you’d almost say stronger than in Wales*

There was an extraordinary choice of cultural activities – choirs, drama companies accompanied by an immense cultural pride. The migrants were at the periphery of Welsh culture, they worked hard to bring it closer towards them. As Cohen (1982) suggests

*“People become aware of their culture when they stand at its boundaries”*

Chapel membership provided the migrants with a self image of cultured respectability, displaying similar qualities to the idealised image of the 19<sup>th</sup> century “slate quarrier”, a Welsh-speaking progressive industrialist. Manning (1984) argues that

*“the quarrier... .. straddled the moral sphere of culture and religion, and the material sphere of production and his language in both spheres was Welsh”.*

He represented the “modern” Welsh speaker who was equally at home in the industrial world and the world of the Eisteddfod<sup>12</sup> and Cymanfa Ganu<sup>13</sup>

*“Not only was the slate quarrier linguistically Welsh; he was also culturally Welsh-liberal. Nonconformist, cultured, temperate, and respectable, all traits that were linked together by the hegemonic Welsh Liberal Nonconformist construct of Welshness in the 19<sup>th</sup> century”* Manning (2004)

The Cymanfa Ganu was an opportunity to display Sunday best attire as well as singing prowess. Religion and music were both celebrated as guest musical conductors attracted huge congregations to the larger chapels. Each denomination would hold an Annual Cymanfa Ganu, a major event in the Liverpool Welsh calendar which was held for four days over a weekend.

There is no greater Welsh cultural gathering than the National Eisteddfod and it has been held on Merseyside on six occasions, the last time in 1929<sup>14</sup> The 400 voice choir formed for the 1900 Liverpool Eisteddfod remained as a choir and became the

<sup>12</sup> Welsh festival of literature and music.

<sup>13</sup> Hymn singing festival

<sup>14</sup> Liverpool Council’s invitation to host the event in 2007 was not accepted by the Eisteddfod council.

Liverpool Welsh Choral Union, giving twenty concerts a year. Following its rebranding in 2003 the 160 voice choir is known as the Liverpool Welsh Choral with its membership open to all. Mair Powell is one of its ten Welsh members but the choir still retains its Liver bird and Welsh dragon logo.

Local eisteddfods in Liverpool were a regular fixture in the cultural calendar. There was a famous Boxing Day Eisteddfod, in Birkenhead, the highlight of Christmas for many. Alun Roberts recalls reciting as a small boy in Eisteddfod Bore'r Oes.

Margaret Quayle remembers the famous Lewis's Eisteddfod, a public display of Welshness, which was held on the top floor of the department store and said

*“The Liverpool eisteddfods were not poor relations of their Welsh counterparts because the standard of performance in Eisteddfod y Glannau was considered to be on a par with the county Eisteddfods in Wales with the winners qualifying for entry to the National Eisteddfod”*

The Welsh social clubs known as “aelwydydd” prospered in Liverpool during the Second World War. Following the outbreak of war, the Board of Education took over responsibility for youth welfare and a National Youth Committee was set up to advise on the welfare of young people who had ceased full-time education (National Archives) All young people were required to register with local authorities and give details of any youth organisation to which they belonged. Margaret Quayle recalls the “aelwyd” in Bootle being visited by government inspectors and declared *“an oasis of culture in a desert of mediocrity”*

Many families returned to Wales to escape the wartime bombing. Alun Roberts, born in Liverpool in 1927 had a lucky escape when a 50lb German bomb destroyed the other half of his family's semi-detached home in 1940. The family returned to Abersoch for ten years before migrating back to Liverpool in 1950. Margaret Quayle recalls that many younger children and their families left Liverpool during the blitz, never to return. Alun Roberts said

*“When I came back to Liverpool after the war, there were a lot of chapels which were an integral part of the community, but as the chapels declined so did the community”*

E. Goronwy Owen recalls six Welsh “aelwydydd” in Merseyside after the Second World War. He met his future wife, whose grandparents migrated to Liverpool from Caernarfon in an “aelwyd” and their locations indicate the strength of the Welsh communities in Wallasey, South Liverpool, Heathfield Road, Anfield, Bootle and Birkenhead .

Cultural events also offered social networking opportunities. David John Williams, a banker, met his future wife, a teacher from Bala in the “Young Wales” club, in Upper Parliament Street where they sang hymns after chapel on a Sunday evening.

According to him

*“that’s where the matrimonial agency was, if you like, lots of people met there on a Sunday night”.*

“Young Wales” no longer exists but the legacy of Welsh cultural and social activities in Liverpool has been long-lived. Liverpool’s Gymdeithas Gymraeg (Welsh society) meets each Tuesday evening. Mair Powell does not attend because she goes to Bethel Chapel each Monday evening and she has choir practice on Wednesday.

*“Dr Rees always says we have to leave something for the next generation, but I don’t think there will be a next generation after us. Goronwy Owen feels we must have a community centre for the Welsh. That will be the future I expect. It’s sad thinking about the fact that we’ve gone down so much in numbers despite the fact there’s so much going on. At the end of the day, we live in Liverpool and our children, and their children can’t identify with Wales in the same way as us.”*

6.

### **THE WELSH IN THE LIVERPOOL ECONOMY**

Early rural to urban migration from Wales was motivated largely by the labour market in Liverpool and many members of the ethnic Welsh minority became hugely successful in their new environment. The well known department stores, T.J. Hughes in London Road and Owen Owen in Clayton Square were both founded by Welshmen.<sup>15</sup> The Liverpool businessman and shipping owner, Sir Alfred Lewis Jones, born in Carmarthen in 1845 was one of Britain's greatest entrepreneurs controlling Elder Dempster Ltd, one of UK's greatest shipping companies. The Welsh were well represented in the teaching profession (almost half of the questionnaire respondents are retired teachers or university lecturers). Liverpool's hospitals attracted a great many Welsh nurses and doctors and the docks attracted sailors<sup>16</sup> and warehousemen, but it was the building industry that employed the Welsh in considerable numbers and they made more of an impact on the building profession than any other.

They dominated the building trade in Liverpool in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century and much of the residential areas of the city were constructed by Welsh builders. The business network of the Welsh builders benefited greatly from the established social network, centred on the chapels.

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<sup>15</sup> The founder of Lewis's was not Welsh. David Levy was Jewish but changed the name of the shop to David Lewis, to appeal to the influential and wealthy Welsh (Rees 2010)

<sup>16</sup> The Blue Funnel line was known as the "Welsh navy"

*“...this concentration in a particular industry and the consequent control over that industry, was essentially related to the Welsh position as an immigrant community and to the internal structure of that community”* (Jones, Rees 1984)

The impact of the Welsh builder on his host environment and the consequences of that environment on the migrant builder is worthy of further examination. Migration to Liverpool shaped the lives of these men and their families. They became much more entrepreneurial in spirit, buying their own plots of land for building development and becoming private contractors. The last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw a significant spread of housing away from the congested city centre and the Welsh took full advantage of the opportunities that decentralisation offered. They became more organised as individual builders co-operated with one another, and employed other Welsh craftsmen and labourers. They were responsible for building much of the closely terraced streets of Everton and Kirkdale in Liverpool's pre 1875 growth.

Typically, they built 6 roomed 3.45m x 3.75m x 7.77m<sup>17</sup> using Welsh brick, made either in North Wales, or in Liverpool from Welsh clay. It comprised a scullery at the back, parlour, kitchen and three bedrooms and became very popular to meet the increasing demand for residential property. They maximised the amount of housing by using all their available land until the Liverpool Corporation intervened to insist that more space was created between the streets both at front and back. These popular houses were built in Bootle, Everton, Anfield, Parliament Fields and Princes Park, then Litherland, Linacre, Crosby, Waterloo, Walton, Fazackerley, Cabbage Hall, Wavertree, Smithdown Road and beyond.

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<sup>17</sup> Metric conversion from 11ft 4ins x 12ft 4 ins x 25ft 6ins cited in “Welsh Builder in Merseyside”

Many of the Welsh built houses were occupied by Welsh families. The 1881 census reveals that Anfield Road consisted of only eight houses, three occupied by Welsh families -

No 4 by Isaac Evans, a confectioner, his wife and three children

No 6 by Robert Jones, a cotton porter from Denbigh, his Merionethshire born wife, Mary, their Liverpool-born daughter and a lodger

No 14 by John Williams, a cab proprietor and his wife Elizabeth, both from North Wales.

A decade later, none of these families resided in these houses and the much enlarged Anfield Road was mainly occupied by Lancastrians. In common with many, the Welsh may have moved further out of the city centre to the newer suburbs. One Welsh family who brought up their two daughters in Trinity Road Bootle was the maid from Dolgellau who arrived in Liverpool at the age of 14 years and married the quarryman from Rhostryfan.

The relocation of St David's Church in 1910 to Hampstead Road, West Derby reflected the movement of the Welsh residential areas out of the city centre and a significant change in the distribution of Welsh residents in the city of Liverpool. It was demolished to enable the Midland Railway to extend the Adelphi Hotel. When first built the church was excellently placed at the bottom of Brownlow hill to serve its members, but they were dispersing to the north, south and east.

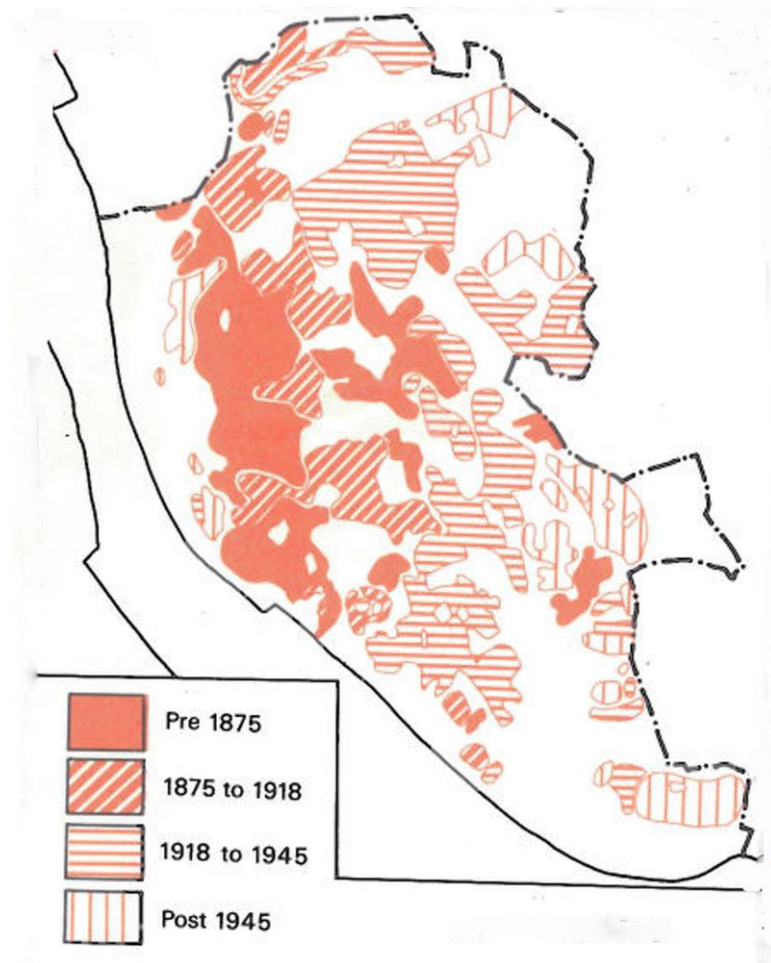


Fig 3 : Age of Liverpool Housing  
(Source : Patmore, Hodgkiss)

Three men from Anglesey, who all arrived in Liverpool by boat from Amlwch, were responsible for much Liverpool's housing expansion. Two brothers, David and Thomas Hughes and Owen Elias became some of Liverpool's wealthiest men.

*“Owen Elias and his associates encircled the entire town, practically creating the districts now known as Kirkdale, Walton, Everton, Cabbage Hall, West Derby and Toxteth Park”*

newspaper article cited by Jones (1946).

Owen Elias, was popularly known as the “King of Everton” but the Elias’s were only one of a number of building families that took advantage of the explosion in suburban growth in late 19<sup>th</sup> + early 20<sup>th</sup> century Liverpool<sup>18</sup>. 386 Welsh building contractors are listed by Jones (1946) and an analysis of their biographies reveals that 37% were born in Anglesey, mostly in the ports of Amlwch, Cemaes, Beaumaris and Moelfre.

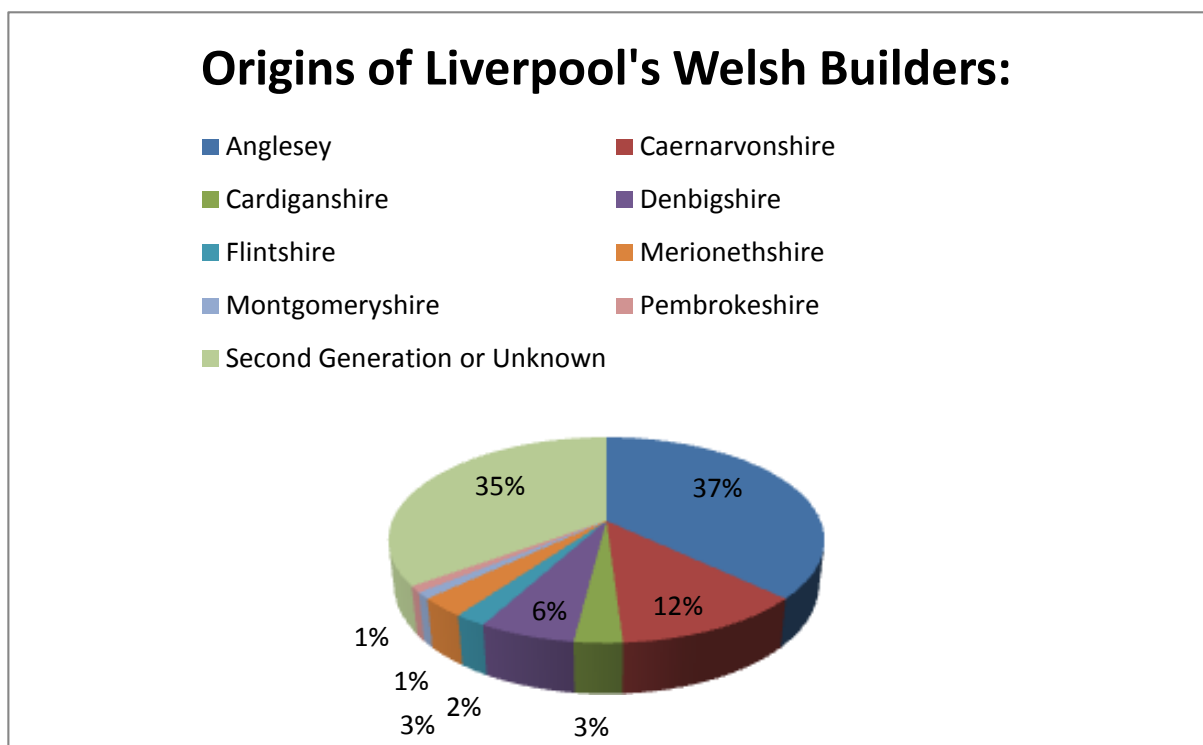


Fig 4 : Origins of Welsh Builders

Success breeds success and as word of prosperity reached their home villages, further migration from those areas was encouraged.

<sup>18</sup> 33,818 houses were erected in the nineteen years prior between 1896-1914 60,733 between 1918-1939 (mostly 5-6 bedroomed). Figures according to J.R. Jones (1946)

The Welsh builders made a huge architectural impact on Liverpool but not all their architectural traces remain. The so-called “Welsh streets” near Princes Park were demolished in 2010. 11 Welsh named streets with 444 Victorian terraced houses were demolished as part of the city’s regeneration programme.<sup>19</sup> However, there is plenty more visual testimony of the Welsh connection in street names throughout the city. Walton residents may not be aware that a complete series of streets are named after the father and son building business of Owen and William Owen Elias

**Oxton, Winslow, Eton, Neston,**

**andrew, nimrod, dane**

**Wilburn, Ismay, Lind, Lowell, Index, Arnot** (sadly no M.)

Most of the Welshmen involved in the building trade were trained joiners or stonemasons, but there were also many farmers who were willing to learn new skills (Jones 1946). Many originated from Anglesey but the Caernarvonshire migrants included quarry men from Bethesda and Llanberis. Quarrying was the natural vocation of many from North Wales with its coal, slate, copper, zinc, gold, and lead mines and their skills could be utilised in Liverpool’s quarries in Brownlow and Quarry Hill.

Liverpool’s Welsh migrant community practiced both ethnic and religious favouritism in the labour market, an “*ethnically defined employer class recruiting labour from amongst their own ethnic group* (Jones + Rees 1984). The city’s chapels facilitated this recruitment and acted as job centres as Welsh migrants brought a letter of introduction from their place of worship in Wales. They were welcomed as new

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<sup>19</sup> Ringo Starr was the most famous resident of the “Welsh streets”, born in 9 Madryn Street

worshippers and introduced to potential employers. The migrants provided a pool of trustworthy, reliable labour for Welsh businessmen who were often familiar with their new employees, through family or home village connections. Servants could also be recruited through chapel or home village connections.

There may have been an element of exploitation as they were paid less than the going rate (Jones 1946), but this was offset by better security of employment, as long as the employees conformed to the chapel's strict moral code.

Many Welsh entrepreneurs became estate agents as well as building contractors and others moved into banking and building societies. (Jones, Rees 1984). Chatham Street building society was named after the Calvinistic Methodist chapel with which its founders were associated. The North and South Wales bank was founded in Liverpool in 1836<sup>20</sup>. It was financed by Welsh builders, and largely staffed by Welshmen, who were usually familiar with the bank's customers.

*“Many of the builders had no other capital than their skill, industry and character, but they were personally known to the officers of the Bank, who met them on Sundays at the various Welsh places of worship and who might be office bearers in the same church”* (Jones 1946)

The Welsh businessmen benefited financially from their strong community network but the community also benefited from their philanthropy. Businessman donated a significant amount to good causes, becoming significant benefactors to their “achos” (cause) particularly. When the building contractor, Thomas Hughes realised there was

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<sup>20</sup> It was incorporated with the Midland Bank in 1908)

no chapel for the Welsh in the newly formed district of West Derby, he built one in Lombard Street. His brother David, another builder built a mission room in Walmsley Street and a chapel at Cranmer Street. When the chapel became too small for the growing congregation he was instrumental in the building of Anfield St chapel. Owen Elias paid the bulk of the building cost of Burlington Street Chapel.

The builders were able to utilise their building expertise to create beautiful buildings of architectural importance, which not only demonstrated the prosperity of their “achos” but also their own success and spiritual devotion. Sometimes chapels were replaced by others very short distances away. Chatham Street chapel <sup>21</sup> replaced its predecessor in nearby Mulberry Street, which had only stood for twenty years

The Welsh builders were philanthropists according to E. Goronwy Owen.

*“I had a great uncle in Liverpool, Edward Owen. Originally from Anglesey his family were farmers but he became a a carpenter in Liverpool. Like so many Welshmen he made his name as a builder and my great uncle succeeded, he became one of the big, well known Welsh builders. He did well..... He was a deacon in Stanley Road Chapel, Bootle. When he died in 1902, he left £2,000 to the chapel<sup>22</sup> and £1,000 to Bootle Hospital.... The old boy did well and lived in a mansion in Breeze Hill”.*

The father of David John Williams was a carpenter from Montgomeryshire who worked in the building trade in Liverpool for most of his life. His son recalls that he always worked for firms with Welsh connections such as the builder John Jones, (affectionately known as Jones bach).

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<sup>21</sup> Present site of the University of Liverpool Management School

<sup>22</sup> Using average earnings index worth £859,000 today

The Welsh builder made the most of suburbanisation and the opportunities for advancement and wealth it offered. They were part of the reason for the housing boom and they benefited most from it. They encouraged others to follow ensuring the continuation of the migrant influx from Wales.

7.

**THE GROWTH OF NATIONALISM**

Liverpool's Welsh community was politically as well as culturally significant to Wales and was at the forefront of political Welsh life in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The great Welsh migration to Liverpool coincided with the emergence of a strong liberal tradition in Wales

*“The Welsh liberal non-conformist assault on the citadels of landed wealth and Anglican religion was central to the defining credo of the Welsh people. By the 1880s, liberalism had constructed a **gwerin**, a cross-class alliance possessed of the reflexes of a radical common sense. These ideas were reticulated throughout Wales via a web of organisations, pressure groups, and religious bodies, ably and energetically manned by ministers of religion, businessmen, and trade unionists”*

Jones (1992) p 336

The growth of nationalism generally during the 19<sup>th</sup> has been linked to the improvement of communication technology. Anderson (1983) explains the development of “*imagined political communities*” by the convergence of capitalism and print technology.

Liverpool was the most important centre for Welsh publishing in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Jones, Rees 1984). The “Y Cymro” and “Y Brython” newspapers were both founded in Liverpool and grew to become national Welsh papers. National newspapers are seen to be crucial in the growth of nationalism by Billig (1995) the use of we, our, us etc. strengthens an individual's sense of belonging to a nation.

Lewis Jones, a young Welsh migrant working in the printing industry and exposed to new radical ideas in Liverpool was the first leader of the Welsh community in Patagonia. He was part of the Welsh Emigration Committee, formed in 1861, by prominent Welshmen in Liverpool who applied for land in Argentina through the Argentine consul in Liverpool. Their dream was to create a Welsh colony free from English influence. Their optimism and self-confidence became a reality when the first migrants sailed from Liverpool on “The Mimosa” in 1865. Later, Elan Jones’s father and uncle, both members of Chatham Street chapel would both leave Liverpool for a new life in Patagonia.

In the mid 19<sup>th</sup> national identity came to be associated both with political and religious beliefs (Jones 1992) “*Welshness thus became a cause to which one adhered, rather than a country to which one belonged*”. Jones argues that the core of national identity became religio-cultural, rather than national.

The major Welsh figure in Liverpool who combined religious, culture, print and politics was Rev William Rees (Gwilym Hiraethog), a minister in Salem and Tabernacl Independent chapels for thirty years. He was the most significant of Welsh opinion formers, who awoke the political consciousness of Wales (Jones, Rees 1984). This charismatic man who migrated from Denbigh to Liverpool in 1843 founded and edited the fortnightly publication, “*Yr Amserau*” (The Times) in 1843, which kept its readership informed of the big political issues of the day. Its editor was also a fantastic orator and hundreds would attend his hugely popular lectures at the Concert Hall in Lord Nelson St. The coherence of Liverpool’s Welsh community must have been strengthened by this exposure to new ideas, presented eloquently and powerfully in their own language.

An editorial in Liverpool's local paper "Y Dinesydd" (The Citizen) in 1890 declared *"We are of the opinion that the Welsh in the towns of England are an exceptionally patriotic class – perhaps more so than the inhabitants of the Old Country themselves"*.

The Young Wales club was a political society when it was founded in 1893 to unite Welshmen who came *"from the homeland to the foreign capital"*. It declared its aims to be *"the development of our Society as to command the support and adhesion of Young Welshmen of every class and creed, who, by the pure force of patriotism, we hope to see welded into a common brotherhood"*  
(from first issue of Young Wales journal, cited by Jones + Rees 1984)

The enterprise and self-confidence of the Welsh community can be illustrated by their innovative use of Welsh Christmas cards, which were not available in Wales. The first Welsh Christmas cards were designed and printed in Liverpool in 1909 by Gwasg y Brython (Rees 2010) The Cambrian series were designed around the patriotic symbols of Wales, the Welsh dragon, leek and daffodil. Personalised Christmas cards were also available which were expensive<sup>23</sup> but were widely used by the wealthy.

A nation can be defined as *"a community of people whose members are bound together by a sense of solidarity rooted in an historic attachment to a homeland and common culture, and by a consciousness of being different from another nation"*

Smith (2000)

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<sup>23</sup> Cost per dozen - (between a shilling and ninepence and six shillings per dozen - £35.60 - £122 today using average earnings index)

The first generation of Welsh migrants were not afraid to express their difference, because that difference was their way of life. Jones, Desforges (2003) adopt the broad definition of nationalism as *“a feeling of belonging to the nation”*. Liverpool’s Welsh institutions and social infrastructure reproduced nationalism within a locality. The coherence of Liverpool’s Welsh community was strengthened by its innovative and entrepreneurial spirit and the Liverpool Welsh community must have been shaped by the large amount of Welsh material published in the city.

The Welsh nationalist party, later known as Plaid Cymru was founded in 1925 by Saunders Lewis who was born and educated on Merseyside. He was brought up a member of *“the only strong, self conscious bourgeoisie which the Welsh nation ever had”* according to (Miles 2009). The development of a strong middle class was crucial to the development of nationalistic ideologies in Europe (Jones 1992) and in his first address to the party in 1926 Saunders Lewis claimed the European heritage of Welsh civilisation (Jones 1992). He argued that under English nationalism *“the civilisation of Wales wasted away and declined. Today that civilisation is in mortal peril”*<sup>24</sup>.

Billig (1995) identifies the importance of mundane, day to day symbols in the propagation of nationalism. Indicators of nationalistic feeling were observed in the homes of the interviewees. Personal ephemera relating to Wales was seen in varying

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<sup>24</sup> Address to the First annual meeting of the Welsh Nationalist Party in 1926 by Saunders Lewis

degrees in all the homes e.g. – a print of the iconic “Salem”<sup>25</sup>, a Welsh lovespoon, together with more contemporary Welsh works of art including hymn calligraphy and a Welsh dragon flag displayed in the front window.

On a light-hearted note, all the questionnaire respondents who expressed a preference said they supported the Welsh rugby team but when it came to football it was either Liverpool or Everton. Hybrid identities are able to have a choice of allegiances. Their sense of loyalty to their locality is obvious, but this does not extend to their country of residence.

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<sup>25</sup> 'Sidney Vospers 'Salem' painting of a small Baptist chapel in North Wales became a Welsh icon, much like Constable's 'Haywain' to the English. It was bought by Lord Leverhulme in 1909 for one hundred guineas and he used it was used to market Lever Brothers' Sunlight Soap. It is on display in the Lady Lever Art Gallery in Port Sunlight.

8.

## CONCLUSION

Much of this study has been taken up in the description of a thriving migrant community in Liverpool during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a powerful force of Welshness that existed outside Wales. The decline of such a community outside its native land (even if that land is in close proximity) could be seen as inevitable in the face of strong outside influences of the English language, but three factors were largely responsible for its longevity – the spatial migration pattern which ensured that Liverpool's migrant population was never static, the effective network infrastructure based on the chapels and the economic success which created a confident middle class that combined wealth and ideas. This combination created a strong diasporic identity that resisted ethnic minority assimilation into the dominant culture of its host nation.

None of the factors identified worked in isolation. The coherence of the community was strong because they overlapped and language was the glue that held everything together. The middle class were indebted to the network infrastructure for employment opportunities and social activities. As marriages ensued from the meetings in chapel, young families were more than happy to take an active part in community life, welcoming new migrants to their homes, chapels and businesses and making charitable contributions to Welsh institutions. Liverpool was not on the sidelines but at the cutting edge of Welsh religious, cultural and political life. The people were Welsh, the space was Liverpool but the place was Wales.

It has been argued that the coherent strength of Liverpool's Welsh community was due to the organisational structure provided by the non-conformist denominations. Mirroring the general decline in religious attendance across the UK, those chapels are greatly reduced in number today. However, the reduced economic, cultural and political activity of the Liverpool Welsh cannot be accounted for by the decline of the chapels. Post war improved transport links increased commuting distances and lessened the steady influx of new migrants and Welsh devolution encouraged more migration within the nation.

It is clear from the empirical data provided by the children of early 20<sup>th</sup> century migrants as well as post-war migrants that there is a core group of Liverpool Welsh who continue to regard themselves as essentially Welsh, despite the fact they have lived outside Wales for over half a century. Language has largely become place orientated (chapel and related activities and people orientated (family and close friends) but this study maintains that had the original community not been so vibrant and self confident, it would not be spoken so widely in Liverpool today.

Much of the empirical research is time sensitive as it has concentrated on the core of Welshness in Liverpool today, a remarkable group of proud Welshmen and women. Emanating from this core is a further group, those that "understand" or "speak a bit" of Welsh, which is worthy of further research to investigate how the identity-defining tradition of the Liverpool Welsh will manifest itself in the future. Further research could explore whether the loss of language facing many of the children of the study participants can also be associated with a loss of identity.

The Welsh migrant community in London has been transformed from one that was organised spatially round several localities to one that now exists in cyberspace (Segrott 2001). Perhaps this will be the situation in Liverpool in future years?

The author would like to thank the members of Bethel Chapel for completing questionnaires, Elan Jones, Goronwy Owen, Mair Powell, Margaret Quayle, Alun Roberts and David John Williams for their interviews and Bethel's minister, Dr D Ben Rees for all his assistance and support.

Bethel Chapel will be demolished in early 2011 but the new Bethel will be a fit-for-purpose building for the needs of its 21<sup>st</sup> century congregation.

**APPENDIX 1**

## Questionnaire Results (31 questionnaires)

What nationality do you consider yourself?	
Welsh	27
English	0
British	2
Other	2

How long have you lived in Liverpool?	
Under 10 years	0
10+	1
20+	3
30+	2
40+	10
50+	15

Have previous generations of your family lived in Liverpool?	
Yes	10
No	21

Where do you consider "home"?	
Liverpool	16
Other	13
Liverpool+other	2

How many years have you attended chapel?	
Don't attend chapel	1
10+	1
20+	1
30+	0
40+	3
50+	25

How important do you consider the chapel has been in retaining the Welshness of Liverpool life?

Social life	
1-Not very important	1
2	0
3	1
4	5
5- Very important	24

Business life	
1-Not very important	10
2	5
3	7
4	6
5- Very important	3

Cultural life	
1-Not very important	1
2	0
3	3
4	6
5- Very important	21

Which language are you most comfortable speaking?	
English	6
Welsh	13
Both	12

Which language do you prefer writing?	
English	7
Welsh	13
Both	11

Do you have Children? Can they speak or understand Welsh?	
Children who can speak Welsh	10
Children who can only understand Welsh	9
Children who do not understand	2
No Children	10

Age	
Under 40	1
40-50	1
50-60	4
60-70	7
Over 70	18

Gender	
Male	14
Female	17

Occupation	
Teacher	14
Housewife	3
Other	14

Which football team do you support?	
Liverpool	12
Everton	9
Wales	0
None	8
Other	2

Which rugby team do you support?	
Wales	26
England	0
None	4
Other	1

**APPENDIX 2**

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL, SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE  
RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

**Cymreictod yn Lerpwl/Welsh Identity in Liverpool**

**Ydych yn ystyried eich hun....***Do you consider yourself....*

Please circle as appropriate

Saesneg/English      Cymraeg/Welsh      Prydeinig/British      Arall.....

**Ers faint ydych wedi bod yn byw yn Lerpwl?**

*How long have you lived in Liverpool?*

**Oes cenedlaethau eraill o'ch teulu wedi byw yn Lerpwl?**

*Have previous generations of your family lived in Liverpool?*

(If so, please note when they came, their place of birth, their work and where they lived in Liverpool)

**Ble ydych yn ystyried "cartref"? *Where do you consider "home"?***

**Faint o flynyddoedd ydych chi wedi mynychu capel?**

*How many years have you attended chapel?*

**Faint mor bwysig chi'n ystyried mae'r capel wedi bod yn cynnal Cymreictod bywyd Lerpwl**

*How important do you consider the chapel has been in retaining the Welshness of Liverpool life?*

Please circle as appropriate

(1 = not very important, 5 = very important)

Bywyd cymdeithasol/social life	1	2	3	4	5
Bywyd busnes/business life	1	2	3	4	5
Bywyd diwylliannol/cultural life	1	2	3	4	5



## **APPENDIX 3**

### **LIVERPOOL CHAPELS**

#### **Calvinistic Methodists**

1787	Pall Mall	moved to Cross hall St (1881)
1806	Bedford St	moved to Princes Rd (1867)
1826	Rose Place	moved to Fitzclarence St (1865)
1834	Oil Street	moved to Burlington St (1839)
1839	Burlington St	moved to Netherfield Rd (1859)
1841	Mulberry St	moved to Chatham St (1861)
1860	Netherfield Rd	moved to Douglas Rd (1903)
1860	Cranmer St	moved to Anfield Rd (1877)
1861	Chatham St	united with Princes Rd (1950)
1863	Wellington St	moved to Woodger St (1865)
1865	Fitzclarence St	destroyed in 1941
1865	Woodger St	moved to Chapel Rd, Garston
1866	Chapel Rd, Garston	united with Bethel 1992
1868	Princes Rd	united in 1950 with Chatham St
1869	Lombard St	moved to Newsham Park (1884)
1876	Stanley Rd, Bootle	united with Waterloo in 1992
1878	David St	moved to Belvedere Rd (1924)
1878	Anfield Rd	closed 1979
1879	Walton Park	closed 1969
1880	Crosshall St	closed 1920
1884	Newsham	closed 1951
1884	Peel Rd, Bootle	closed 1949
1884	Holt Rd	moved to Edge Lane (1900)
1887	Webster Rd	moved to Heathfield Rd (1927)
1900	Edge Lane	united with Heathfield Rd (1975)
1906	Douglas Rd	closed 1974
1924	Belvedere Rd	united with Princes Rd + Chatham St (1950)
1927	Heathfield Rd	reopening new building in 2011

### **Welsh Independents**

1817 Tabernacl, Great Crosshall St move to Netherfield Rd South in 1868

1838 Bethel, Bedford St moved to Park Rd in 1870 (ish)

1841 Salem, Brownlow Hill

1856 Great Mersey St

1878 Kensington

Park Road

Martins Lane

Clifton Road

Belmont Road

Grove Street

Independents also established chapels in Birkenhead (1842)+ (1883)and  
Bootle(1878) + (1884)

### **Welsh Baptists**

Welsh Baptists, Cross Hall

Welsh Baptist, Bootle

### **Wesleyan**

Zion

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